

# Homeschool supplies

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that, but if it looks good, we'll get it."

Anne Marie Awrey created a unique back-to-school shopping angle for her family: buy for others. The Traverse City homeschooling mom of two young children said she spends minimally for school supplies, with no need for uniforms or backpacks. So as a family, Awrey and her children have purchased school supplies and taken them to the Goodwill Inn for the past two years.

They donate supplies, for example, that would be needed by a 12-year-old boy.

"I always think of it as our first lesson of the year," said Awrey, also a sale shopper. "We get a lot of satisfaction out of doing this and, with prices what they are, I feel like I can do a lot more for kids than at other times of the year, like Christmas."

While school supplies are school supplies, clothing purchases are definitely different for back to school at home. Koenig notes that she does not necessarily have to buy new clothes just for the fall. Instead, she picks up what her kids need when they need it or purchasing

ahead at a sale.

"It's nice because we don't have to," said Koenig of a massive school clothes campaign. "It's completely different, my kids don't need a new winter coat every year because they don't outgrow it every year — I don't think you can get away with that in school, the kids remember."

Ramona Cotton agreed that being a homeschooling family means you can buy clothing unrelated to back to school deadlines. The Blair Township resident makes sure her kids have a well-balanced wardrobe, including at-home informal clothes plus nicer clothes for activities with the TEACH homeschool group, of

which they have been a member for two years. She also provides her children clothes for the group's art and gym activities.

"I'm not one that thinks their wardrobe needs changing just because they are going to school," said Cotton, who has three young children and one on the way. "If they need things, then we get them; if they don't, then we will wait for Christmas or birthdays."

One major purchase of homeschooling families is curriculum, which math, language arts, social studies and so on will they use for the coming year. With a second grade son and daughter going into kindergarten, Cotton plans

her curriculum buys around different learning styles and ages.

"First I look at my curriculum, like Saxon math will tell me lesson by lesson what I will need," she said. "I use a K-3 curriculum for both of them for social studies."

Veteran homeschooling mom Scott said she purchases any new curriculum by June, because otherwise companies have a backlog of orders by fall — meaning a wait of weeks for delivery. The Traverse City resident has six children, five of whom have been homeschooled for all or part of their education. She has graduated two from homeschool and is still working with two at

home.

Scott also spends time mid summer planning the next year, filling out a large framework of goals for each subject. She gathers ideas all year and keeps a folder for each daughter with goals, objectives, daily plans, yearly assessments and extra-curricular activities.

"Once I get the framework done, then I figure out what days what happens," she said. "All subject to change, but I at least have to have something to work from."

**Carol South is a local freelance writer who is also a regular contributor to the Grand Traverse Herald.**

# Swap snacks with empty calories for nutrient-dense foods

BY DEIRDRE O'SHEA  
Copley News Service

Children love a snack time with kid-size portions and fun, hands-on foods. Because snacks frequently make up almost one-fourth of a child's food intake, they are a significant source of daily nutrition.

Two healthy snacks a day should bridge the gap between meals and round out a child's diet. Only 2 percent of American kids' diets meet all the recommendations of the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid ([www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)). Less than 20 percent eat enough vegetables, for example.

Kids learn dietary habits at home. From a young age, they absorb the food preferences and eating routines of the family, so proper nutrition must begin with their parents.

"The whole issue of childhood obesity has crept

up on our country over a period of years," says Kate Coler, deputy undersecretary of the USDA's department of Food, Nutrition and Consumer Service.

"Parents have the responsibility ... to incorporate physical activity and to teach their children about healthy eating habits and provide healthy snacks."

A good snack is "nutrient dense," which means no empty calories. Avoid foods with little or no nutritional value and those high in fat and additives, such as hot dogs, high-sodium sandwich meat, soda, sweetened fruit drinks and iced teas, sugarcorned cereals, low-fiber carbohydrates, potato chips, desserts, cookies and candy. Fruit juice should be limited to about four to six ounces each day.

The food pyramid emphasizes the five major food groups required for good health. Whole grains pro-

vide carbohydrates, B vitamins and fiber. Fruits and vegetables provide antioxidants, vitamins such as A and C, carbohydrates and fiber. Milk and dairy foods provide calcium, riboflavin, protein and vitamins A and D. Meats, fish and poultry provide protein and iron. Nuts and beans provide protein and fiber.

A fun way to involve children in choosing healthy snacks is to make a list of foods for each of the food-group categories. For small kids, cut pictures out of a magazine. Teach kids to mix and match foods from different categories to create snacks, and let them make their own (or help out).

The goal is to eat the greatest variety of foods, which will offer children more nutritional value. Here are some fast snacks to try:

- Pile canned kidney,

pinto or black beans on top of leftover rice (brown preferably); shred on Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese. Gently heat in the microwave until the cheese melts.

- Make pizzas with whole-wheat English muffins; top with a pineapple or tomato slice, mushrooms, olives, peppers or onions.

- Cut fruit — apples, pears, watermelon, cantaloupe — and cheese slices make wonderful kabobs on toothpicks; experiment with new kinds of cheese, such as Havarti and Gouda.

- Spread whole-wheat wraps with hummus; add chopped cucumbers, tomatoes and avocados, red-leaf lettuce, and a slice of turkey; roll and cut in half. This is a good way to introduce the flavor of hummus.

- Make flavored yogurt. Start with plain yogurt and

add small amounts of honey (not for infants, however), maple syrup, vanilla or another natural flavor; mix in fruit, nuts, sunflower seeds, granola, or dried blueberries or cranberries.

- Cut celery boats to fill with peanut butter or cream cheese; dot raisins along the top. Known as "Ants on a Log," this favorite still pleases kids.

- Spread fruit-flavored yogurt on a graham cracker square and top with a second square; wrap in plastic

wrap and freeze for a cold treat.

- Freeze bananas for smoothies. Slice when they're ripe and toss in a freezer bag. Try one frozen banana with a half cup of any yogurt and 3 ounces of orange juice.

- Remember fondue? Melt soft cheese (brie or cheddar for example); when it has cooled down, dip broccoli, baby carrots, celery, bread cubes or fresh fruit.

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