

NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROVIDES PARENTS SCHOOL SAVING TIPS

Columbia, SC.....Parents will spend an estimated \$500 on each student in preparation for school. Clothes, shoes, computers, textbooks, and school supplies are just a few of the money grabbers. So, in addition making your back-to-school purchases during the tax-free weekend (August 1-3), keep in mind these other money saving tips from the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs.

- ***Give your budget a reality check.*** Assuming you already have a budget, look at it a little differently. Exclude costs that cannot be handled at the store. Such costs might include: enrollment fees, textbooks, band instruments, class dues and athletic fees. Keep these costs in a list separate from your normal shopping list. Doing so will allow you to keep track of required and non-required expenses.
- ***Eliminate the gas guzzling.*** Consider your transportation options. In some cases, public transportation may be the way to go. Bus passes for older high school and college age students traveling in groups may be more cost efficient. Bicycling to school may also be an option for your child. If driving, organize a car-pool club to spread the costs around. As with any transportation option, always keep in mind the safety and feasibility of each option.
- ***Paper or Plastic?*** When it comes to lunch, consider your two options carefully. Sending a brown *paper* bag lunch may not be convenient, but will cost less. Using your *plastic* to pay for a meal

About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers.

Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit www.sccoconsumer.gov.

plan will minimize early morning scrambles, but will put extra stress on your wallet. It's the value of convenience vs. the value of the dollar. Either option may be preferable, but choose wisely.

- ***Use the Used.*** This is even cheaper than buying used. It's using used. So what if you have to sharpen the crayons one-by-one or slap a new name on the lunch box? If it's not broken, don't buy another. A mini-makeover (a few stickers, labels, or sharpening) and you can cross it off the list.
- ***Take the list, but check it twice.*** It's hard to escape this one, but an alert eye and open mind may save you a few bucks. Look at the list carefully. If it doesn't specify, determine which items are suggested purchases and which are required. Buy what is required, probably not include the 2-tier, adjustable locker shelves. Second, keep your options open. Shop at warehouses and consider buying in bulk. It may not be as glamorous, but that's not really the point.
- ***Wool hats are for summer.*** Shoes and clothes are a necessary evil when it comes to growing kids and new school years. Seasons, however, are a shoppers' best friend. Off-season deals are better than bargains. They're steals. So, buy the wool hats in July. Your wallet will thank you now and later. As much as possible, pay with cash. It will keep bills low heading into the holidays.
- ***Coupons aren't just for grandma.*** Whether rebates or coupons, discounts or preferred shopper savings, deals are a good thing. But just like grandma's day, they take a little effort to secure. So, if it means taking the time to cut around the dotted edges to redeem that double-value coupon or mailing in the UPC label, do it. Take the few minutes to save more than a few bucks.
- ***Compare in comfort.*** Compare and save. Nothing too original here. The exciting part is that you can do it from the comfort of your couch. Most retail locations now have an online presence, so you don't have to waste the gas, time, or effort driving around. Just a few clicks and you can identify the best bargain. And since you'll be reclining amidst plush pillows, you have no excuse not to do a little cost comparison.

For more information, contact the Public Information Division at 803.734.4190, toll free in SC at 1.800.922.1594, or online at www.sccoconsumer.gov.

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