

Pointers For Parents

Now Is The Time To Think Back To School

(NAPSA)—Class will be in session soon and it's time to be thinking ahead about the best ways to stuff those backpacks and lockers with required supplies. By considering the "4 R's" of back-to-school shopping—Reading, Writing, 'Rithmetic and Recreation—tackling that shopping list has never been easier with the use of the Internet.

"Retailers begin promoting back-to-school merchandise and accessories early," says Eva Yusa, also known as "Eva the Shopping Diva," shopping expert and blogger for comparison shopping Web site ShopLocal.com. "From calculators to textbooks, backpacks and new fall clothing, it is never too early to begin your research and stock up on back-to-school necessities to keep costs at a minimum."

Eva offers the best ways to check items off your list this year:

Reading

Many back-to-school lists are distributed in midsummer. Be prepared by buying the must-haves for the first week of class and hold off on items that the kids may be able to live without until sales can be found in Sunday circulars in newspapers or online. Don't forget to ask friends and family if they have older copies of required books to loan out for the year.

Writing

Homework can be less of a chore with a designated space at home for your mini-Einsteins. A desk complete with a computer, color printer, bookshelf with dictionaries, thesaurus, writing style guides and plenty of paper and fresh ink cartridges promotes and accommodates desk-side creativity.



'Rithmetic x 2

Pencils, paper and notebooks purchased at the beginning of the school year rarely endure through bus rides and tossed backpacks. To avoid late-night trips to the store, two sets are always better than one. Also, don't forget a T-80 calculator with multiple functions and keep an eye out for coupons by checking local circulars or Web sites like ShopLocal.com.

Recreation

After-school activities are a big part of kids' social lives. With sporting practice, events and keeping up with their friends, backpacks are the carry-all for items such as sports equipment, clothing, iPods and cell phones. Estimate how many pounds the bag will need to accommodate and if you can't find the perfect style, make one! Visit a fabric store and personalize plain bags with iron-on letters, logos and ribbon.

For more information on the 4 R's and back-to-school shopping, visit Eva's blog at www.ShopLocal.com/EvatheShoppingDivaBlog.fp.