



# GETTING THE KIDS OUT THE DOOR

**From Beth Aldrich for Hot Moms Club**



Being a busy work from home mom, I'm always looking for quick and clever ways to get our family up and out the door in a timely manner. I've come up with a few tips that work well for us that I'd love to share.

It never fails, if you wait to organize your children's morning exit strategy until morning, it's likely you'll oversleep or just plain forget. Instead, try staging your path the night before to avoid morning rush, stress and possible arguments.

We plan and pick outfits for the next day after nighttime baths or story time. We simply place the selected outfit at the foot of the bed (shoes and all), leaving nothing to chance in the morning rush. The same thing goes for books and assignments that need to get placed in backpacks. In the past, there have been plenty of times where I've had to drive back to school to drop off forgotten schoolwork. With a zipped up backpack, assignments are sure to find their way to the teacher's desk.

School lunches can be packed the night before. I've discovered that while cleaning up after dinner, I can pack the non-chilled items (crunchy snacks, cookies, etc) in the lunch box and leave it strategically placed on the counter for quick packing of the pre-made, chilled (bagged carrots, fruit, and sandwiches) items from the refrigerator. By planning out lunches ahead of time, I avoid the morning scramble of asking "What kind of sandwich do you want", etc. Additionally, by recycling food containers, you go easy on the environment and landfills. Re-usable stainless steel water bottles keep food chilled and never give food that plastic taste. My sons pitch in by helping me prepare their lunches. The boys also place their classroom snacks in their backpacks the night before to save precious morning time.

Exit strategy is key when hustling three boys out the door. If jackets, coats, boots, hats, and gloves are conveniently hung in a mud room or hook at the exit, nothing ever seems to get left behind. It's helpful to have a master drawer or container (such as a plastic bin or basket) where each child's extra garments can be stored, making life easier when cold mornings creep up on you. Having a central location for umbrellas and rain ponchos near the exit is also helpful.

Motivational technology is a useful negotiator. Every good parent knows their child's tipping point and at times it's helpful to have a secret weapon. Our negotiator of choice is electronics. To get my youngest son out the door without a gripe or quarrel with his brothers, I will often say, "when you get in the car, remind me to give you your Gameboy." Sure enough, he's bounding out the door—past the brothers—in his seat, belted and ready to go. The same thing goes for discipline. If there continues to be a morning out the door problem, the first line of defense is taking away the cell phones (for older brothers)—this seems to eliminate any future dilly-dally-ers for days to come.



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Finally, I come first. Even though I make several plots and plans for my children to get ready to go in the morning, I keep myself in line, too. I pick out my own clothes the night before, I pack healthy snacks (such as bagged almonds or carrots) in my purse for carpool line, I leave reusable grocery bags in the car at all times—for that spontaneous trip to the grocery store in between meetings, I have my work papers and reading in my backpack ready to go for meetings that I might have after school drop off, and I always carry my workout bag in the car (just in case I get motivated for a mid-day workout). By giving yourself the gift of organization, you show your children that they are important enough to plan for and you show yourself that you are one simplified, organized Super Mom!

Beth Aldrich is founder of For Her Information, an online guide for conscious-minded woman. For more articles and helpful tips visit, [www.forherinformation.com](http://www.forherinformation.com).