




8 takeaways on

Back-to-school

2018





Parents plan to spend less on back-to-school than last year, with most budgeting less than \$250

Approximately 62% of parents will spend less than \$250 on back to school shopping, compared to 59% last year, and nearly 22% will spend between \$250 and \$500, whereas in 2017 25% budgeted this much. High spenders remain the same, with roughly 16% budgeting more than \$500, both this year and last.

2

7 out of 10 parents will head to discount stores to shop for back-to-school

Thanks to their low prices and wide selections, mass merchandise discounters like Walmart and Target were the most popular store type, with 71% of parents planning to shop there for back to school. Less than half of parents (40.4%) plan to visit online stores and marketplaces for their shopping lists. Nearly one-third (31.2%) of parents plan to shop at office supplies stores, 29.3% plan to visit department stores, and 25% plan to shop at clothing stores.

3

Cost is the top factor for where to shop and what to buy

Approximately 35% of parents rank low prices and the availability of discounts as most important. However, this is significantly down from last year, where 50% of parents considered low prices and discounts the most important factors. Ranking second in importance is buying things their children want; 15.5% of parents think it's most important that retailers have the products their kids actually want. Wide selection of goods, quick and easy shopping and quality products were also important factors.

4

Walmart, Target and Amazon rank the top 3 destinations for back-to-school shopping destinations

Retailer	Category	% of parents
Walmart	Mass merchandiser	50.3%
Target	Mass merchandiser	47.4%
Amazon	Online	15.8%
Staples	Office supplies	9.9%
Office Depot/Office Max	Office supplies	7.1%
Kohl's	Department store	6.8%
JCPenney	Department store	5.4%
Old Navy	Apparel	4.9%
Macy's	Department store	3.8%
Best Buy	Electronics	2.2%

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Parents aim to get back-to-school shopping done before school begins

Most parents (54.1%) plan to start back-to-school shopping at least 2 weeks before school begins. Of that number, 33.6% plan to shop 2-4 weeks before, 20.5% started over 1 month before. 10% of parents will shop the week before school starts, while 3.3% will not begin until after school starts. Interestingly, 12.7% of parents shop for school supplies throughout the year, as needed.

6

Fewer is better, as parents aim to shop at 1-2 stores this year

More than half of parents (53.7%) will only visit 1-2 stores for their back-to-school shopping. This makes sense given that an overwhelming majority will visit at least one mass merchants, like Target or Walmart. Almost one-third of parents (32.8%) will visit 3-5 stores. 7.4% will shop at 6 or more stores. Some parents (6.1%) don't plan to visit any stores at all.

7

Kids opinions matter, with almost 75% helping to decide where and what is bought for back-to-school

More than one-third (37.7%) of kids help their parents choose what product or brand to buy; 20% choose both where and what to buy; 7% do their own shopping; 26.8% did not have any input in back-to-school shopping.

8

Parents this year will spend less money on clothing and more money on stationery and supplies.

Nearly half of parents (48.9%) will spend most of their budget on clothes, shoes and accessories for school, compared to 56.6% last year. Another 32.5% will spend mostly on school supplies and stationery, compared to 27.2% last year. About 6.7% will spend most of their budget on books; 6.3% on electronics and 5.1% on dorm room essentials.



Methodology: Survey questions were asked of more than 1,000 parents of school-age children in the U.S. The survey was conducted in July of 2018.