

# Back to School; Back to Reality



By Heidi Hatch  
She can be seen weekday mornings on  
FOX-35 News from 5:00-9:00 a.m.

Moms, who among us has not had a conversation with your child similar to this:

*"Mom ... can you help me build the solar system?"*

You think to yourself – I gave birth to you so after that building the solar system should be easy!

*"Sure, when's it due?"*

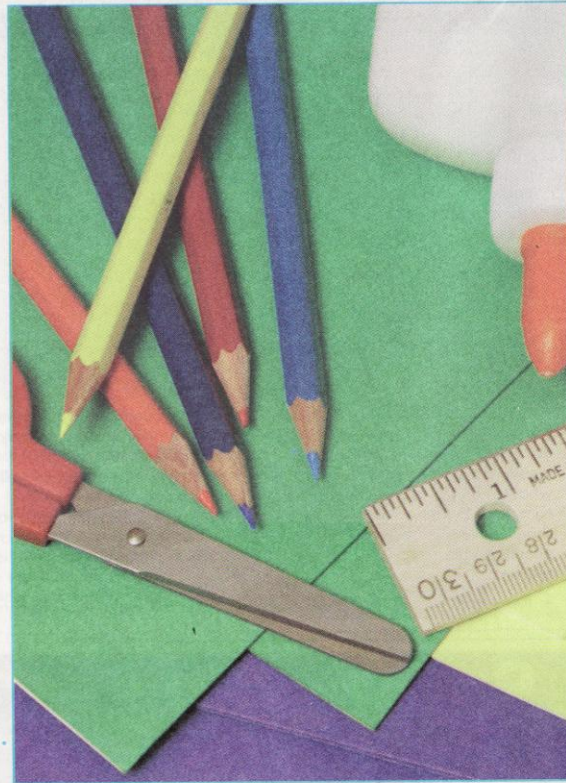
*"Tomorrow morning."*

Nice! Your child was given seven days for the project, the same amount of time it took to create the world. You are now left with 12 hours, a 24-hour drug store and a picture you found on Google.

Don't get me wrong, I love it when this time of year rolls around. I love new clean notebooks without any ratty edges, the smell of new markers and freshly sharpened crayons still in the box.

What I'll miss is the summer "brain break." You know, a few weeks without having to make a late night run to the store to finish a dinosaur diorama or, my personal favorite, helping my daughter prepare for the weekly spelling test. Every Thursday night I am transported back to a previous life where I too knew how to spell pterodactyl without looking it up. While most moms – myself included – like to think they know how to spell all the words, the preparation for this weekly test is a reminder that we've all come to rely on spell check a bit too often.

In some ways, it seems like just yesterday that I was shoving my Michael Jackson folders into my own backpack and begging my mom for a Trapper Keeper. However, I'm reminded that it has been a long time since my "good old fashioned rule days" when it takes me ten minutes to figure out how to do a second grade math problem. In my defense, I do know the answer – I just don't know how to teach my daughter how to figure it out. It would be easier if I could just finish it for her. However, I would never do that as we all know that's not a good idea. Not only is it dishonest, but I'm going to have to let her figure it out on her own if I



want my daughter to pass the FCAT and move out of the house before she's 36.

Luckily, my daughter loves school. She inherited that from me. I loved school so much that I'd play school as soon as I got home from school. Of course, in my classroom at my Mom's kitchen table, I was the teacher and the one handing out the homework. No math, though. It wasn't my best subject, hence the Broadcast Journalism degree. On the other hand, my daughter is really an ace at math. She loves it. She got that from her Dad.

The one thing I truly dread with the start of each new school year is the thought of parent teacher conferences – they make me feel old. Every time, without fail, when I'm greeted by the teacher, "Hello Mrs. Hatch," I immediately turn to look over my shoulder for my mother-in-law. Once I snap out of my self-absorbed state of denial, the rest of the conference is perfect. My daughter is an absolute angel in the classroom. It may have something to do with the fact her two-year-old brother is not there to harass her... But I digress.

So alas, we're back to school, back to a routine and a chance to, for better or worse, remember our own school yard triumphs and tragedies. Trust me – the second grade really is a lot easier when it's your second time around – I mean, when it's your child's turn.