



Get Better Understanding

Back to School

Each year as children head back to school, we get back to our routines. The summer is fun when there is not so much to do. Or, did you really take a break? Did you fill up the extra time to the point where you are now frazzled?

Take a few moments to catch your breath and make some choices that will allow this school year be full of memories instead of the blur of a whirl wind.

Activities

There are many activities to participate in when school starts. So as to not overcrowd your calendar, it is a good rule of thumb to have only one activity per person. That includes you! It is good to commit to a period of time whether a season, term or year, to determine if the activity is something to continue. It also allows time for a person to become proficient.

Explain to the children that with everyone in the family having an activity, there may be some conflicts in times and days. In those instances, someone may have to miss or arrange to get a ride with someone else. When times of scheduling conflict arise, discuss it with the children and allow them to help come up with solutions and the final decision.

Allow the children to pick from different types of activities. A sport, a musical instrument, and arts and crafts are all some pastimes to try.

Also allow them to make the decision to leave one activity for another one, even if they are good at it. The year my daughter played percussion, her plan was to play throughout junior high and high school. The group was so good they rose to number 1 in competition. But somewhere during the year, she decided she was done. Her band teacher was very upset when she heard my daughter would not be returning the next year. "Lillie has talent and shouldn't quit." I told Lillie

that the only way I would let her quit band was if she promised me that if ever in her life, she looked back and said, “I wish I hadn’t quit”, she would find a teacher and play again.

Another activity that our family did together was volunteering. Doing something that helps others gives one a great sense of being part of something bigger than self. Over the years, our family participated in an apartment ministry, feeding the homeless, and helping other single parents in a support group.

Having only one activity per person creates some free time during the school year. This allows everyone space to enjoy the chosen activity. Also, the family can spend some unstructured time together.

Calendar Keeping

There is lots of advice on how to organize your calendar to get you to all your activities on time. Keeping a master with you and posting a weekly schedule on the fridge, using a different color for each person in the family, having a folder for invitations, directions, etc are all great ideas.

Calendars come with pictures that you can hang on the wall. Weekly, monthly, daily versions are available. Electronic handhelds and even phones have calendar and reminder options.

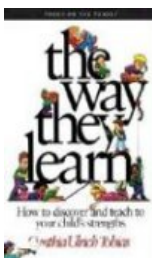
It can be overwhelming to decide which is the best way to keep track of all the things one must do during the school year: activities, school functions, PTA, holidays that you will need to secure childcare just to name a few.

The most important thing is to find something that works for you. Don’t let organizing your calendar keep you from enjoying each day. Let it be a tool for you to make your life easier.

Let your kids help you. Those who can write would love to put their activities on the calendar. If you have little ones, get stickers and let them use the stickers for their activities.

I had to let my kids know that if they did not make sure the things they wanted to do was on the calendar, there was a risk it wouldn't happen. Something might get scheduled in that time instead or it would be forgotten.

The Way They Learn



As I was thinking about school starting back up, I asked myself what helped me and my kids most?

I would have to say it was the book “The Way They Learn” by Cynthia Tobias. the book, she explains different learning styles. She goes beyond the basics. She explores how learning styles affect how information is understood and organized.

She also shows how these traits can become the child's greatest strengths.

If it seems that your child(ren) are trying to drive you crazy, it may just be they have a different learning style. Knowing your children's way of processing will open up new ways of motivating and inspiring your children.

Go to www.primaryparentingonpurpose.com and click on the link to get the book or more information.

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