



Stress Buster

Stress Buster—Time Management: Preparing for a Hectic Fall

Back-to-school brings a change to daily routines that can be a blessing for parents and kids alike. Changes can be overwhelming at first. To save time and prevent headaches, work together as a family to get organized.

Set a schedule for each family member.

- ◆ Determine when to get up and go to bed to prepare for school days. Set weekend bedtimes and curfews while you are at it. To be at their best, preschool and elementary-aged kids need 10-11 hours of sleep per night; teens need 8 ½-9 hours.
- ◆ Set aside time after school and in the evening for family dinner, homework, and chores. Include time to prepare for the next day by laying out clothes and packing lunches.
- ◆ Fill in other activities, such as sports, music lessons, clubs, or part-time jobs as best you can. Limit the amount of activities in which your child participates to reduce stress for everybody.
- ◆ Have a master calendar for all in the household to see. Assign each family member a color, and help each person remember to fill in his or her activities. Younger kids can use stickers to record their schedules.

Prepare your home for school.

- ◆ Designate an area for backpacks, sports gear, and other items often grabbed on the way out the door.
- ◆ Create an area for homework. When shopping for school supplies, buy extra paper, pencils, and other items to stock the homework area.
- ◆ Take inventory of each child's fall/winter wardrobe with him or her to determine what fits, what needs to be donated, and what has been worn-out. Make a list of items to buy, and encourage older kids to research what they want before going to the mall. If negotiations need to be made, do so before getting in the car.
- ◆ Ask kids and teens to make a list of favorite lunches. Compromise if necessary, then buy as much of the needed items in bulk and as far ahead of time as possible.