

## Parents, Have You Prepared Your Child for Next School Year?

By Shawnta S. Barnes - July 24, 2018



Summer is winding down and the next school year is right around the corner. It is best for your child to start school on the right foot. Here are four actions parents can take to help their child have a great start to the school year.

### **Obtain school supplies**

There's nothing worse for a child than beginning school unprepared. Make sure you purchase all the supplies on the list and if the teacher requests a certain brand, get that brand. I talked to a kindergarten teacher about why her school insists parents purchase Crayola crayons. She shared that off-brand crayon colors are not always the exact color. Red may appear pink and confuse the child. Another specific item on her school's list was the Ziplock brand gallon bags. The kindergarten teachers in her school planned to put books to send home in the bags and previous years, teachers had experienced other gallon bag brands constantly ripping. If you cannot afford school supplies, reach out to churches or local community centers. Many times they have back to school give away events that might even include free haircuts or school uniforms.

### **Talk to your child about school**

Over the last few weeks, I have been talking to my twin sons about being in second grade next school year. This has been a great opportunity to hear what they are excited about and to hear any worries they have. My husband and I have been able to talk to them about their worries. We have also been able to offer them encouragement. If your child had a rocky time last school year, use this time to assure them that the next school year is an opportunity to start over with a clean slate with not only the school but also with you.

### **Attend back to school orientation**

After your child has been in school for a few years, it may be tempting to skip back to school orientation or a back to school meet and greet, but you should not. Back to school orientation is an opportunity for your child to interact with their classmates and meet the teacher. If your child will be in middle school or high school, it is an opportunity for your child to find his or her locker and classes. Over the summer, the school might make changes. Attending back to school orientation or a meet and greet is an

opportunity to learn about those changes. It is also a chance to drop off school supplies or organize your child's locker or desk.

### **Contact your child's teacher or agree to a home visit**

At the beginning of each year, I have talked to my sons' teachers. On Sunday, my sons' teacher called. My twin boys will be in the same class for the second grade. She called to schedule a home visit. She planned to meet her students and their families before school begins. She and her student teacher stopped by our home yesterday and chatted with my husband, my boys, and me. As an educator, I have also done home visits, and I know the value. It gives the teacher an opportunity to get to know you and your child and you get an opportunity to share pertinent information the teacher needs to know for the upcoming school year.

The beginning of another school year is an opportunity for your child to learn, make new friends, and have fun. As parents, it is our responsibility to do all we can to make sure our children are able to have a smooth transition to the next school year.