

Barley two weeks before schools reopen and many parents are beginning to shift gears. Conversations are turning to school fees, uniforms, books, transport, change of schools, among others. Teachers are also finalising schemes of work and the children are slowly realising that the freedom of the holiday is drawing to a close. Yet amid this visible preparation, there is a quieter, often neglected back-to-school aspect: Preparation.

Preparation is often misunderstood. Many parents equate it with buying scholastic materials, securing school fees, or revising notes. Those things matter, but true preparation goes deeper than what children carry in their suitcases. It is about what they hold in their minds, hearts, and habits. As parents and educators, this final stretch of the holiday gives us a valuable opportunity to prepare children beyond the classroom.

#### CONTINUED LEARNING

Holidays are a change of learning environment. When the school timetable disappears, children should still learn different lessons including time management, how adults handle responsibility and problem-solving without instructions from a teacher.

For parents, the holiday season reveals what children

# MAXIMISE LAST DAYS OF HOLIDAYS FOR LEARNERS

have truly internalised. A child who can manage simple responsibilities at home often adjusts more easily to school routines while one who has been shielded from all responsibility may struggle with structure when school resumes. This is why the last two weeks matter; they are for recalibration, not cramming.

#### PREP THE MIND FIRST

As school draws near, there is a temptation to focus entirely on academic readiness. Children do not struggle at school merely due to weak academic ability, but because of poor attention in class, low motivation, lack of self-control, or emotional fatigue. These issues cannot be fixed by textbooks alone.

Parents can address these quietly at home by engaging children in conversation, encouraging them to explain their thoughts and involving them in decision-making or problem-solving during daily activities so as to stimulate critical thinking and build confidence. These interactions sharpen the mind without



**PARENTING**  
**DICKSON**  
**TUMURAMYE**

turning the home into a classroom. Equally important is reintroducing a sense of effort. Simple expectations, such as completing assigned chores, managing personal belongings, or finishing small tasks teach perseverance.

These habits translate directly into how a child approaches school-work.

**PARENTING: A SILENT TEACHER**  
Much of what prepares a learner is the parent. Children observe how adults speak, listen, resolve conflict and respond to pressure. When parents model

#### ATTENTION...

**When parents focus on growth rather than grades, children develop healthier motivation and resilience.**

consistency, patience and accountability, children internalise these qualities. A child who learns to listen at home is better prepared to listen in class. One who learns respect at home finds it easier to convey respect to teachers and peers.

Classroom behaviour, attitude to authority and response to correction are deeply shaped by what happens at home long before the school term begins.

#### A HEART FOR LEARNING

As school approaches, children often carry unspoken concerns. Some worry about academic expectations, others about friendships, discipline, or disappointing their parents. If these concerns are ignored, they may show up later as withdrawal, poor performance, or behavioural issues. These last few days are ideal for

intentional dialogue.

Ask children how they feel about returning to school so as to identify challenges long before disciplinary notes arrive. When we explain why routines matter, children begin to understand that discipline is not punishment, but preparation for success.

As children feel heard at home, they are more likely to seek help when challenges arise at school. This is also an opportunity to reset expectations. When effort, integrity and improvement are positively affirmed at home, children approach school activities with confidence rather than fear.

#### BEFORE THE SCHOOL GATE

As the holiday season closes, parents and teachers are reminded that education does not begin at the school gate. Schools provide instruction, but homes shape learners. Children who return to school emotionally grounded, mentally curious and accustomed to responsibility are better positioned to benefit from formal education.

#### A GENTLE TRANSITION

One of the biggest challenges children face at the start of term is the sudden return to structure. Late nights, unplanned days and unrestricted screen time make early mornings and classroom focus difficult. The final days of the holiday offer a gentle bridge.

Gradually restoring routines, such as regular sleep times, designated quiet moments, or morning responsibilities helps children adjust emotionally and physically.

This approach reduces resistance and anxiety when school resumes. Routine also teaches time awareness. Children who learn to plan their day at home are better equipped to manage homework, tests, and co-curricular activities at school.

The final days of the holiday are not too late. They are an invitation for parents to prepare children quietly and deliberately. When children return to school prepared beyond the classroom, teaching becomes easier and learning becomes deeper.

**The writer is a parenting coach and marriage counsellor**