

10 WAYS TO MAKE BACK TO SCHOOL EASIER

YOUR FOOLPROOF GUIDE TO GETTING THE KIDS OUT THE DOOR AND ORGANISED FOR SCHOOL

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Yes it is that time of year again when the summer holidays are over and the new school year has begun. The more thought and preparation you can put into place by establishing simple organisational strategies the easier it will be for everyone.

Here are 10 tips to start school afresh and help the year run smoothly.

Preparation For School

When it comes to getting to school on time, you need to set up a **regular routine**. It's best to work backwards from when you need to be at school and allow time for everything that needs to happen in the mornings.

If your house is chaotic in the mornings, maybe it's time to do a bit of **preparation the night before**. Older children can easily get their clothes ready in advance and track what they'll need for the next day with a list or timetable, whereas younger children could use a whiteboard or checklist to assist them.

Older children can also make their lunch either the night before or in the morning. Younger children though might need a bit more help from parents with clothing, lunches and packing their bags.

It's a good idea to have the same **dropzone** in your house for items such as bags, shoes and coats rather than having to search for them when needed. Ideally this location is close to where you

enter and exit the home however for some that might not be possible due to the layout of the home. Make sure everyone is aware of this and what he or she needs to do with that space.

If you haven't already now is the time to go through **last years school work and artwork** and decide what you want to keep and what you can throw out. It is useful to have a dedicated space to keep all these items in and I usually recommend a memorabilia tub for each child. Older children might like to keep their school work as reference materials and this might be better kept in folders handy to where they usually study.

You could involve your children in this process unless maybe they are a child that wants to keep everything!

Homework

Create a **homework station** – work out where the children will usually do their work. Younger kids might need your assistance, whereas older children usually work well in an environment that is well lit, quiet and free of distractions. However, some people focus better with some noise and others around so it's important to take that into consideration.

It is also a good idea to stock up on age-appropriate pens, pencils, erasers, rulers and sharpeners for use at home so children have everything they need to complete their homework (or in most cases anyway – I have been caught out before when one of my boys told me the night before something was due that he needed colored cardboard – I now have a supply of that too).

Create a **homework routine** by choosing a time that suits everyone, taking their energy levels and extracurricular activities in to consideration.

For some families, having set quiet time can be effective. It can be used for doing homework, reading a book, doing chores or generally having quiet playtime, might go for around one to one-and-a-half hours, and has to fit in with both parents' and children's schedules.

Children are more likely to get started if they have a **plan of action** and stay motivated to get the work done. It can be helpful to break tasks into small chunks. For a child struggling with motivation, start with an easy task first rather than the longest or hardest and they may not even notice they've started.

When your child asks for help, you should consider **providing guidance rather than answers** and letting them learn for themselves.

When it comes to homework, how often do children leave half-done **bits of work or materials lying around**? To combat this, you might like to set up something like a magazine holder for each child to keep their schoolwork and reference material. It will provide you with a neater environment and everyone will know where to find his or her belongings and avoid unnecessary stress looking for homework to hand in!

Keep Communicating

Keeping the **lines of communication open** will help everyone keep track of schedules and responsibilities, as well as eliminate struggles of trying to keep up with everyone's whereabouts.

One of the best tips regularly given to clients is to have a family calendar for everyone to see and use. The calendar should include all the necessary school year schedules like term dates, curriculum dates and after-school activities. It should be displayed in a central place in your home where you and your family are likely to see and update it. Alternatively if you are technology savvy family then you might all like to link into an electronic calendar for this purpose.

Either calendar option is fine as long as it works for your family.

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Amanda Lecaude is professional organiser who loves being able to help people – her clients – get organised. She sees the difference it makes in their everyday lives, particularly families, just to have a way to create some TIME, SPACE and BALANCE! She also very passionate about equipping school students with organising skills for life to maximise greater results primarily in secondary school and limit the overwhelm and frustration for both them and their parents.

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