

Receipts

A receipt is your proof of purchase that will be needed in the event you have to return an item to the place of purchase. Too often, consumers encounter problems with items which they have purchased but do not have a receipt for the purchase. Some traders too are guilty of not giving receipts, yet attempt to deny customers their right to redress because they do not have one.

It is a legal requirement for receipts to be issued for purchases valued at \$5.00 or more. If it is not given, demand it.

Even if you lose your receipt, your consumer rights still apply when returning something that is faulty. All you need is proof of purchase, which doesn't necessarily need to be a receipt. Proof of purchase could be a credit or debit card statement, an invoice, or a returned cheque.



As you make your back-to-school purchases, we hope you will be wise consumers. Prepare a budget, check to see what items are needed, and shop around for the best quality and prices. Get the entire family involved and make it an exciting adventure and a learning opportunity.

The Prices and Consumer Affairs Division is here to assist in whatever way to help make your back-to-school shopping experience as hassle-free as possible. We would be only too happy to answer concerns that you may have.

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Shopping for **BACK-TO-SCHOOL**

Things you should know before making purchases



When Carnival is over and the summer vacation begins to wind down, parents can't help but think about back-to-school shopping. For many parents, this is a hectic and frustrating period. Some may have spent far too much on the various fetes and other Carnival events and very little may then be left in their wallets.

This year, the Prices and Consumer Affairs Division is urging parents and guardians to plan and budget early for back-to-school shopping. This should be one of the major items on your summer to-do list.

For many families, buying school supplies, uniforms and gear is their single biggest expense when it comes to spending on their children. Buying new school supplies, school bags, lunch bags, shoes, and electronics can quickly become very expensive.

Take inventory

Schools often provide supply lists in June and some even post them on their websites. If you look at the information early enough, you'll have more time to watch for sales rather than fight the crowds as you buy everything at the last minute.

Take stock of what your child still has from last year. Reuse as much of last year's school supplies as you can. For example, if the pair of shoes you bought last year still fits and is in good condition, your child may be able to wear it for another year.

- 7.** Keep the weight of the packed bag to 15% of your child's' body weight. A child who weighs 60 pounds should not carry a bag that weighs more than 9 pounds.
- 8.** Test before you purchase: Bring a few personal items that your child would normally carry in his school bag to the store with you. Slip them into the bag as he tries them on to get a better sense of weight distribution, etc.
- 9.** If it has chest or waist straps, make sure they sit properly on your child.
- 10.** Consider your child's personal style. Your child will be wearing the bag to and from school each day. While proper fit and good quality are the biggest factors to look for, style is still an element to consider. You want to know that your child actually likes the bag and you will not be returning the bag to the store because your child doesn't like it. You are not entitled to a refund simply because you changed your mind or because your child doesn't like the style or colour.



Know the Store's Policies

While making back-to-school purchases, be sure to find out what the store policies are. For instance, if you are purchasing a pair of shoes, but your child is not present, inquire about the store's return policy.



However, be aware of signs such as: **NO REFUNDS ON SALE ITEMS, ALL SALES ARE FINAL, or NO REFUNDS, EXCHANGE ONLY.** Such signs are contrary to the Unfair Contract Terms Act. Consumers have the right to complain and to be duly compensated when goods are faulty and flaws were NOT pointed out before the purchase.

Choosing the Right School Bag

Your child's school bag will probably be the hardest-working item in your back to school shopping. The bag needs to withstand daily use including traveling to and from school, load, and the rough treatment that children dish out on their belongings.



Because it receives constant, daily use, it must be of good quality. You might be tempted to buy a bag that is inexpensive and just assume that it can carry the load your child will have. However, inexpensive, low-quality school bags typically last for a few weeks to a few months.

To look for a quality bag, keep an eye on the following:

1. Avoid loose, uneven or careless stitching that could easily come undone.
2. Check for raw or frayed fabric edges which could unravel.
3. Pass on zippers that are openly exposed to weather. Instead, opt for zippers that have fabric flaps over them to keep water and other elements out of the backpack.
4. Choose the proper size: The width of a bag proportionate to the child's width. For instance, a small child should not opt for an adult-sized bag. Further, the bag's height should extend from approximately two inches below the shoulder blades to waist level, or just slightly above the waist.
5. Look for broad straps with padding for the shoulders.
6. Go for school bags with pockets, slots, and dividers to evenly distribute the weight.



Afterwards, create a list of what school supplies are needed. This is a great opportunity to help your child distinguish needs from wants.

Set a budget

Parents can limit their spending by setting a specific dollar amount for their back-to-school budget, and then try your very best not to spend any more than that.



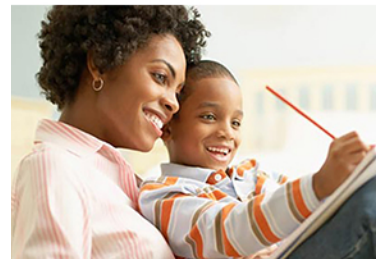
Consider including your children as you budget and plan. Rather than going into debt to buy everything they need right now, talk to your children and find out what's important to them. As parents, we often forget that our children's expectations may be very different from our own, and when it comes to back-to-school spending, it's a great time for our kids to learn about budgeting and paying for needs versus wants.

Before you go to the stores, make sure you have your list of all the back-to-school items that you need. Agreeing on the list of items before you go shopping with your child should also make shopping much easier and less expensive. If your children know you are only buying what's on the list, they will be less likely to ask for everything they see, and if they do, it will be much easier to say no.

Great teaching opportunity

Use this back-to-school shopping experience as a way to teach your child about money. Consider splitting your back-to-school budget among each of your children and tell them that this is all the money you are going to spend on school supplies. You'll be surprised how quickly name brands can lose

their appeal as your child carefully tries to make their budget stretch. Then again, if a shoes or bag is incredibly important to your child, they may choose to make do with more of their old school supplies so that they can have enough money to afford the name brand item.



When shopping pay particular attention to the following

Buying School Shoes

Parents should examine shoes carefully before buying:

MAKE SURE there are no broken stitches, and that stitches are not too close together where they turn a corner and could weaken the material, causing it to tear.

CHECK:

- How well the shoes are put together
- How level the heels are. Make sure they are not shaking
- For loose straps, test their strength
- How well the shoes will take your child's weight
- All glued areas
- That lining at toes and heels are firmly stuck

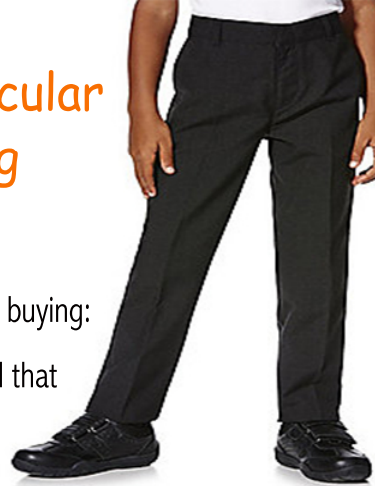
Allow your child to walk around the store in the shoes to make sure they do not hurt or squeak. Only he/she can know how the shoes feel. If you try a pair of shoes that hurt your child's feet in the shop, and you still insist on buying them, you could hardly blame the retailer later.

Check that shoes fit properly. They should be:

Long enough - this could be checked by pressing on the top of the toes of the shoe to see if there is room between the end of the longest toe and the end of the inside of the shoe (at least one half of an inch for a growing foot).



Wide enough - the child's feet should not make the sides of the shoe bulge.



Deep enough - the top of the shoes should not press down tightly on your child's feet. They should not be too deep either. When standing on toes, there should not be a large ridge in the upper part of the shoe.

Closely fitting at the heel without cutting into the anklebone. If your child stands on tip-toe the shoe should not slip off at the heel.

NOTE TO PARENTS: Children are not adults, and may not be capable of correctly checking a pair of shoe on their own before making the purchase. If the item is not faulty, you may not be entitled to redress should something go wrong.



The possibility of being able to shave a few dollars off purchase prices can be a big attraction at this time. But it's the consumer's responsibility to check goods properly to ensure you are getting value for your money.

In many sales, the old stock may be reduced to make way for new. Items of clothing are sometimes labeled incorrectly – a size 14 uniform shirt may really be size 12. The colour of shoes may have faded if they were displayed outside the storefront for some time. It is the responsibility of the trader to point out these flaws to the consumer before the contract of sale is made, allowing the consumer the right to change his or her mind.

The Sale of Goods Act protects the consumer even in sales. Goods must be of satisfactory quality, fit for their purpose as well as the description given, whether they are uniforms, footwear, pencils, or some other school supply. Consumers should still expect to have a reasonable amount of use out of any of these items. They should not fall apart soon after purchase.