

#274 - The Back to School Starter Pack

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today is episode 274 - the back to school starter pack. It's the middle of August and the probable season of back to school. If you don't have kids or aren't in education, you might not be super into this episode, but there might be a few helpful things in the realm of seasonal transitions so there you go.

Basically, I want to remind you of all the things you might want to think about and where we've already talked about those things on the podcast. Remember back in episode 200 where we did the Lazy Genius starter pack and listed 20 of the best episodes that will impact your life right away? This is that but for going back to school.

So let's break down some of the resources you might be into, and we'll obviously have links to all of these in the show notes.

The best place to start is with an episode I did last year around this time called **Get Your Back-to-School Life Together. It's Episode 221**, and in it, I talk about - you guessed it - getting your back-to-school life together, but one thing I want to highlight here is that in the beginning of that episode, I share a perspective on narrowing down what matters most during this season. We have a lot of things that need to matter right now - getting school supplies, transitioning routines, making sure our kids have seasonal clothes that fit, transitioning play areas to spots that can support homework, too. There is a lot that we could think about. Rather than say, "Well, I can only choose one of those things to really focus on," you can think about all of the areas you need to address and then name what matters most about *it* specifically. What matters most about what matters most?

So instead of broadly saying, "Getting school supplies matters" because of course it does, what matters most *about* getting school supplies? Is that the process is quick, fun, done solo, or done as a family? Does budget matter? Do you want everything to come from one place? Do you want your kids to choose, or is it fine for you to just order stuff and have it ready? What matters most about what matters? I go into detail in Episode 221, but I think that perspective alone could help calm a little of the back to school crazy.

And depending on your situation, especially as it relates to Covid, two years ago, I did an episode called **How to Go Back to School, Episode 168**, and that was focused more on going back to school when you don't really know what going back looks like. If that is your situation specifically, that episode could be super helpful.

Another episode to listen to and maybe start implementing bit by bit now is **Episode 223, The Lazy Genius Gets Out the Door**. I mean, hello. That's maybe one of the hardest things about being a person, being a person in charge of other smaller persons, and doing that in a transitional time. So that episode is actually one of my favorites. It's practical and kind of funny

and full of solidarity because of how hard it is for us to get out the door. So I highly recommend listening to that one. And as a sort of bonus episode to getting out the door, right around that time, I recorded **Episode 225 which is called The Shoe Episode**, and y'all that's seriously an entire episode about how to deal with shoes in your house, particularly shoes that are lost by your children. It's not just an episode for children's shoes, but that's a big challenge of getting out the door is finding everyone's daggum shoes. So if that is a struggle in your house, that's episode to listen to.

Another bonus that is related to getting out the door is **Episode 226 - How Batching and Bags Can Get You Out the Door**. It's a practical look at how to think about your stuff when you're leaving and coming home in such a way that you have what you need without forgetting stuff or without having a bunch of crazytown lists and complicated routines that you don't remember to do. So if you are a person who has a hard time herding the humans and their things from one place to another, those three episodes could be super helpful.

Next up, let's park for a minute on after school. I think that I personally have an ideal in my head, a dream that when my kids come home from school, they feel safe and comforted and happy to be there and that the energy in our home after school is something they remember. Now, that's a lot of pressure to put on a very busy couple of hours between school and dinner, right? But it's an energy that matters to me and I think matters to my kids. So it's worth at least thinking about and starting small with how that after school time feels. And that's why I for sure want to recommend **Episode 123 - The Lazy Genius After School Routine** which was a very long time ago. September of 2019. So pre-pandemic, you guys. Wild. But very relevant obviously.

One thing that's really important to remember about the time after school is that it's borderline if not fully frantic for everyone. It's a naturally frantic, saturated time of day, and no routine is going to eliminate that. It might lessen it, but it's not going to make it go away. And that feels really important to say in this episode as we remember all the things that are going on in our homes and in our kids and in ourselves as we go back to school. We think that if we're stressed out in any way that we're doing something wrong, that we're missing something, that we're not creating a routine or system or whatever that works well enough because after school feels a little loopy. It will always be a little loopy. The very nature of children transitioning from school to home, you transitioning from having zero or some of your kids to all of them, homework, rest, play, dinner, and everyone having different social and emotional needs when they go from school to home... y'all. It's a lot. It's naturally going to feel tight. And that is even more true if you are a working parent. If you don't get off work until 5pm or 6pm and you're dealing with getting kids from practice and day care and grandma's and getting groceries for dinner or coordinating with another adult every day because your schedules change... it is fruitless to expect that after-school is going to be seamless and simple and calm. That's just not the nature of that time of day. Now, we can make small changes and strategically apply Lazy Genius principles to make it a little easier since that's our purest goal - to make things just a little easier wherever we can - but please hear me. If you get into school and you find the after school time to be stressful, the problem is not you. It is not you. The problem is that after school is stressful.

Period. But there might be some small things you can do, one at a time, to create some kind of after school routine for yourself and your people, and that is laid out in that episode, in episode 123 - The Lazy Genius After School Routine.

We'll be right back...

Next, let's talk about the general topic of time management. Time shifts once school starts, and things pick up and change and even though it's only the middle of August, somehow we're already thinking about Christmas? It's weird. So if that category stresses you out - if figuring out how to manage your time stresses you out - here are a few episodes that could be helpful.

First, **Episode 246 - 5 Essential Mindsets for Time Management**. The planners and tools and hacks and pens and processes are not where you start. Remember, one of the Lazy Genius principles that is the most important but also the most quietly present and maybe even a little bit ignored sometimes is to Go in the Right Order. Going in the wrong order when it comes to time management is starting with the tools rather than starting with the mindset. We want to change and adjust how we think about our time before we start to actively manage it. So that episode is a fantastic foundation of the Lazy Genius way to think about time.

Moving beyond that, a couple of my favorite episodes are **Episode 177 - The Lazy Genius Plans a Day**, **Episode 124 - The Lazy Genius Weekly Plan**, and **Episode 173 - What Is Your List-Making Personality?** All three of those are practical episodes to help you process how you need to physically organize your tasks, your rest, your responsibilities, and also give you some language on how you personally might do that. We don't all plan our time the same way. We don't all make lists the same way. We're all different, and expecting that one way to manage time works for everyone is silly. That's why I want you to start with the episode about the mindsets behind time management so that you can have a better filter for how to see the practical tips and what best applies to you and how your brain and your life work. Does that make sense? No single planner, system, calendar, hack, list-making approach works for everyone. It doesn't. Oh, we want it to so badly which is why we keep searching, but stop searching. I've said this before and I'm sure I'll say it many times in the future, but don't focus on the planner. Focus on the practice. Don't obsess with the physical item you'll use. Slowly develop a practice, and then you'll be more likely to spot a physical item - a planner, a system, a calendar - that will work specifically for you and what you need for your practice.

And the final category that can be troublesome when we're going back to school is food. Making breakfast, packing lunches, making dinner. Really, I think your best bet is to get a copy of my newest book, The Lazy Genius Kitchen. Truly. Because I can give you some ideas categorically which I'll do in a second with podcast episodes, but The Lazy Genius Kitchen teaches you the tools of how to create your own solutions that actually work because they're created for you. It's a framework of how to solve your own specific problems in the kitchen, so if you're feeling overwhelmed by the food situation as you transition out of summer and into fall, that's my best recommendation. Buy or borrow the book. It's a forever resource that will adapt with you as your kids get older or you go back to work or you stop working and stay home or you go from cooking

for one or two to cooking for five or six or the other direction. It's just a fabulous seasonal resource for you.

Now for some episodes specifically related to food and this season of the year, I'd recommend **Episode 121 - How to Build a Fall Dinner Queue**. A dinner queue is covered in The Lazy Genius Kitchen book in more detail than the episode even, but it's essentially a smaller list of meals or recipes that work for your season of life and the season of the calendar. Rather than pulling from the entire Internet or all of your cookbooks, you have a queue. You have curated list that works for right now based on what matters to you, and that episode shows you how to build one. Then there's **Episode 174 - Try a Meal Formula This Fall**. I love a meal formula because it takes the idea of the dinner queue but puts even a little more structure around it. It's a loose framework of how to choose seasonal meals in a way that feels fresh and not repetitive and not like you're biting off more than you can chew but it's still pretty automated and easy. So that's another meal planning ish episode to try out.

And finally I'd like to bring back an oldie but a goodie, **Episode 54 - The Lazy Genius Makes Soup**. Y'all, I have gotten so many messages over the years since this episode came out in March of 2018 - so over four years ago - on how people's soup-making game just skyrocketed after listening to this episode. I'm telling you there is a right order for how to make soup, and since it's going to eventually probably maybe start getting colder soon, it's soup time.

So those are some episodes for your back to school starter pack. In putting this episode together I realized we don't have anything specific about school supplies themselves, so just know that's already on the calendar for 2023. We'll do a school supply episode then, but for now I hope these episodes, even one or two of them, can be your companions over these next few days and weeks and help you feel a little less stressed and little more excited even to go back to school.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week, it's Rebecca Beachy who has the sweetest idea for back to school, obviously highly appropriate for this episode. Rebecca emailed this: I love your principal of deciding once! Without realizing I had done it, years ago I decided once that our kids back to school routine would look like this: The night before the first day of school: 1) I print out some back-to-school questionnaires that I found on Pinterest that ask what grade they're going into, who the best friends are, what they want to be when they grow up, etc and have the kids fill them out (and save them from year to year). 2) Then I measure and mark them on our door frame ruler. And on the afternoon when they get home from the first day of school, I DECIDED ONCE years ago to always have the same snack waiting for them: dirt pudding with gummy worms. This is the only time of the year I ever make this particular dessert so to them, it "tastes like going back to school!" (when my oldest went off to college, I couldn't resist. I wrapped up a chocolate pudding Snack Pack, a pack of Oreos and a pack of gummy worms for him to unwrap on his first day of college. He texted me that he loved that!)

How sweet is this, you guys?! Such a simple thing... a beautiful use of two Lazy Genius principles - Decide Once and Build the Right Routine, and I love that it's kept going over the years. Now I want to remind all of you that if you don't have a tradition like this for the first day of school or you want to but your kid is sixteen so what's the point, here is your permission to do something anyway. Just because you don't start from the beginning or you forgot a year or your kid feels too old now, it doesn't mean you shouldn't do something to mark the beginning of the school year if that matters to you. Remember, two weeks ago we talked about seasonal ceremonies, and those don't lose their power if you didn't begin doing them from birth or whatever. Just do what matters when it matters, and let go if not having done it in the past. Thanks to Rebecca for sharing this idea and to you for being kind to yourself as you listen to it! That's important, too. If you want to be considered as Lazy Genius of the Week with your idea, you can always email hello@thelazygeniuscollective.com and put "Lazy Genius of the Week" as the email subject line! Letoya, our community manager, will get those, and we can't wait to hear your ideas.

Okay, that's it for today! Thank you so much for being here, and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!