



## Simplicity Kids Newsletter - August 2009

### Top 10 Back-to-School Tips

#### Preparing for school:

##### 1) Make a school supplies checklist.

Schools typically provide a list of recommended school supplies. Be sure to take your list with you when you go shopping. Each child should be responsible for shopping for his/her own supplies. Make this a family trip. Remember that the Sales Tax Holiday is from August 7-9 this year! If your budget permits, pick up a few extras to donate to one of the back-to-school supply drives for needy school children.

##### 2) Organize backpacks.

Backpacks are very helpful for storing and carrying school supplies. Be sure to stock backpacks with the necessary school supplies. Assign each compartment in the backpack so that nothing gets lost in the shuffle. If the weight of the backpack is a concern, wheeled backpacks are available. Make sure backpacks are fully loaded before bed so hectic mornings are a thing of the past.

##### 3) Create a system for storing school papers and artwork.

Artwork and papers can easily take over your room. Set up your system before the first day of school. As a family, decide what system you are going to use. Not every piece of schoolwork can or should be kept. Set up a bulletin board or a special place in your home to celebrate each week's best work. Ideally, toss the rest or store it in a lidded container that will be purged at the end of the year. For big, 3-D projects and artwork, take a picture of your child with the piece and then let the space-hogging project go. A good rule of thumb is to keep no more than 3 pieces that best represent that school year.

##### 4) Plan and pack lunches ahead of time.

Prevent emergency grocery runs by planning ahead! Review school lunch rules and guidelines. Keep pantry and refrigerator stocked with healthy choices. Pack lunch after dinner and refrigerate overnight.

##### 5) Establish a routine.

Routines help establish security and confidence in a child's life. Regular schedules provide a framework that allows children to learn how to manage their time and focus their attention. Children thrive on consistency. It is important that children understand what is expected.

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Effective routines help keep a family organized. Recognize that glitches will arise and routines will have to be modified accordingly. But a well-planned routine should be your family's baseline.

### Preparing your home:

#### 1) Get organized!

There is no better time to get organized than at the beginning of a new school year! Sit down with your family and create a plan for how you are going to get organized before the first day of school.

#### 2) Set goals for the school year.

Each new school year provides an opportunity for a fresh start. Begin the year by prioritizing and strategizing. Learning how to set reasonable and attainable goals is a valuable lesson. Write down the specific goals for the school year. Review and adapt these goals monthly. Celebrate when a goal is achieved.

#### 3) Create a family calendar.

Hold a family meeting once a week. Updates, celebrations, concerns, and announcements are shared during this time. Though it is important to have a large calendar displayed in a central location, it is also important for each family member to keep track of his/her own calendar. The right one for your family is which ever version you'll actually use.

#### 4) Set up a homework station.

Involve your children in creating their homework station. Allow them to plan, design, and shop for the essentials needed to complete this space. For younger children, a central location facilitates adult involvement. For older children, their own desk in a bedroom or designated study area is preferable.

#### 5) Clear out or create a drop zone.

Create a special area for the "things" of everyday life. Backpacks, sports bags, shoes, and hats all need a place to land. Hooks, shelves, baskets, and cubbies are helpful. Remember that building functional systems is the key in keeping spaces organized. Label everything so misplaced items can quickly be corrected.

### Meet Laurie Martin, Simplicity Kids Coach

#### Laurie's Experience:

- 20+ years of experience working with and teaching children of all ages, including preschool, elementary, middle, high and college.

#### Simplicity, 2006- present:

- Developed and wrote Simplicity Kids organizational curriculum for children ages 5-21.

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- Organized children from 2006 to present.

### **Trinity Episcopal School, 2001-2005:**

- Won 3rd Place in the Country for the Most Creative Teacher of the Year Award by Dole Food.
- K-5 Healthful Living Teacher 2002-2005. Created, designed, and implemented the "Healthful Living" curriculum.
- 2nd Grade Teaching Assistant, 2001-2002.
- Lead organizer/planner for Field Day.
- Head of the Facilities Committee for Accreditation and Head of the Kitchens Committee, 2004-2005.
- Started Middle School WyldLife, 2004-2005.

### **Laurie's Education and Training:**

- Meredith College, B.A. Child Development, 2001.
- K-6 North Carolina "A" licensure.
- Certified Professional Organizer.

### **Get your "What's Up Charlotte!" Events & Performing Arts Calendar today!**

Get your "What's Up Charlotte" Events & Performing Arts Calendar while supplies last! It's a calendar LOADED with events in Charlotte for the next 12 months! The who, what, where & when in ONE place! PLUS the contact information for the top Mommy Venues in town for sunny days, rainy days or a day trip away! Even if you can't go to everything, at least knowing the events actually occurred can help you feel "in the loop!" Cost \$15.00 with \$1.00 of each calendar donated to [The Relatives](#) on East Blvd in Charlotte, NC. E-mail Lori Martin of [The Purple Martin & Co.](#) at [thepurplemartin@bellsouth.net](mailto:thepurplemartin@bellsouth.net) for your calendar today!

### **Simplicity Kids Program**

Simplicity Kids is an organizational program designed to empower children and teens. By creating orderly living in home and school environments, children will gain essential skills that will last a lifetime.

Our methodology is grounded in the gradual release model of responsibility, which includes guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent learning. This model not only enables the child or teen to discover order in the present, but also helps them retain and reapply these skills in multiple areas of their life.

By working one-on-one with a Simplicity Kids Coach, children and teens will acquire both organizational and time management skills. Children will identify their strengths and preferred learning styles through a variety of games and activities.

Our goal is to provide children with the tools they need to create authentic and enduring systems and spaces that will reduce anxiety, increase confidence and generate success.

Warmest regards!

Laurie Martin & your Simplicity Kids Team