

Moving From High School to Adulthood: Information and Documents Organization Tip Sheet

Congratulations! You now have the tools you need to begin creating an adult life that is all your own. Organizing information is an important part of keeping your transition to adulthood moving forward on a successful path. It can be challenging, but with time and lots of practice, you will learn to create systems of organization and the habits to maintain them that work well for you. Ask for help from a parent or someone you trust when you have questions. Be patient with yourself when you make mistakes – it’s how we learn! Take pride in your efforts and celebrate your successes.

Here are some tips to help keep you organized:

- **Learn about the information you’re storing.** Understand what the information means, why it’s important, with whom it will be shared, and how you will be using it. A parent, case manager, or financial advisor may be helpful as you learn about organization.
- **Explore options for organizing and make a system that works for you.** Create virtual or hard-copy files for documents, important phone numbers and contact information, and store them in a place that is easy to find. Your system can include online apps or document vaults designed for storing information in the virtual world. You may wish to use an accordion file, file box, file drawers, or other hard-copy systems for organizing paper copies. Depending on your needs, you may want a combination of virtual and hard-copy organizers.
- **Make copies of important documents, records, and applications.** Before you send a completed application or form to someone else, be sure to make a copy for your own file.
- **Keep your information private and your data safe.** Share important paperwork or records access information only with those who have a responsibility to keep your information private, such as doctors, therapists, a financial conservator, or a parent. For documents and records that you access online, write down the website and login information and keep it somewhere safe. An online password manager program can be beneficial for securely storing records login and password information. Online document vaults offer secure options for uploading and storing copies of documents.
- **Include your contact information.** Be sure to include phone, email, and website information for important contacts in each category.
- **Consider using an online calendar to track documentation updates.** You will need to occasionally update information such as your State ID, driver’s license, or passport. You can set alerts on your virtual calendar to remind you of dates when documentation needs updating.
- **Be your best self-advocate.** Ask for help when you have questions. You may wish to ask a trusted adult to model the processes and guide your practice until you feel comfortable doing it on your own. You will likely need ongoing help as you learn – we all do. It’s okay to tell a trusted adult what works for you and what doesn’t as you explore ways to manage your information.
- **Consider keeping a folder of your strengths and accomplishments to encourage you when things get hard.** This can include positive feedback from others, a list of accomplished goals, awards or certificates, job offers, a school assignment with a good grade, or your own personal notes of encouragement on your successes.

For more information and videos, check out these resources from our PACER Student and Young Adults page at [Students and Young Adults - PACER Center](#).