

# Back to School Shopping - Canada - 2022

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on back to school shopping
- Market factors influencing back to school shopping
- Retailers used for back to school shopping
- Supplies purchased for school
- Typical back to school shopping timing
- Consumer attitudes related to back to school shopping

The abrupt shift to virtual learning early in the pandemic altered school supply requirements, motivating many parents and students to purchase supplies for at home and school. Though the start of this most recent school year began smoothly, the emergence of a new variant has once again created uncertainty around virtual learning which will impact school-related purchases going forward.

Trips to multiple retailers are common among back to school shoppers. Six in 10 shoppers plan to visit three or more retailers for their back to school shopping, with mass merchandisers being relied upon most commonly. Retailer preferences are driven by the varying needs of different demographic groups, as adult students and parents of children plan to shop at different retailer types in order to fulfil their school shopping requirements.

Economic concerns and tightened budgets will lead to more shoppers buying fewer items and making do with what they have. Canadians who are struggling financially are less likely than those with a healthy financial situation to be planning to purchase a wide variety of school supplies.

There is an opportunity to encourage shoppers to make a stronger emotional connection with back to school shopping. Two thirds (66%) of parents already view this activity as a time to bond with their kids and another 68% let their children choose most items. Encouraging a deeper involvement with kids when shopping will expand the opportunity for upgrades and additional purchases,



“The initial surge of school-related purchases in the spring of 2020 has continued to impact how consumers shop as well as what they buy, even two years later. The extended uncertainty around whether students will be learning in classrooms or from home has forced students to be prepared for either scenario.”

– **Meghan Ross, Senior Home & Beauty Analyst**

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particularly since 61% of parents agree that they like to treat their children with extra/special school supplies that are not on the standard supply list.

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