

Family and Consumer Sciences

“Connections” in Tom Green County



Back to School Shopping Tips

When kids breathe a downtrodden “awwwwww” and parents a collective “woo-hoo,!” you know it’s almost back-to-school time. Kelli Hollinger, director of the Center for Retailing Studies at Texas A&M University’s Mays Business School in College Station, says this fall the National Retail Federation predicts back-to-school spending will total \$75.8 billion.



Here are Hollinger’s tips for back-to-school shopping:

- Peak time for spending begins 3-4 weeks before school starts, which nicely overlaps with many tax-free weekends, including Texas (Friday, Aug. 11 – Sunday, Aug. 13). Visit txtaxholiday.org for items covered and not covered under this savings weekend.
- Shoppers can expect heavy promotions from major chains to compete for share of wallet during the back-to-school season, second only to Christmas in terms of total sales volume.
- While overall department store sales have sputtered this year, discount stores like Walmart and Target are preferred destinations for school-aged and college-bound students alike.
- Since parents often express anxiety about this spending outlay, back-to-school shopping can also be a good lesson in budgeting, prioritizing wants versus needs, and teaching saving skills for kids. Using store apps to compare deals and basic online searches can help families shop efficiently and find the best deals.
- Although school districts requiring students to wear uniforms are on the rise, apparel remains a top seller, followed by electronics, shoes and school supplies. According to Deloitte, a professional service organization, back-to-school survey, 31 percent of parents are buying fewer traditional school supplies because of increased use of technology in schools.

Source: today.tamu.edu

| INSIDE THIS ISSUE: BACK TO SCHOOL | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Shopping Tips | 1 |
| Food Safety | 2 |
| School Anxiety | 3 |
| Tips for a great start | 3 |
| Monthly Recipe | 4 |
| County News | 4 |

Back to School Food Safety

It's time to get ready for back to school! While you start planning on what to put inside your child's lunchbox, don't forget to keep that food safe. According to the Center for Disease Control, almost half of the Salmonella infections each year happen to infants and school-age children. Keeping food safety in mind while preparing and packaging lunch boxes can greatly reduce food poisoning. Here are a few tips that can help make sure that food is packed safely:

Clean, Cook, Separate, Chill:

- **Clean:** If you're making lunch the night before, be sure to wash your hands and use clean cutting boards, utensils, and countertops. Making lunch on the same surfaces you used to prepare raw meat or poultry for dinner may result in cross-contamination and lead to Salmonella-related illnesses.
- **Separate:** Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for meat and poultry.
- **Cook:** Cook foods to the right temperature, use a food thermometer to check.
- **Chill:** If the lunch contains perishable food items like luncheon meats, eggs, and yogurt, make sure to pack it with at least two cold sources (e.g. freezer packs and frozen water bottles).

Easy Tips to Pack a Safe Lunch:



1. Frozen juice boxes can also be used as freezer packs. By lunchtime, the juice should be thawed and ready to drink!
2. Perishable food can be unsafe to eat by lunchtime if packed in a paper bag. Use an insulated box or bag instead.
3. Children should wash their hands for 20 seconds with warm soapy water before eating. Have them sing the ABCs twice while washing if they sometimes finish early.
4. If possible, your child's lunch should be stored in a refrigerator. But leave the lid of the lunchbox or an insulated, soft-sided bag open in the fridge so that cold air can circulate and keep the food cold.
5. If you're packing a hot lunch, like soup, chili, or stew, use an insulated container to keep it hot. Fill the container with boiling water, let it stand for a few minutes, empty it, and then put in the piping hot food. Tell your child to keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot- 140° or above.
6. After lunch, discard all leftover food, used food packaging, and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food.

Source: dinnertonight.tamu.edu/

Seven tips for parents to manage back to school anxiety

Child anxiety expert, Jeremy Pettit, a professor of psychology with Florida International University, shares some tips for parents whose children may be exhibiting signs of back to school anxiety.

1. **Attend open house and orientation activities** before the start of school so children can see their classroom and meet teachers.
2. **Establish a routine and stick to it.** There are many changes happening at the start of school. Having a predictable routine at home can be calming.
3. **Discuss the positive aspects of going back to school**, such as seeing friends again or starting fun extracurricular activities in school such as sports or clubs.
4. **Provide reassurance** but not excessive reassurance – once or twice is enough.
5. If at all possible, **do not let children avoid school by staying at home.** This tends to make things worse rather than improve the situation.
6. **Show empathy.** Parents can discuss with their kids their own experiences with anxiety and what they have found to be helpful. Parents also can help children identify their own strategies for coping with anxiety.
7. **Praise children when they face their fears** and make efforts to cope with anxiety.



In most cases, the anxiety will fade away over the first few days of school. However, sometimes it can begin to interfere with daily functioning – missing school, performance in class suffers, parents miss work to pick up the child from school early, and frequent arguments within the family. If the anxiety persists, it may be time to seek help.

Source: news.fiu.edu

Four back to school tips to get your child off to a great start

Summer is winding down; it's time to think about school again. As you pick out new clothes and backpacks, here are four back-to-school preparations that can make a real difference in your child's health and academic success this school year.

1. Get your child on a good sleep schedule with good sleep habits.
2. Plan healthy lunches and snacks.
3. Make an appealing homework place and decide on a routine.
4. Plan activities and downtime.

Source: health.harvard.edu



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Banana Apple Muffins

Serves: 12

1 1/2 cups white whole wheat flour.
1 teaspoon baking powder.
1/2 teaspoon baking soda.
1/4 teaspoon salt.
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce.
1/4 cup skim milk.
1/4 cup granulated white sugar.
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract.
1 large egg.
2 medium ripe bananas peeled and mashed.

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
3. Whisk applesauce, milk, sugar, vanilla and egg. Gently add bananas to wet ingredients.
4. Fold flour into wet ingredients.
5. Divide muffin batter among 12 lined muffin tins.
6. Bake 18-20 minutes.

This would be great for breakfast or after school snack and your child could help too!!

Source: dinnertonight.tamu.edu

Tom Green EE News

EE Yearbook and Rally Day Planning Meeting

When: August 9th @ 9:30

Where: County Extension Office

**(Please bring your updated EE
Club membership list to the
meeting)**

*Family and Consumer Sciences "Connections" is
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