

Back to School Swap Ideas
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Since coming up with a plan is crucial to a successful back-to-school swap, follow these tips and save big bucks this season.

1. Establish Participation Guidelines.

To ensure everyone has a chance to find something they need, determine a minimum number of items each attendee must contribute. Also, set a limit for the number of items each parent is allowed to take so supplies aren't unequally distributed. Finally, let parents know the types of supplies they can bring, including gently-used books, clothing, school supplies and sporting equipment.

2. Award the Biggest Donor.

The more items you have to swap, the more successful the event will be. Persuade participating parents to donate as many goods as possible, keeping within your established parameters, of course. You don't want a room filled with clutter and junk! To motivate fellow moms and dads to contribute, offer a reward to the parent who donates the most items. A [gift card](#) is a popular choice, especially since you can purchase it at a discount through Gift Card Granny.

3. Set Collection Times.

A successful swap should be well organized for easy browsing. Set a specific collection time and drop-off location and share this information with your attendees. Consider placing a bin outside your front door so parents can drop items off at their convenience, even when you aren't at home.

4. Spread the Word.

Will you limit the swap to family and friends or do you want to open it up to other families in your community? Depending on your decision, you can use different avenues for promoting the event to get the best turnout. Set up a [Facebook Group](#) to convey details via social media, send [a free evite](#) to better manage RSVPs, or contact your school's PTA to help spread the word. Even if some parents can't attend, they may be willing to donate items they no longer use for the swap.

5. Get Organized.

Once you've collected all of the items for the swap, it's time to get organized. Divvy up goods by type and then organize within each category. For instance, clothing should be separated by gender and size, while sporting equipment can be categorized by activity. Hangers and clothing racks will make for a clean garment display, while folding tables are perfect for showcasing books and school supplies. If you don't have these items in your home, don't rush out to buy them! Request to borrow from participating parents within the event invitation instead.

6. Make it Kid-Friendly.

Since your back-to-school swap is all about the kids, make sure it's a child-friendly event. This helps parents avoid finding a babysitter, a necessity that may deter some from attending. Set up

games in your backyard or designate a separate play room where the children can run around. Ask your babysitter to watch the kids for the duration of the swap, and also allow older kids to participate in the process if their parents need help selecting required items.

7. Repurpose Plastic Bags.

You might suggest parents bring their own plastic or reusable bags to collect swapped goods, but ultimately some will forget. If you have a stash of plastic grocery bags, repurpose them by offering a couple to each parent who walks through the door. Keep some handy for double-bagging heavy items, too.