

Maximizing Back to School Organization

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As summer winds down, we shift our focus to the new school year. A essential factor in school success is organization. One of the biggest areas where students often “get lost” is in the organization of their backpack. Within the first few weeks of school, that carefully selected backpack has become a black hole of assignments, writing utensils, and small trash. Frequent backpack checks are useful. It is helpful to stock your child's backpack with the essentials including an assignment notebook, one binder, one folder for each class period or subject, pens and pencils. For effective organization, all folders should be in the binder - work to be completed on the right, homework to be turned in on the left. The secret to success is to have your child check each folder after every class or subject to make sure all papers were turned in and all papers are in the right place. Parents should also conduct a backpack check at home. It is beneficial if your child prepares his backpack before going to bed, leaving it by the front door so nothing is forgotten in the morning rush. If backpack organization or missing homework assignments has been an area of difficulty for your child in the past, positive reinforcement can be given for consecutive days of an organized backpack.

It is not uncommon for children to tell their parents at 6:30 on a Sunday evening that they need poster board, glue, or special paper for an assignment that is due the next day. One way to combat these surprises is to create a home “office”. Providing a specially designated space for your child to complete homework emphasizes the importance of school and the importance you place on it. Whichever site you decide upon, it should be stocked with study area essentials, including: ruler, calculator, dictionary/thesaurus, colored pencils, graph and lined paper, pens and pencils. A computer is useful as well, but games should be discouraged during study time.

Talk to your child about his expectations for the year. Emphasize his strengths and previous accomplishments. Keep open communication with both your child and his teachers. The best gift you can give your child is your support and involvement.