

The Prepared Environment's

Back-to-School Reset

Declutter & Set Up Your Home for a Calmer School Year – **Teacher Edition**

As the new school year approaches, you're probably thinking about your classroom, your students, your schedule, and the very long list of things you need to get done before the first bell rings.

But what about your home?

Back-to-school is a transition for teachers, too. Summer routines change. Mornings get earlier. Lunches need packing again. Work starts coming home. And suddenly the little things that weren't a big deal in July can feel like one more decision at the end of a very long day.

This reset isn't about perfectly organizing your home before school starts. It's about looking for the places where you can make life a little easier for yourself.

Declutter what you don't need. Give the things you use every day an easy home. Create a few simple systems. And prepare your space for the tired, busy version of you...not just the organized version with lots of energy.

Teachers spend so much time preparing their classrooms for their students. This time, let's prepare your home for you.



TAKE CARE,

Sarah

Reflect Before You Reset

Before you start organizing, think back to last school year.

You don't need to change everything. Instead, notice the little parts of your day that regularly caused frustration.

Ask yourself:

- What made school mornings feel rushed?
- What was I constantly looking for?
- Where did my school things end up when I came home?
- What household tasks were hardest to keep up with?
- What made packing lunches difficult?
- What tended to pile up during busy weeks?
- What did I wish I had prepared ahead of time?

Then ask one more question:

What could I do now that September-me will be grateful for?

Choose a few things. You don't need to fix your entire house before school starts.

Declutter First: Clear Out the Clutter

Entryway/Mudroom

- ☐ Put away shoes you won't be wearing this season
- ☐ Remove bags, coats and accessories you don't regularly use
- ☐ Make an easy-to-reach spot for your keys
- ☐ Clear space for your everyday school shoes and bag

Closet & Clothing

- ☐ Pull out your go-to teacher clothes
- ☐ Remove anything that no longer fits or feels comfortable
- ☐ Set aside items that need repairing

Teacher Bags

- ☐ Completely empty last year's school bag
- ☐ Recycle old papers and receipts
- ☐ Return stray supplies to where they belong
- ☐ Wash or wipe out your bag if needed
- ☐ Restock only the things you actually use

School Stuff at Home

- ☐ Gather school supplies from around your home
- ☐ Decide what needs to go back to school
- ☐ Create ONE home for the school materials that need to stay
- ☐ Recycle or donate materials you no longer need

Remember: Declutter first. Organize what's left.

Create Your Teacher Launch Pad

Think about the things you carry out of the house almost every school morning. Where do they live?

Instead of collecting everything from different rooms as you're trying to leave, create a simple Teacher Launch Pad near your exit.

You might include a place for:

- School bag
- Keys
- ID/lanyard
- Lunch bag
- Water bottle/travel mug
- Items that need to go to school
- Library books or things that need returning

You don't need to buy anything.

A hook, basket, tray, shelf or small section of a closet might be enough.

The goal isn't to create a beautiful command centre.

The goal is to stop searching for your keys at 7:42 a.m.

Reset Your Closet for Teacher Mornings

You don't need an entirely new back-to-school wardrobe.

You need clothes you can find, that you feel good wearing, and that make getting dressed on a Tuesday morning easy.

Start by shopping your own closet.

- Pull out your favorite teacher outfits
- Check that everything fits and feels comfortable
- Make sure your favorite shoes are ready
- Deal with anything that needs washing or repairing
- Identify pieces that mix and match easily
- Move off-season or rarely worn clothing out of the way

Try This:

Create 5 easy teacher outfits using clothes you already own.

Take a quick photo of each one.

Now, when you don't know what to wear, you don't have to make another decision, you can look at your photos and choose one.

You could also designate a hook, chair or small section of your closet as a place to put tomorrow's outfit.

Make getting dressed require fewer decisions.

Make Feeding Yourself Easier

This is not a four-hour Sunday meal-prep plan.

The goal is simply to make food easier to grab, pack and prepare when school starts.

Start With a Reset

- Clean out the fridge
- Toss expired food
- Take a quick freezer inventory
- Clear out your lunch container cupboard
- Make room for foods you'll actually use during school weeks

Create a Teacher Lunch Zone

Choose one shelf, drawer, basket or section of the pantry for easy lunch items.

Think: What can I grab when I don't have the energy to think?

Choose: 3 easy lunches, 3 grab-and-go snacks, 3 emergency dinners. Write these down on a piece of paper or in a note in your phone.

You don't need a complicated meal system.

You need a few easy answers to: "What am I going to eat?"

Create a Coming-Home Routine

You probably have routines for your students. Your home can have routines that support you, too.

Think about what happens when you walk through the door after school.

Does your bag land on the floor? Does your lunch container stay in your bag until tomorrow morning? Do papers migrate to the kitchen counter?

Create a simple landing routine.

When I Get Home...

My school bag goes:

My keys go:

My lunch container goes:

My water bottle goes:

School papers/items go:

Then I:

That last one matters. Maybe you change your clothes. Maybe you make tea. Maybe you sit down for ten minutes. Maybe you go for a walk. Maybe you need a little silence before anyone asks you another question.

Your routine doesn't have to be productive. It needs to help you transition from school to home.

Prepare for Low-Energy Evenings

Don't prepare your home only for the version of you who has time, energy and motivation. Prepare it for the version of you who has spent all day teaching.

Look around your home and ask: **What tends to become difficult when I'm tired?**
Then see if you can make that task easier.

If dinner becomes difficult...Keep a few extremely easy meals in the freezer or pantry.

If laundry piles up...Make sure hampers are where clothes actually come off.

If school things take over the kitchen...Give them one designated landing spot.

If you can't keep up with cleaning... Decide what "good enough" looks like during the first few weeks.

If you need time to decompress...Create a place where you can sit without immediately seeing another job that needs doing.

You aren't trying to create a home that stays perfectly organized.
You're creating a home that asks a little less of you.

Before School Starts

The first week of school is probably not the week to reorganize the garage. Before school begins, think about what you can take off your plate.

- Catch up on laundry
- Reset the entryway
- Clear the kitchen counters
- Stock a few easy meals
- Choose some easy school outfits
- Reset your lunch supplies
- Set up your Teacher Launch Pad
- Put school items that need returning by the door

Decide what can wait. And then give yourself permission to let it wait.

During the First Week

Your routines may not work perfectly right away. That's okay.

Pay attention to what is creating friction and adjust as you go.

- Repeat easy meals
- Wear your tried-and-true outfits
- Keep evenings as light as possible
- Give yourself time to decompress after school
- Reset your school bag before bed
- Put tomorrow's essentials by the door
- Go to bed a little earlier if you can
- Lower your expectations for what needs to happen at home

At the end of the week, ask:

What worked?

What kept frustrating me?

What could I change in my environment to make next week easier?

You don't have to get the system right the first time.

Observe. Adjust. Try again.

The 10-Minute Teacher Reset

When your week starts to feel a little chaotic, set a timer for ten minutes. Don't try to reset the whole house.

Just reset the things that will make tomorrow easier.

- Clear the entryway
- Empty your school bag
- Check your calendar
- Reset lunch containers
- Restock a few easy foods
- Choose tomorrow's outfit
- Clear one kitchen surface
- Put school items by the door
- Plug in anything that needs charging
- Choose ONE thing that would make tomorrow easier

Done is enough.



A FINAL REMINDER

Back-to-school preparation doesn't have to mean buying more things. Sometimes the most helpful preparation is removing something. Clearing a surface. Choosing where your school bag will live. Putting together five outfits. Stocking three emergency dinners. Deciding that the laundry can wait.

Your classroom is a prepared environment for your students. Your home can be a prepared environment for you.

TAKE CARE,
Sarah