

School Basics

Activity Book



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THE ABCs OF BACK TO SCHOOL FOR PARENTS

By Diane Milne

As the new school year begins, every parent wants to encourage success for their children. However, getting books and backpacks can sometimes overshadow the little things that make for a smooth and successful start to the school year. Here's an alphabetical guide to 26 details to remember while school is in session.

- A. Ask questions.** Ask your child about his day at school. Try to ask questions that encourage more than yes or no answers. What did you learn? Who did you sit with at lunch? What books did the teacher read to you?
- B. Breakfast.** Kids learn best when they've had a nutritious breakfast. Schools often remind parents of this on testing days, but it's important for kids to get off to a good start every day.
- C. Communication.** Communicate with your child's teacher. Share your concerns, what you feel is working well for your child, and ask for clarification if something is unclear.
- D. Dates.** Check dates of school holidays and plan accordingly. Calendars vary by district.
- E. Effort.** Praise your child's best efforts. Not every child is a straight-A student. Let her know how proud you are when your child has truly done her best.
- F. Friends.** Get to know your child's friends, and encourage relationships with those that are a positive influence.
- G. Guidance counselor.** Ask the school guidance counselor to talk with your child if he seems stressed by the birth of a sibling, the loss of a family member, or school relationships.



H. Homework. Provide a quiet place that is free of distractions, and help your child as needed, without doing the work for him.

I. Illness. Keep your child home if he is sick. Germs spread quickly in a classroom, and one sick child quickly becomes 25 sick children.

J. Jot a note. Be sure to send a written excuse when your child is absent. Too many unexcused absences can affect your child's grades, or raise concerns of truancy.

K. Know the rules. Be familiar with school rules, policies, and dress code. If the Code of Conduct isn't sent home with your child, check for it online.

L. Listen. Really listen when your child talks to you. Put down the newspaper, put down the phone, turn off the TV, close the laptop, and listen.

M. Make choices. With your child, choose which after-school activities are the most important. Kids need down-time, time for balanced meals, and plenty of sleep.

N. Newsletter. Read school and classroom newsletters regularly.

O. Open House. Attend your school's Open House. Find out what's going on in your child's class, get to know the teacher, and look over your child's work samples.

P. Praise good behavior. It's easy to take positive behavior for granted, but good kids need to be praised for following the rules.

Q. Quality time. Busy lives make quality family time hard to find. Eat dinner together, go for a walk, or play a game with your child.

R. Read your child's textbooks. Glance through the table of contents to find out what will be taught. Then talk about what your child is learning to help build excitement and make connections with the topics.

S. Smile. Mornings can be hectic and a lot of kids bring this stress into the classroom with them. Try to send your child off with a smile and a hug to set a positive tone for the day.



- T. Tardiness.** In some schools, a certain number of tardy slips count as an unexcused absence. Be careful!
- U. Update the teacher.** If there are things going on that are affecting your child let the teacher know. Kids react to separations, friends moving away, and the loss of a pet. Teachers can offer extra sympathy, understanding, and support.
- V. Volunteer.** If your schedule permits, offer to help in the classroom each week. If not, help from home by typing the class newsletter, cutting out art projects, or planning class parties. A parent's involvement in the classroom promotes success in school. For more volunteering ideas check out "A Guide to Getting Involved at Your Child's School."
- W. Website.** Check out the school website. You'll find important information, changes in dates, and suggestions for ways to support your child.
- X. Don't focus on the X's.** When graded work is returned, don't focus on the problems that are marked wrong. Rather than saying, "You only missed 7," say "You got 93 right!"
- Y. Yell and shout.** Be your child's biggest cheerleader when your child scores on the football field, participates in the science fair, or recognizes all of the letters of the alphabet. Your praise is more precious than any prize or sticker from the teacher.
- Z. Zip your mouth.** When you disagree with the teacher, go to her directly to discuss your concerns. Venting these frustrations in front of your child will undermine the teacher in your child's eyes, and cause confusion. Work out your differences privately.



6 WAYS TO MANAGE YOUR BACK TO SCHOOL BUDGET

By Bill Burns

Suddenly, it's that time of year again. Your child needs all sorts of supplies, all at the same time: shoes, clothes, pencils, backpack...and that's before sports equipment and musical instrument rentals. How do you help your checking account survive?

"By developing a plan with the whole family – and beginning it now," says Amy Bergin, creator of The Couponizer, a tool to help families save money. Here are Bergin's tips to help you create a plan that's just right for everyone.

Get started now. There are two reasons for this. First, a good plan takes time to create. Second, getting a jump on the execution of your plan allows you to search for the best deals early, so you can avoid wasting time and money driving all over town trying to locate miscellaneous items.

Include your kids in the process. "The sooner you can involve your kids, the better," Bergin says. Discuss each child's needs and wants. If a request seems extravagant, ask your child why she needs that particular item. This way, you'll have time to discuss topics like needs versus wants, and the influence that other people have over what we value. It's much easier to work through these with your kids during neutral times than when they're busy grabbing things off the racks at the store.

Shop at home first. Take inventory of your house, and you may be surprised by what you already have (and how much money you'll save). Don't forget about hand-me-downs. "You don't want to slight younger kids," Bergin says, "but when clothes or supplies are still in good shape, there's no reason they can't be re-used." You can also use them to make compromises with your kids. For example, you'll agree to buy your daughter that expensive pair of shoes and she'll agree to use the winter coat her older sister has outgrown.



Focus on school, rather than on buying. Remind your child as needed (often) that what she'll experience at school will be much more worthwhile than what she can buy at the store: time with friends, new teachers, fascinating discoveries in class, and after school activities. You can also point out that saying no to designer clothing means you can say yes to sports fees and band equipment.

Plan, Shop, Buy, and Deliver. This is Bergin's method for putting it all together. It's ideal for back to school budgeting and shopping, but you'll need to get started ahead of time. "It's not an overnight trick," she points out. Here are the highlights:

- In the Planning phase, you'll take stock of what you have and what you'll need. Then you'll create a shopping list, and check for online coupons and store deals. "Keep an eye on the circulars," Bergin says. "Watch for multi-purchase sales, such as 2-for-1 deals on shoes."
- In the Shopping phase, you'll fill your cart with the items on your list — and only the items on your list. Don't give in to the lure of other things. "The little stuff will get you," Bergin warns.
- In the Delivery phase, you'll head home knowing that you saved money. "When you share about your success with the family, everyone gets excited and wants to experience it again. That's how it becomes repetitive."

Delay purchases when you can. We tend to think that our kids need everything on the first day of school. Buying items over time enables you to fit back to school purchases into your budget more easily, and can even save you money. "Stores often overstock," Bergin notes. "Once the big rush is over, they tend to mark down the prices on the remaining items." Check with your children's teachers to see what they'll really need right away and what you may be able to pick up later.

Facing the back to school budget can fill the thriftiest shopper with dread. But when the family works together to discuss, set up and execute a solid plan, the results are good news for everyone.

A GUIDE TO GETTING INVOLVED AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

By Samantha Cleaver

Whether you're helping organize a book fair or cutting out paper hearts for Valentine's Day, volunteering in your child's school helps you keep tabs on their learning, and improves the learning experience for all students. But today's definition of parent involvement is much more than just helping out in class, and some types of involvement reap more benefits than others. Steffen Saifer, director of child and family programs with the Oregon Parent Information Resource Center, would like to see parents and schools redefine parent involvement as a partnership instead of a one-way volunteer experience. "Parent involvement implies that you're at school, and are putting in volunteer hours," says Saifer, but with working parents' busy schedules, that's not always feasible. Using the idea of a parent partnership widens the range of activities that define involvement to include everything parents do at school and at home.

So, how do you make your involvement in your child's education count? Here's a guide to things you can do at home and at school:

Stay informed. Read what comes home in their backpacks, go to PTA meetings, and know what's going on, whether that's the annual field trip schedule for your first grader, or the school attendance policy for your 12th grader.

Meet the school's needs. "Education is very much a team process," says Andrew Houtenville, senior research associate with New Editions, "at times parents are going to be called upon to potentially substitute for things that schools can't provide." The prime example is the annual school supply drive, but, every school needs something different, so ask the principal or teacher what they need and how you can help.



Don't smother. "Let your child be able to experience school the way they need to," says National PTA President Jan Harp Domene. If your child isn't comfortable with your volunteering in their classroom, spend time in another class, you're still improving the overall learning experience.

Be involved every day. It's that day-to-day engagement, says Houtenville, in what your child is learning that seems to have more impact on achievement than, say, coming to school once in a while or participating in the annual bake sale.

Set them up for success. Make sure your child has space to do homework and limit their TV and computer time. When you set aside a time and a place for work, you're communicating that you want your kids to focus.

Be proactive. Whether by appointment or note, Saifer suggests giving teachers information about your child that will make it easier for them to individualize the education experience. If your child is a visual learner, for example, let them know that.

But, it's not just what you do; research has found it also has a lot to do with what you say. Using data from surveys taken by 10th graders, Houtenville and Karen Conway, professor of economics at the University of New Hampshire, found that talking to your kids about what they're studying in school and what they're interested in has an impact. Their study found that talking to a child about what she was studying in school could produce an improvement in student achievement equivalent to spending an extra \$1,000 a year on that child's education.

The message: Talk to your kids and don't stop. "Even in 10th grade it matters that you regularly talk to your kids about what they're doing in school," says Conway, who has a 9th grader of her own and reminds herself of this research often. Conway doesn't know why conversations make such a difference, but, "I think that some of it is the signal to kids that [education is] important."

But sometimes conversations about school can seem like a one-way street. Here are some tips for clearing the lines of communication with your child:

Don't stop as they get older. Elementary schools often do more to help parents become involved than middle or high schools. But, says Joyce Epstein, director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships with Johns Hopkins University, parents need to continue that involvement into middle school and high school. Know that just because your child may not be excited to see you, doesn't mean they don't want you there.



Provide age-appropriate involvement. Take advantage of the opportunities, advises Epstein, whether that's helping in a kindergarteners' classroom or attending a high schooler's football games. But, don't be overly excited to see a middle or high school student, they may not want to be hugged in the hallway.

Discuss content. In the upper grades, if the general, "How was school today?" gets you nowhere, ask what they did in math, who they are learning about in history or how the science lab went. Specific questions will get you more information.

FOR: KIDS

For more worksheets and printables,
go to www.thuvientienh.com.





ALPHABET ART

UPPERCASE

Break out the big box of crayons, the markers or a pack of colored pencils.
How many different colors can you trace the letters in?

Tracing practice for uppercase letters A through Z. Each letter is shown on a set of three horizontal lines (top, middle-dashed, bottom) with numbered arrows indicating the stroke order.

Row 1: A, B, C, D, E

Row 2: F, G, H, I, J, K

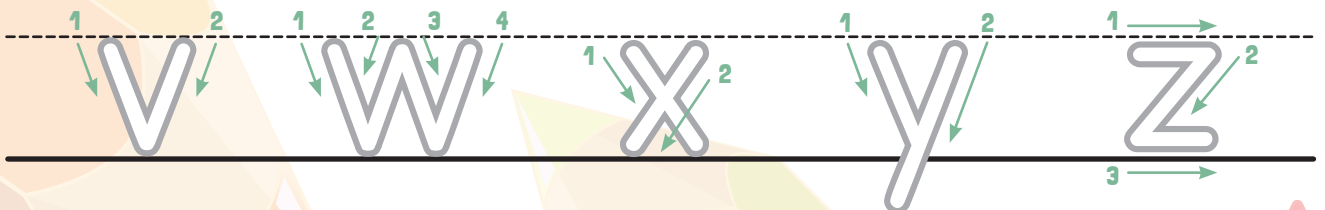
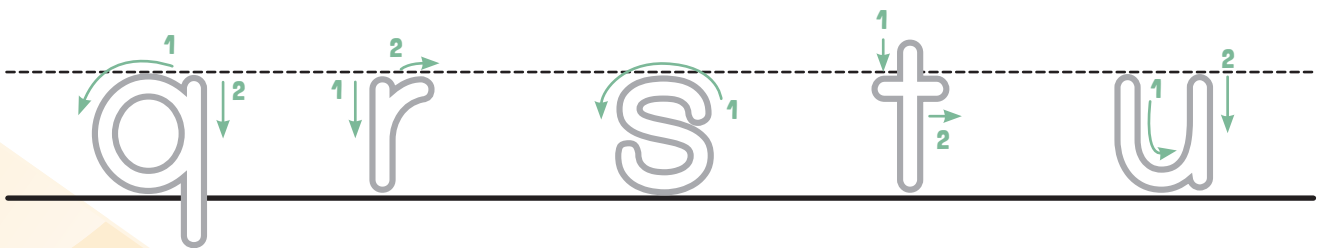
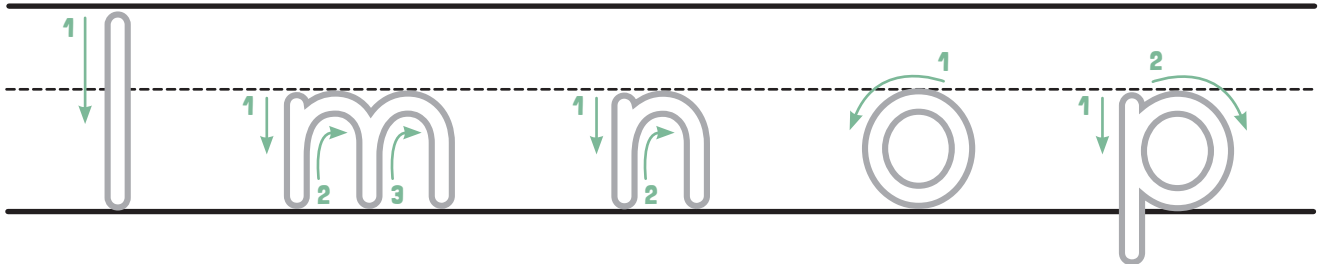
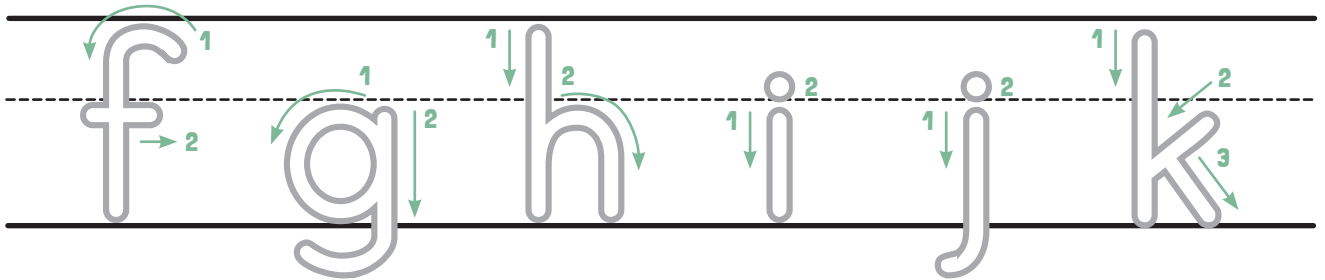
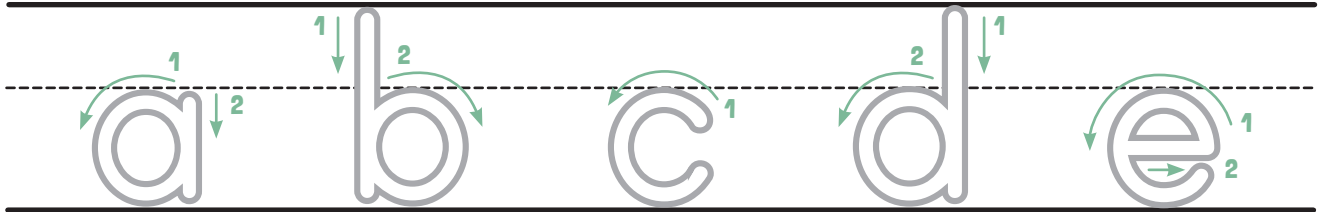
Row 3: L, M, N, O, P

Row 4: Q, R, S, T, U

Row 5: V, W, X, Y, Z

lowercase

Break out the big box of crayons, the markers or a pack of colored pencils.
How many different colors can you trace the letters in?



NUMBERS CHART TO 100

First fill in the missing numbers, then color in the correct numbers by counting. Use what you know of number patterns to help you.

1	2	3		5	6	7		9	10
11		13	14	15		17	18	19	
21	22	23		25	26	27		29	30
31		33	34	35		37	38	39	
41	42	43		45	46	47		49	50
51		53	54	55		57	58	59	
61	62	63		65	66	67		69	70
71		73	74	75		77	78	79	
81	82	83		85	86	87		89	90
91		93	94	95		97	98	99	



Count by twos and color those numbers blue. **For example, 2, 4, 6.**
What comes next?



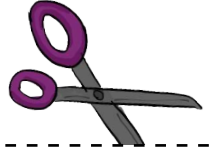
Count by fives and color those numbers red.



Count by tens and color those numbers green.

PRINTABLE BOOKMARKS

↓ Cut on the dotted lines

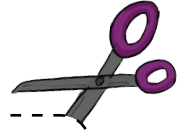


Use these bookmarks to jot down notes, assignments or other things to remember during class, or as you're reading.

HOMEWORK	CLASS NOTES	CLASSMATES
Due on: _____	Date: _____	Name: _____
To Do: _____	_____	Email: _____
_____	_____	Phone: _____
_____	_____	Name: _____
_____	_____	Email: _____
_____	_____	Phone: _____
Supplies, Resources or Ingredients: _____	_____	Name: _____
_____	_____	Email: _____
_____	_____	Phone: _____

Use this bookmark as a place to jot down words you like or that you want to look up later. Alphabetical order can make a word easier to look up later on.

Cut around the edges then fold the bookmark along the bold line.



A _____ _____	N _____ _____
B _____ _____	O _____ _____
C _____ _____	P _____ _____
D _____ _____	Q _____ _____
E _____ _____	R _____ _____
F _____ _____	S _____ _____
G _____ _____	T _____ _____
H _____ _____	U _____ _____
I _____ _____	V _____ _____
J _____ _____	W _____ _____
K _____ _____	X _____ _____
L _____ _____	Y _____ _____
M _____ _____	Z _____ _____

10 THINGS I WANT TO REMEMBER

Write down important dates, names, places or instructions that you need to remember later.

10 numbered lines for writing, each with a horizontal line and a decorative scalloped top edge.



CHORES TO DO



Name:



Date:



MY CHORES

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

M

T

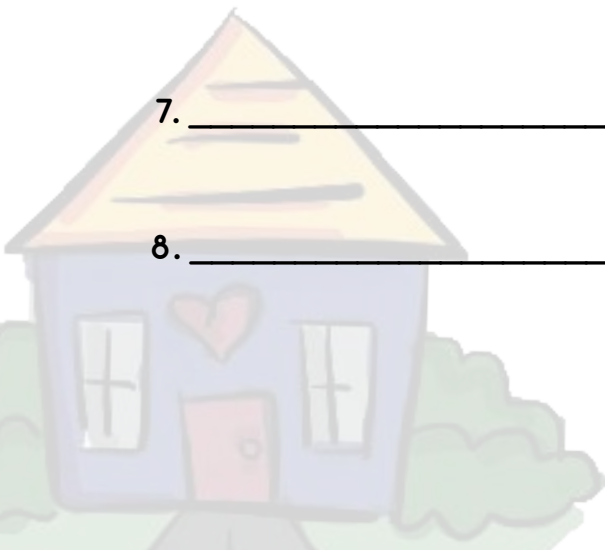
W

T

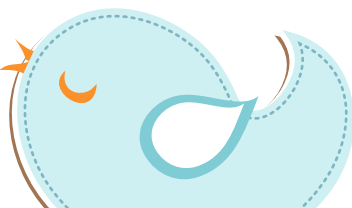
F

S

S



MULTIPLICATION TIMES TABLES TO 12



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36
4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48
5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72
7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77	84
8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80	88	96
9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	99	108
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120
11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110	121	132
12	24	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120	132	144

FOR: FAMILIES

For more activities,
go to www.thuvientienanh.com.



MAKE A DUCT TAPE WALLET

By Amy Brayfield



This unique craft idea takes duct tape to a new level! This activity provides kids great practice in following directions, and makes for a fun, homemade gift.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Duct tape
- Scissors

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Start by helping your child rip off a strip of tape about 12 inches long. Lay it down on the table horizontally with the sticky side facing up.
2. Cut another strip of duct tape of equal length and lay it over the lower half of the first strip, sticky side down, making sure the ends line up.
3. Fold the exposed part of the first strip down over the second strip to seal the top edge.
4. Cut another 12-inch strip of tape. Flip the wallet over and place the third strip of tape over the sticky, exposed bottom half of the wallet.
5. Flip and repeat, keeping the duct tape rectangle you are making 12 inches wide, but each time adding another layer to the bottom. Continue until your duct tape rectangle is about 8-8½ inches long.

6. Fold over the exposed flap on the bottom to seal the bottom edge of the wallet. Trim an inch or so from each side to make them neat, so the rectangle now measures 10-11 inches wide.
7. Fold the rectangle in half from left to right, like you would a book.
8. Seal the bottom and right edges of the rectangle with strips of tape so that only the top edge is open.
9. Fold the rectangle in half again from bottom to top, so that the rectangle is now about 5 inches wide and 4 inches tall.
10. You can tape the open right and left sides to seal them and create a smaller wallet, or you can leave them open, to make a larger wallet that's more like a pocket book.
11. Pat yourself on the back—you've just made a simple duct tape wallet!



WHILE THIS PROJECT IS DEFINITELY KID-FRIENDLY, IT CAN BE A LITTLE TRICKY FOR SMALLER HANDS, SO MAKE SURE YOU'RE THERE TO HELP FOR THE HARDER CUTTING AND ASSEMBLING PARTS.









CREATE A SECRET STORAGE BOX

By Amy Hengst

What child doesn't love to have a secret hiding place? And what better hiding place than an old book? Hollowed books provide the perfect secret space to keep a small stash of money, candy, or toys. Here's an activity that'll show you and your child how to construct your own secret storage book.


For this project, you'll need a book. Many libraries or yard sales offer old hardback books that can be a great starting place for this project. Ideally, you'll want to choose a book title that is uninteresting and people won't be tempted to pick up and flip through themselves. That way the book blends in, and no one will know the hidden treasures it contains!

WHAT YOU NEED:

-  A medium to large hardcover book
-  A medium sized paintbrush
-  White craft glue or wood glue
-  Box cutter, or utility knife
-  Pencil
-  Ruler
-  Old newspapers, magazines, or plastic shopping bags
-  A small disposable container such as a clean yogurt cup



 **Optional:** Sandpaper (150 grit), available at any hardware store

 **Optional:** A small magnet, and a washer or other small , flat metal piece

SET-UP:

1. Set down newspaper or old magazine pages to protect your table or workspace.
2. Choose which pages you want to leave loose at the front of the book. These pages will cover the hollowed-out part of the book.
3. Flip these pages over to the front cover. Then flip one more page over so that those stay clean. Since you will need to make markings on where to cut up the book, this way you can mark up a page that will be hidden later on.
4. Wrap the front cover and these first pages with newspaper, or put a plastic grocery bag over the front of the book, and secure them with a rubber band or twist tie. This is to protect them while you glue and cut the other part of the book.
5. Next, mix the glue you'll use to hold the pages together. Fill the yogurt cup about a quarter full with glue, then another quarter full with water. Mix them together carefully, using a plastic knife or the end of your paintbrush. You want the glue to be thin, but not drippy, so that it will seep into the pages and fasten them together.

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Once your materials are prepared get ready to start gluing your book. Flip the protected cover out of the way, and hold the rest of the pages together. Brush your glue mixture around the outside edges of the book pages.
2. Set some glossy (non-sticky) magazine pages between the cover and the glued part of the book, and shut the book. Put something heavy on top as a weight to hold it tightly shut while it dries.
3. Set it to dry for at least 20 minutes.
4. Save your left-over glue solution by covering your container. Then wash the glue out of your paint brush with cold water so the brush bristles don't stick.

5. Once the book is dry, check to see how secure the pages are. If there are gaps, add another coat of glue and set it to dry once more. You may need to glue it up to three times.
6. Once your pages are secured together, you are ready to begin hollowing out the book. Start by measuring three quarters of an inch ($3/4$ ") from all sides, and draw lines where you will be cutting.
7. Use your utility knife to begin cutting pages out of the book. Go slowly to make sure that you cut neatly. This will get more difficult the deeper you go in the book.
8. As you cut, consider whether you wish to leave a few pages at the bottom of the book, or cut all the way to the back cover. As you near the end, cut carefully so you do not cut through the bottom.
9. When you are done cutting, go back and even out the walls of your box (the pages you have cut through). You can also use the sandpaper to smooth out the edges of the book.
10. If you want to add a magnet to hold the box closed, cut out a small section at the right hand margin of the pages, just the size of the magnet. Glue the magnet in place. Then glue a washer or other metal piece to the inside of the front cover, so that it aligns with the magnet and keeps the book closed.
11. Brush glue into the inside pages of the box to seal them shut.
12. Now, you'll want to glue the neat, clean page over the rest of the pages and over the magnet. Carefully apply glue and turn the whole page over to be glued down. You will be covering the hollowed part of your box with the page, but don't worry, you will be cutting it out later.
13. Leave your work to dry. Again, put a heavy weight on the book to hold the pages in place. Wash your brushes carefully.
14. Once the glue is dry, use your knife to cut the page you just glued down, so that the hollowed portion of the box can open. If the inside of the hollow portion is still sticky, leave it open to dry a little longer.



ONCE IT'S DRY, YOU'RE DONE. PUT YOUR TREASURES INSIDE, AND HIDE THEM IN YOUR BOOKSHELF!








BUILD A BETTER BULLETIN BOARD

By Julie Williams

Setting up an organized area, no matter the size, to hold your child's important papers, form and anything else she might need, can be a big help during the school year. This will be a great place to house all of those important materials, including loose memos, like field trip permission forms, which always seem to build up. Even if chaos seems to take over at first, take heart: the payoff that comes with organization is always worth the effort. Kids do better, adults yell less, and nobody misses field trips!

During Back to School season you can find lots of organization products at most stores. But with this homemade bulletin board project you can make your own organization tool at little or no cost right at home.

WHAT YOU NEED:

-  Hang-up bulletin board that fits near your child's work area, approximately 24"x32" (or so)
-  1 yard of plain fabric in a design your child really likes (a good suggestion is cotton broadcloth, but you can also use flannel. (Beware heavy canvas, however, which is too thick.))
-  6 yards of 1/2" wide grosgrain ribbon or elastic straps
-  Felt, cut to the same size as the bulletin board
-  Package of flat-head thumbtacks
-  Staple gun
-  Masking Tape

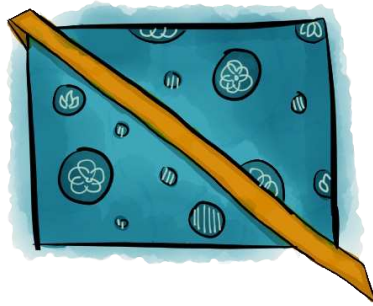


WHAT YOU DO:

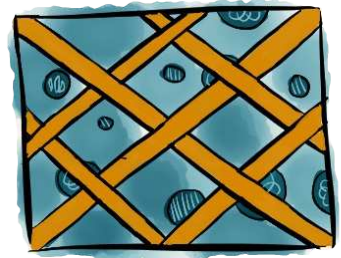
1. Take your bulletin board and lay it on a flat surface. You can also purchase excellent bulletin corkboard material at a hardware and lumber store, by the square yard, with no frame.
2. Lay the fabric over the bulletin board surface so that there is a generous overlap at the edges. Trim the fabric so that there is a border around each side, roughly 6" wide.
3. Carefully smooth the fabric over the bulletin board surface and fold it over the edge. Check again to make sure that the fabric is smoothed down and even. Then check the corners, and fold them as you might if you were wrapping a present.
4. Anchor the corners with masking tape, and then use the staple gun to staple the fabric permanently in place.
5. Now turn the bulletin board over and stretch the ribbon across the top of the front of the bulletin board. Start by draping the end of the ribbon about six inches in from the edge, over the top edge of the board, and anchor it with a staple. Then stretch the ribbon diagonally across the corner, pull it around and to the back, anchor and trim it. Lay out ribbons at intervals of 6-8" making diagonal stripes across the face of the board. Then crisscross the ribbons with another set, following the same steps, resulting in a lattice pattern across the face of the board.



**STAPLE THE END
OF THE RIBBON**



**DRAG THE RIBBON
DIAGONALLY ACROSS**



**CRISSCROSS THE
RIBBONS**

6. At the junctions where each ribbon meets, take out your staple gun again, and anchor the junction with a staple. Then finish it off with a flat head thumbtack.

7. Finally, when all the ribbons are attached and secured, turn the bulletin board over and cover the back with the felt piece. Again, use the staple gun along the edges to staple the felt to the back, creating a smooth surface.
8. Congratulations! You've created a personal organization tool, styled just as your child likes, and most importantly, you and your child have made something that will make a big difference in her success at school and at home. Papers can be tacked anywhere on the bulletin board, but when small stuff comes in, you can tuck those things into the ribbons of the lattice. Your child will be proud of this bulletin board...and even prouder of the success that comes when she has a place for everything, and everything is in its place.

HANDY TIPS AND ALTERNATIVES:

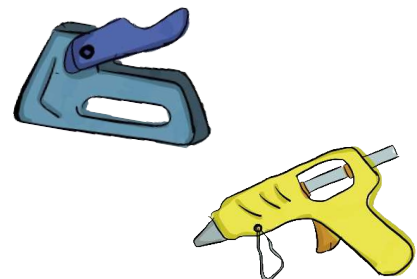
Recycle old, favorite clothes


If your child has outgrown a favorite t-shirt, or, an older sibling or parent has one to spare – one side of the shirt can be used as cloth for covering your bulletin board. For a no-sew project, you may have to adjust the size of your bulletin board to the size of the cloth.



I don't have a staple gun, but I do have a hot glue gun

In a pinch a hot glue gun can be used instead of a staple gun. The staple gun will definitely create more permanent, stronger bonds, especially when wrapping the cloth over the front of the board, but a glue gun can do a decent job, too. Just be careful; when they say it's hot they mean it! (Don't use hot glue on elastic. It will melt.)





Great job!

is an ThuVienTiengAnh.Com art superstar

