

# real solutions

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*Real Solutions is a periodic newsletter produced by Susan Stewart designed to provide practical organization tips to simplify your life.*

## It's A Wrap

Cindy's daughter Megan brings home a birthday invitation from school on Tuesday. Ok, it may not have been sent home that day, but that is the day it emerged from the depths of Megan's backpack. Cindy quickly glanced at the invitation and set it down with a pile of stuff thinking she would deal with the details later.

Friday afternoon Megan asks about the birthday party. Cindy panics. She had forgotten all about it. As she looks at the clock, she can't remember if it was from 4-6 or 6-8. She begins frantically looking for the birthday invitation which is buried somewhere in her pile on the counter. The party invitation finally surfaces and she realizes the party starts in a half an hour. Just enough time to find a gift, wrap it, and get Megan over there. Thank goodness Cindy buys gifts ahead of time on sale! In fact, she has just the perfect thing she bought last month. Now if only she could remember where she put it.

The clock is ticking and Megan is anxious to leave. Cindy is stressing, she hates being late. Finally, she remembers that she left the item in the laundry room and finds it buried beneath a pile of dirty clothes. The next search will be for wrapping paper. Forget it. There is no time. They will have to stop at Walgreens on the way to the party and buy some wrapping items there. She quickly looks up the address of the party on Mapquest and prints it out. Seven dollars later for a card and gift wrap, Cindy and Megan arrive at the party 30 min. late.



After school, Tracy empties Brandon's backpack with him and they spend 15 min. together talking about his day. One of the things they pull out of the backpack is a birthday party invitation for one of Brandon's classmates. Tracy asks Brandon if he would like to go to the party and as he responds with a resounding "yes", she heads to the calendar. It looks like the date is open so Tracy writes it on the calendar, RSVP's and puts the invitation in her Mom's notebook so she will have the address on the day of the party.

On Friday, Tracy and the kids stop by Target on the way home from school to buy a gift for the party. Tracy gives Brandon a budget and allows him to pick out the gift for his buddy. By picking out the gift himself, Brandon is learning to give and is also learning a valuable lesson on the worth of money.

When they arrive home, Tracy and Brandon head over to the wrapping station to wrap the gift. This is Brandon's favorite part- picking out the gift bag and putting it together. After he and mom wrap the gift, Brandon decorates a blank card, signs it and the gift is ready for the party.

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Tips on It's A Wrap.

# real solutions for real life

If you don't have an assigned place for a paper item, ask yourself if it's necessary to keep it. Statistics say, 80% of what we file (or throw in a box), we never look at [again](#).

Spending a few minutes to unpack a [backpack](#) with a child can communicate that you value what he/she is doing in school. Ask questions as you go through the papers and when you are finished, ask your child if he/she is ready to let go of them. Usually after spending time looking at the papers with them, kids are ready to part with their papers.

For school papers that are extra special, consider [displaying](#) them in a defined space for period of time. When you rotate new papers in, date the back and place in a file or [box](#) for a memory book. I recommend saving only 5–6 items a year. If you save much more than that, you will be giving your child more stress rather than blessing at graduation.

Having a place to keep items temporarily until they need to be accessed eliminates digging through piles. Think Mom's Notebook!

Storing [wrapping](#) paper, gift bags, tissue, scissors, tape and [cards](#) together, simplifies the task of wrapping a gift. You may also want to keep this near other "gift" items that are purchased ahead of time.

Teaching your child how to use a [calendar](#) and plan ahead is a necessary life skill. Additionally, allowing a child the experience of shopping within a budget will help him/her to understand financial boundaries.

Kids rarely take interest in greeting [cards](#). They much prefer a "homemade" picture or card over something from the store. Encourage your child to [create](#) something special for the birthday kid.

For more organizing tips go to [www.perfectlyplaced.org](http://www.perfectlyplaced.org)

