

School Days

Tech Checklist For School Success And Savings

(NAPSA)—At school, at home, on the road and in between, technology is changing the way students study and the way teachers teach.

A recent study by the National Retail Federation found nearly half of U.S. parents plan to spend less this year on school supplies than in years past. Four out of five respondents intend to seek out better deals and bigger discounts to spread their shopping dollars. Still, spending on electronics and computer equipment is expected to increase more than 10 percent.

Electronic gear has become essential for students, so parents need to know how to pick the gadgets their kids really need without breaking the bank. Keeping up with technology is a tough task, but these tips will help you focus on what's most important and where to seek savings:

- **Tip 1: Prioritize**—It can be difficult to choose between what's necessary and what's nice to have. Some must-haves to accompany a new computer purchase include blank CDs, USB flash storage drives, headphones and a mouse such as the Microsoft Wireless Mouse 6-BA Series, which is available in a variety of vibrant colors at Target (\$24.99-\$29.99).

- **Tip 2: Do your research**—Plan ahead, watch the weekly circulars and keep an eye out for coupons and sales on the items you need. Also, shop on select sales tax holidays when possible. Items such as school supplies, clothing and footwear, books and computers may be available tax-free on certain dates.

- **Tip 3: Shop smart**—Do



Electronics are a bigger part of education than ever, even in elementary school.

your research online so you'll know where to find the best deals, and take advantage of free shipping to save on Web purchases. Plus, some products are online exclusives, such as the ASUS 8GB Netbook with Windows XP at Target.com (\$279.99).

- **Tip 4: Make one list for everything**—You don't need to search all over town or visit specialty stores for each item on your list. Do your research, compile your list and reserve one afternoon for one comprehensive school shopping excursion.

- **Tip 5: Get multifunction devices**—Purchase items that fulfill multiple needs and take the place of multiple gadgets, such as the Epson AIO 3-in-1 printer, scanner and copier (\$29.99).

Keep these tips in mind to keep more money in your wallet and give your youngster a head start for back-to-school success.