

## 21 Days to Back-to-School Bliss

Tips for getting your school-year off to a relaxed and productive start.

Gearing up for back-to-school can be a bit overwhelming; there is a lot to do, a lot of transitions to navigate, and often a sense of blues as the realization that summer has, once again, gone by too fast. However, you can easily turn back-to-school anxieties into positive anticipation for a great school year with the following action plan. Plug these steps into your calendar right now and see what a difference they can make!



### One Week before School: Week of Preparation

**Day 1** (seven days before school): **Ease into a “school” bed-time schedule.** Slowly transitioning into a “school” sleep schedule ensures proper rest and encourages a positive attitude towards going back to school.

**Day 3: Create a place for everything, so everything will be in its place.** Designate one basket for each child to store his shoes, bookbags, and jackets. Give each child a container filled with standard homework supplies that can be transported from, for example, the kitchen to the computer room. Finally, establish a place for each child to store extra papers from school -a section of your file cabinet or a designated box under his bed.

**Day 4: Purchase supplies.** Keep the supplies minimal and simple. Fancy folders and notebooks are bulky and hard for students to use. The best system to use is a one-inch binder with a plastic folder for each class, keeping all folders in one place.

**Day 6: Set goals with your children.** Help your children *look forward* to the new school year by having each person (including you) share at least two goals for the new school year: one academic goal and one “fun” goal.

### First Week of School: Week of Routines

**Day 7** (night before school): **Have a “Sunday Night Meeting” every week!** Each member of the family should grab their planners/calendars for a 10-15 minute “meeting.” Ask your children what they have scheduled for the week (such as sports practices), share your plans for the week (children like to know what to expect, so tell them if you will have a late night at the office or will have to attend a meeting at school), arrange rides home from after-school activities, etc. Your week will be much less chaotic because everyone will be on the same page!

**Day 8: Establish a routine for papers that need *your* attention.** Purchase magnetic clips for each child and post them on the refrigerator. Have your

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children clip papers here that you need to fill out, sign, etc. (Expect to spend four hours filling out back-to-school papers this week.)

**Day 10: Get ready for school at night, before you go to bed.** Avoid chaotic mornings and forgotten school supplies by having everyone pack up their homework, bookbags, lunch/lunch money, etc. before they go to bed. They should also set out their clothes, shoes, and jacket at night, too. (Get the FREE 'Night Before School' Tool at [www.soarstudyskills.com/freestuff](http://www.soarstudyskills.com/freestuff).)

**Day 11: Is everyone using their school planners?** All students need to use a homework planner! Check planners every night until they are part of everyone's routine.

**Day 12: Clean out bookbags once a week.** Cluttered book-bags are the root cause of lost assignments and must be cleaned out regularly. (The Sunday Night Meeting is another good time to do this.)

## Second Week of School: Week of Cooperation

**Day 14: Hold your second "Sunday Night Meeting" of the school year.**

**Day 15: Give each child a choice about something today.** The more you can give your children choices, the more cooperation you will get from them, especially when doing homework. Some choices may include giving two options for dinner or two different times to do their homework. When you give choices -and honor their choices- your children feel empowered and will be much more cooperative.

**Day 18: Catch your children being good today!** Improve cooperation by giving compliments to your children. Keep them specific and succinct (most children are embarrassed by mushy-gushy compliments). For example, "Thank you, Kristen, for coming home and starting your homework right away. I appreciate that." Positive praise works wonders!

**Day 21: Give yourself a break!** Congratulations, you have survived the first two weeks of school and you are well on your way to a happy, productive school year. Celebrate by *scheduling* some time for yourself. You deserve it!