

TOPIC:

How to Declutter your Home in 8 Easy Steps

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Alaska Center for Resource Families**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING CREDIT:****Read through this self-study***Fill out the "CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING" Questionnaire***Return to ACRF for 1.0 hour of training credit.*

Whether it's books in the living room, junk mail in the kitchen, or clothes in the closet, everyone has a bit of clutter in their home. Having clutter in your home is very normal but having too much clutter is a downside especially if you have a child or multiple children in your home. Clutter makes it more difficult to find things, makes a small space look even smaller, and takes up valuable living or storage space that you may need for your family. It can be hard to get around to decluttering in real life, but you do not have to be a professional organizer to achieve this! A few small steps can help jump-start the effort and may even improve your mental health! **Here are 8 easy steps to help you declutter your home:**

**Step 1: Desire to Change**

The first step to declutter your home is to have the desire to change. Until you get to that point, you cannot make good progress on going through decluttering. If you desire to have your home be in tip-top shape, it will take work to let go of items that are unused or unwanted. Having less clutter will help you feel calmer and more peaceful while providing a safe home for a foster child. Decluttering all the rooms will take time and effort, but the results can help you better enjoy your space. There may be days where you are feeling overwhelmed and unmotivated, but it's important to remember just one small task a day can change perspective and that emotion!

Step 2: Determine a Strategy

The next step in decluttering your house is to figure out what your strategy will be. To do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- How much time do I have to devote to decluttering?
- What spaces need the most work?
- What areas of the house stress me out the most?
- When do I need to complete my whole house decluttering project?

Questions like these will help you to determine a workable strategy for your house in this season of your life. For example, it may not be feasible to spend an entire day decluttering. Instead, you may need to develop a more realistic strategy, such as one where you spend one hour decluttering at a time. You are better off choosing to start with an area you can see daily and be motivated by the progress made.

Step 3: Gather the Necessary Supplies

After determining your decluttering strategy, you should gather the necessary supplies. This will allow you to maintain your decluttering momentum and not get distracted by other tasks if you must stop what you are working on to get supplies at a store. Examples of supplies to start with include trash bags, boxes or plastic tubs, cleaning supplies, and organizational items such as drawer dividers, baskets, etc.

Step 4: Set a Timer and Get Started

Now you are ready to get started decluttering! Based on the strategy you determined in step two, go to that space, set a timer, and get started. Whether you only have a few minutes or a few hours, you can make good progress on the decluttering process if you set a timer and stay focused. You do not need to worry about the entire job. Instead, focus on the task at hand. If a whole room seems too much, start with just one drawer or cabinet. You will be surprised how good it feels to go through a junk drawer or cabinet space where you store miscellaneous items.

Step 5: Determine – Keep/Sell/Give Away/Trash

As you are going through the items and thinking about realistic uses for them, it is time to make some determinations. First, you must decide whether the item should be kept or not. If you decide not to keep it, you need to determine if you want to sell the item, give it away, or trash it.

- Items that are no longer needed and do not have any useable life left in them can be tossed in the trash bag to be disposed of. For example, broken things can easily be decluttered and trashed.
- Items that are still useable but do not want or need anymore can either be given away or sold. For example, you may know someone who could use the item and give it away. Another option would be to donate the unwanted items to a local charity.
- If you are looking for a way to make some extra cash and do not mind putting in some work, you may choose to sell your clutter. You can do this by holding a garage sale or posting items for sale online.

Step 6: Clean the Space

After you have emptied the space, it is a great time to clean it without the clutter in the way. You can now easily access the nooks and crannies of an area. This is a great time to wipe down cabinets and shelves and sanitize them. You can also clean the floor and baseboards easier without moving stuff out of the way.



Step 7: Reorganize

Now that you have figured out what you are keeping and cleaned out the space, it is time to reorganize and place the items back in an organized manner. The decluttering plan should leave you with only what you use and want to keep. Using storage containers can also make locating what you are looking for in a clutter-free manner. Most living rooms are well-loved, and a regular hang-out spot for friends and family. For this reason, be sure not to overwhelm the space with too much furniture or clutter. Reorganizing may look different for different areas of your house, but the goal is the same – efficient access to the items you are looking for.

Step 8: Determine a Plan to Keep Up with the Decluttering

Unfortunately, decluttering is not a one-and-done type of task. You will need to figure out a plan to help you keep up with the clutter coming into your house and prevent yourself from getting overwhelmed. It is essential to schedule time to declutter regularly. To keep your home feeling tidy and organized, consider a few things. Own things that are meaningful and useful to you. Don't just hide stuff behind a closed door. Create zones of your house to regularly check in on your items. Also find a phrase such as, "Don't put down, put it away" to help remind yourself and your children to tidy up after themselves!

With these 8 steps, you can declutter your house and develop a plan to help you maintain a safe foster home for children. Happy decluttering!

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