

Getting Your Kids Out the Door – With Their Shoes!
Alexandra “Allie” Golon



Illustrated by Buck Jones

If you’ve got children like mine, getting them out the door—on time and with all their belongings, especially their shoes—can be a daily challenge. My kids are visual-spatial. They’ve got a wonderful sense of space and direction; they’re the kids who can tell you exactly where within that five-level, very dark parking garage you’ve parked your car. But when it comes to any sense of time, forget it! So, it seems we’re always running late. Running late equates to leaving without everything they need, probably nine times out of ten!

After an extensive run of homeschooling, my youngest son, Matt, returned to a very carefully chosen private school for the gifted that just happened to be 52 miles away—one direction. We actually had to leave the house at 6:30 am for an 8:10 start to his day. Matt started mid-year, which meant January, and we live in Colorado. You can

see where I'm going with this, right? There's a saying in Colorado: "If you don't like the weather, just wait another 15 minutes." And another: "Shorts and a parka and you're ready for anything." There were days when the weather between home and school was from entirely different seasons! So being prepared and ready to go was an extra challenge in our household and meant having clothing and gear—and shoes—for nearly any weather event.

One day, about half way on our route, Matt calls out to me, "Mom. Where are my shoes?!" Scowling, both hands gripping the wheel, I respond, "On your feet—*right*?!" Nope. A quick dash through a Target store that opened 10 minutes before class started and he was barely even late. Guess where Matt keeps his shoes these days? Yup. One pair in the car and one pair in the house. And today, we're only a mile away from the school.

So, I've been working on some tips, and soliciting some from other parents, to help kids like mine get out the door, on time and fully prepared. I hope one or two work for you and your "timeless" children.

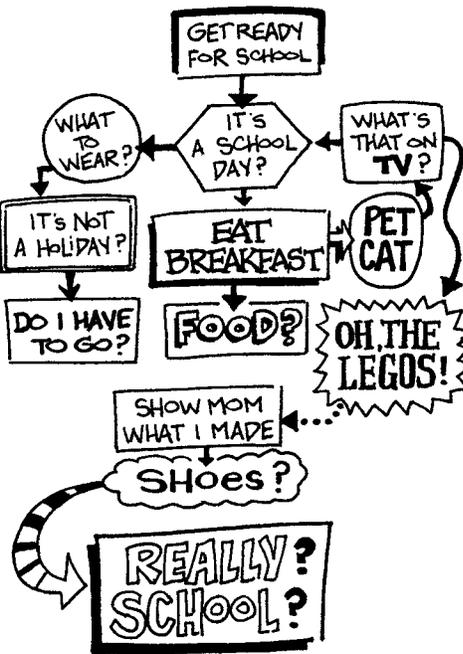
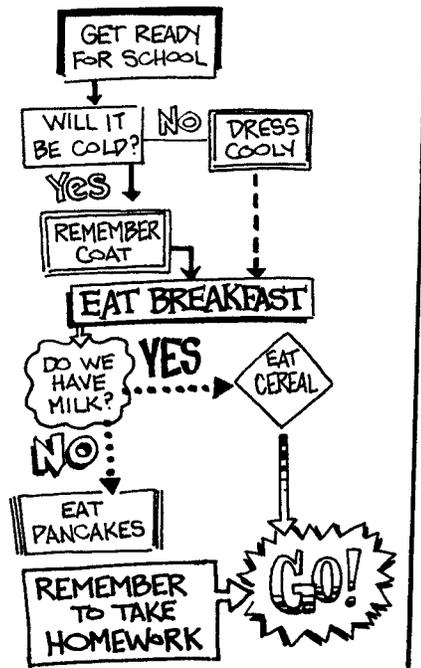
Here's one a mom from New Zealand sent me: She and her son sat down together and agreed on the chores that needed to be completed each morning, and in what order. Then, they color-coded those chores: Blue (1) Eat breakfast, Red (2) Get dressed, Yellow (3) Brush teeth, and so on. Each morning, she would hand her son his set of cards, each with Velcro tabs, which he would take with him to each task and stick them to the dresser, mirror, etc., wherever the chore had taken place. He quickly learned the morning routine and was able to complete the chores, without distraction, in time for them to leave for school each day. You could play with this idea and create two sets of cards, each

numbered, then place the #1 card next to what you want your child to do (perhaps, on the hairbrush, next to the bar of soap, or under the toothbrush). Then your child would search for the numbered cards, in a row, completing the obvious task in order, then “turn in” the two sets of cards indicating all the chores were complete! Perhaps a timer could be implemented and the whole thing could be a game?

Assure your children that whatever they were longing to do instead of getting in the car will be there for them when they return. Also effective, although militaristic sounding, are one word commands: “Shoes-Car-Please” convey all the instructions they need. Not much decoding is required! One mom wrote, as quoted in *Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner*, by Dr. Linda Silverman, that she condensed her bedtime instructions to: JamBruWash for pajamas, brush your teeth and wash your face! There are certainly a number of daily routines that could be made more fun if they were given in silly codes or clues. Remember, humor engages the right hemisphere! Get your kids into the act thinking up clever ways to make their own requests.

**Auditory-Sequential
Learner**

**Visual-Spatial
Learner**



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Getting a visual-spatial child out the door can be a daily challenge. There are so many distracting and more entertaining options available. One technique that works, at least some of the time, is to create a mental picture of the consequences of not getting to your destination on time. For example, suppose you are running late to an afternoon sports practice. You could create the following picture for your child: “If we are late for your practice, that will upset the coach and possibly delay or interrupt the start of practice for all the other kids who arrived on time. How do think your coach will feel? How will the other kids feel?” If they can envision the experience and understand the consequences

of not arriving on time, you may actually stand a chance of getting out the door--and, possibly even with their shoes!

Alexandra “Allie” Golon is Former Director of the Visual-Spatial Resource, a subsidiary of the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development, in Denver, Colorado. As a founding member of the Visual-Spatial Resource Access Team, a former G/T teacher and homeschooling parent to two exceptionally gifted visual-spatial learners, Allie brings a wealth of experience to her books, *Raising Topsy-Turvy Kids: Successfully Parenting Your Visual-Spatial Child* and, *If You Could See the Way I Think: A Handbook for Visual-Spatial Kids* which has also been used by teachers as a rich source for classroom strategies. Allie has been invited to present on parenting and teaching visual-spatial learners and on homeschooling issues at state, national and international venues. She has counseled dozens of families regarding harmoniously parenting visual-spatial learners as well as on various homeschooling issues, and has appeared on talk radio programs and in various print media. Allie can be reached at Allie@Visual-Learners.com.

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