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4 Things Every Parent Needs to Prepare Their Kids for School This Year



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by Shawnta S. Barnes    

Summer is winding down across the country and many have already returned school, or the beginning of the school year is right around the corner. Every kid deserves the chance to start school on the right foot. Here are four actions parents can take.

1. **Make sure your child has the school supplies they need.** There's nothing worse for a child than beginning school unprepared. Make sure you purchase all the supplies on the list and if the teacher requests a certain brand, get that brand. I talked to a kindergarten teacher about why her school insists parents purchase Crayola crayons. She shared that off-brand crayon colors are not always the exact color. Red may appear pink and confuse the child. Another specific item on her school's list was the Ziplock brand gallon bags. The kindergarten teachers in her school planned to put books to send home in the bags and previous years, teachers had experienced other gallon bag brands constantly ripping. If you cannot afford school supplies, reach out to churches or local community centers. Many times they have back-to-school giveaway events that might even include free haircuts or school uniforms.
2. **Talk to your child about school.** Over the last few weeks, my husband and I have been talking to my twin sons about starting second grade. This has been a great opportunity to hear what they are excited about and to hear any worries they have. Through discussing what to expect this coming school year, we have been able to offer them encouragement. If your child had a rocky time in school last year, use this time to assure them that next school year is an opportunity to start over with a clean slate with not only the school but also with you.
3. **Attend back-to-school orientation.** After your child has been in school for a few years, it may be tempting to skip back-to-school orientation or a back to school meet and greet, but you should not. Back-to-school orientation is an opportunity for your child to interact with their classmates and meet the teacher. If your child will be in middle school or high school, it is an opportunity for your child to find his or her locker and classes. Over the summer, the school might make changes. Attending back-to-school orientation, or a meet and greet, is an opportunity to learn about any changes your school has made over the summer. It is also a chance to drop off school supplies or organize your child's locker or desk.
4. **Contact your child's teacher or agree to a home visit.** At the beginning of each school year, I talk to my sons' teachers. Recently, my sons' teacher and her student teacher stopped by our home to chat with my husband, my boys and me. As an educator, I have also done home visits and I know. As an educator, I have also done home visits and I know that they have value. It gives the teacher an opportunity to get to know you and your child and you get an opportunity to share pertinent information the teacher needs to know for the upcoming school year.

The beginning of another school year is an opportunity for your child to learn, make new

friends and have fun. As parents, it is our responsibility to do all we can to make sure our children are able to have a smooth transition to the next school year.

An original version of this post appeared on Indy/Ed as [Parents, Have You Prepared Your Child for Next School Year?](#).

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Shawnta (Shawn-tay) S. Barnes, also known as Educator Barnes, is a married mother of identical twin boys. She navigates education from not only the educator's perspective but also the parent's perspective. She has been an educator for nearly two decades. Shawnta works with K-12 schools, universities, & education adjacent organizations through her education consulting business Blazing Brilliance. She is an adjunct college professor, supervises student teachers, Indy Kids Winning Editor-in-Chief, Brave Brothers Books Co-founder, & CEO, and Brazen Education Podcast host. She holds five education licenses: English/language arts 5-12, English to speakers of other languages P-12, library/media P-12, reading P-12, and school administration P-12, and she has held a job in every licensed area. Previously, she has served as a school administrator, English teacher, English learners teacher, literacy coach, and librarian.

She won the 2019 Indiana Black Expo Excellence in Education Journalism Award. In 2023, she completed her doctorate in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education with a minor in Learning Sciences. She is an urban gardener in her spare time and writes about her harvest-to-table journey at [gardenershicole.com](https://www.gardenershicole.com). To learn more about Shawnta, visit [educatorbarnes.com](https://www.educatorbarnes.com).

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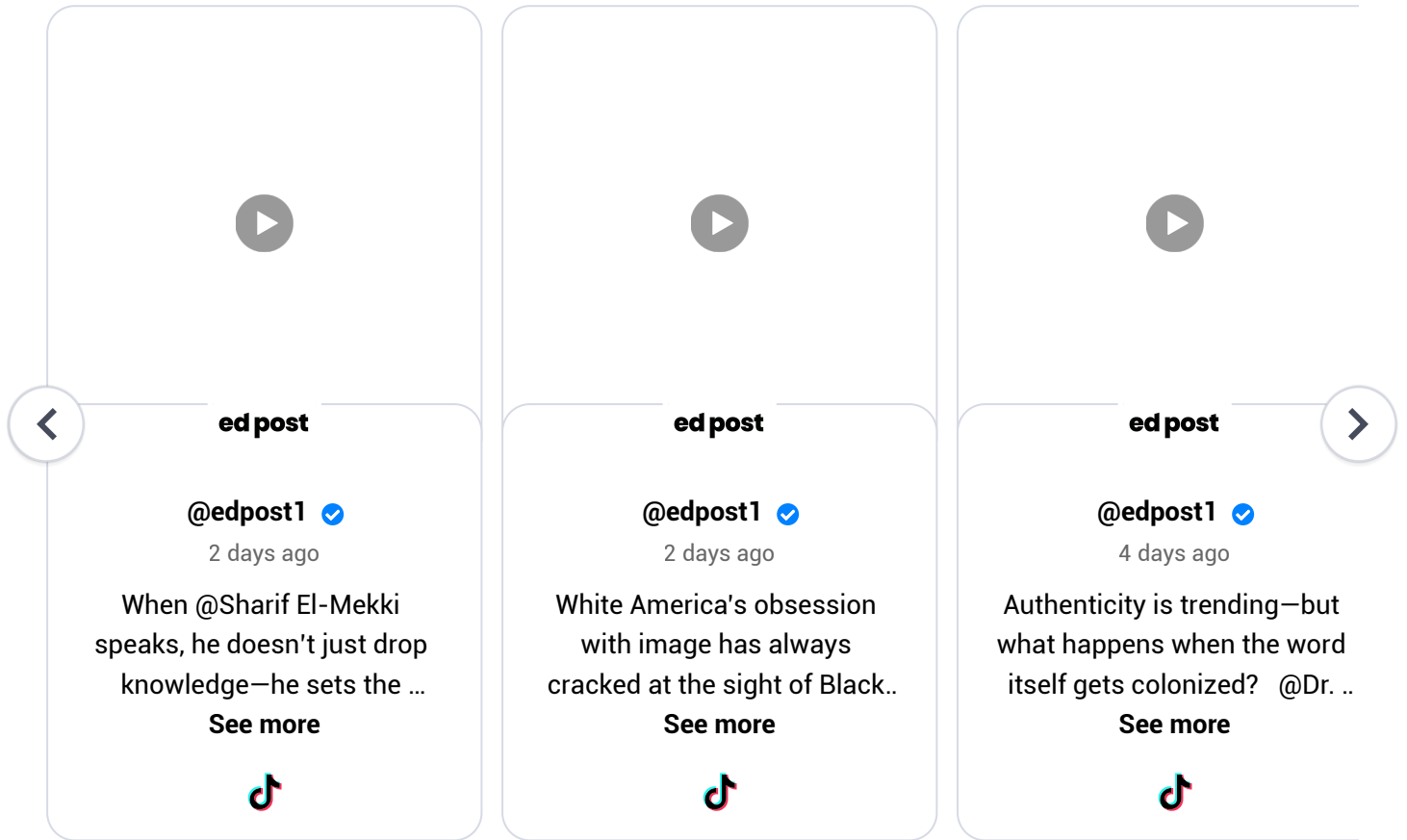
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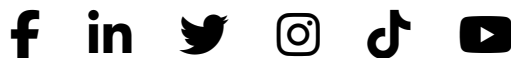
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