

mounted rack or a hook to keep the entryway from becoming a “drop zone,” she says.

After school, ask children to empty their backpack papers (school news, forms, etc.) into a hanging wall file with their name on it and to empty their lunch bag. There are magnetic plastic file holders that can be attached to the fridge, or a more attractive wooden one can be hung in a central location. A parent should check each kid’s file at the end of the day, or before bed.

It might seem like a good idea to go through the backpack papers and homework as soon as the child comes through the door, but it’s not, argues Salloux. It’s best to devote a block of uninterrupted time to review the paperwork later instead of trying to read, fill out forms, fix a snack and ask about a child’s day at the same time.

People, she says, think they save time when they multitask, but studies have proven that the opposite is true. “Multitasking makes our brains stupid. We try to do too much at once and it’s stressful,” says Salloux. “There are real benefits to being single-focused.”

## The Schedule

A calendar to keep track of soccer games, recitals, open house nights, PTO meetings and the other activities that consume families during the school year is critical.

Both women found fault with my tiny calendar hung inside a kitchen cabinet.

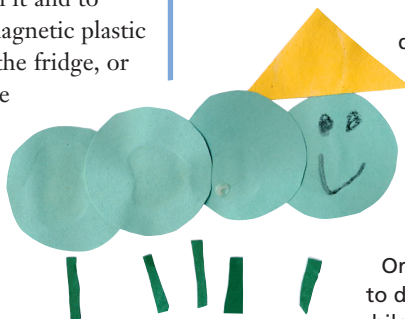
They like a large wall calendar out in the open to make sure that everyone knows the plan for any given day.

Parziale also suggests using a different color marker for each family member to keep track of important dates.

Most mothers don’t delegate enough, both women agree. Ask children to set the table, help make dinner, put clothes away. Older kids can record their own activities on the calendar.

“You are not doing them any favors by doing everything for them,” says Salloux. “The biggest thing I find with my clients is that parents aren’t giving their kids enough to do.”

## Ten Tips for Storing Kids’ Artwork

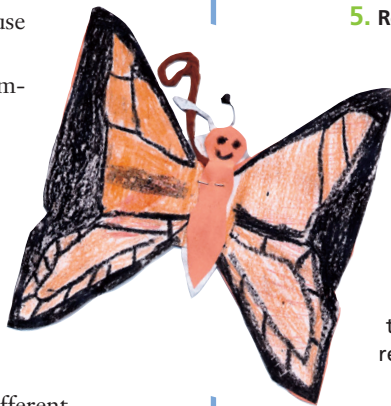


As parents, we don’t want to ever discourage our mini Monets and prolific Picassos, but it’s a challenge to find enough room in the house to store all the artistic creations that come home from school. Professional organizer and Arlington resident Elizabeth

Goodsell, founder of That’s Neat!

Organizing, offers the following ideas to declutter kitchen counters and closets while still nurturing the budding artist:

- 1. Select your favorite art pieces to frame and hang in your home.** A mat and frame can turn any artwork into a masterpiece, and your children will be proud to see their creations displayed prominently.
- 2. Designate one wall as a rotating “gallery.”** Display artwork for a few weeks and then take it down to make room for new pieces. This also helps contain the art to one area in your house.
- 3. Use a display shelf** in a hallway to showcase special pieces or sculptures.
- 4. Laminate artwork and use it as placemats,** for yourself or to give as gifts.
- 5. Routinely give the artwork away** to relatives and others who love your kids.
- 6. Turn artwork into wrapping paper or cards.**
- 7. Each year, designate a box for each child to store favorite artwork,** and keep only what fits in the box. Your child can help choose the pieces to keep. At the end of the year, showcase or save the best (maybe five pieces), recycle the rest, and start over again.
- 8. Hang art on the wall or the fridge, and each month take a photo of your child in front of all the pieces.** Then take down the artwork but keep the photos in a special photo album.
- 9. Take digital photos of the artwork and turn them into a slideshow screensaver** on your computer.
- 10. Upload digital photos of the artwork to an online photo site** and create a simple calendar or photo album.



For more organization tips from professional organizer Elizabeth Goodsell, visit [www.thatzneatorganizing.com](http://www.thatzneatorganizing.com).