

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

Get An A+ On Your Back-To-School Shopping

(NAPSA)—You won't have to do a lot of studying to get high marks on your back-to-school shopping if you do your homework.

Lifestyle and shopping expert Debbi Karpowicz Kickham offers her favorite techniques to help Moms manage (they spell C-H-I-L-D to make them easy to remember).

Clean the Closet For Charity. Before shopping, sort through your child's closet, so you both can decide what to keep, toss, give away or donate to charity. Articles of clothing that haven't been worn in a year are good candidates to purge. And when you donate used garments to charity, parents and kids can feel good about "doing good" and you can take a tax deduction.

Have Fun. Set the timer for 15 minutes, play your kids' favorite music, and quickly sort through their closets together to determine their needs for this year. When finished, order pizza, play a board game together or watch a video as a reward for a job well done.

Itemize. Make a list of all items that need to be purchased, and stick to it. "Shopping can put you on sensory overload," says Kickham. "But a list helps you gain control to avoid temptation and impulse buying. In addition, online shopping can minimize trips to the mall, juggling kids and shopping bags as well as the stress of back-to-school shopping." Kickham recommends PersonalShopper.com, a free service that saves time, money and energy. In fact, Personal Shopper is the premier online personal shopping service that proactively finds items targeted to your interests, favorite brands and



Using online services can help you save time and money on back-to-school shopping.

style/color preferences, as well as inspired gift ideas customized for each recipient and occasion and great deals on items for your family's needs throughout the year.

Limits. Set budgetary limits with your kids, so they can learn the value of a dollar and what you can afford. According to a recent online survey of American adults responding to the recent Personal Shopper Back-To-School Shopping Survey by Harris Interactive, 61 percent of parents said that "staying within my budget" is one of the biggest challenges they face with back-to-school shopping.

Discuss. Talk to your children about the what and why of their favorite outfits. These criteria about styles and colors will help with future clothing purchases and avoid family feuds.

"Some of the parents polled said that they found back-to-school shopping worse than a trip to the dentist," adds Kickham. "But with these suggestions, back-to-school shopping—and getting your kids to cooperate—won't be like pulling teeth. Who knows—it might even elicit some smiles."