

Organizing Tips for Back-to-School Success

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Backpacks and home files don't have to be a constant mess if you implement a few simple organizing tips to help with back-to-school success:

Tip #1: Choose Binders that Fit Your Child's Needs

- Use an accordion file if little fingers are afraid of getting pinched by 3-ringed binders.
- Keep papers from being wrinkled by rolling them up and placing them inside a cracker or chip canister to transport them to and from school.
- Coloring-coding binders to match textbook covers can assist with the quick retrieval of items out of school lockers or backpacks.
- For younger kids, a binder can be as simple as a folder with a pocket on each side – one side labeled "Take Home" and the other side labeled "Return to School".
- Use plastic pocketed tabs inside a 3-ringed binder. Make slits in each hole so pocketed tabs are easy to remove and replace without opening binder rings.

Tip #2: Schedule Regular Backpack De-cluttering

Some students treat their backpack like a security blanket and carry everything around with them because they don't want to forget anything.

- Encourage your children to de-clutter their backpacks on a weekly basis.
- Assign certain pockets for specific items and always keep everything in its proper place.
- Keep a backpack checklist handy to help students remember what needs to go to school each day.

Tip #3: Create a Home File

Binders are meant for active papers, backpacks are meant for traveling papers, and home files are meant for permanent paper storage.

- Remove and keep graded papers in a home file divided by subject until you're certain they have been recorded properly before discarding them.
- Create a home file by labeling hanging file folders that mirror the system in your child's binder. This makes it easier for them to clean out their backpack and binder. This also makes it easier for referencing materials for tests or quizzes.
- Keep your child's school calendar, school directory, and lunch account information easily accessible in this file.

Tip #4: Use a Planner

Using a planner will help empower your children to keep track of their own schedule.

- Schools often provide students with planners, although sometimes these planners don't fit your child's needs or personality. Make your own planner or download a free one from www.simplyinorder.com
- Check your child's planner on a daily basis until you're certain daily assignments are being recorded.

Tip #5: Prepare the Night Before

Keep morning madness to a minimum by preparing ahead.

- Plan a full week of outfits using a "Days of the Week" organizer.
- Help younger children put shoes on the correct feet by using a marker to draw arrows inside the bottom of their shoes. Instruct them to make the arrows point at each other before putting them on.
- Prepare lunches ahead of time by freezing drinks to use in place of ice packs. When lunchtime arrives, the drink should be defrosted and ready for consumption.

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