



Get organized for school - around the house

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For a smooth transition back to school, develop some habits at home well in advance.
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Getting yourself and your child organized for school means forming habits that will last throughout the year. Select the habits below that are most important for you and your family, and work them in to your daily routines over several weeks' time. Before long, you won't have to think about them; they'll just happen:

1. **Create a family information zone** ("the zone") in a frequently used place in your home (the entry where everyone comes and goes, the kitchen, the family room). Hang a master calendar to track individual and family activities, and help your children to participate in noting events and changes. To find a calendar that works for your family, see [Jeri Dansky's blog](#). Make it a daily habit (morning, evening or both) to check and update the calendar.
2. **Assign a basket, box, or other container to each family member** to keep in the zone. It should be large enough for papers, mail, and small objects, and may be marked by color, name, or symbol so each container is easy to identify. Every day, each family member uses the baskets as places to sort mail, drop papers needing signatures, share graded assignments, place homework to be checked, and _____ (fill in your own task here).
3. If the zone is near an entry, **install hooks** for jackets and coats, umbrellas, hats, and backpacks. Add cubbies, a storage bench, or large mat to keep outdoor shoes. See [Life Organize It](#) for some great ideas to get the entryway organized for your family.
4. **Set up your child's room** so that it's easy for you and him or her to get started in the morning and settle down for the night. Create space to pick out and put away clothes. Drawers, hangers, and hooks are all useful - find what works best for you and your child. Organize shoes so that both mates in a pair are together in a box or bin. For detailed, step-by-step tips for organizing a child's room, see the [Get Organized two-part series](#).
5. **Create homework/study space** for your child in a well-lit, quiet space. Avoid places at home where there are so many other distractions that homework and reading would be impossible. Set up the space with the supplies your child will need for homework tasks, including computer and printer access if they're needed to complete assignments. See [eHow](#) for more specific tips on setting up your homework/study space.
6. If homework is to become routine, **set up a schedule** so that your child forms a habit:
 - arrive home,
 - hang up jacket,
 - unload backpack in study space,
 - have a snack,
 - start homework before dinner,
 - eat dinner,
 - help with clean-up,
 - finish homework,
 - load backpack,
 - select clothes for the next day,
 - read or watch TV,
 - get ready for bed.

The more predictable the routine, the better the chance your child will get homework done as part of her or his evening activities. You may need to be a coach to keep your child focused, but that role should become less necessary over time. For more ideas visit [Activity Village](#).

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