

New York State Consumer Protection Board is on your **SYDE!**

Please **JOIN** our **Stretch Your Dollar Effort:**



BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPECIAL EDITION

The following suggestions have been received from consumers thus far. Please add your own suggestions by sending an email to my2cents@consumer.state.ny.us.

Back-to-School Clothes

- Be on the lookout for back-to-school clothing sales at any time. Consistently check clearance racks and outlets for clothes your children will grow in to. When you see a great deal, purchase it and put it away for the new school year. Garage sales and consignment shops are often great places to find gently worn clothing at affordable prices.
- Wait for a tax-free week to shop for more expensive purchases if one is coming up in your county.
- Refashion some of your children's current clothes that still fit. Adding patches, sparkly jewels and beads to jeans and tops can make them look totally different. You can also bleach jeans or tie dye other garments for a totally new look.
- Check for coupons online and in-store circulars that you can apply towards clothing purchases.
- Organize a clothing exchange with friends and neighbors. Everyone brings the clothes that their children have outgrown and often you can "swap" garments. Exchanging gently used backpacks and handbags is a good idea as well.
- ***Add your own tip!***

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Back-to-School Supplies

- Contact your child's school and get a list of the supplies that they will need. This will prevent you from making needless purchases and having to go out shopping again when your child brings a list home the first week of school.
- Shop at home first. Often you have just about everything your child will need around your home. Clean out those junk drawers and make an inventory of what you already have before going shopping.
- Go through last year's school supplies to see what can be used for the coming year. Items like calculators should be able to be used year- after-year.
- Ask if supplies can be purchased from school as they are often discounted.
- Check the inventory at discount stores or larger stores that are offering price buster savings on items like pens, pencils, notebooks, computer toner, etc. and stock up for the year. These items do not expire.
- Do not give your child all of their new school supplies at once as children often lose small items like pencils and erasers.
- Check with friends, family members and neighbors who work in offices if they are getting rid of any products that your child can utilize for school supplies. Recycling binders, folders and other items is great for the environment.
- If your child's backpack from last year is still in good condition but they want something new, consider decorating it.
- Research the type of backpack which will be best for your child's size and needs before purchasing a new bag. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests looking for the following when purchasing a backpack for a child:
 - ✓ Wide, padded shoulder straps - Narrow straps can dig into shoulders. This can cause pain and restrict circulation.
 - ✓ Two shoulder straps - Backpacks with one shoulder strap that runs across the body cannot distribute weight evenly.
 - ✓ Padded back - A padded back protects against sharp edges on objects inside the pack and increases comfort.
 - ✓ Waist strap - A waist strap can distribute the weight of a heavy load more evenly.
 - ✓ Lightweight backpack -The pack itself should not add much weight to the load.
 - ✓ Rolling backpack - This type of backpack may be a good choice for students who must tote a heavy load. Remember that rolling backpacks still must be carried up stairs. They also may be difficult to roll in snow.
- Label your child's more expensive belongings, like a backpack, on the inside so they do not get confused with another child's items or it can be returned if lost.
- **Add your own tip!**

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Back-to-School Lunches

- Compare the price of a school bought lunch with one you can prepare and choose the less expensive of the two choices. Schools are mandated to offer a healthy, nutritious meal meeting government standards at affordable prices.
- Use meal leftovers for school lunches.
- Have your child help in the preparation of their lunch so they can help choose items they will eat rather than waste.
- Consider using recyclable bags and containers to cut down on waste and teach your children about helping the environment.
- Look for containers that are insulated to keep items like yogurt and beverages cool.
- Provide water to drink in a reusable container rather than purchasing juice or soda.
- Reuse storage bags when packing lunch to save money.
- Set up a reward system with your child for bringing home any reusable containers or bags sent in their daily lunch so you do not have to keep replacing them.
- **Add your own tip!**