

## Back to school organizing tips

By

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### Get your kids and your home ready for the hectic back to school season with these easy organizing tips.

As the summer comes to an end, the fall brings a season filled with packed lunches, rushed mornings and a house in disarray. It's that time of year again, when the kids head back to school.

Wendy Hollick is a proud recipient of the 2011 Professional Organizers in Canada Ambassador Award and owner of [Neat Spaces](#) where she offers clients professional organizing help. Wendy is also a mom of three kids, so she knows a thing or two about the [back to school](#) rush!

Keeping the house organized once the kids are back in school can be difficult. According to Wendy, keeping things simple, getting the kids involved and organizing one room at a time are helpful approaches to organizing during the back to school months. "Rooms that need the most attention are the bedrooms, bathrooms, homework area and the kitchen," says Wendy. Here are some practical back to school [organizing tips](#) for each of these rooms:

#### Back to school organizing tips

##### Kids' bedrooms

Wendy says the bedroom is a place of rest and that toys should be limited here. "Getting the kids involved and giving them the tools to become responsible is essential to keeping their rooms organized," she says. Large hooks on the back of the bedroom doors are a great idea for the kids to easily throw their hoodies, baseball caps, etc. Having shelves is another simple way for the kids to store their belongings. Wendy suggests big open shelves so that they can put their books, trophies and pictures on display, while staying organized. "Once the stuff is off the floor, it's not clutter," she says.

According to Wendy, clothing tends to be the biggest issue in the kids' bedrooms once they go back to school. She suggests purchasing an affordable clothing organizer or getting a customized one put in. Keeping the clothes off the floor by having ample hanging space is essential. It's also important to keep the hangers all one colour to bring a sense of simplicity and organization to the room, she says.

##### Bathrooms

If more than one child needs to use the bathroom in the morning, things can be hectic. Wendy suggests making a schedule for the kids to have their showers/baths to avoid fighting over time in the bathroom. "Older children prefer to have their showers in the morning, so the younger children can be scheduled before bedtime," Wendy says. "Schedule a time that makes sense." Assigning a specific colour of towel to each child will also eliminate bickering over whose towel is whose and reduce laundry loads.

In order to have clutter-free counters, Wendy suggests installing pullout drawers in the cabinets for an easy [storage idea](#) and to help the kids see what is in the back of the cabinets. According to Wendy, using the wall space is essential. She says using small decorative shelves and wall organizers for towels, shampoo, soap, etc. will provide extra space. Hooks on the back of the bathroom doors are a great solution for hanging towels and housecoats.

Wendy says that Mom should get the kids involved in [organizing the bathroom](#) by assigning the children plastic caddies for their personal items. They can bring their stuff back to their rooms and back again when needed. Having small, colour-coded bins for their stuff in the bathroom also helps each child be responsible for their own items and keeps the counters clear.

*Lead image courtesy of Land of Nod*

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### Homework area

Setting up a homework area will help the kids stay organized and keep school papers confined to one area. Wendy suggests setting up a small area in the kitchen. "Kids tend to gravitate towards the kitchen after school, so setting up an area for them to do their homework there is ideal. They don't need fancy, they just need practical," she says. Having everything they need at their workstation, such as pens, pencils, magazine files and calculators will eliminate wandering and help them focus.

### Kitchen

According to Wendy, [organizing the kitchen](#) means removing anything that doesn't belong there. You must remove anything that doesn't serve a purpose in the kitchen (e.g. paperwork, exercise equipment). To keep the counters clear in the kitchen, Wendy suggests using decorative bins and baskets. "If things are 'containerized', they tend to stay organized," says Wendy. Labeling the bins is also helpful. If something is labeled, the kids are less likely to stash the item somewhere else when they go to put something away, says Wendy.

Wendy suggests making the kids' lunches the night before. "You don't want to stress yourself out in the morning," she says. Having plastic Tupperware that is colour coded for each child will help the kids know whose lunch is whose in the morning. Colour coding each Tupperware that contains a different type of food item also helps Mom know who ate what, and what to look for if the container goes missing, says Wendy.

Donation bins, garbage and recycling bins for easy disposal are also helpful for organizing the kitchen (and other rooms), says Wendy. Separate bins make it an easy and efficient way to sort items that you are getting rid of.

In order to maintain an organized home during the [back to school](#) months, Wendy suggests taking 15 minutes to clean and organize at the end of each day. "Go into any room and picture what the space looks like when it's organized, and then work clockwise and remove anything that does not belong within the vision of that space," she says.