



Preschool and early elementary years

Provide the outside structure



At home

- Use short routines with one clear starting cue.
- Point to a simple picture sequence.
- Keep important objects in the same place.
- Give one cleanup category at a time.



At school

- Pair spoken directions with a model, picture, or finished example.
- Ask the child to repeat the first step.
- Practice routines when children are calm.



Remember

Adults are still much of the planning system. Use supported games to practice waiting, remembering rules, taking turns, and changing actions.



Later elementary years

Build shared systems



At home

- Create a checklist with the child.
- Keep school materials in a regular place.
- Preview the next day.
- Name the first visible action, estimate its time, and compare the estimate with what happened.



At school

- Post the steps and divide long work into checkpoints.
- Teach students how to use planners and other tools.
- Model how to record, prioritize, begin, and check work.



Remember

Build ownership while fading support one part at a time. Independence may still be uneven across subjects and settings.



Adolescence

Coach planning while ownership grows



At home

- Use a shared weekly planning time.
- Let the teenager propose the plan.
- Work backward from due dates.
- Agree on a few check-in points.



At school

- Make priorities and interim deadlines clear.
- Teach one reliable system and allow practice.
- Give feedback on the process and the final work.
- Let students choose how to order manageable parts.



Remember

Expect growing ownership, not instant adult-level consistency. Use clear paths, realistic checkpoints, and chances to repair a missed step.

Five supports that help at any age

1

Make the goal and steps visible

Use a short list, picture sequence, model, or written plan.



2

Reduce avoidable memory load

Keep materials predictable, remove unrelated clutter, and give directions in manageable parts.



3

Teach a pause-and-check routine

Ask: What is the goal?
What is the next step?
How will you know it is done?



4

Practice inside real activities

Plan a real project, organize real materials, or check real schoolwork.



5

Fade support gradually

Move from modeling, to a cue, to a self-check. Restore help if accuracy falls.

