



Avoiding the Back to School Meltdown

By

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Taking children in a huge department store filled with a giant jelly bean jar of colorful school supplies can be any parent's nightmare. Here are some ideas to make it a proactive and positive experience.

Supplies Parents Will Need

1. Construction Paper - 1 sheet for each child
2. Glue
3. Scissors
4. Numerous flyers from discount stores with pictures of school supplies
5. Magic markers
6. Ruler
7. List from the school on what supplies the child will need
8. Clip boards if desired

Prior to beginning

Section off the construction paper using the ruler and marker making two columns and as many rows as will fit on the paper. (Judge the height of the row based on the size of the pictures you have of school supplies) See example below:

Supply	Done

Have your children either read the list or listen to you read the list and then go through the flyers looking for pictures of what supplies they need. Have the children cut them out and paste them on the construction paper. Continue the project until all the necessary supplies from the list are placed on the construction paper.

Now you are ready to begin the next step. Talk to your children about the trip to the discount store to purchase the supplies. Tell them you only have the money to purchase the items on the list today. If they see something else they want- they can put it on their wish list. (an extra piece of construction paper) You might even take a digital camera with you and take a picture of the "wish" item. The nice thing about this, you can sneak back later and purchase this item for a holiday present. Your child will forget about the items once they get home, but they will be pleasantly surprised on holiday morning.

Tell the children their job is to find their selected items and then check off the list with their markers. (Clipboards make this part easier.)

When you enter the store, stop for a shopping cart and then put hand baskets inside the shopping cart. Place a piece of construction paper with each child's name on it in the side of each hand basket. This will help you check to see if everyone has their entire list.

You can have a contest to see who can find their items the quickest and the child who finishes first gets to choose what Mom cooks for dinner that night. You know if your children can handle competing against each other or not.

You can do the same thing with a department store catalog and back to school clothes.

Happy Shopping