



## Good School Habits, Good Life Habits

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**T**he start of the school year is always exciting. Kids get to reconnect with friends and immerse themselves in new topics while mom and dad get to enjoy the return to normal schedules after the crazy days of summer. After you've had a few weeks to settle into the new routine but well before the onslaught of the holidays, we recommend taking a step back from the grind to consider how you can help your children establish good habits for the school year and beyond.

### Sarah on “Life Lessons”

“Every morning as I scramble to find my keys, wallet and cell phone before racing to make that 8am meeting, I have to wonder if I'd have this daily struggle had I gotten in the habit of putting my things in one place when I arrived home from school as a child. My husband, who also suffers from the ‘droppies’ as we affectionately call it, is convinced that once you've graduated from 5th grade, it's probably too late to learn! While I'm not sure I'd go that far, I would say it's got to be easier to establish a good habit early than to try to unlearn a bad one when you're pushing 40!”

### Alicia on “Getting Started”

“Helping your children establish the habit of organization does not need to be a daunting process. Start off by selecting one area in need of a little help. For my daughter, Lucy, it was getting her to use and maintain an organized desk. To motivate her, I let her pick a theme for her work space and, of course, she chose “pink princess.” Together, we then purchased small theme related

items such as pink pens, pencils, a pink organizer, even a pink butterfly net to drape over the desk. Lucy now has a work space she helped create and, more importantly, loves using.”

Help your kids establish and maintain good habits with these three tips:

### #1: Beat Procrastination

Chances are the last thing your children want to do after school is more work! One great tip for motivating procrastinators is to schedule a block of time where everyone in the family completes their assignments (mom, dad, and babysitters included). You'll be surprised at how much more productive your children will be if they know everyone in the family is busy at work. Once all homework is done, they'll have the rest of the night to focus on more important things like hide-and-go seek!

### #2: Get in the Routine

When trying to establish good life habits for your kids, routine is crucial. Many children ditch their school gear whenever and wherever the spirit moves them. Establish a system for putting things away right when they walk in the door so that it becomes second nature. First you'll need to create a space for their belongings: a shelf, coat hook, and mat that will be the designated proper place for their school belongings and outerwear. Allow them to customize it and make it theirs. Then create a rule that says they must put their things away the minute they walk in the door – no exceptions!

### #3: Reward Good Behavior

Kids are more apt to stick to good habits when they are both exciting and rewarding. Remember those gold stars you worked so hard to obtain as a kid? Guess what? They still work! Set small goals for them to work towards and keep track of their progress with a sticker chart hung in a prominent place. Once your child has obtained a certain amount of stickers, reward him with small yet satisfying treats such as a night out to the movies or baking his favorite desert.

*We are the co-founders of Buttoned Up, inc., a company dedicated to helping stretched and stressed women get themselves organized (along with everybody else they're responsible for too!). We welcome your thoughts! Please send ideas and questions to us at: [yourlife@getbuttonedup.com](mailto:yourlife@getbuttonedup.com) or visit us at [www.getbuttonedup.com](http://www.getbuttonedup.com)*