



## TBI TIPS

### Organizational Challenges in Students with TBI

Students who have a traumatic brain injury (TBI) often have trouble with organizing their time, materials, and thoughts. These challenges make it difficult to succeed in a classroom setting. Studies have shown that the frontal lobe is the most common area of injury after a mild or moderate TBI (Levin, et al., 1987). Considering that the frontal lobes play a critical role in organizational processes, it is not surprising that students who sustain brain injuries often have organizational challenges when they return to school. These students may need support with organization to succeed.

### Strategies to Try

Be prepared to try many different supports and strategies. No one support, or accommodation is going to work for everyone. Experiment with various supports or combinations of supports until you find what works for your student. Then, be ready to make adjustments over time as the student's needs change.

#### Advance Organizers:

These organizers function as maps to tasks, schedules or thought processes. They can be as simple as written to-do lists and as complicated as the student needs. A general rule is to keep them as simple as possible.

#### Models:

Providing a complete model of what the student is being asked to do helps them to organize their thoughts and understand what completion looks like. For example, providing a completed sheet of math problems, a sample essay, a finished art project or a PowerPoint presentation gives the student a structure for what is expected of them and a way to know when the project is completed.

#### Rehearsal/Practice:

Allowing a student who has organizational difficulty to practice a challenging, recurring task can be a successful strategy. Examples include practicing navigating a busy hallway and making it on time to class, creating routines for getting materials out and ready, turning in work, asking for help, etc. This practice helps students know what to expect and what is expected of them.

#### Collaboration:

Sometimes, students with organizational challenges simply cannot get started because their thoughts are jumbled. For complex tasks, try working with the student to get started. Allow the student to lead the activity as much as possible and provide cues and prompts as needed. Simple gestures like pointing to the top of the page may cue the student to write their name there.