

(Style on a Dime) Do your homework now-Save big later!

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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I can already hear you complaining: “Don’t ruin our last few days of summer vacation by talking about the h-word!” I’m sorry, but we must talk *homework* for a minute. You know my focus is always to share with my readers how to save, save, save. Well saving money is not the primary focus today, but trust me, we’ll get to that.

Please bear with me as I try to convince you that doing homework right now, in the form of a before-school-review, can create some great savings in your home. You will save yourself the stress of realizing (often too late) your kids have fallen behind, your kids will save the frustration of being confused in class, and you’ll save some of those cuss words that you use right before you hit that boiling point. (Now you know you don’t need to be using those cuss words anyway, but I’ll save that for a future article.) Rather than sending little Martez off to school unprepared for the next grade, invest some time and a few well spent dollars to help him get off to a strong start.

Hire a budget-friendly tutor

My eighth grader struggled in math last year, so the college senior we hired to tutor her this summer has worked well. While tutors normally charge around \$40/hour, her rate is \$15/hour (a win-win situation). Even just a couple of sessions of review before school starts would be helpful.

Do math drills to-go

Because our families have such full schedules these days, we are often on the road, travelling from one outing to another. Instead of listening to music, or letting the kids watch a video while you drive, test your student on her addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts. Make it fun by giving a penny or nickel for each correct answer.

Find online resources

There are several great websites that can help your kids prepare for a great school year. A retired math teacher recommended several to us: www.coolmath.com , www.mathplayground.com , www.mathslice.com , www.funb.com

[rain.com](#)

These sites use math (and reading) games to make learning fun and some have free printable worksheets and flashcards.

As parents we would never dream of sending our children to school without a book bag and necessary supplies (as long as we can afford them). Sadly, we sometimes leave the responsibility of preparing our children for another school year solely to the teachers. That's not right. Chantelle's first week of school should not mainly reflect the bargains scored at the mall, because stylish outfits don't earn A's. As our children's original teachers, we must reinforce messages like "you are most beautiful when you are using your brain, (not when rocking your new Baby Phat gear)" and "clowning in class is not cute."

God has placed great potential in each one of our children and we must help them to tap into it. Let's make the time to help our kids get excited about a new school year and review grade-appropriate material with them before they hit the school grounds. This way we send to the hard-working teachers our children who are prepared to learn, grow and excel. After all, they are our leaders of today and tomorrow. Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.