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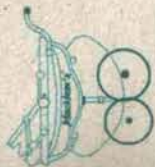
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Back to homeschool

By Tami Oudendijk

Even if you homeschool throughout the summer, there are things to get ready at the beginning of the traditional school year. This is the time of year new curriculum materials come out, and let's face it, everyone needs a deal on school supplies. There are other things to consider too.

1. Registration: You have to fill out your registration paperwork and check on any funding for which you are eligible. This is also the time to register for any community recreation activities in which your child participates.

2. Medical Records: Make sure your children's vaccinations (if you choose) are up to date and that their hearing and eye tests are current. Many of these things are required through schools but a homeschooler has to remember to schedule these appointments and make sure they're on track.

3. Brace yourself for the critics: Maybe it's your mother or your mother-in-law or that all too career oriented neighbour that pop up every year at this time to see if you're still planning to homeschool or if you'll be sending your child to "real" school this year.

- Be prepared. Fortify yourself with a list of reasons why you homeschool
- Understand where your critics are coming from (they want the best for your child in the long run)
- Involve them in the homeschooling process – what can your child learn from Grandma?
- Bring them to your support group
- Put them on your subscription lists so they can receive some of the great materials you read
- Send them to a web site with some good FAQs so they can get some answers
- Keep your resolve

4. Declutter: This is always a good time to declutter and revamp your study space. Go through your materials and figure out what you still need and what you are finished with. Have your child help set up the work space so he/she starts to get excited about participating in the new learning to come. Have a garage sale and go shopping for some fun new journals, pens and art supplies with the profits.

5. Finalize your curriculum plan: Start big and work backwards. Look at the year and list all the monthly themes you are going to cover and how they break down by subject area, the books you'll need, the associated trips you will take etc. Break each theme down by week and then set up a daily schedule. If you purchase curriculum this may be mostly done for you but you'll still have to integrate it into what works best for your schedule. Let your child help you in the daily planning part. He'll definitely let you know what he doesn't like but he might come up with some great new ideas to make the days more fun.

6. Relax and enjoy the fact that you don't have to be part of the morning rat race.

Tami Oudendijk is a partner in FunInABoxCanada.com that develops theme based activity kits for 3- to 6-year olds. FunIn-A-Box Canada focuses on developmental skills through a variety of fun, learning activities. www.FunInABoxCanada.com.

