

# BACK TO SCHOOL

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## Stocking school supplies for homeschoolers

BY CAROL SOUTH  
Special to the Record-Eagle

Ellen Koenig hits the school supply sales early and hard. A homeschooling mom, she stocks a bookshelf with crayons, folders, paper, scissors, glue and other supplies that her children tap into all year. Koenig has been homeschooling her children since 1989 and has graduated four of them, including one last spring. With two still in school at home — John Paul, 12 and Elizabeth, 7 — she jumps on pre-back-to-school sales in late July every year. She combs sales flyers, draws up a plan of attack and, this year, returned home with bags of bargains plus a sheaf of rain checks. “I spend about \$20-\$30 midsummer and we have a big school cabinet where it goes,” she said. “I have learned that you have to do it right now, the first time you see the back to school flyer, it’s gone. Oh, they’ll have another sale but it’s not as good.”

Noting that all her kids have all been verbal learners, she buys cases of notebooks and folders, snapping up the latter for ten cents each.

“They use them to practice writing, sketching, science and write songs, movies and stories in them,” said Koenig, a member of the Live and Learn homeschool group. “We have piles of notebooks all over the house.”

Schooling at home provides a different perspective on August’s back-to-school frenzy. Savvy homeschooling parents like Koenig, whose kids are always creating something, keep their supplies well-stocked but purchase when the price meets their needs, not a school time table.

Laura Scott said her daughters like the supply gathering part of starting up homeschooling every fall. “They like to get those stretchy book covers, a fresh supply of gel pens, erasers, glue sticks — those are big because they are always gluing,” Scott said, a member of the Immaculata Homeschool Group. “They both just have their hearts set on a five-subject notebook.”

“And stickers — we use lots and lots of stickers,” she added. “Plus tons of fabric and clay; we don’t really consciously go searching for



Ellen Koenig of Traverse City with the family’s homeschooling supplies. From the right, her children John Paul, 12, and Elizabeth, 7.

Photos/Carol South

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## Tween wardrobes are first declaration of independence

BY SAMANTHA CRITCHELL  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — In many households, the tween years are the quiet years. Kids whisper with friends behind closed doors and clam up even more around adults. Their clothes, however, speak volumes. When 10- to 14-year-olds think about back-to-school clothes, they might pay attention to what idols like Hilary Duff or Ashlee Simpson are wearing, but they’re really more interested in the statement they themselves will make. “Twins are at the place in life where they are beginning to assert their independence from mom and dad. Tweens choose their clothing based on personality

types — skater, sporty, preppy, surfer. It’s who they want the world to see them as,” *Seventeen* magazine editor-in-chief Atosa Rubenstein said. “There’s a lot of talk if a seventh-grade girl returns in September all ‘gothed out’ or ‘skatered out.’”

Boys and girls who are into skateboarding — or who wish they knew how — adopt a lot of punk-rock touches, such as black leather and metal studs. Wannabe surfers have a beachy look, including board shorts and Vans sneakers. The urban look includes the bling and basketball jerseys favored by hip-hop stars; the gothic look is almost all black, heavy and long; and the preppies look the sportiest,

with hints of tweed, argyle and grosgrain ribbons. T-shirts decorated with bold graphics cut across most fashion cliques and are a top pick in the fall fashion forecast. The graphics, which range from Hello Kitty to skulls and crossbones, can convey an entire lifestyle, social standing and outlook on life in the mind of a tween, says Rubenstein. Besides being expressive, the shirts are great for this age group because they are easy to care for and to pair with bottoms, says Lisa Strubel, director of color



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AP Photo/Mary Altaffer  
Designer Mossimo’s fall line for clothes designed for children.

# Just in time for Back to School!

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