

Ask an Expert – Five Back-to-School Shopping Tips

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Back-to-school shopping can be the perfect time to help kids learn to inventory their clothing, make decisions, and become wise shoppers. Below are tips to involve kids without leaving a hole in your pocketbook.

1. Take inventory. Before venturing to the store, help kids take stock of their drawers and closets. Are there shoes that still fit from last year? Are there hand-me-downs from an older brother or sister that are in good shape? As you take inventory, note items that can be discarded, those that need repair, and things need to be purchased.
1. Create a spending plan. After making your shopping list, involve youth in creating a spending plan. By making a plan, you develop perimeters to help them shop within their means.
1. Watch the ads. There are many shopping apps available. One that is noteworthy is [Flipp](#). It is free and lets you see weekly ads for major and minor retail stores. Watch it regularly to check for stores that might have sales on the items on your list. Look at the ads with your kids as you decide where to shop for their clothes and supplies.
1. Consider thrift shopping. Thrift shopping allows you to shop for trendy items without the price tag. It might take more than a day or two to find the things you need, but it could be the secret to helping you stick to your spending plan.

1. Use the envelope method. This method is a great way to help kids see the value of money. Give each child their own envelope and write their name on it along with the items they need. This method will help them learn that shopping for sales will allow their dollars to stretch farther. It is also a very visual lesson that once the money is gone, it's gone.

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