

Preparing for the School Year and Ensuring a Stress-Free September

Expert organizer [Barbara Reich](#) certainly knows what it takes to prepare for the school year. Over the years, Barbara – founder of [Resourceful Consultants, LLC](#) – has written numerous articles that help parents make a seamless transition from summer to fall, and help them maintain a stress-free school year. Below, we've aggregated some of Barbara's tips so that you and your family can make sure to have a successful September.

1) Clean and De-Clutter

One of the most important keys to reducing mental clutter during the school year involves reducing physical clutter. Before school starts, take some time to go through your children's clothes and toys. Any clothes they have outgrown can be donated, and perhaps some redundant items that fit can be sent away, too. Your child doesn't need every soccer jersey they've ever accumulated, or every tutu in their ballet repertoire. Similarly, old and unused toys, or books that your child has outgrown can be given away to ensure that they don't take up any of the precious space in your apartment or home – though of course there is always room for one or two sentimental favorites.

Keep in mind that decluttering is not a one-time job. During the year your child will accumulate birthday party favors, times table practice sheets, and art-class scribbles. As the year progresses, be sure to continually cleanse the house of those little items that ultimately add up to a lot of mess. Barbara recommends a 48 hour rule or "through the weekend" rule: anything your child wants to keep that looks like junk to you can be discarded after the weekend. Following these simple steps will help declutter your physical space, which can only have positive effects on your mental wellbeing.



2) Schedule 1 at a Time

Juggling after school activities, for even one child, can be a full-time job in and of itself. To minimize the stress of this, Barbara recommends starting your child's schedule with the activity they like most. Rather than trying to schedule basketball, ballet, and French horn classes in one fell swoop, find out when your child's favorite activity is going to meet, pencil that in, and then move on. This will help you avoid a bevy of "4 o'clock Tuesday" commitments, and will also allow you to schedule methodically while prioritizing the activities that your child values most.

3) Keep a Master Calendar

Often, it's difficult to keep track of it all. Between project due-dates, bake sales, soccer practices, ballet rehearsals, and the litany of other scholastic and extra-curricular commitments you and your children have made, it's easy to let things slip through the cracks. Keeping a master calendar – whether it is on the fridge, posted to a wall, or kept on a computer – will help you stay in control and avoid double booking or overextending yourself.

On a similar note – Barbara recommends holding a weekly family meeting that will prepare each member of your family for the upcoming week. Your children might alert you to the fact that they have to be driven somewhere, or you can remind everyone that you won't be home for dinner on a particular night. In general, surprises often equal stress, and anything you can do to effectively stay on top of your family's schedules will help you as you navigate the long days and weeks of the school year.

4) Say No

As a parent who is eager to please, it's easy to become a little too agreeable. You need someone to head the bake sale? Why not? There's a U10 football team that practices four times a week? That seems manageable, right?

It's extremely easy to become overtaxed in the blink of an eye, and constantly saying yes is a surefire way to raise your stress levels and blood-pressure to unhealthy levels. Don't be afraid to say no to commitments that are too taxing, or that you simply do not want to do. This may include heading school-programs, agreeing to overwhelming extracurricular activities, and even accepting playdate offers that your child doesn't really want. Make sure you have a realistic outlook on what is plausible and what is not, and don't be afraid to say "no".

5) Say Yes

And, at the same time, you should absolutely take on responsibilities and opportunities that are fun and easy, or those that interest you. If you plan the parents' night out, you can put your organizational skills to work and also ensure that the location and timing are convenient for you. Similarly, planning graduation parties or other one-off events enable you to connect with the community and earn bonus points with your child without having to make year-long commitments.

And when the voice in your head says it's time to take care of yourself? Say yes to that, too.

These preparation tips for the school year were graciously provided by [Barbara Reich](#). For more information on Barbara and her company [Resourceful Consultants, LLC](#), please visit the hyperlinks included in this article.



everythingsummer®

www.everythingsummer.com

info@everythingsummer.com

Copyright Everything Summer, LLC 2016©