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[Get it Together! Keep it Together! Let Linda Help!](#)

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Linda's Organizing Tip for August 2008:

Ready, Set, School!

For some of us, summer is a time we relax our expectations a bit and things may run on a looser schedule. Rules may become a little lax as we allow our kids time to enjoy the endless stream of activities, friends and parties. Teens, who begin to age out of summer camp programs, may have become accustomed to sleeping in and more computer/TV/Wii time than usual during the school year.

It's great and necessary for kids to have a chance to relax and set their own schedules. Towards mid-August though, it's time to reign in the kids and begin to prepare for school.

Here are a mixture of ideas from myself and fellow organizer, Monica Premo of [Practically Perfect](#) in Warner Robins, Georgia, (478-918-7399) about how to prepare for the year ahead.

In the month before school starts:

- Get the school calendar and put the start date on the family calendar.
- Avoid scheduling vacations and social commitments the week before school starts and try to limit extra activities the first week of school, so that you have time for the deluge of paperwork and any emergency supply shopping trips.
- Encourage the kids to call their friends and see who their teachers are. Even if their friends are in a different class, they will have a little time to adjust before school starts.
- Tour ahead of time if the child will be attending a new school. Transitions from elementary to middle to high school are tough because it's all new. Some schools may allow children to set up their lockers ahead of time, which is a big help.
- For preschool and elementary students, visit the playground.
- Start holding regular family meetings on Sunday nights, where everyone brings their planners and reviews the upcoming week. This helps with family expectations and communication about activities, appointments, testing dates, transportation and many other important issues. Chores, behavior and allowance can be addressed, too.
- Consider limiting access to media time (Computer/TV/video/Wii) by setting up and every other day limit, a certain number of minutes a day, or certain open/closed hours of availability.

Physicals and Medical Records

- Be sure your child has received all of the required shots and had a physical, if needed. Get the required forms from your school and bring them with you to the doctor.
- Prepare any allergy information for the school and have your doctor sign it at the annual physical.
- Make a copy of the completed immunization record, physical report and allergy/medicine forms and keep them in your medical records or school file.

Supplies and Clothes

- Set up a time with your kids to help them put their names on their supplies and set up the binders, etc. Homemade printed labels off the computer are easy to use and make everything look crisp and neat. Kids may enjoy designing their own with special graphics.
- Locker shelves are a must for middle/high school. They really help keep binders and books in reach and organized.
- Go through closets to purge clothes that don't fit. Make a list of what is needed. Less in the closet makes it easier to choose outfits.

Transitioning the Week Before School Starts

- Get back to the school bedtime schedule. If there's a big difference in the summer and school bedtimes, you may want to push it back 15 – 30 minutes a day for several days to ease them into it. Do the same thing in the morning to get them up. Post the bedtime schedule in a visible location.
- Re-establish the school chores if they differ from the summer ones. Your lifestyle changes from summer to school as do the chores, so realign the chores to accommodate the new activities and schedules.
- Decide how you're going to handle lunch and snacks. Set up a lunch-making station with napkins, pre-packaged snacks, lunch bags, etc.
- Make a list of lunch and snack items to add to your weekly grocery list.
- Write checks for school lunch and/or breakfast.
- Pick out clothes for the first day of school.
- Figure out the bus routine and post the pick-up and drop-off times. Just for fun, have a "Hooray, it's the First Day" party with your neighbors and bring muffins and juice to the bus stop the first day or celebrate after school with cupcakes.

The First Week of School

- Be prepared to fill out LOTS of paperwork. Set aside extra time in the afternoon or evening to do so. Copy the forms before sending off to school so you can easily use the same information next year. File under SCHOOL.
- Make sure all of your emergency contact information including e-mail, phone numbers, and persons authorized to pick-up your child, are up to date.
- Have a special snack after school and ask how everything went. This is important for middle- and high-schoolers, too.
- Make a list of each child's schedule, teachers and their e-mail addresses.
- Mark all school holidays, test and report card dates on your family calendar.

Have a wonderful year!

If you need help with organizing, simply call Linda

These tips are for sharing!
Please forward to others interested in organizing ideas.

I welcome all feedback about these articles. Please feel free to e-mail me anytime.
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