



GET A HEAD START

Don't wait for fall to get in gear for the next school year, says Donna Goldberg, author of *The Organized Student*. Go through your child's backpack now to take stock of the supplies she already has. Then toss 99% of her papers, saving only the most creative items.



MANAGE MEDICATIONS

A disorganized medicine cabinet can result in the wrong treatment—or worse. New York City pediatrician Richard Saphir, M.D., suggests color-coding prescriptions: Assign each family member a different color and highlight the labels. Tape kids' dosages to the door.

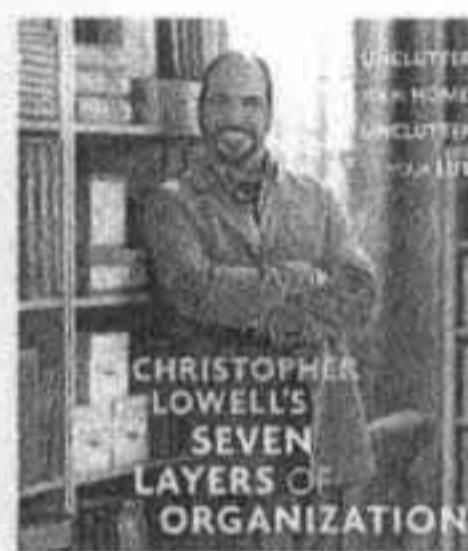
COOK WITHOUT CHAOS

"Buy twice the ingredients when shopping for dinner and make double of every recipe you prepare," says Cynthia

computer helps you see what you're spending without foraging through paper receipts, says Elizabeth Lewin, co-author of *Family Finance*. She recommends using software such as Quicken Basic (\$30; quicken.com) to keep track.

ELIMINATE EXTRAS

Christopher Lowell, the Discovery Home network TV host and author of *Christopher Lowell's Seven Layers of Organization*, shares this easy action plan: Walk through your home twice with a heavy-duty trash bag—first to throw out the obvious junk, then to bag



up the things you haven't used in the past year and donate them to charity.



By Elaine Stuart

valuable closet real estate," says Audrey Robertson of The Container Store. Stack shelves or boxes on top, install a low rod for double hanging, and try an over-the-door organizer.

FILE FOR THE FUTURE

Knowing where things are when you need them is the hallmark of an organized home. Classify important family documents in the Life.doc binder (\$30; getbuttonedup.com). Another option: The Mommy

10 Ways to Get Organized

Stevens Graubart, co-author of *The One-Armed Cook*. Freeze half and you'll have a meal ready in minutes the following week.

PREVENT PAPER PILEUPS

Families are drowning in paper, and 80% doesn't need to be saved. To tackle a towering pile, flip it over and start trashing items from the bottom, where the oldest (and probably least important) pages lie, says Donna Smallin, author of *Cleaning Plain & Simple*.

FOCUS ON FINANCES

Downloading your credit card expenses onto a personal

BE HEALTH WISE

Next time you have to change doctors or notify a camp about an allergy, be prepared. Make a drawing of your family tree and medical history with "My Family Health Portrait," a free tool from the U.S. Surgeon General, at familyhistory.hhs.gov. Keep copies of everyone's medical records in a folder or binder.

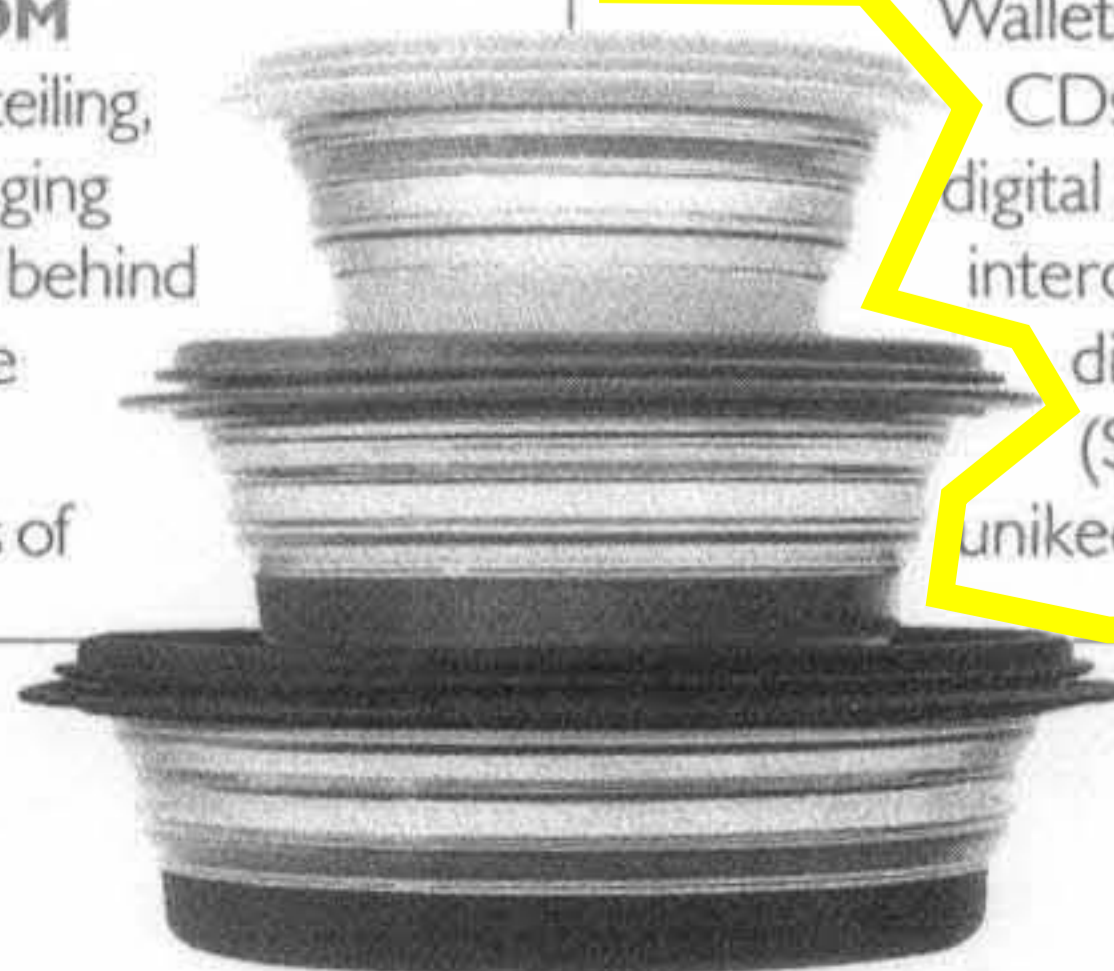
MAKE ROOM

"Under the ceiling, beneath hanging clothes, and behind the door are often overlooked areas of

File helps you save your favorite parenthood articles, advice, and recipes (\$20; bookstores).

PACK AND STACK

Rubbermaid's Collapsible food containers have expandable sidewalls that can be flattened to 1" high for storage (\$4-\$8; major retailers). UniKeep's sleek Media Disc Binders and Wallets organize CDs, DVDs, and digital photos in interchangeable disc sleeves (\$3-\$22; unikeep.com).



PHOTOS: TED MORRISON/CLARE AGENCY (TOP LEFT & MIDDLE RIGHT); THE CONTAINER STORE (TOP RIGHT); JONATHAN KANTOR/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM LEFT).