

# Organizing for Back to School



The TV commercial says, “It’s the most wonderful time of the year”, the time when we get to send our “very-bored-with-summer” children back to school. Soon the lazy, hazy days will turn into crazy days filled with homework, sports, Scouts, music lessons, school activities, and more. This school year, you can have better control of life in your household with a few simple organizing solutions.

## CREATE “INFORMATION CENTRAL”

It’s a permanent location in your home for all of the information that each member of your family needs to know at any given time. This area should be located in the most heavily-used room in your house, normally the kitchen or family room, and ideally near a telephone.

### Items to be kept in “Information Central”

**The Master Calendar** This is a very large, month-at-a-glance calendar, with big blocks for each day, hung on the wall for all to see. Transfer ALL scheduled activities, both school and recreational, onto this calendar. This eliminates the need to keep multiple schedules of events for each child’s different activities. Also include Mom and Dad’s activities and family events on the Master Calendar.

Using an academic year calendar, which runs from August through July, will allow you to immediately transfer the entire school calendar onto it.

Consider having each family member choose a color and writing each person’s activities on the calendar in his own color. The Master Calendar becomes your single source for information on who needs to be where, and when.

**The “Child/Grade” Folder** When you are out buying school supplies, also buy a package of expanding ‘box bottom’ file pockets. They are the size of file folders, but they have sides and expand to about 3 inches in depth.

Label one of these file pockets with the name of your child and his or her grade level (i.e., Meredith – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade). Create a similar file pocket for each child. (Hint: Buy colored file pockets in the same colors as each child uses on the Master Calendar.)

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Store report cards, artwork, tests, or memos from school them in the appropriate child's folder (after you have transferred any activity dates to your Master Calendar). Keep these folders in a prominent location in Information Central, such as in a kitchen desk file drawer, or near where you keep your unpaid bills. Next summer, simply move these folders to long-term storage and start new folders for the coming school year.

**The "In" and "Out" Boxes** Using a set of simple stacking letter trays, create places for your children to put papers for you to sign or file, and for you to put papers they need to return to the school. Label the top tray "IN", and the lower trays with each child's name. Teach the children to put papers in the "IN" box for Mom or Dad to see. Mom or Dad then put any papers to be returned to school in the child's own tray.

Until they get into the habit, you will need to remind the children to use the system: Put papers in "IN" when they get home from school and retrieve papers from their personal box and return them to school every day.

**With INFORMATION CENTRAL, everyone in your family can stay informed!**