



Getting Ready for a New School Year

By Judy Arnall

The last days of summer are closing in and thoughts turn to the start of school when that yellow leaves appear on the neighborhood trees. Parents often wonder how to smooth the transition from summer holidays to school. Here are some tips to make a new school year successfully smoother:

1. **Don't shop until the school supply list comes home.** It's tempting to get a heads up on sales and deals, but if you buy the wrong item, your child will refuse to use it.
2. **When you shop, buy extras of the sale items.** Your child will lose things by Christmas or may want extra supplies for homework tasks at home.
3. **Get haircuts done early.** Most school photos are taken the first week and you want to avoid that just-cut look.
4. **Get the Doctor and Dentist appointments out of the way early.**
5. **Photos!** Don't forget to measure and weigh your child or take a photo of them next to the same object every year. You forget how quickly they grow.
6. **Move back bedtimes.** Change the lights out time 15 minutes per night for the two weeks before school.
7. **Pack away old school work.** Put in boxes and label.
8. **New grade. New chores.** Celebrate the addition of another year and how capable your child has grown.
9. The day before school officially opens, walk the halls with your child, get their timetable and **map out the hallway and bathroom routes.**
10. **Arrange play dates** with new buddies.
11. Draw up a homework **contract.** Include stipulations that meet both your child's and your needs and both of you can sign it. Post on the wall for those inevitable whining moments.
12. **Separation Anxiety – handover or stay.** You must do whatever fits your parenting style. You know your child best.
13. After the initial sales, **stock up** on extra supplies, which can be marked down 80% by the end of September. Kids lose a lot of things.
14. **Clean up rooms at the end of August.** Pick up garbage, recycle old books, clothes and toys. Assess whether new furniture needs to be purchased.

Judy Arnall is a Professional international award-winning Parenting Speaker, and Trainer, Mom of five children, and author of the best-selling, "***Discipline Without Distress: 135 tools for raising caring, responsible children without time-out, spanking, punishment or bribery***" She specializes in "**Parenting the Digital Generation**" www.professionalparenting.ca (403) 714-6766 jarnall@shaw.ca

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