

Consumer Corner

Get The School Year Off To A Smart Start

(NAPSA)—Parents who have done their homework already know the expense of school supplies can quickly add up. Here are some simple tips that will help you meet your child's classroom needs without breaking the budget.

- **Think ahead.** Your child may have received a list from school detailing what supplies will be needed for the coming year. With that in mind, take a look at what you already have around the house and then make a list of what you need to buy.

- **Set a budget.** Decide how much you can afford to spend and don't go shopping when you're tired. Tired shoppers are often tempted to overspend just to get the chore out of the way.

- **Leave them at home.** You may want to shop without the kids so they don't sway you to buy "cool" stuff like a backpack that's twice the price of a comparable brand.

- **Take a pen.** Take a pen or pencil with you to cross off items on the list that you've purchased. That way instead of buying too much, you're concentrating on getting the bargains.

- **Stock up.** If you find a deal, take advantage of it. Your child may only need one or two notebooks now, but if the price is right, you can always save money by buying in bulk and using them later.

- **Shop closeouts.** Shopping at closeout stores will definitely move you to the head of the class in terms of savings. You'll find a



GETTING HIGH GRADES for school-supplies shopping is easier when you decide how much you want to spend and avoid shopping when you're tired.

great assortment of school basics at closeout retailers such as Big Lots. Closeouts are the same first-quality, brand-name products found at other retailers, but at substantially lower prices. Closeout retailers offer products at 20 to 40 percent below most discount retailers and many times up to 70 percent below traditional retailers.

- **Give them space.** Make a place in your home that helps promote good study habits. As the largest closeout retailer in America, Big Lots has a wide array of school supplies like pens, crayons, pencils and filler paper for as little as 25 cents. Big Lots, which operates 1,300 stores in 45 states, is also a great source for ready-to-assemble computer desks, work tables and other accessories you need to create a healthy homework haven for your child—all at closeout prices.

To find a nearby Big Lots, visit www.biglots.com.