

# Organized Students: Jumping up to the next level

by Kimber Nelson

**STAYING ORGANIZED** is one of the greatest challenges faced by students who are affected by ADHD, as well as adults with the disorder. There are many great tools that can be used to stay organized and on-task. The tried and true planner can be very effective, but it is often forgotten and—let’s be honest—not really that much fun. No matter how much we want to achieve our goals, keeping track of our schedules and our lives often feels like a daily grind rather than something we “want to” do.

Luckily, we are in the midst of the technology century and have access to tablets, smartphones, and all the brilliant tools that come with them. The odds are good that there is a great organizer tool out there that will support you in taking the actions you have always intended. Technology is often painted as a time-wasting distraction, but when harnessed correctly it can be moved from the evil “dark” side and its power used for good.

The trick is to weed out all of the clutter (sound familiar?) and find the mega-valuable gems that will move us forward. Mobile analytics company Garter Inc. forecasts that by 2014, a staggering 185 billion applications will be downloaded from mobile app stores. Luckily, all of the app marketplaces have excellent targeted search options.

Since the smartphone is also a crucial virtual connection to your student’s social circle, the likelihood of its being forgotten is minuscule. You may, in fact, wonder if the device has melded with their thumbs (which often makes mom or dad crabby at the dinner table). But for staying on track, the attachment can be a positive thing.

Connecting the goals set in the smartphone app to visuals in your home serves as a great reminder to tap into the phone and the organization app. A wall calendar with important dates highlighted in your favorite color, a photo, or a piece of jewelry that

represents your goal are a few suggestions to keep its importance top of mind.

Apps can be used from your phone or tablet, so just pick the size that works for you. To assist in narrowing down your search, here are a few apps currently on the market with time-management features worth taking a look at.

For older students, check out **Track and**



**Share** (iTunes), designed to track your mood, track your habits, get things done, and manage your health. Visualization

makes all of the difference. Older students will be able to look back and see the correlation between their moods, medication, and activities and see what is the most effective. The very simple graphics make the app appropriate for a variety of ages and taking screenshots of your graphs to share through email with parents, coaches, or any other support you are working with is easy.

**Choiceworks** (iTunes) is definitely an



excellent option worth looking at for the younger student. It works off of images to create a schedule board, in addition to a waiting and feelings board. It takes the checklists to build routines off the wall and into the phone in a vibrant, visual way. Choiceworks comes preloaded with over 165 images, plus you can upload your own. The app is designed for clear, consistent support to foster independence and positive behavior.

**iPrompts**, [handholdadaptive.com/iprompts.html](http://handholdadaptive.com/iprompts.html),



a similar app, is available at the Amazon Android app store.

Of course, there are other time-management options out there, but just like many things in this world, they are not built to work well with the ADHD brain. The apps I share above are a great start, but my personal opinion is that more is needed for long-term impact.

While it’s not yet on the market, I designed the **Actions Hero App** for people with ADHD, to mesh the draw of video games with staying organized and on top of priorities. It works with the ADHD brain: fast-paced, very visual, and with instant rewards that will get you where you want to go. It is also integrated with software that you can share with your coach, and will smash the boring out of time management. ●



*A certified ADHD coach based in Pleasant Grove, Utah, Kimber Nelson provides individual coaching for college students and adults. She trained at the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching and with JST Coaching. Nelson is the designer and developer of the soon-to-be-released Actions Hero smartphone app.*