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THE JOKE'S ON YOU

by Phil Ryder & YOU

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"Look...YOU try to drive and put on
eye shadow at the same time!"

- Lisa Monroe • Minot, ND

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Back to School Business

In no time, school will be in session. And early morning alarm clocks will chime in with those early morning school bells. Are you ready for this? Are your children? Most families experience some slip in their family routine during the summer. The days are longer, the nights warmer, and as a result bedtimes get pushed back and there is much more playing and relaxing. It's how it should be. However, with September upon us, it's time to reign in the troops for another school year. Here are a few tips to get you started on the right foot.

Reintroduce Routines

- **Bedtimes:** The key word here is gradually. Gradually reintroduce bedtimes that have slipped. Moving the time frame back roughly two weeks before your child returns to school. This will give them ample time to adjust to the routine before the pressures of school hit.
- **Dinner:** Bring back dinner at the table and weekly chores. This will bring back the structure into those final summer evenings before the chaos begins.

Give Them Choices

- **Lunch Boxes:** Involve your children in the planning and choosing of the foods that will go in their lunch boxes. Have them help you make them the night before. Know what they can bring and what they like.
- **School Clothes:** Start early. Back to school shopping starts in mid-July. Let them shop with you and choose their own clothes.

Get Organized

- **Calendar:** Find a calendar that will hold all the happenings, from church to soccer clubs, in your family. Post it in a public place, near the phone.

Above all, make it special. For many children, going back to school is a tough transition. Buy new school bags and supplies that they are excited about. Make it fun by talking positively about the new things they will learn and the new friendships they will make.