STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR OFF WITH A WIN!
5 things busy parents need to keep in mind
By Clayton Kale

Sometimes, waiting until the last minute isn’t a bad thing. For example, if wait to buy a car until the end of the month, you can often get a good deal.

But more often, planning ahead can make life easier and much less stressful. For parents who are busy with work obligations, children’s soccer practices, duties at church, volunteer boards and everything else that comes with modern life it is especially important to plan ahead.

That’s why we encourage parents to look ahead to the coming school year and be prepared. Here are 5 tips on being prepared for the coming school year.

1. Download the Greenville County School District school calendar, and make note of important dates. The first day of school? Check. Last day of school? Check. Fall, Winter, and Spring breaks? Check, check, and check. Having those already saved to your smartphone calendar will prevent those days from sneaking up on you! We’ll save you the trouble of hunting it down. The latest school calendars can be found here.

2. Avoid the school supply rush. Depending on your child’s grade, you probably have a good idea of what they’ll need next year. Some schools have already made announcements. But in the case of general school supplies, start stockpiling now, and you won’t be hit with sticker shock. And while you’re at it, consider buying an extra backpack, reams of paper, and packs of pencils. The YMCA of Greenville is collecting school supplies to provide to students in under-resourced families. Want more information on that? Contact us!

3. Long summer days mean more time to play outside, so your kids are probably enjoying later bedtimes. That’s a wonderful privilege to have during the summer, but remember that young brains need on average 9 to 11 hours of sleep every night [1]. Consider bringing bedtimes back to the school year norm over the next few weeks. It doesn’t have to be drastic, but aim for 15 minutes earlier a week until you’re back at your school bedtime routine.
4. Put some work in now to make the morning routine get easier every year. Practice age appropriate independence during the summer to make morning routines easier when the daily grind of the school year returns. Every year, children and teens should be able to take on more responsibility for getting ready for their school day. For rising Kindergarteners, it could be practicing getting out of bed without drama in time for school. For rising first graders, it could be independently picking out clothes the night before, getting out of bed on time, and getting dressed without prompting. Rising second graders could do all of those tasks plus tie their own shoes. And so on. Keep up this routine through the years, and by middle school, morning routines should be a well-oiled machine.

5. Prepare now for what your kids will be doing after the school bell rings at the end of the first day of school. For busy parents, knowing that their children have a safe place to go after school is peace of mind that allows them to finish the workday.

The YMCA of Greenville offers after school programming and picks up from more than 40 schools in Greenville County, and provides a safe, affordable place for students to wrap up their school day. Every day, students have time to do homework, play active games, socialize with peers, and eat a healthy snack. Busy parents know that signing up for After School at the Y before the school year begins is an easy way to take something off the to-do list. Registration is open now for the 2016-17 school year. To sign up, visit any YMCA of Greenville Member Services desk or call 864-412-0288.

Bonus: Remember that bit in tip one about planning ahead for Spring Break and teacher in-service days? As a YMCA after school participant, your student has a place to go for all-day care of at no additional cost! You don’t have to worry about finding childcare, and your student gets a day camp type experience with fun games, arts and crafts, swimming, and more.

For Y members, Afterschool starts at just $54. Not a Y member? It’s worth considering for the savings on after school alone. If you register for after school when you join the Y, not only will you get the member rate for after school care, we’ll waive the $100 joining fee. AND with a family membership, you get access to our popular Parents’ Night Out program. Request more information about membership.

Go ahead, you busy planner parent you. Add a date night while you’re planning for childcare. You deserve it.

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