

# How to beat the back-to-school blues

**Pro tips.** That early alarm clock will start ringing soon, so we asked an expert how parents can prepare.

tips and personal parenting anecdotes to help break down the organization process in easy-to-manage steps.

## What's the hardest routine for kids to get back into?

In the week before, you should try and re-establish a bedtime and a wake-up time so that kids aren't waking up two hours earlier than usual. The best thing to do with homework is to make it part of the routine, done in the same place at the same time every night after school. Even if they finish their homework, they can read a book or do something that's educational. Once they know that those are the rules, they'll fight you less. I think if kids have a string of successes, if they study and do well, then they are more apt to want to study and do well the next time.

## For kids who have had behavioral issues in the past, how do you keep them from making the same mistakes?

Each year is a new year. The way your child responds to a teacher means there may be better chemistry some years than others. Every year is a fresh slate, and your child is one year older and one year more mature. If you feel like there have been behavioral issues, you sit your child down and say you're going to check in with their teacher. I'm not opposed to a little creative bribery.

## Younger kids are using cell phones and social media now. Are there dos and don'ts for working parents who want to stay in touch with their kids?

My [kids'] school does allow cell phones during the day, and I wish it didn't. I don't feel like there's any



A résumé brush-up can make the empty nest easier, Reich says. *—MARTIN*

reason why they need to get in touch with me during the day. Kids have cell phones at a younger and younger age, and it's a blessing and a curse for parents. I think the consensus among parents is we all hate social media, but we like being able to get in touch with our kids.

## What's your advice for stay-at-home parents who feel some withdrawal when their kids begin their education?

I remember when my kids first went to preschool and I felt sick inside. It was like somebody had cut out a piece of me, because I used to be with them all day. As a parent, you reinvent yourself many times. When you have that last child in school, it's a good time to brush up on your professional skills if you want to go back to work.

CHRIS LONGO  
Editor of *Parents*



PLUS

Advice

## Routine Machine

As a mom of twins, Reich had to learn how to manage and juggle like a pro. For back-to-school, she says a routine is vital.



Barbara Reich