

Lesson Objectives

1. Increase participants' knowledge of home organization.
2. Identify strategies participants can use to reduce or eliminate clutter from their homes.
3. Participants will learn organizational techniques and practice these techniques through a program activity.

Intended Audiences

FCE groups, Extension programs, mothers of preschoolers/Mom's Day out programs, community agencies, church groups, senior centers, and others.

Introduction to the Topic

American consumers have a fondness for purchasing a great deal of "stuff," which has led to clutter-filled houses. In addition, families have less time to keep everything organized. This lack of organization causes stress for everyone in the household. Members in the home also feel unsettled by this lack of organization.

The focus of this lesson is to encourage participants to adopt new habits to help keep their homes more organized, resulting in less stressful living. Participants will share ideas about clutter control and will review some basic storage concepts.

Before the Lesson

- Review the leader's guide and fact sheet (MF2879).
- Obtain copies of the fact sheet for each participant.
- Search the Internet for relevant websites to enhance the topic.
- Gather materials needed for the activities listed below.

Presenting the Lesson

The lesson covers basics of how to sort through and clean up clutter. A special section contains ideas for closet cleaning and storage. You may want to bring illustrations of cluttered or poorly organized closets – including before and after cleaning pictures.



Be sure to allow time for participants to discuss strategies they use at home to keep things neat and organized. This discussion can be the icebreaker at the beginning of the lesson.

Optional Program Activities

1. Put the sorting method into practice

Give each participant two envelopes and two index cards. Have them write Give Away and Store/File on the envelopes. Have them write Put Away and Trash on the cards. One envelope is for items to give away and one envelope is for items or receipts to store or file. The card labeled Put Away is for items to put back into their purses or wallets after they have sorted everything. The card labeled Trash is to identify items that need to be thrown away.

Instruct attendees to empty their purses or wallets and sort everything into the four piles. Once they have completed that task, they can return the Put Away pile to their purses. Next, participants should place items in the Give Away pile into its envelope to take home and give away. The Store/File pile needs to go into its envelope and be taken home and filed. The trash pile goes into the trash can.

Ask participants how they felt before, during, and after the activity.

2. Make a job spinner

Use a paper plate or a circle of stiff paper. Divide the circle as you would a pie. In each section, write a household job to do. Make an arrow out of stiff paper and attach it to the paper with a clasp fastener. Then spin the arrow to determine your job.

3. Make a job jar

Write all jobs and chores on slips of paper and place the slips in a can or jar. When it's time to assign chores, everyone chooses a slip of paper from the jar until all slips are gone. These are the chores for everyone to do for the next week, month, etc. One jar could be for routine or daily tasks (such as feeding the pets, washing dishes, and taking out the trash) and one jar could be for occasional tasks (washing windows and sweeping the porch).

4. Make a chart or bulletin board

Make a weekly schedule for all family members and rotate jobs so that no one does the same job all the time.

Community Awareness Activities

1. Present the lesson to another group that could benefit from this information.
2. Coordinate a recycling day, e-waste recycling event, or dumpster day in your community or neighborhood.
3. Set up a display at a community event that explains how to sort into categories and turn a clutter-filled house into an organized home.

Related Extension Publications

Our Valuable Records MF685, <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF685.pdf>

Prepare Kansas – Take Steps Ahead of Disaster, <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3055.pdf>

University of Idaho Extension - Declutter Packet, <https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/county/latah/family-finance>

References

Kansas State Cooperative Extension Publication GT-205, Mary E. Tucker, Extension Specialist, Environmental Family Housing, 1986.

Example of a home organizing duty chart:

Source of Clutter	When to Sort	Whose job?
Mail, bills, books, papers	daily	Mom
Toys and games	daily	Mom and son, John Jr.
Hobby materials	weekly	Daughter Susie
Cleaning supplies and laundry	Daily, weekly, monthly, and annually	Mom and kids
Tools and hardware	weekly	Dad and son, John Jr.
Clothing and outerwear	Every 3 months	Everyone

Cut the Clutter Evaluation

Date of Program: _____

District/County: _____

Instructor: _____

Because of my participation in the Cut the Clutter and Get Organized Program:	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I gained knowledge about the use of home organization techniques.			
I understand the benefits of de-cluttering and letting go of items I do not use regularly.			
I learned practices that can be implemented to create a safe, accessible, healthy, and well-maintained living space.			
I know thrifty ways to save space, store goods efficiently, and organize important possessions.			

As a result of attending this class:	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I plan to implement one or more practices for home organization to reduce clutter in my home.			
I will begin to clear out or discard items I have not used in the past 3 to 4 years.			
I will donate unused clothing or household goods to a local charity or assistance program			
I plan to downsize my belongings in the next 1 to 5 years.			
I rate this program excellent.			
I rate the instructor as excellent.			

The most helpful thing I learned from this program was:

Author

*Denise Dias, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences,
K-State Research and Extension, Johnson County
11811 S Sunset Drive, Suite 1500, Olathe, KS 66061
913-715-7000, ddias@k-state.edu*

Reviewers

*Elizabeth Kiss, Ph.D, CFP, AFCPE, Associate Extension Professor,
Kansas State University, Extension Specialist
343L Justin Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-1403
785-532-1480, dekiss@k-state.edu*

*Rachael Clews, MA, MS, CFLE, Extension Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences,
K-State Research and Extension Southwest Research-Extension Center
4500 E Mary Street, Garden City, KS 67846
620-275-9164 extension 226, rclews@k-state.edu*

*Karen Richel, M.S., AFC®, Certified Money Coach (CMC)®, Associate Extension Professor
University of Idaho Extension - Latah County
200 S. Almon Street, Suite 201, Moscow, ID 83843
208-883-2241*

*Cindy Williams, Meadowlark Extension District, FCS Agent
K-State Research and Extension, Meadowlark Extension District
Oskaloosa Office, PO Box 326, 100 E. Washington
Oskaloosa, KS 66066-0326
785-863-2212, csw@k-state.edu*

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