

# ask the EXPERTS

## It's time to take control

WOULD you like to be more organised and feel a little more in control of your busy family? Take a look at these top 10 tips and see if your family notices a difference:

**Memory jogger:** use a wall calendar to record important dates and appointments, write them down as soon as you can before they slip your mind.

Try the SureStart parent's calendar or a family planner calendar from WH Smith or Clintons.

**Keep it clear and simple:** set a few straightforward house rules to save time and avoid battles.

Lisa, mother of Josh, aged 11, and Sophie, aged 14, of Clayton says: "Set clear boundaries. When children know the rules they'll be more likely to do as you ask so it's easier to be organised."

**Routine, routine, routine:** Dominic, father of Cameron, aged four, of Stone, says: "Establish a good daily routine, as your child will be happier if they know what is coming next and so will you."

**List it out:** write out lists — shopping, things to remember and



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plan for and so on. Getting things out of your head and onto paper saves the worry of trying to remember everything.

**Be prepared:** Yasmin, mother of Sarah, aged four months, Eamon, aged two, and Hannah, aged seven, of Tunstall, says: "I get up before the kids to tidy up and get everything done."

Many parents lay out clothes and school bags in the evening to reduce the morning rush.

**Take note:** need to remember something important? Write it on a Post It note and stick to the inside of your front door and you'll notice it before you leave the house.

**Clear the clutter:** searching for lost keys, shoes and school bags can turn a well planned day into a rush.

Have a clear out and use the free space to store everyday items which you need to find easily.

A hook for keys means they're quick to locate.

**Keep calm:**

● Keep keys on a key hook to locate them easily



● Use a wall calendar to remind you of important dates but don't let your things get too cluttered

the more frantic and irritated you are the more difficult it is to concentrate and be well organised.

Take a deep breath, and remind yourself that "slow and steady wins the race".

**Handy helpers:** teach the children to take responsibility for small jobs, such as

packing their own school snacks or feeding a pet in the morning.

At first this will be more work as they learn what to do but you are getting them into the habit of being helpful.

Andie, mother of David, aged 21, Hannah, aged 24, and Katie, aged 27, from Cellarhead, agrees: "Work as a

team, include the children in making decisions and taking on jobs around the house."

**Give up:** at least once a fortnight be disorganised for the day.

Be spontaneous, forgetful and, if you can, rely on someone else to be organised.

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