

Back to School on a Budget

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Unfortunately, right on the heels of Christmas and holidays comes back to school time. And we all know just how expensive that can be with new uniforms, shoes, backpacks, books and pencils, even the simple lunchbox has become a designer item.



Uniforms

Unless your school has its very own particular uniform, don't buy it from school wear shops. You'll get excellent quality and great prices buying from discount department stores. They all carry plain white, blue and grey school shirts and plain coloured polo shirts, along with shorts and long pants. They also carry fleecies in basic school colours too.

Shoes

School shoes are an expense, but one that it's worth spending a little more on. After all they are worn at least 4 days a week, 40 weeks a year so they need to be comfortable and a decent quality. This being said, it is possible to pick up a bargain. Look for the back to school sales and the buy one pair, get one pair half price offers to save a bundle.



Backpacks

Unless last year's backpack is literally falling apart you don't need to invest in a new one. A soak and wash and it will come up clean and fresh for the New Year. Change the nametag to give it a fresh look and it's ready to go. A cobbler should be able to mend any torn straps or replace broken zips for a fraction of the price of a new backpack.

Books and pencils

Shop at home first. There is nothing wrong with continuing to use the pencils, rulers and sharpeners and pencil cases that the kids already have. Once



you've worked out what they have and what they need, hit the back to school sales. And in this case there is nothing wrong with the .59c ruler or the .99c pack of pencils, especially for younger kids. They get lost, they get sharpened away to nothing and it's not that important to have the brand names.

Lunchbox and Drink Bottle

Unless last year's lunch box and drink bottle are falling apart, they can be re-used. If they are scuffed and dirty clean them up with a paste of bi-carb and vinegar, rub it over and let it sit for a few minutes. Then wash it off in warm soapy water and dry them well. Freshen the inside of the drink bottle by filling it with cool water, adding a splash of vinegar and letting it sit overnight. Rinse it well with clean water and then turn it upside down to dry. Change the look with some new stickers or name labels and save yourself \$15!



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