

FRUGAL DUCHESS

Making room for homework



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During the school year, students often have special assignments that demand time, energy and money. Fortunately, with a few

time-saving steps, homework duties can be less stressful and time-consuming.

Sort home supplies. Take the divide-and-conquer approach when stashing home supplies, said Suzy Wilkoff, owner of Tasks Unlimited (www.tasksunlimited.com), which is based in South Florida. She recom-

mends separating pens, pencils, erasers, tape and staples into plastic containers or storage boxes of different colors.

Use labels. In my house, school supplies are sorted into clear, vertical drawers. Having supplies on hand reduces the need for late-hour shopping trips on deadline.

Use a bookshelf. These

are ideal for storing supplies, paper, notebooks and tablets.

Create a homework center. Whether it's the dining room table or a formal desk, homework needs a designated site.

Make a file box for each child. Wilkoff recommends establishing a file box for each child with color-coded

or labeled files for each subject and after-school activity. "It is very important to continually go through papers and discard what is nonessential," Wilkoff says, suggesting a monthly review.

Use a bulletin board. School notices, invitations and other announcements can be posted in chronological order and removed after the event is over. A wall calendar and a dry erase board are also helpful.

Color code events — games, tests, tutoring sessions — with a different marker for

each child. While computer calendars and electronic reminders are great, a large family calendar or bulletin board keeps everyone up to date.

Give each child a manila folder. Too often important notices and letters from school get lost in backpacks. A manila envelope is "a great way to keep the 'pertinent' paper-type items organized inside a book bag that may have a habit of getting messy," Wilkoff says. Just be sure to check the envelope weekly.