

Be prepared for the morning rush

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Summer is over and it's time to get back into a routine for the fall. Does this idea fill you with anticipation or dread? A little organization can help you and your family feel calm and prepared for the fall routine.

- Most schools provide a list of supplies needed for each grade. These can often be found online and well before September. Make a list of the supplies your child has from last year and decide what you really need to purchase for the upcoming year. Look for items on sale year round and keep a box or bin of basic school supplies like paper, pencils and erasers at home. Children can access the supplies they need throughout the year.
- Post a list of what needs to be done each evening before school or work. This list could also be a photo. A sample list is shown below:
 1. Set out clothes
 2. Pack healthy lunches
 3. Fill in forms that need to go back to school
 4. Check that homework is done and packed
 5. Pack items needed for after school activities (like swimming lessons)
 6. Set out backpacks and work bags
 7. Adults pack your keys, company ID badge and cell phone
 8. Pack healthy snacks (especially if after school activities will make supper late).
- Once a week, sit down with your family and see what is coming up in the week ahead. Decide how everyone will be getting to where they need to be. Will you need to arrange carpooling, walk, take a bike or have a bus pass or money handy?
- Consider limiting the number of activities your children are in. It is easy to become over-committed. Children and adults need their downtime and time for creativity, free play and spending time in nature.
- Plan your weekly menus and include your family in the decision making.

- Make a grocery list according to what you plan to prepare for the week. This way you will have all the ingredients you need and won't need to go back to the store.
- Post the weekly menu so everyone will know what is for dinner that night. Depending on the age of your children, they can start some of the food preparation before the adults get home from work. When children are old enough, they can even prepare the whole meal.

For more ideas, check out the Alberta Health Services Back to School Survival Guide: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2542.asp>.