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### Start the School Year off Right!

As the beginning of the school year draws upon us, it's time to get our children ready for reading, writing, and arithmetic. But now, more than ever, larger skills are the key to academic success. Organization, time management, and study skills, are important for children of all ages, and a lack of these skills is a real problem. In fact, "chronic disorganization is a real disability, just as much as a problem with reading, math or spelling might be." (Mel Levine, Professor of Pediatrics at the Univ. of North Carolina)

Whether your child is impacted significantly or just has trouble remembering homework from time to time, here are some helpful tips:

- Research shows more is accomplished homework is begun right after school and when the hardest assignment is done first. Having set 'homework zone' with necessary materials out and ready alleviates the "I need to find a pencil!" problem.
- Before homework starts, give a short break and help prioritize assignments (what will be done first, second, third, etc?). Check to see if there are any long-term assignments.
- Always utilize a daily, weekly, and monthly calendar
- For children that underestimate the amount of time it takes to complete an assignment, use a timer.
- For those that overestimate the time remaining to complete a task, set a designated start and end time. Reward completion w/ a privilege, such as electronics.
- Students of all ages need to have a binder system that works for them and their teachers, and "binder maintenance" should occur at least weekly. Label and file away old materials in a reserve accordion notebook that can be accessed in the future (like for a final exam)

The battle over homework and organization can sometimes become detrimental to the parent/child relationship. Many families choose to bring in an outside, neutral third party, called an Educational Coach, to work on organization and study skills across the curriculum. This coach can assess your child's specific learning style, and provide strategies on time management, organization, and effective reading and note taking, memory techniques, and other study skills.

Remember that time spent organizing today will be time saved tomorrow! Helping your child to gear up for the school year by setting up effective systems early, will help everyone in the long run.

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