



Carson Tate, Owner

## New Program - Living Simply Kids

Is your child -

- Anxious?
- Frustrated?
- Stressed and Overwhelmed?
- Suffering from poor academic performance?
- Battling with you over messy rooms, play spaces and book bags?

Living Simply Kids is an organizational program for children designed to empower children to order their spaces and time through a differentiated, constructivist curriculum.

Our methodology is grounded in the gradual release model of responsibility, enabling the child to not only find order in the present, but also to retain and reapply the skills in other areas of their life. Working with a Living Simply Coach, the child acquires organizational skills in their preferred learning style in order to co-create lasting systems for organization.

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

Let us empower your child and enable them to reach new heights.

## MAKING THE GRADE ON BACK TO SCHOOL

As summer vacation winds down, it is hard to think about trading those lazy, unstructured days for busy schedules and routines. But, with a bit of thought and planning, your family's back to school preparation can be simplified.

"SCHOOL" can smooth the transition.

- Sift through what you already own.
- Create a detailed shopping list.
- Help from your child is important.
- Order online to save time and money.
- Organize all calendars and papers for the school year.

**L**abel everything new, and maybe even the old.

**SIFT:** Take inventory of what you already own. Does it fit? Is it in good condition? Do you still love it? Contain and label off-season clothes and the clothes that don't quite fit. Don't let your discard piles languish. Pass along hand-me-downs to friends or to charity.

**CREATE:** Make a shopping list. Be sure to incorporate the supplies list from your child's school. If uniforms are required, include them too. Try to group items and plan your shopping route for maximum fuel efficiency and minimum hassles.

**HELP:** Let your children help. Children love to have their desires and opinions considered. Taking responsibility and being included in the planning is great training for your child. Have them map out, draw, or list all the belongings they think they will need for their desk, locker, and book bag. Have your child color code their calendar, notebooks, and folders. Organization is a skill that can be taught - and it's never too early to begin. Start the year off with good organizational habits!

**ORDER:** Ordering online can often be the easiest and cheapest way to get your child ready for the fall. Bookmark some of your favorite sites and register your shipping and payment information so future checkouts are a breeze. Pay attention to the back to school ads in local papers to find the best deals on the essentials. Call ahead to be sure the specific item you want is in stock.

**ORGANIZE:** Create an efficient and manageable filing system for both you and your children. The papers that arrive from school are endless, so address each paper the day it arrives home. A 3-ring binder with dividers and clear sleeves works well for some families. Others prefer a filing drawer. There is no right or wrong way to do this. Whatever works for you is all that matters. One advantage of the 3-ring binder is that it is portable, which is a plus considering how much time can be spent in the car. A benefit of the filing system is that it is much more expandable. Clear, 32 quart containers are great storage for children's artwork and keepsakes from school.

**LABEL:** Once all the old has been purged and new items acquired, take time to label. Coats, backpacks, lunch boxes, and soccer cleats all need identification. A permanent marker works well on clothing, shoes, backpacks, and notebooks. A label maker is also perfect for water bottles and pencil boxes. It's one of the best organizational tools you can own.

If you have more than one child, and your schedule permits, it is nice to do back to school preparation with each child separately. This gives you more

one-on-one time with each child.

Finally, consider buying a few extra school supplies to donate to your child's classroom or to Charlotte Mecklenburg's August School Tools drive. The extra notebook, crayons or backpack you contribute will make a world of difference to the thousands of Charlotte Mecklenburg public school students who will otherwise start the school year poorly equipped. And your child will have the satisfaction of helping someone in need. For more information on donating school supplies click on the following link: [www.cischarlotte.org/schooltoolscampaign.html](http://www.cischarlotte.org/schooltoolscampaign.html).

### **JUNK IN YOUR TRUNK?**

The average family drives over 32 miles a day. However, it is easy for a busy family to far exceed that average. When school begins, so does soccer, ballet, piano and Scouts. Some days your car might feel like your second home! And with school backpacks, sports equipment and all your other gear, if you're not vigilant, car clutter can get out of control. Here are some tips for conquering all that junk in your trunk...

- 1) Before you can organize your car's interior, it needs to be cleaned. Empty the trunk, floorboards, glove compartment and any place else you've got clutter lurking. Give the interior a thorough vacuuming and wipe down all hard surfaces.
- 2) Return only the essentials to your car. Make sure you include your registration, car inspection report, insurance information, AAA card (if you are a member), jumper cables, maps, tool kit, flashlight and first aid kit.
- 3) Provide a lidded plastic storage bin for each child to keep small items he wants or needs to use in the car. Keep another container for non-perishable snacks, wet wipes, travel games and CDs. Reusable grocery bags and a small cooler often come in handy.
- 4) Ring binders or file folders will keep projects, directories and calendars organized and accessible in the car.
- 5) A small accordion folder will accommodate all your gift cards and coupons - no more mad dashes home to retrieve the card you want to redeem.
- 6) Maintain your new system. Be sure all book bags, sports equipment and random flotsam and jetsam never spend the night in your car. With a bit of encouragement, even a young child can be taught that trash belongs in the trash can, not in the car. Aside from having a clean "mobile home," an

empty car is a much less attractive target for break-ins. Parents, set a good example for your children. Never leave your iPod, cellphone or sunglasses in the car. Always lock up - even when you're parked in your driveway or garage.

Tip: Lightening your load is a smart way to save gas. With gas hovering around \$4 a gallon, who isn't looking for ways to economize? According to Parade Magazine, each additional 100 pounds of weight reduces mileage by as much as 2%, the equivalent of 8 cents per gallon. Simply by cleaning out your trunk, you can save about \$50 dollars a year.

### **STREAMLINE YOUR SCHOOL MORNING ROUTINE WITH THE 3 Ps** PLAN PREPARE PACK

Make lunches, sign papers, load the backpack, and lay out clothes the night before. This investment of time in the evening will pay big dividends the next morning.

#### Lunch Tips

PLAN - Have a well-stocked pantry and refrigerator so there are healthy choices at hand. Nothing is more frustrating than having to make an unplanned grocery run during rush hour or on the way to school. Be sure you know any rules and guidelines from your child's school regarding lunches. This is especially important if your child has a classmate with food allergies. Be creative. Themed lunches are always fun.

#### Should you go organic?

What do baby food, rice, strawberries, grains, milk, corn, bananas, green beans, peaches and apples have in common? They are all on the National Geographic Green Guide as top choices for going organic if all organic is not feasible. Check out their website for details. <http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc/54-55/organic>

PREPARE - Make lunches before bedtime. Encourage your child to help. This can be a good time to talk about the importance of making healthy food choices.

PACK - Be sure the lunchbox and containers are easy to open, appropriately sized and labeled. Refrigerate overnight. Bottled water or milk or juice boxes can be frozen and used to cool the other items you've packed.

Water bottle concerns: Many Nalgene water bottles and other hard plastic sport water bottles are made of polycarbonate (#7 on the bottom), which may leach Bisphenol A, an estrogen-like chemical. Several seemingly safer

alternatives are available locally and online. <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2008/04/bpa-in-water.php>.

### **TAMING THE HOMEWORK CLUTTER MONSTER**

\*Designate a homework place - quiet and well lit with all necessary supplies close at hand.

\*Make sure all school supplies well organized. Containers, drawer dividers, and desk- top caddies can all work - it's really a matter of space and personal preference. In addition to the standard supplies, a white board comes in handy for outlining and drilling on math facts or spelling words. The best stash of school supplies and tools won't be worth much if your child doesn't know how to utilize them efficiently.

\*Establish a routine time for homework. Immediately after school works well for some families and for others some downtime after school is better. Try not to over-schedule after-school and extra-curricular activities. This leads to a frantic and anxiety-ridden child. For younger students, teachers usually offer guidelines for how long they expect their assignments to take. Be sure to show an interest in your child's work - ask them questions about their homework and what they are studying.

\* Most schools have a required or suggested assignment notebook. Discuss the importance of writing down all assignments. Time management is a key factor for orderly living. Create a calendar that is easy for your child to use and maintain. Color coding activities on the calendar will help jog their memory.

So rather than mourn the end of summer, enjoy the anticipation of a great school year. With Living Simply's help, make this be your best year yet.

Living Simply, LLC  
<http://www.livingsimply.net>