

Back-to-School Survival Series

DON'T FORGET THIS!

25 Things Parents Wish They Packed Before the First Day

The Checklist You'll Be Glad You Saved!

It's not the big things you'll forget to pack...Backpacks? Check. Notebooks? Check. Lunchbox? Check. But ask any seasoned parent, and they'll tell you it's usually the little things that cause the biggest headaches during those first few weeks of school. From forgotten headphones to surprise gym days, these often-overlooked essentials can save you last-minute trips to the store—and a whole lot of stress.

Before the school year begins, take five minutes to review this list. Your future self will thank you!

Everyday Essentials

- Reusable water bottle
- Headphones or earbuds (if required by the school)
- Extra pencils and erasers
- Small hand sanitizer
- Travel-size tissues
- Lip balm
- Reusable utensil set (for packed lunches)
- Name labels for lunch boxes, jackets, and water bottles

Quick Tip: Label everything! Water bottles, sweatshirts, lunch boxes, and jackets are some of the most commonly misplaced items during the first month of school.

Clothing & Weather Must-Haves

- Lightweight sweatshirt or hoodie
- Rain jacket
- Gym shoes (if your child keeps a pair at school)
- Extra socks
- Hair ties or clips
- Change of clothes (especially for younger students)
- Weather-appropriate outerwear before temperatures suddenly change

Quick Tip: Keep an extra pair of socks in your child's backpack year-round. They're surprisingly useful after rainy recesses, accidental spills, or muddy field trips.

Lunchbox Lifesavers

- Ice packs
- Reusable snack containers
- Water bottle cleaning brush or tablets
- Backup lunch container lids (they always seem to disappear!)
- Emergency shelf-stable snacks for rushed mornings

Quick Tip: Freeze juice boxes or yogurt tubes overnight to help keep lunches cool while doubling as an ice pack.

The Parent Emergency Kit

Keep a small tote or storage bin in your vehicle. Whether you're headed to practice, running errands after pickup, or dealing with an unexpected spill, you'll be glad it's there.

- Extra outfit
- Wet wipes
- Small first-aid kit
- Umbrella
- Blanket
- Non-perishable snacks
- Phone charging cable
- Reusable shopping bag

Classroom Extras

These aren't always on the official supply list—but teachers are often grateful to have them on hand.

- Dry erase markers
- Sticky notes
- Gallon-sized storage bags
- Tissues
- Hand sanitizer
- Extra pencils
- Individually wrapped treats (where permitted)

Quick Tip: If your child's teacher shares an online classroom wish list later in the year, consider bookmarking it. It's an easy way to help replenish supplies when they're running low.

Bonus: Think Beyond the Backpack

Before school starts, double-check these easy-to-miss details:

- Is your child's emergency contact information current?
- Does the school have any updated medical or allergy information?
- Are after-school transportation plans confirmed?
- Have you packed any medications or inhalers the school requires?
- Are devices fully charged and labeled?
- Have you reviewed classroom communication apps and notifications?

A few minutes now can help prevent a lot of scrambling later.

The 5-Minute Win

Walk through your home with your child's backpack in hand. As you go, gather everything they'll need for the first week of school—from headphones and gym shoes to extra socks and tissues—and place it all in one spot. You'll instantly see what's missing and avoid those last-minute surprises.

Concierge Pro Tip

Need help finding replacement water bottles, ordering personalized labels, locating a hard-to-find classroom supply, or comparing prices on school essentials? Your Restore the Day concierge can do the legwork for you, so you can spend less time shopping and more time enjoying the last days of summer.

How Your Concierge Can Help

Your Restore the Day concierge can assist with:

- Tracking down hard-to-find school supplies
- Finding personalized labels and organization products
- Ordering replacement lunch boxes, water bottles, or backpacks
- Locating classroom wish list items
- Researching after-school programs and activities
- Finding local alterations or uniform services
- Creating a customized back-to-school shopping checklist for your family

Sometimes it's the little things that make the biggest difference. With a little preparation—and a little concierge support—you'll be ready to start the school year with confidence.

Coming Next in the Back-to-School Survival Series...

Dress Them for Less - Smart ways to buy and sell kids clothes

Raising Digital-Smart Students - A Parent's Guide to Safe and Healthy Technology Habits