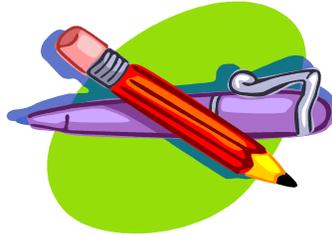


Back To School Organizing Tips



Here are some organizing tips for back-to-school time - things that you can do to ease this transition and help set your children up for a successful school year:

- If you haven't already: **go thru your child's papers and art work from last year**, saving just the most special things and recycling the rest. Similarly, **weed out clothes, games and equipment** they no longer use. Give yourself a fresh start in the new school year, and support charities at the same time with your donations.
- **Create a launching pad** in your home - a place for everything your kids will need to leave the house the next day: backpacks/purses, forms to hand in, phones (have a place for charging), and perhaps a bench, hooks, baskets, cubbies. You can also post a **check-list at the exit door**. Launching pad can **double as the drop-off area** for things when kids come home.
- **Help your children with their backpacks:** Decide how to use each section, buy appropriate containers, notebooks/binders, and **Label Everything!** Help them get in the habit of **cleaning it out on a weekly basis**. ("Label Everything" is a good idea in general for back-to-school prep.)
- **Create one or both:**
 - **Household notebook:** three-ring binder with clear plastic pages, and notebook paper. Include things like: Phone and address lists, schedules, car pools, lunch menus, sitter info, movie/book/restaurant/fun recommendations, food shopping lists, chores, recycling info, packing lists, master and daily to-do lists, etc.
 - **Desk-top file box with hanging folders** (for the parents): Include: schedules, papers to sign, class lists, activities information, phone and address lists, invitations, etc. **Bulletin boards** can be helpful for these items, also, but make sure that you keep them de-cluttered and up to date!
- Have a **family calendar** posted for all to see. Perhaps use a different color for entries related to each family member.

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- If it works for your family, have regular **family meetings** to talk about scheduling, chores, routines, etc.
- Have a **designated homework station** for each child in as quiet a place as possible. Include a comfortable chair, good lighting, supplies, and a desk-top file box if appropriate (see next bullet).
- **For middle-schoolers and high-schoolers especially: get a desktop file box** with hanging file folders labeled with each of the child's classes, as well as hanging folders for all activities (in-school and out). They will have a ready place to store papers they don't need to carry around every day, and will be able to retrieve them easily when needed.
- Give each child his or her own **recycling bin and box for memorabilia**.
- **Do a lot the night before** - make lunch, choose clothes, get backpack ready and things charging.
- **Create routines** for homework, chores, and all daily activities.
- **Build in down-time, have realistic expectations, be positive and praise frequently!**
- **The Organized Student: Teaching Children the Skills for Success in School and Beyond, by Donna Goldberg.** A very helpful, often recommended organizing book.