

5 Ways to Soften the “Back to School” Transition

That was a looooong summer!



With a record dry spell and sunny days almost the **entire** time, my boys were more than ready to go back to school this year. And I was more than ready to send them.

After seeing them off Wednesday morning at 8:03 am (exactly), I hooted and hollered before plopping down on the couch with a hot cup of tea. I didn't move for at least a couple of hours.

Now that we are in full “back to school” swing, I wanted to share some ideas on how to make your transition a successful one.

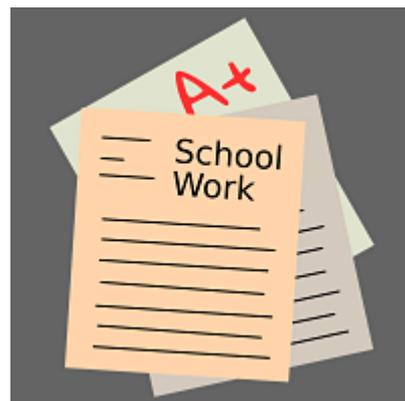
#1. Are You Ready to Be Home?

Being in the 8th and 2nd grades, I'm sure my boys are sick of hearing me ask. But this single 6-word question makes a world of difference in our household. You've heard the age-old adage “Everything has it's place, and a place for everything”. This is so true when it comes to transitions. The biggest struggle with going back to school is finding things. After hunting down lunch boxes, coats and library books much more than a few times, I realized that we needed a system to keep everything where it can be found.

Now, as soon as the boys come home, they are to empty papers

and folders on to the table and put shoes, lunchboxes, backpacks and coats where they belong before doing anything else. (Maybe using the bathroom is an exception.) There is a place where these things belong, so that when they are needed in the morning, they are easily found. Create this habit and I know mornings will go a whole lot easier for your family.

#2. Paper Management



Schoolwork produces a lot of papers! We are blessed to have paper to use for our children's learning, but what do you do with all of it?

First, you will have to decide for yourself what is worth keeping. Each year, I keep less and less, but set aside those treasures that will bless them when they move away. I use a large accordion file folder and make sure their name and date are on the paper before dropping it in.

Second, we have the refrigerator and dishwasher as a gallery of the latest works of art or high scores. I replace an old piece with the new piece so the appliances aren't overwhelmed.

Lastly, you have the orientation day stockpile/newsletters/forms/fundraiser paperwork that you must keep track of throughout the year. We purchased these [wall pocket organizers](#) for each of the boys that sit near the table in our kitchen. Whenever something important needs to be kept, I drop it in their pocket. Now, even the boys know where to

find it.

#3. Time to Connect as a Family

As Fall comes on, you may find your family scattered in many different directions. The busyness and lack of quality time can put a strain on your relationships. Even though children are excited to go back to school, they also feel anxious about making friends and the challenges of learning. You can provide a firm foundation of reassurance and stability when you are purposeful about guarding your family time.

Dinners together without distraction, board games or going on a hike are casual ways to come together as a family. Don't think that your time has to be organized or expensive. You just need the space to communicate and share experiences in relationship with one another.

In order to find the time, you will need to put it on the calendar or commit to a regular time together. You can also be more purposeful by setting out a jar and having family members write ideas on a slip of paper. Being spontaneous can make it more interesting!

#4. Less is More



With the new schedule, it can be tempting to take on more activities. Sports activities begin, churches start new programs and you can find yourself going in different

directions each hour of the evening. But what kids remember most about their childhood is the quality of relationship with their families, not the amount of activities they did.

When something comes up to be added to your schedule, ask yourself if this activity is going to benefit the family as a whole. Consider what your child would want to do with you and make it a priority to anything else you could add to your schedule. Your attention is what is most important to them.

#5. Fully Embrace Fall

Now that you have guarded your family time and worked hard to organize your home, **dive in to Fall!** Rake up a pile of leaves to jump in with the kids. Wander down to the local pumpkin farm and do some chunkin'. Volunteer in your child's classroom and see what is so wonderful about their new grade level. When you stop to think about what you enjoy most this time of year, make room to experience it with your family.

Now that I've shared helpful tips on transitioning into Fall, I'd love to hear from you!

What are your favorites of Fall? What helps make this time of year easier for your family?

Join the conversation below by leaving a comment with your ideas and stories.