

How to Spend Less on Your Kids!

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While children are a bundle of joy, they bring a number of expenses into everyday life that can and will easily eat up your budget. Planning is vital for any parents who want to save. There are many ways to plan out your finances, but if you follow these tips, you'll be able to not only save, but have enough left over to spend money on things you and your child can enjoy together.

1. Coupons

Babies, toddlers and preschoolers have a lot of necessities, from diapers to baby wipes to rash creams to bandages to snacks for school. If parents make random choices and select these items every month, they are likely to end up with products that are too expensive to be sustainable choices. Instead, hit the stores on discount days and stock up on at least a month's supplies. Join coupon sites and print coupons for products you need. For instance, there are discount coupons for up to 50% off on stationary, clothes and grocery items on many sites. Remember to pick the brands that most often have good discount coupons available, so that you can reward them for helping out consumers like yourself.

2. Online Resources

Many parents want to get rid of toys, books, computers and furniture that their children have either grown out of or do not want anymore. Several websites offer all this and more and most parents are willing to sell all this at low rates. Many items found on these sites are actually in pretty good shape and allow you to save up quite a bit. You can also swap toys, books and games with other moms or dads. Join online groups that actually meet once a month to swap items and save up!

3. Be Creative

Kids like going out, but eating out all the time is expensive. So is going to the mall. Instead of making that a norm in your house, get your kids excited about hide and seek in the backyard or other outdoor games at the local park. Make it a point to get your kids to help out in the kitchen and prepare a lunch basket, so you will not have to stop at a drive-thru later. Children who spend too much time watching television or playing video games not only force parents to waste money on games and movies, but also end up losing out on healthy activities. Teach your child to value outdoor activity from a young age, so they grow into healthier teenagers, who are definitely much easier to afford.

4. Pass It On

Encourage toddlers to come up with their own games instead of having to rely on toys. Recycle newspaper, old magazines and boxes by letting your child make his or her own toys. Let them stick pictures on them with glue or just enjoy tearing up newspaper and putting it in a box. Surprisingly, children enjoy these games much more than they enjoy playing with dolls or stuffed animals!

5. Waste Not, Want Not

There are many parents looking for what you do not want, so put your children's used books and toys online for sale. Try Craigslist, Ebay, and maybe Amazon. If none of these work, try a consignment store or have a yard sale!

6. Bonus

Last but not the least, as soon as your child is old enough, teach him or her to save and encourage them to work, so they can earn an allowance. Many kids can make extra pocket money working odd jobs like walking the neighbor's dog or organizing a carwash for the neighborhood. Take it from me - teaching children to work hard and save up early really helps. It prepares them for college, the real world and helps out your wallet immensely.

Rachel Kinsey saves money by recycling, couponing & visiting www.boatinsurance.org.