

Back-to-school expenses can take a big chunk out of a household budget. Families with children in grades K-12 plan to spend an average \$673.57 on apparel and accessories, electronics, shoes and school supplies while college students and families with children in college plan to spend an average of \$888.71, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation.

Cut costs by using smart shopping strategies.

1. Shop during the sales tax holiday – August 6-7. Tax exempt items include
 - a. Clothing less than \$100 per item
 - b. Accessories or equipment less than \$50 per item
 - c. School supplies
 - d. School art supplies
 - e. School instructional material

Complete details are available from the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration at 501-682-7104 or www.dfa.arkansas.gov.

2. Plan ahead. Make a list of everything you'll need. School supply lists are often available at discount department or office supply stores and on school websites. In addition to regular school supplies; you may also need items such as lunch boxes, art supplies, sports equipment, or clothing. Making a list helps you avoid impulse buys.
3. Comparison shop – Compare stores and brands. Watch for sales. Many stores promote back-to-school sales. Find the stores with the best prices on the items you need. Store brands and generic items are often less expensive than name brand products.
4. Use coupons - Check store flyers, the Sunday paper, and free online coupon sites. Combine coupons with other sales and discounts when possible.

See details for the 2016 Arkansas Sales Tax Holiday at

<http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/exciseTax/salesanduse/Documents/holidayItemized.pdf>

For more financial management tips visit the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service website at www.uaex.edu.

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