



## Preparing Your Child for Next School Year

By Educator Barnes – July 18, 2019

We are in the prime of summer. The days are warm, and children are in the streets playing with their friends. Maybe, they are cooling off in the pool. With each passing day, we are a day closer to the beginning of the next school year. Instead of scrambling around at the last moment, get your children prepared.

With my children, I start with the previous school year. My sons and I discuss what they enjoyed and what they disliked. I need this information to assess what to tackle for the upcoming year.

Also, this allows my children to learn how to reflect. Reflecting over experience is a good skill for children to develop and carry into adulthood, but reflection without follow up action is pointless. Next, we discuss their goals for the upcoming year.

Hold it right there. Don't give your children goals. Goal setting should be a collaborative process. Yes, there are some areas I want to address. However, people, even children, are more likely to invest in and accomplish goals if they have a say or create them on their own. Last year, one of my sons set a goal of not storming out of his classroom whenever he got upset. Was the year perfect? No, but least I had this goal to refer back to as a reminder when he fell off track.

Another way to be prepared is to be in the know. I was at the doctor with my sons this week, and the doctor wanted to schedule the next appointment. That reminded me that I hadn't even looked at the school calendar or put the dates into the calendar on my phone. You are not going to show up to important events at the beginning of the year if you don't make a note about them. The quickest way for students to get off track is for parents to be disconnected from the school.

Moreover, children become disconnected when they miss school or don't have what they need. Get appointments out of the way so your children are not going during the first month of school. My sons have been to the dentist, pediatrician, and optometrist this summer. I also went through their clothes and shoes. If your children wear uniforms, get them now or you'll be scrambling to find their sizes later. If the soles of your children's tennis shoes are coming detached, like my children's, get them another pair. You know they will have gym class. I also checked out their backpacks and lunchboxes. These items were fine, so I'm not replacing them. Don't let your children convince you they need new stuff when the old stuff is fine. Please don't forget to buy exactly what is on the school supply list. As an educator, I will tell you it is expensive to buy supplies students don't bring or frustrating to buy supplies because parents substituted an item with another item. Teachers ask for specific items for a reason.

Last, the most important action a parent can take is encouraging their children. Let them know you will be there supporting them throughout the year. Parent encouragement goes a long way.

Please avoid the last-minute rush and prepare your children for the upcoming year.