

## Things You Might Do to Help Your Child with a New School Year

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Retired teacher and school administrator

A new school year is almost here. Children have great expectations for new friends and new teachers, new school clothes or uniforms, that come with the new year.

Parents have an essential role in getting children off to a good school year. Like an old war horse, I start thinking about ways parents may help create an environment for a smooth and productive opening. The best advice for beginning the school year comes from the school and your child's teacher. Every parent should set aside some time to review these messages sent from the school.

A multitude of parental advice givers live in our world. Parents must develop their own confidence level to chart a path for intellectual, social, and moral development of their children. The following is a supermarket of ideas that I shared with my education graduate students. They mainly relate to younger students, but also have some relevance to older students.

1. Provide a positive mindset for the new school year. Take advantage of any "meet and greet" programs provided by the school.

2. Be aware of any negative interaction issues with other children in the neighborhood, child-care settings, etc. These issues that might impact class placement should be discussed with a counselor or principal before the school year begins. Don't wait until student assignments are set. Class rosters are set using a variety of factors that make it very difficult to make changes in class assignments once they are set.

3. Establish a clear plan for after-school care and communicate these plans clearly to the school. Investigate school, community-based, or individual care programs well in advance of school opening.

4. Design a distinct plan for after-school activities that provides a set time to do school-related assignments and homework. Don't over program your child's after school enrichment activities. Many young people are programmed with activities 3-4 afternoons per week. It is easier to program less in the beginning of the year, to establish the time needed to meet school-related

assignments, homework, and programs. The schedule may be tweaked as the year progresses.

5. Make the school aware of any changes in family demographics – divorce, death, etc.

6. Establish play dates with two or three of your kids' friends or new classmates to rebuild existing social ties. Most class rosters are posted at school.

7. Get your kids involved in programs that they can do after school to keep them active and moving – Scouting, dance, karate, sports, etc. Too much sedentary "screen time" negatively impacts the wellness of children.

8. Establish a bedtime schedule in advance of school opening. Enforce bedtime during the school year.

9. Encourage your kids to read at least one book before the school year begins.

10. Review the school calendar with your children that they will use to manage their activities.

11. Parents should become familiar with daily planners and communication methods used by their child's teacher. For children who are less schedule-oriented, you might also review some apps, like iHomework2 or MyHomework, to help your children organize assignments. Egg timers or clocks on iPhones are helpful with homework doodlers. Establish an "official" homework area in your home – table, student desk, etc.

12. Make school or homework assignment sessions manageable in length. Don't expect most children to sit for two-hour homework sessions. Break up the tasks with short breaks – snack break, bathroom break, taking pet out for bathroom, etc. Easily distracted children should have tasks broken into small parts. Praise the completion of the small parts. Learn how to use positive phrases to motivate homework completion.

13. Set up a specific time on Sunday to review a child's upcoming weekly schedule with time needed for activities, academic assignments, extra-curriculars, family activities, etc. A family calendar, either using scheduling apps or a white erase board posted in a kitchen or high-traffic area of the home, is helpful to track everyone's activities and commitments. It is very important to establish time requirements to com-

plete school assignments. For example, don't wait until the night before to try to finish a major project.

14. Establish some family time management rules for children – screen time (iPads, computer games, etc.) for the school year and create a daily "family time" for oral sharing (not texts, twitter, or Facebook posts). It could be at dinner or before bed.

15. Teach children how to prioritize with simple "to do" lists. For those with cell phones, use the meeting reminder function to help parents and children remember important school assignments and even the start of homework time.

16. Take your kids shopping using the lists of school supplies, books, and technology needs from teachers. Many teachers will post these on school web pages. You might even consider buying a little extra and giving them to your child's teacher. Let kids see what supplies they have from the past year.

17. Backpack purchases are usually a social statement. Make sure the backpack fits your child. If you cannot afford a new backpack, be aware that many churches, businesses, or civic organizations have give-away programs.

18. Google sites that provide information on successful parent/teacher conferences, such as: <https://www.care.com/c/stories/3268/strategies-for-a-successful-parent-teacher-co/>.

19. Use some time management tools to help relieve the "get them to school on time stress factor." Some ideas include putting out clothes for the next day before they go to bed, checking backpacks for notes to avoid morning surprises, establishing a morning bathroom use schedule, loading school backpacks at night and placing by the door, making an in-box for parents for things like permission forms, creating lunch box rules if carrying lunch, or Google for other ideas.

20. Discuss the different pros and cons of bringing versus buying school lunches and get school menus in advance to discuss lunch choices.

21. Set your clocks up 5-10 minutes to aid in being on time.

22. Have a talk with children before school opens about making friends, bullying, riding bus, and make positive statements about their ability to be successful at their new grade level.

23. Talk to your child each day about what he or she is doing in school and discuss what he or she learned.

24. Remember that everything does not have to be perfect in your child's life. *It is important that children learn how to deal with difficulties successfully.* Every parent must address the most effective ways to help children with their moral development in an imperfect world.

25. Parents should remember to build a little "me" time in their lives.

Again, this list is only a supermarket of ideas that may assist parents with the start of a new school year. Relax! In all my years as a teacher, principal, and administrator, I had very few students who had major difficulties adapting to a new school year. Children are more adaptive to change than most adults.

## ACHS Band Boosters plan community yard sale

Planning a fall yard sale? Tired of your yard getting used as a driveway during the yard sale? Why not use a parking lot? You can! On October 12, the ACHS Band Boosters will be sponsoring a community yard sale to be held in the high school parking lot. You can rent spaces as a fundraiser for the Cougar Band.

Two spaces will be \$20.00 and each additional space will be \$5.00. Worried about food? That is no problem. Food vendors will be there as well, and more are needed.

Anyone interested in renting spaces for the yard sale, or if you are a food vendor and are interested in helping the Cougar Band, please call 910-217-2195 and ask for J.T. Remember, no weapons or tobacco products. Everyone is invited.

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**TUESDAY Senior Day**  
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**WEDNESDAY Wing Night**  
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## Mt. Bethel UMC plans upcoming events

The church will be sponsoring the following activities and we invite everyone in the community to come and join us.

- Saturday, August 24, New Lift Thrift Store "Back To School Extravaganza," 10AM-4PM. Free hot dogs and school supplies while they last. There will also be music by Styx & Tones along with free train rides. In addition, there will be an end of summer brown bag clothing sale for \$5 per bag.

- Wednesday, August 28, Fall Bible Study Planning Meeting, 6:30PM. Anyone interested in participating in a Fall Bible Study on Wednesday nights at 6:30PM, beginning on Wednesday, Sept. 11, led by Pastor Dale can attend this meeting.

- Wednesday, Sept. 4 Crop Walk Team Captain Orientation Meeting at 6:00PM. The 8th CROP Hunger Walk, sponsored by Mt Bethel UMC, will be on Sunday, October 20, at 2:30PM (registration at 2PM). Team captains from area churches, civic organizations, schools, and businesses that are interested in sponsoring a team of walkers are invited to attend this meeting to pick up sponsor packets.

- Sunday, Sept. 8,

Homecoming Sunday at Mt. Bethel, 10AM. Speaker will Rev. Dale Bost, Mt. Bethel's current pastor. A covered dish luncheon will follow the worship service.

- Monday, Sept. 23, UMM sponsored American Red Cross Bloodmobile, 3:00-7:30PM. To schedule an appointment, go to: [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org), sponsor code: mtbethel. To speed up your appointment on the day of the drive, go to: [www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass](http://www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass).

## Mt. Bethel, New Life Thrift Store plan BTS Extravaganza

Mt. Bethel United Methodist Women and New Life Thrift Store are hosting a "Back To School Extravaganza" on Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 10 am - 4 pm at New Life Thrift Store, 8935 Hwy. 127 North, Bethlehem.

This event will include a clothing bag sale all day, free hot dogs and drinks from 12-2pm, (or while supplies last), and free kids train rides from 12-2pm. Also, children will have the opportunity to choose two school supply items from the free table, while supplies last.

Read the info and answer the questions. Print the pass or email it to yourself. "Give a pint and save a life."

The public is invited to come out and join in any of the above events. Worship schedules or any upcoming events can be found on their website at [www.mtbethelumc.org](http://www.mtbethelumc.org). Mt. Bethel UMC is located on Hwy. 127, 1/2 mile north from Lowe's Grocery in Bethlehem.

Local teachers will be able to register for two gift certificates to be given away. The youth music ensemble, Styx 'n Tones, will be performing from 2-4 pm. The UMW and New Life Thrift Store wish to thank the community for great support in this mission to provide affordable clothing and home goods to Bethlehem neighbors and visitors.

Please share this information with friends and family and mark your calendars. You can fill a brown bag with clothing for the whole family for only \$5.00.

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