



Back to School Spending — Kids and Parents Work Together to Save Money

These days, families are more conscientious when planning their back-to-school spending. How do parents keep more money in their wallets while appeasing their children who still desire the latest, pricey trends? Getting children involved in planning that big shopping day can make everybody happier. You'll spend less, and most important, they'll get practice shopping for bargains, prioritizing their wants, planning ahead, and sticking to a budget.

Share the budgeted amount you can afford and enlist their help in choosing how the money should be spent. Your kids will likely have to make some hard choices and a few designer labels may fall by the wayside. But also give them an opportunity to develop creative solutions. For example, put them in charge of online or newspaper comparison shopping and coupon clipping. Or, hold a family or neighborhood yard sale and use the proceeds to add items back to the list.

Other ideas to keep in mind:

- Wait until after school starts to buy some items. Stores frequently offer deep discounts when they need room for holiday merchandise. Also, your kids may have a better idea of what they want after seeing popular trends.
- If your kids are in peak growing years, stagger clothing purchases throughout the year so they don't outgrow everything all at once.
- Sell outgrown but useable clothing at consignment stores or online. You can shop there as well.
- Check around online at discount sites for savings on basic supplies.

The whole family can get involved in back-to-school planning which makes for even smarter shopping, and it jump starts everyone's thinking for the coming school year.