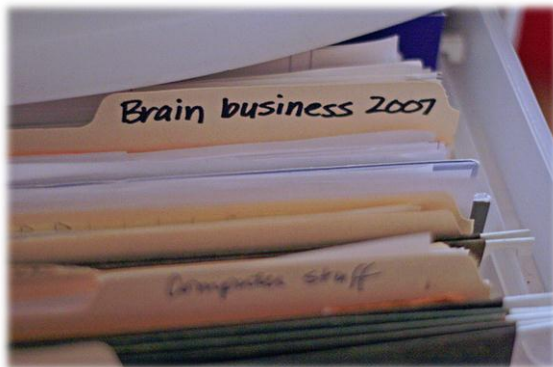


Home Records and Files

Some of us hear the word records and think about the large black vinyl records we used to play on a record player. Yes, the CDs of yesteryear. However, that is not what this is about, we will be talking about how to start, maintain and improve a system to keep our children's home file and records.

From the time we bring our children home, we already have a number of documents for them that we need to keep in a safe place yet easily accessible for most things we do with them.



Contents of a basic Home File:

1. Birth certificate
2. Social Security card
3. Immunization record or letter of non-immunization
4. Current picture (school photo or snap shots)
5. Passport
6. Adoption papers

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Some parents prefer to keep their records in folders while others prefer binders. No matter what system you use, knowing where the documents are is the most important part.

Should your child have medical issues, you can add a second tab to your system.

Contents of a basic Medical File

1. Diagnosis letter
2. Results of tests
3. Any letters from specialists to your primary care doctor/pediatrician
4. Referral letters to professionals

Depending on where you are your children may start school at age 4 or 5. If your child is diagnosed with a disability you may also have the need for Early Intervention Services, or Pre-school Special Education before even starting kindergarten. This then will require a new tab for school information.

For starts, **you will need to keep:**

1. Evaluations – i.e. psychological, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language, others as needed;
2. Report cards, tests, transcripts;
3. Individual Education Programs (IEPs) or 504/Accommodation Plans.

You should also keep copies of your child's work at the beginning of the year and during the natural breaks from school like fall, winter, and spring. These will come in handy should we you need to show the teachers and IEP team that there may be issues with regression, or losing skills if they are not in school. Without this information it will be very hard to prove that the student would be a good candidate for the Extended School Year program or ESY.



My file is incomplete, what can I do?

The first thing you have to do is not panic, there are ways to gather the information you're missing.

1. Gather the information you do have. Go through the basic lists of suggested information. Make copies of the originals and file the originals in a place you can have access to.
2. Use technology to your advantage. Most schools have websites with their phone and addresses. This becomes very useful when trying to gather information from previous schools.

We gathered some of the best tips from our staff. Here are some of their golden nuggets.

"Having my home files ready when we moved to a new area helped me get Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) services within a month of us moving. The service coordinator told me it usually takes 3 months because parents don't have all the information together."



“I use a 3-hole notebook, 2 different color sticky notes, a glue stick, and a pen. Whenever I get a business card from a professional, I glue it to the inside of the notebook cover. The sticky notes are my reminders, one color for things I have to send out, the other color for things people told me they will send me. It also helps me take notes during phone calls or meetings with my son’s doctors. My hubby travels a lot for work, and this way I can keep him up to date on what we are doing for our son. I have about 10 of these filled in, it’s good to look at them and see how far we have come with my son.”

“I’ve had a few families tell me that they scan their child’s IFSP or IEP and put them on flash drives so that they are easily retrieved and no need for a paper file system. I have also heard of families putting medical information like allergies, meds, diagnosis, primary care physician information on a flash drive so that if they do have to go to the ER the information is easily accessible to ER staff. This method could probably be used for day camps and the like, especially for kids that have more complex medical needs. The flash drive can be put on a key chain or neck lanyard and kept handy by the phone or where you keep your keys if a quick trip to the ER is necessary.”

“A parent went to a hearing trying to get her child back into school after an expulsion. The findings of the hearing were mailed to her three days later. She thought the hearing officer was going to keep her child out of school for the remainder of the school year, (about 4 more months) so she didn't bother reading the report. When she and I went through it—SURPRISE! He could have gone back to school two weeks later. It pays to read your mail!”