

How to ease back into classrooms

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As summer draws to a close, parents across the nation are bracing themselves for back-to-school shopping.

We've all been there. The school supply list looks more like a small novel than a simple checklist and suddenly, we're swept up in a whirlwind of pencils, notebooks and overpriced gadgets we're convinced our children need to succeed.

But before you max out your credit card in a frenzy of back-to-school madness, these simple tips might help save your sanity — and your bank account.

Home inventory

The key is to take stock of what you already have. It's a simple concept, yet one that's often overlooked in the rush to prepare for the new school year.

How many of us have drawers full of barely-used notebooks, pencils with life left in them, and perfectly good backpacks that have been cast aside?

Before you hit the stores, channel your inner archaeologist and excavate your home for hidden treasures.

This isn't just about being thrifty; it's about teaching our children valuable lessons in resourcefulness, sustainability and the value of money.

The list

Make a list and stick to it like your financial life depends on it.

In the age of targeted advertising and flashy displays, walking into a store without a

clear plan is like trying to navigate Westfield Carousel a week before Christmas.

Those unnecessary gadgets have a sneaky way of jumping into our carts.

Creating a detailed list of essential items isn't just about avoiding impulse purchases; it's about prioritising what truly matters.

Online advantage

Buying supplies online and opting for click-and-collect isn't just convenient; it's a strategic move to avoid the siren call of in-store promotions and the inevitable, "Mum, I need this".

You can take your time, find the best deals, and even involve your children in the process without the risk of them being swayed by colourful displays.

It's a peaceful revolution in back-to-school shopping that your stress levels and wallet will thank you for.

Uniform dilemma

When it comes to school uniforms, invest in new shoes but consider secondhand options for the rest. Especially if your children are having a growth spurt.

New shoes are crucial for comfort and foot health, but that school blazer they'll outgrow in a few months?

That's where secondhand stores, uniform exchanges, and hand-me-downs come into play.

Many schools and parent groups also organise uniform swaps, which are goldmines for gently used items at a fraction of the cost.



Label hack

Here's a brilliant hack — use a Sharpie to label clothing instead of iron-on labels. It's quicker, easier, and significantly cheaper.

Plus, it's a task you can delegate to your kids, turning a chore into a fun activity that helps them take ownership of their belongings.

Hidden resource

If you're struggling with back-to-school costs, don't suffer in silence. Reach out to your school's family welfare officer.

These unsung heroes are there to help, often with access to resources and sup-

port systems that many parents don't even know exist.

There's no shame in asking for help. In fact, it's a sign of strength and good parenting to seek assistance when needed.

Schools understand that education is a partnership between educators and families, and many have programs in place to ensure that financial constraints don't hinder a child's learning opportunities.

Keep these back-to-school savings hacks top of mind and you'll not only teach the kids some valuable money lessons, you'll also take all the worry out of Janu-worry.