

# Get Organized! Then Send Them Off to School

By Kristin White del Rosso

As summer blazes by, the beginning of the school year is just around the corner. Rather than waiting until the last minute to get everything done, spend some time each day getting organized for the upcoming school year. This is a great opportunity to clean out your child's room and closet, set up a study and storage area, and get clothes and supplies.

## Clean Out Closets

Carve out time to sort through your child's closet and drawers to determine what fits and what should be donated. As you go, write down what styles, sizes and clothing essentials you need. Begin with one closet or drawer at a time. Keep a large garbage bag handy to gather items for charity and create a separate sorting area for items you will keep. By working on an individual drawer or specific area of the closet, you will be able to manage the task at hand without getting overwhelmed.

## Organize Clothes

After you have determined what clothes to keep and what to purge, organize the remaining items by season — placing the current season's clothes at the front of the closet and in easy-to-reach drawers. Store off-season items in clear storage bins and stow them away on a closet shelf or under the bed. If your child wears a school uniform, consider keeping these outfits in a visible place in the closet so they are more easily accessible. Be sure to revisit your child's closet every few months to rearrange clothes and to determine what you might need to purchase for the upcoming season.



## Set Up a Study Area

Whether your child uses an individual study area or a shared space, designate a "homework" area and set it up with supplies and a calendar or checklist. The key to staying organized and not letting papers and projects overtake workspace is to create ample storage space for supplies, and to tidy up immediately following study time. For example, if you use the kitchen table to do homework, make space in a nearby cabinet or consider purchasing a rolling cart with drawers that can easily be tucked away.

## Family Home Tracker Calendar

This stylish calendar handles the biggest, busiest schedules and lets the whole family record and review activities easily. The super-size format includes school week layouts, visual schedule guides, planning time savers, and even people and event trackers. Available for \$29.95 from [www.timetoo.com](http://www.timetoo.com) or at local stationery stores.



## Create Backpack Storage

Avoid the "backpack pile," by creating a storage area for book bags. Place hooks in the area of your home where you most frequently enter and exit your home to store backpacks. If you use the garage, consider putting hooks in your garage or in the entryway leading from the house into the garage. Installing lockers or cabinets to store backpacks, coats and shoes also helps reduce clutter and keeps items centrally located. As soon as homework is complete, immediately place the backpack on its designated hook so it is ready to go the following morning.

## Keep Papers in Order

In addition to managing space for homework and projects, you also need a place to organize school-related papers and documents. Consider an accordion file that you can organize by month or a file system with clearly labeled folders. Make space in your file drawers for school-related items. For important action items, place items in a folder to keep handy and check daily. Add key dates — school holidays, exam schedules and school fundraisers — to your calendar.

## Shop with a List

Before you head out to make school-related purchases, take the time to get organized at home and inventory what you really need. This will ultimately save you time and money, and help reduce stress. Prepare a list of clothing and shoe needs, including school dress code guidelines. Use your child's school's "supply checklist" as a guide to what you need to purchase. Your list should also include a supportive backpack and a lunch oibox or an eco-friendly reusable lunch bag rather than paper lunch bags to help reduce waste.

## Use Products to Stay Organized

One of the best ways to stay organized is to define where items will be stored. Some helpful storage solutions include clear storage bins for colored pencils, pens, crayons and other craft supplies; stackable trays to sort and store computer paper and writing paper; and a portable label maker to label your children's school supplies and school-related files.

By getting your home and supplies in order, you and your family can enjoy the rest of summer and start the new school year off organized and stress-free.

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