



### School lifts

"If a mother's place is in the home, why am I always in the car?" read a popular bumper sticker of a decade back. "Born to schlep," was another that hit home.

- **Set up a lift club.** Before you do, make sure you are confident of the other drivers and the state of their cars. Agree on safety rules like the wearing of seatbelts, as well as broader concerns. Communicate the logistics and the safety messages to kids. What will the procedure be if one of the lift club kids is going home with another friend? How long should they wait before phoning if the lift doesn't arrive?
- **Enjoy the ride.** Use the time to relax and really engage with your children – after all, when else do you have half an hour of alone time to chat? A comfortable car with an efficient air con and good sound system makes the journey that much more bearable. And it helps if you are not driving around in a sea of abandoned shoes and empty juice boxes – get the kids to wash and clean your car as their weekly chore.
- **Consider an au pair or a professional driving service, but before you entrust your children to another person on the roads, check them out carefully.** Soccermom provides drivers to handle school lifts. All drivers are licensed, reference-checked and have their own recently road worthied vehicles. They are categorised according to their qualifications and age, so for a little extra you can specify that you want someone over-21, or with a professional driver's permit.

Honorata Saar hit upon the idea when she was doing her masters studies and driving children around. She says, "I realised that many parents, particularly those with older children, don't need au pairs, just reliable transport."



I decided to offer a professional service with a contract setting out conditions, safety practices and so on." You can have a permanent placement, or just sign up and request a temporary driver on an ad hoc basis. Costs range from R35 to R65 an hour, plus a per kilometer fee for mileage and petrol.

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### Keep it together

This clear, wall-mounted stationery organiser (R190 from Pepper Plum) is great for keeping stationery and other essentials organised and on hand for homework time or creative play.