

Back to School Tips for your Family

By getting a jump on organizing your family for the upcoming school year you can save time, money and avoid headaches! Here are some simple tips to keep in mind as the new school year arrives:

Back to School Shopping

- Before you go shopping, have your child try on last year's clothes to see what still fits.
- Make a list before you go shopping and discuss what your child needs and which stores are best to find these items. Make a plan before simply heading to the mall.
- Consider shopping as soon as July as retailers phase-out summer apparel and introduce fall items. Plan to shop on rainy or very hot days.
- Try on-line shopping to avoid the crowds just before school is back in session.
- Request school supply lists from your school or teachers ahead of time. If the lists aren't available until after the first day of class, consider placing orders for these items on-line to avoid the first week of school rush and depleted supplies.

Making the Transition

- About one week before school starts adjust bedtimes and wake-up times to coincide with school schedules.
- Spend time talking with your child about school in a positive manner and give them an opportunity to express any concerns.
- The weekend before school starts, plan a special family dinner. Toast the end of the summer and the beginning of the new school year.
- Take the time to review and re-establish any evening routines such as eating dinner, cleaning up the kitchen and homework times. Set the ground rules for TV watching and be prepared to tape shows that conflict with the family routine.

Off to School for First-Timers

- Visit the school before hand and show your child the different activities he/she will participate in. Go over the names of new people.
- Request a class list with phone numbers for your child's class. Call other parents and try to arrange for your child to play with a few classmates before school starts.
- Walk with your child to school or the bus stop several times before school starts. Review safety rules about crossing streets and traffic lights.
- Discuss any special after-school pickup arrangements.
- Plan a special outing with your child to purchase school supplies and a first-day outfit.
- Be certain your child is comfortable using a public toilet (including a urinal for boys) so school rest rooms won't seem strange.
- Plan for packing a lunch or lunch money (even for just a drink). If needed, inquire with the school beforehand about the prices so that your child has the correct change.
- Take pictures of your child on his/her way to school in the first-day outfit. But avoid taking photographs and videotaping at school.

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Resources: 'The Family Manager's Everyday Survival Guide' by Kathy Peel & 'Organizing Plain & Simple' by Donna Smallin