

Clothes on a budget

The kids have grown several inches, their pants are all worn out, their jacket sleeves reach just below their elbows, and their shoes have holes in them. You have to go school shopping, but you want to stick to a budget - you've got other kids to buy for also. As a family with five kids, we have this system worked out.

First, we have a fashion show before we begin shopping. We pull out all the Fall clothes and try them on. I keep a list of what each child has, and specific things they need, such as a shirt to go with their red plaid skirt. Once we have taken inventory, we have a good idea of what we will need to buy. Before the shopping excursion, we go get lunch. This is a tradition with my girls, and as my boys grow, I'll start one with them as well. We chill at our favorite restaurant and fill up on the energy we'll need to tackle the clothes shopping. This year, their grandmother and aunt came too. Once we hit the stores, I look to see what sales are being offered and focus on the clothes we need that fall in line with the sales. If one store has a great sale on jeans, we'll look there first. Once we get the essentials, the girls can begin looking for other fashions that they want but don't need. We end it by finding some great shoes that will last throughout the year and be comfortable on their feet. This is an area that I like to splurge a little more and get a good quality shoe. They provide better cushion and support that my growing children need.