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# Reading, Writing and (Re)organizing: NAPO offers Back-to-School Tips

**MILWAUKEE, WI** — Still reeling from last school year's piles of book reports, science projects and hectic school and sports schedules? You're not alone. But, back-to-school season doesn't have to be a stressful time. The National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) is offering tips for a stress-less back-to-school season.

"Going back to school should be a fun, exciting time for everyone in the family," said NAPO-Wisconsin President Roberta Schneider. "It's about creating a plan that fits you and your family so you can hit the ground running on the first day of school."

NAPO-Wisconsin's back-to-school organizational tips definitely make the grade. So, sharpen your pencils and take note of some solutions for making the 2008-2009 school year more organized for you and your child.

## **The basics**

- Create a plan: get the family involved in the overall planning process
- Assign responsibilities: give age-appropriate tasks to each family member
- Monitor progress: re-work plan as needed and establish rewards for jobs well done

## **Buying and storing supplies**

- Take advantage of back-to-school sales to purchase at-school and at-home supplies.
- Create a designated area to store extra supplies that is available to all family members.
- Keep an inventory of supplies throughout the year so you won't be caught short before a big project is due.

## **Homework**

- Designate an area for homework such as the child's desk or a kitchen table.
- Ensure the space is well lit, with basic supplies readily available.

- Get your child into a routine of doing homework at the same time and in the same place every day.
- Organize time spent doing homework. One way is to encourage kids to tackle tougher assignments first. Another way is to break down large projects into daily action items in order to complete it on time.

### **Put paper in its place**

- Create an area for incoming/outgoing papers. This could be a box where children empty their bags of teacher notes, newsletters and field trip permission slips.
- Review the papers on a daily/weekly basis, signing and completing papers in order to return them on time. You can also use this time to toss papers that are no longer needed.
- Assign one box per child for temporary storage of papers/projects completed throughout the year. At the end of the year, take a photo of your child with his/her projects, then toss the bulky, multi-dimensional projects. Save only a sample of each child's work to capture their grade-level work.

### **Preparation is key**

- Use a single calendar to track all family members' schedules and appointments in one place.
- Preparing items the night before makes for a less stressful morning for both parent and child. Some things you can do the night before are:
  1. Fix/pack lunch and leave in refrigerator
  2. Pick out the next day's clothes
  3. Pack school bag with all books, papers and necessities for the next day, and check that all homework is finished
  4. Set out plates/bowls for breakfast

### **How to hire a professional organizer**

If you'd rather not tackle back-to-school organizing alone, you may want to consider hiring a professional organizer. A professional organizer enhances the lives of clients by designing systems and processes using organizing principles and through transferring organizing skills. Professional organizers help individuals take control of their surroundings, their time, their paper and their systems for life. To locate one of NAPO-Wisconsin's professional organizers in your area, visit our website at [www.napo-wi.com](http://www.napo-wi.com) and click on the "Get Organized" tab to find an organizer, searching by city and organizing specialty.