

# Organized

Home & Life

## Welcome 2015!

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# Back to school preparation – start the year more organised!

by **Amanda Lecaude**

For those of us in the Southern Hemisphere, the summer holidays will be over and the new school year will be upon us before we know it. The more thought and preparation you can put into place now by establishing simple organising strategies the better the transition back to school will be for everyone. Here are 5 organising tips to start afresh and help the school year run smoothly.

## **1. Co-ordinate schedules**

Keeping the lines of communication open will help everyone to keep track of schedules and responsibilities as well as eliminate struggles of trying to keep up with everyone's whereabouts. One of the best tips regularly given to clients is to have a family calendar for everyone to see and use. This calendar should include all the necessary school year schedules like term dates, curriculum dates and after school activities. It should be displayed in a central place in your home where you and your family members are more likely to update it if it is easily accessible.

## **2. Set up systems for school papers and information**

A new year quickly becomes busy with a flurry of activities so it is important to think about your household systems early.

When it comes to paperwork from school or after-school activities there are usually two types - those you need to:

- action such as an excursion form or a registration form; and
- to keep for future reference like class lists or school rules.



It is a good idea to action those that you can straight away (remembering to put dates in the calendar mentioned above) and then store those you need to keep in one central place. This could be in a folder, on a noticeboard, on the fridge or in an in-tray. Remember though to regularly go through these to ensure you are only keeping relevant materials and not a pile of clutter.

For those of you with younger children you will most likely also have artwork to deal with. Firstly you might want to purge any unwanted items straight away or after a short time on display. Others might need to be on display a bit longer before you can do this. Naturally you won't be able to keep it all so it is suggested that you keep only those items that you really want or like. You could also take photos of the others before you throw them out and keep the memory alive that way.

### **3. Ensure you have the right supplies**

Have you purchased all the necessary school uniforms, clothing, books or stationery ready to start the school year? If you haven't then you might want to set a time to do this. As children regularly grow it is best to only purchase what you need for the start of school and leave items such as winter uniforms closer to the start of that season.

Remember to label all uniforms, hats and books to ensure that if items go missing from time to time then they will be more easily returned.

In the weeks leading up to school it might also be useful to stock up again on lunch and snack supplies so you are ready to go from day one.



#### 4. Create a homework station

We have already started talking about this in our household and we are looking forward to planning and working with the children on this over the holidays.

Think about creating an area in your home for this. Remember it might need to be different spaces for older and younger children. Those younger might need your involvement in their homework and therefore it is likely this will need to be where you are. Older children usually work well in an environment that is well lit, free of distractions and quiet, however remember that some children actually focus better with people around or noise. Ensure the space you decide on has all the necessary supplies they are likely to require. Stock up on age appropriate supplies such as pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, and sharpeners so as to avoid last minute trips to the store.

Once the new year kicks off you also need to create a homework routine to help you and your children stay on top. The time you or your children pick needs to work well for their energy levels and fit in with other after school activities.

When it comes to their homework how often do children leave half done bits of work or materials lying around? To combat this you might like to set up something like a magazine holder for each child to keep their school work and reference material. This will provide you with a neater environment and also everyone will know where to find his or her belongings.



## 5. Establish new routines

The first day back at school is not the time for a drastic adjustment of your day-to-day school routines. It will be much easier integrating habits at the end of the summer break and make it less difficult once school starts.

Start by gradually introducing sleep and waking schedules and ease children back into routine. Where possible try and establish a school year bedtime routine 1 – 2 weeks before school starts.

Another routine you might like to think about is setting regular mealtimes and in particular younger children might need to adapt to meal and snack routines before the school day demands it of them. Plan meals and snacks to accustom little ones to the timing of a school day before the school year begins.

You may also want to reestablish chores if they have fallen by the wayside a bit over the holiday period.

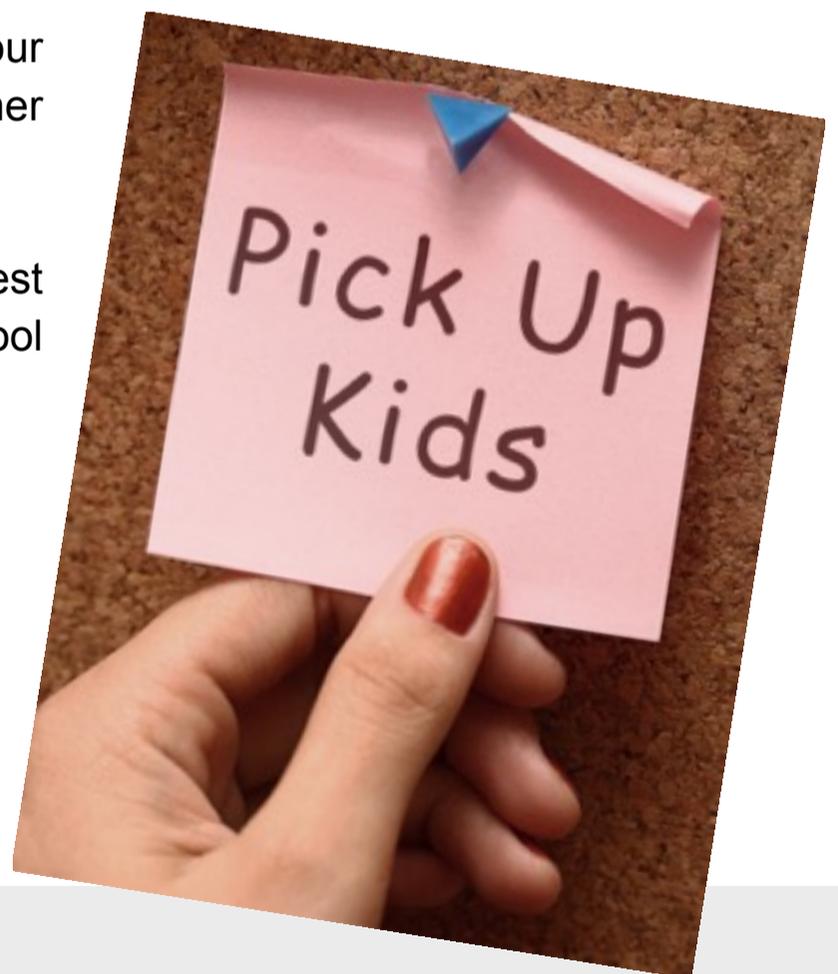
If your house is chaotic in the mornings then maybe it is time to do a bit of the school preparation the night before. Older children can easily have a list or timetable in their room to ensure they pack the necessary things they need for the next day and can also get out their clothes ready. Older children can also assist with making their lunch whether it is the night before or in the morning. Younger children might need a bit more help from parents with clothing, lunches and packing their bags.

Finally it is good to have the same drop zone in your house for items such as bags, shoes and coats rather than having to search for them when needed.

Hopefully these tips assist a smooth transition - best wishes to you and your family for a successful school year!



**Amanda Lecaude**



Amanda is professional organiser who loves being able to help people – her clients – get organised. She sees the difference it makes in their everyday lives, just to have a way to create some TIME, SPACE and BALANCE! She is also very passionate about equipping school students with organising skills for life to maximise greater results in secondary school and limit the overwhelm and frustration for both them and their parents.

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