

Smart, safe storage and organization for back to school

A little organization goes a long way. Not only can it lead to career success and personal productivity, but as students head back to class this fall, it can also provide health benefits and increase student security. Security in schools is a major concern for Americans, with 60 percent of respondents in a recent nationwide survey of 1,000 U.S. adults stating that they worry about the security of their children's belongings in a school setting.

“Implementing smart storage and organization habits now will position students for a successful school year,” says Rebecca Smith, vice president of marketing for Master Lock. “Not only can you relieve some of the stress of worrying about your kids losing important homework assignments or having their valuables stolen at school, but you will have more free time to enjoy together.”

Follow these tips for a smooth transition into the new school year.

1. Mix and fix your routine

Sit down with your family and evaluate your daily routines to ensure they are organized and effective. Identify aspects that no longer work and discuss ways they can be adjusted. If getting the kids fed and out the door in the morning is your biggest challenge, do as much as you can in the evenings to prepare for the next day. Lay out clothes in advance, cook and freeze breakfast options that can be easily thawed and served while you attend to other items. If organization is more of an afternoon struggle, create checklists that outline household chores, homework and other responsibilities to keep kids on track after school.

2. Be involved

Keeping the family organized and safe begins and ends with regular communication and parent involvement. Carve out a time at night to not only get kids started with homework, but to be available for questions, look through their backpacks and ask them to review their day so you are up-to-date with their regular activities. Discuss their security routines by reminding them to lock up belongings while at school and to lock the door when they return home afterwards.

3. File everything

“A place for everything and everything in its place.” In keeping with this famous and wise phrase, create a filing system that organizes everything from administrative documents and report cards to study guides, test scores and great achievements. Keeping all these items in a secure, central location will make it easy for you and your children to access important information, such as school records and contact information. Schedule time every few months to go through the documents to discard unnecessary items and ensure that your system remains as organized as possible. Consider a cloud-based digital organization and storage app and website such as the [Master Lock Vault](#) for access to important information on-the-go. Storing documents and other private data online is not only convenient, it also eliminates the risk of losing hard copies of key items.



4. Keep backpacks light and secure

A child's backpack should weigh no more than 10 to 20 percent of his or her total body weight, UMass Memorial Medical Center pediatrician Dr. Safdar Medina said during a recent interview posted on Worcester.com. When worn improperly or packed with too many heavy items, backpacks can cause pain, restrict circulation and can lead to posture problems. To keep backpacks light, ensure your children have secure locks for school and gym lockers so they are comfortable storing books and other valuables in these places while at class. Use folders or lightweight expanding files to store homework in one place and eliminate carrying heavier materials like plastic binders. Designate a backpack docking station near your home's entryway to encourage kids to unpack and leave them rather than carry them around the home. Finally, don't forget to provide a lightweight backpack lock to deter pickpockets and keep valuables secure.

5. Create a homework hub

Do your kids work best in the kitchen, living room or an alternative location? Identify an area where they can concentrate well and outfit it with any supplies or items they might need for various assignments. Use creative storage solutions such as a shoe organizer for art supplies or mason jars to hold pens, pencils, scissors and more. Having all the tools necessary to complete a given project in one area will limit distractions and time wasted attempting to locate that missing calculator.

For more advice on back-to-school security, storage and organization tips, visit www.masterlock.com.

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