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Budget Shopping for Kids

By Kathryn Finney

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It's hard to find fashionable and affordable clothes for children. Here is the scoop on dressing your little bargainista in the hottest fashions for less.

Dressing Girls

Most of us struggle to find clothing for girls that don't make your favorite five-year-old look like a midget Britney Spears. There are plenty of stores to find age appropriate items like Old Navy, Children's Place, and the Gap. These stores offer great pieces, for reasonable prices. Always buy items like pants and jackets one size up, so that it can last into the beginning of the following year.

H&M has some of cutest clothing for girls at even cheaper prices than the GAP. Avoid department stores that tend to price children's clothing at the same price point as adults. There is no justification for a 4T Ralph Lauren skirt to cost that same as an adult skirt. The one exception is at Macys, which has great deals on children's clothing during their major sale events.

The best store to bargain shop for girls is at Target. The options are limitless and the clothes are well constructed with most items in the \$10-\$17 range. Plus shopping at target is very acceptable (unlike K-MART), so you can save money without worry about the "cool" factor.

Dressing Boys

It seems like the designers for boys clothing are hell-bent on making them look like little action heroes. Bargain shopping for these tykes is an art form that few know how to do. Target has great stuff for little guys, with Children's Place giving the most for your bucks. However, SEARS is also a great place to find cute little items from designers like Sean John and Levi, for very reasonable prices.

Although Old Navy is great place for basics like Cargo pants, the really cool stuff is at GAP. Bright colored lumberjack jackets and knit caps will keep your little guy looking stylish. Another good place is Marshall's and T.J. Maxx. Usually both these stores have nice suits from designers like Polo Ralph

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Lauren for such a bargain that you could also pick them up a little toy to make up for forcing them to go shopping.

Dressy Outfits

When you want to spend a little more on either a good suit or party dress, head to the outlets of the big expensive department stores, like Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Nordstrom also have children departments. Go to the main site of these stores to find the outlets nearest you. You can find designers like Betsey Johnson and Ralph Lauren for kids. Nordstrom has an amazing selection of shoes for little ones as well.

Saving Grace– The Internet

The Internet has revolutionized shopping for children. Long gone are the days of having to meander through stores with three-year-olds. Check out these great online stores:

Zappos.com– Great selection of shoes from designers like Bibi and Kenneth Cole.

Target.com– Cheap and Cool. A great combo.

Overstock.com– A wide selection and rock bottom prices. Great for coats.

Babystyle.com– Keep your favorite infant stylish with clothes from this online fave.

Kathryn "The Budget Fashionista" Finney is the Chief Shopping Officer and Founder of

and

– the original shopping blog. She is also the Chief Shopping Officer of TBF

Group, LLC, an internet based company focused on providing the best shopping and fashion advice on the web.

How to Organize Christmas Toy Shopping

By Barbara Myers

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It's so easy to go overboard when shopping for kids this time of year. We want them to enjoy all the things we didn't have growing up. It's important to set limits though.

1. List all the children you'll buy for this Christmas. Don't forget an extra toy for your local shelter.
2. Set a firm budget for each child.

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3. Note individual interests, hobbies and collections.
4. Ask them what they want for Christmas. You may think Will needs more Legos, but all he really wants is a caboose for his train set.
5. Look through mail order catalogs and internet toy sites for ideas and note them on your list. Place an order if you find the perfect toy.
6. Look through your local phone directory for a list of toy stores in your area. There might be some you aren't aware of.
7. Go shopping with list in hand. As you make purchases mark them off your list. Keep track of how much is left in each child's budget. If you are tempted to go beyond the budget simply write down the item as a future birthday gift idea.
8. Buy paper, bows and tags if you don't already have them. Spend an evening or two wrapping gifts. You did it!

Barbara Myers is the author of *Your Complete Guide to Organized Parenting*. Enjoy a FREE "50 Ways to Manage Your Time" tips booklet at <http://www.ineedmoretime.com>



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