



*The Organizing Authority*

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## **NAPO PROVIDES TIPS ON WHAT PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN DO NOW TO GET – AND STAY – ORGANIZED THIS SCHOOL YEAR**

MT. LAUREL, NJ – A little organization can go a long way toward making the start of a new school year smoother for both students and parents, and the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) is recommending a series of tips that will help families not only prepare for school's first day, but also set the tone for the year ahead.

“By working now to ensure their students have the appropriate tools, workspace and organizational systems in place when school begins, parents can help alleviate the anxieties about the start of school and help reduce the length of time it takes for children to readjust their mindsets,” said Laura Leist, CPO, President of NAPO.

In addition, preparing now means it will be easier to maintain or fine-tune these systems once the school year begins. Donna Goldberg, a NAPO member specializing in helping students become more organized, believes planning ahead is critical and that it should be a team effort. Whether the preparation involves purchasing back-to-school supplies or establishing an area at home for school work, parents and children should work together.

“The more students can pick and choose, the better off they are. They become more invested in the process,” she said.

The following recommendations are courtesy of Ms. Goldberg.

### **Stock Up On Supplies, Develop Organizational Systems Early**

Taking advantage of back-to-school sales is one way in which families can begin their preparation. While there are some supplies that must be purchased after school begins, families can begin by buying the basics like pens, pencils, notebooks and binders. Because prices are typically lower at the beginning of the school year, parents should stock up – especially if their children tend to lose things. Buy triplicates of items like notebooks, so children can keep one in a backpack, one at school and one at home.

If an area has not already been established for children to work at home, parents and children should work together to set up an area and determine which strategies, such as color-coding, sequencing or dating, suit the child's learning styles and needs.

### **Arrange Preview Visits for Children in Transition**

Children who are making a transition, such as beginning school in a new town or entering middle school or high school, should have the opportunity to tour their new building. If parents can arrange a visit prior to the start of the school, children are able to find out where their classrooms are, locate lockers and other important areas.

## **Get Back into the “Early to Bed, Early to Rise” Habit**

Transitioning from summer to school mentality can also become smoother if parents begin putting children to bed and waking them up earlier as summer comes to an end. Adding in a 20-minute reading period before bedtime can also help students get back into the habit of adding study time to their day.

Organization is not limited to the start of the year, however. Once the school year begins, it is important for parents to monitor three elements that will help their students succeed: organization at school, organization at home and an understanding of time management.

### **Maintaining Organization at School**

For students to become more organized at school, the focus should be on where a student’s belongings are stored at school (desk, cubby or locker) and how the student transports belongings or papers back and forth to school (backpack). If these areas are in disarray, it can lead to problems keeping up with assignments and parents not receiving important communication from school.

Purchase a binder or accordion file for students to store loose papers, such as class notes and worksheets. Maintain backpack and locker organization by establishing regular times to get rid of unnecessary papers and materials, use accessories such as a bus pass holder or extra locker shelf to make it easier to find things, and separate contents into categories.

### **Maintaining Organization at Home**

At home, students should have a well-stocked area for completed homework and enough space in which they can spread out their papers and assignments – whether it’s at a desk, the kitchen table or in a child’s room. Storage space is also important to consider, so that children can file papers or school projects that no longer need to be transported back and forth to school.

### **Understanding Time Management**

It’s becoming important for students to grasp the concept of time management at early ages, but it can be difficult for youngsters to learn in a digital world. Parents can help students who are struggling with time issues by purchasing a planner. Students can use it to keep track of commitments inside and outside of school, and are able to get a better feel for how long it takes them to complete tasks. Parents might also need to either limit or prohibit a child’s use of cell phones, email or other forms of electronic communication while they are completing school work so that children do not lose hours of valuable time responding to text messages or answering phone calls.

For those who feel their child or family could benefit from the help of a professional organizer, NAPO offers a free online automated directory, searchable by zip code, country, and organizing service at: [www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net).

### ***About NAPO***

*The premier national association dedicated to the field of organizing, the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) is The Organizing Authority®. Formed in 1985 as a nonprofit, professional, educational association, NAPO is dedicated to serving its members through education, networking, industry resources, and promoting the profession to the public. NAPO’s mission is to develop, lead, and promote professional organizers and the organizing industry. For more information, visit [www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net). Editor’s Note: To interview a representative from NAPO, contact Jessica Lester at (215) 884-6499 or [jessstet@comsolutionsgroup.com](mailto:jessstet@comsolutionsgroup.com)*