

Back-to-the-Basics with Back-to-School Organization

Although most of us are enjoying a relaxing summer break, the **new school year** is just around the corner. August is the **time to get ready for back to school** by preparing ourselves with the proper supplies and **organizational techniques**. Follow these suggestions to create a **less stressful year** and to avoid that last minute scurry before the first day of school. Even if you don't have children or aren't attending school yourself, **we can all benefit by using this time to readjust our schedules and routines**.

1) **Use Calendars-** Prepare your calendar for the upcoming school year. Family members should have easy access to **one central calendar** at home. Keep one in your kitchen or den so everyone in your family can see what is on the agenda for the weeks ahead. Record important dates, such as school closings, vacations, appointments or meetings. This will allow everyone to judge time accordingly for car scheduling and pick ups. **Designate each family member a coloured marker** to write activities to clearly see who has what coming up. In a backpack, keep a **daily planner** and **carry it at all times**. Jot down appointments or project deadlines right away before you forget. Don't rely on memory – **write it all down**.

2) **Only Buy What You Will Use-** Organizing and prioritizing means making space in your room, home or office to store new school work and supplies. **Don't go overboard buying new supplies** thinking this will help you be more organized. Rather, look at the **basic items** you use and only buy those. Make a list of the items you need and **only purchase those items when shopping**. By gathering your preexisting supplies, you can judge more effectively what extra supplies you will need, and what has worked best for you in the past.

3) **Get Rid of the Old to Make Room for the New-** Get rid of old books and papers that you no longer use. When you do come across important papers, have a specific place to store them. A **filing cabinet** would be a great investment, and keeps stacks of papers out of sight. **Outdated magazines** should be **donated or recycled**. If there are articles you like or don't have time to read, tear them out and keep them in a binder or file them by subject. This way you have all the articles that you enjoy together and can take it along with you while waiting for appointments or in between classes.

4) **Keep All School Supplies in One Area-** Designate **one spot** in your home for all your school supplies. **Spend 15 minutes each night tidying** up this area. This will save time in the morning, and avoid the panic of looking for

misplaced items. Always have your **backpack ready** and your homework finished the night before. Keep lunches prepared in the fridge and ready to grab.

5) **Donate Old Clothes**- Everyone wants to have a few new items of clothing for the first day of school. Before you go shopping, look at the clothes you already own to see how they will work for the fall season. Go through your closet and **get rid of outdated clothes** and those that don't fit. If you haven't worn items in months or years, chances are you do not need them. Getting rid of these articles of clothing will make way for your new fall wardrobe.

6) **Do it Now**- Start shopping **early** for back-to-school clothes and supplies. **Don't wait until the weekend before** school starts. The stores will be crowded which may cause unnecessary stress. Make shopping a leisurely and enjoyable experience with your children or friends.

Back-to-school can mean a **fresh start** for your **organizing routine**. Prepare now to ensure you start the new school year **on the right track**.

Permission to reuse or redistribute these materials is hereby granted provided they are reproduced or redistributed in their entirety with full attribution. (c) 2008 Colette Robicheau

Colette Robicheau, President of Organize Anything, is a consultant, coach, and public speaker offering corporate, residential, and personal organizing services. For more information contact Colette Robicheau, Organizing Consultant and Coach visit her website www.organizeanything.com or email info@organizeanything.com.