

EBOOK

FIELD AGENT®

BACK TO SCHOOL SHOPPING REPORT:

# Parents Unveil Insights and Emerging Trends for 2023-24



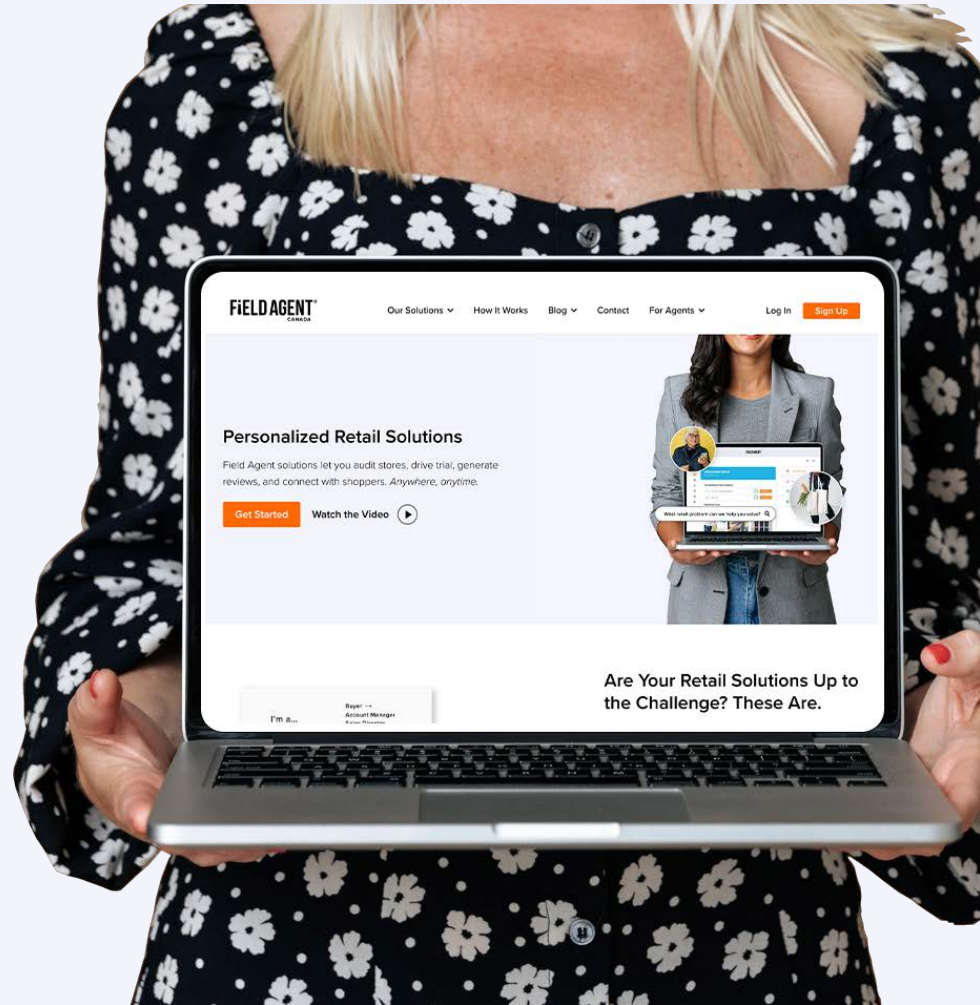
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# About Field Agent Canada

Field Agent is a retail solutions provider that lets you audit stores, drive trial, generate reviews, and connect with shoppers.

Field Agent's on-demand platform allows companies of all sizes to get visibility, gather data, and send real shoppers in stores and online.

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# Survey Demographics for Raw Back-to-School Data

Field Agent surveyed 1,004 parents of students entering kindergarten through grade 12 in the fall of 2023. All respondents were smartphone users at least 18 years old. The survey was completed entirely through the Field Agent mobile app from July 17 through July 26, 2023.



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# School's in Session: Introducing the 2023 Back to School Report

Back to School is not just the time when summer comes to a close and parents quietly rejoice. For the retail industry, Back to School refers to the second-largest shopping season of the year. Brands and retailers know it requires months of planning, organized workflows, and a solid go to market strategy.

Between basic school supplies, clothing, food for packed lunches and everything in-between—the sheer volume of data needed to succeed in various categories is overwhelming. This is why, each year, Field Agent surveys the true experts of the Back to School season: the parents.

In a nine day span (July 17-26, 2023), Field Agent surveyed 1,004 parents of students K-12 for the 2023-2024 school year about their purchase intentions. They gave the scoop on Back to School brands, retailers, trends, and timelines — and Field Agent aggregated and analyzed the results to help you make data-informed decisions.

Pencils up. Let's begin.



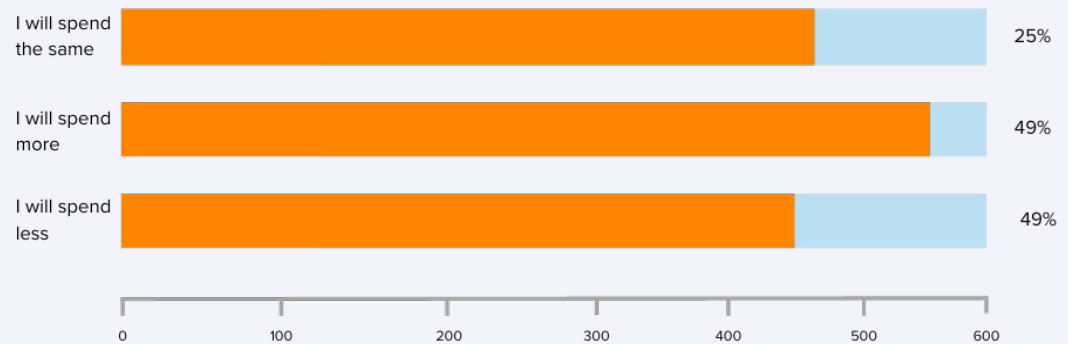
# 1 Investing in Success: Back to School Spending

If this isn't your first rodeo with us, you know that we ask parents the same question every single year: how much are you planning to dish out for Back to School?

With the state of the economy in 2022 that's trickled into 2023, it's no surprise that parents share that they're setting aside extra dollars to spend for their students' Back to School supplies. 79% said that they'd spend the same amount or more, with the remaining 21% expecting to pay a bit less.

Compared to last year, will your household spend likely more or less on Back-to-School Shopping

N = 1,004



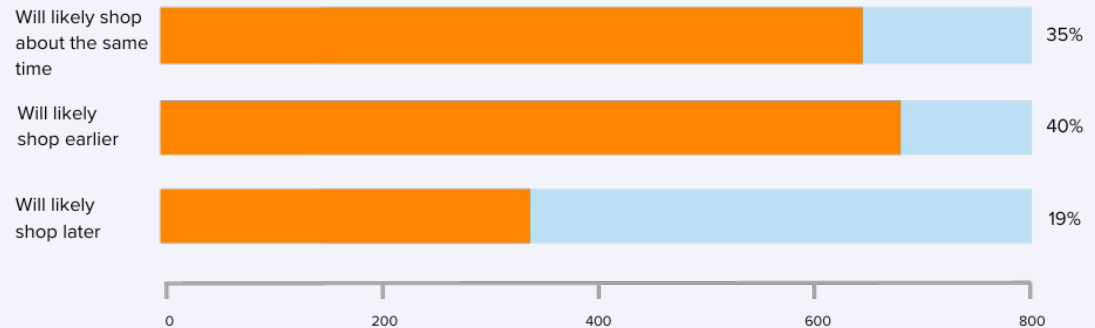
## 2 Time for You to Get a Watch

Dads tend to have a rep for their timing, right? “Early is on time, on time is late.” Don’t even get us started on what happens when they’re late.

Same goes for the 1,004 dads and moms of these K-12 students. When asked about how soon they anticipated shopping for their child’s Back to School items, only 191 said they’d be purchasing later than years previous.

Compared to last year, when do you expect to shop for the 2023-24 Back-to-School season?

N = 1,004





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## 3 What's Making the Cut Cart

Even before parents get in the car on their way to the store, they have a mental list forming. *I have my child's Back to School supply checklist from their school, but what else do I need?*

Pencils and notebooks are a given. Parents take the opportunity during their big shopping haul to stock up on other Back to School supplies that fit the season.

Survey says? Basic school supplies are at the top of the list, and other items fall steadily behind.

But what wasn't predictable was the shift in hand sanitizer and electronics. In last year's survey, 58% of parents said they would purchase hand sanitizer and, as shown, only 34% said they would pick some up this year.

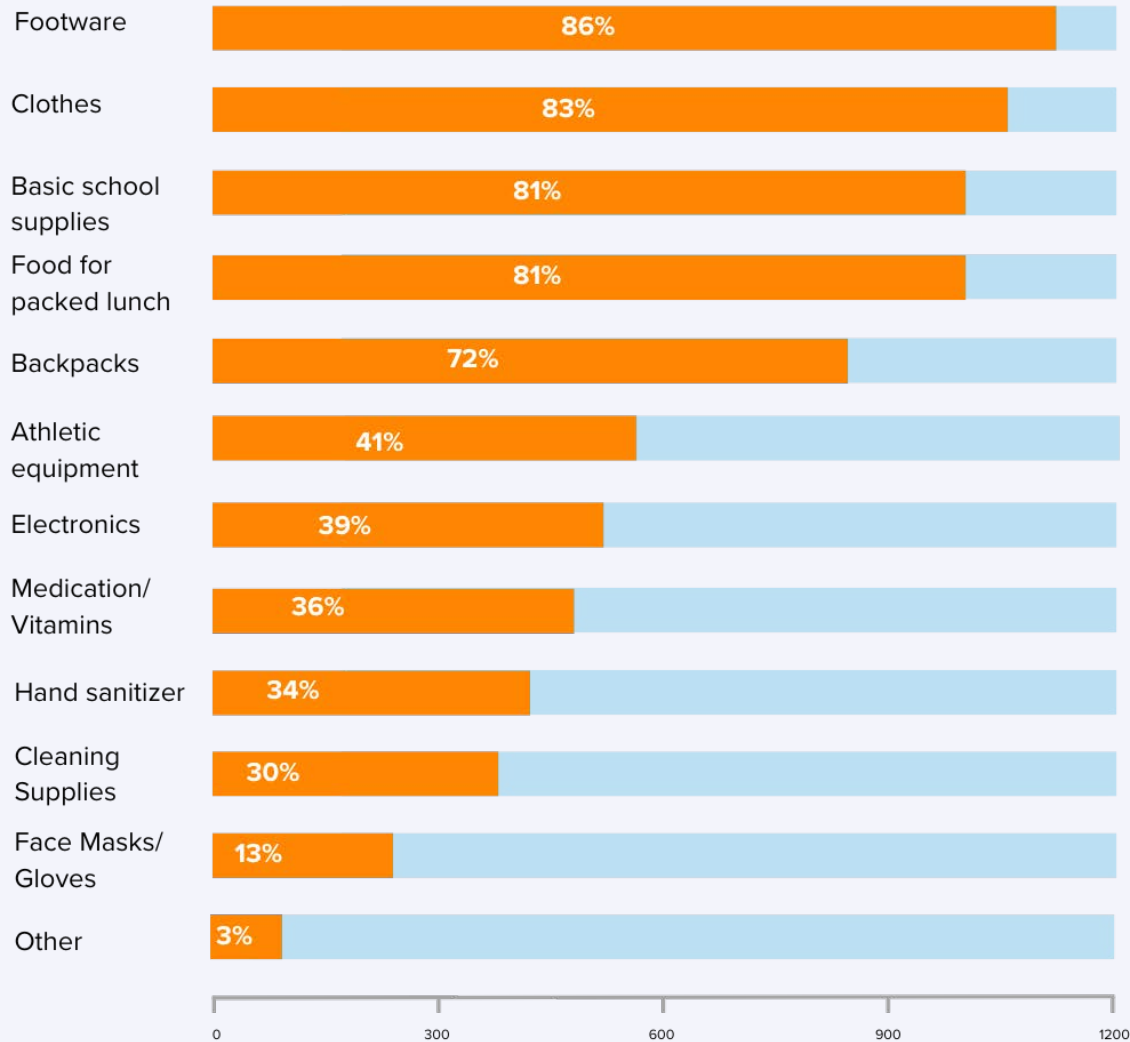
That figure was at a whopping 75% at the height of the pandemic.

Electronics also took a dip too: more than half of parents last year said they'd purchase electronics (53%), and this year it was only 39%.



## Which of the following items do you plan to purchase for the upcoming school year? (Select all that apply)

N = 1,004





## 4 The Right Retailers

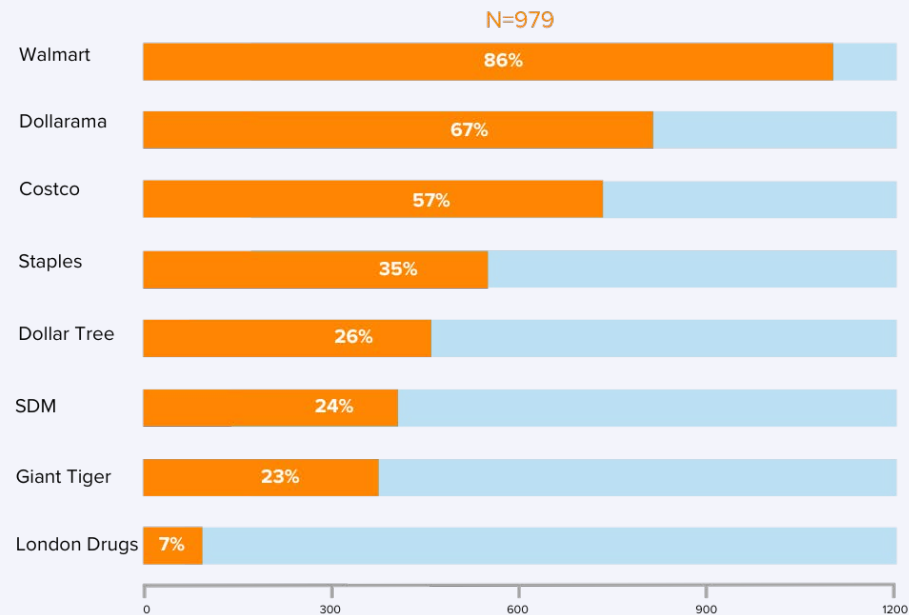
The car is loaded, and parents are headed across town to pick up Back to School supplies. The real question is: where are they shopping?

We asked parents to pick which stores they'd likely visit during their outings for school supplies, and here's what they said:

Compared to 2022, the ranking of preferred BTS retailers is identical. As per usual when it comes to Back to School in-store shopping, Almost nine in ten BTS shoppers will shop at Walmart, with Dollarama and Costco rounding out the Top 3. Staples has fallen in the rankings with just 35% of shoppers indicating they will shop there compared to 51% in 2022.

Out of 1,004 survey respondents, **only 12 people** said they wouldn't shop in-store at a retailer. Trust us, in-store shopping is far from obsolete.

Which store(s) will you likely visit to purchase school supplies from? (Select all that apply)



# 5 The Digital Dig: Online School Supplies

“Hey siri, how do I find the best deals on school supplies?”

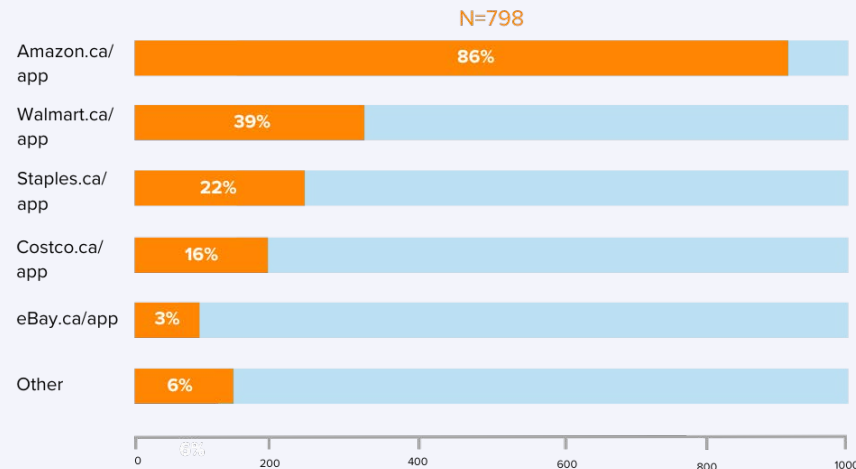
“Alexa, can you order one 12-pack of Crayola colored pencils to my house?”

“Hey google, I’m in a time crunch. Where can I buy spiral notebooks online?”

Parents always have an alternative option to dragging their kids to the store for Back to School shopping: Amazon. (And, other online retailers)

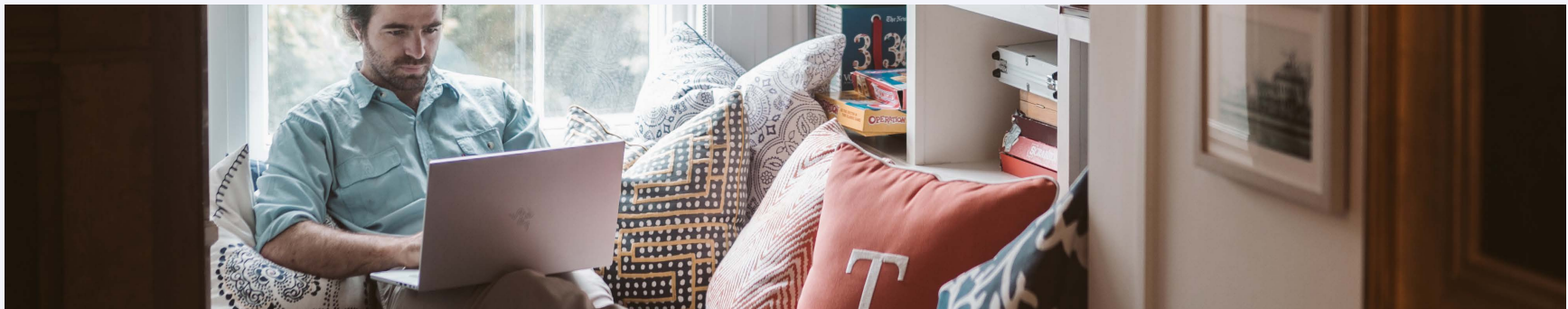
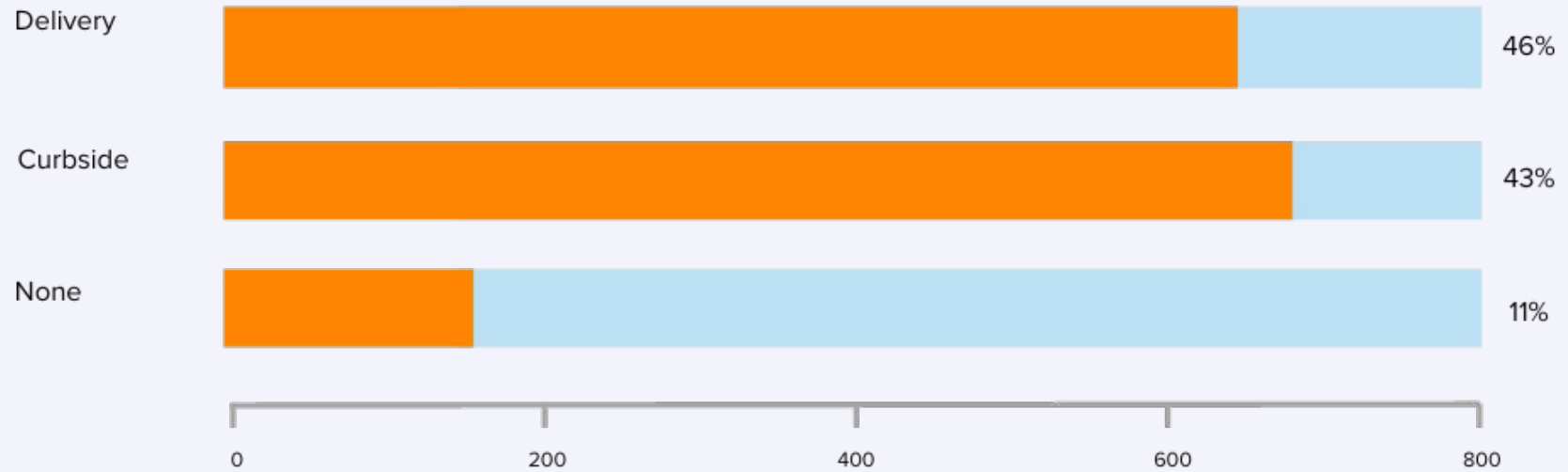
Whether they’re forced because of out-of-stock items (OOS) that they need for their child’s supply list or out of pure convenience, 81% of parents say they are planning to shop online for Back to School 2023. 75% of on-line shoppers will have items delivered to their home while 43% will buy online and pickup in-store.

Which online store(s) will you likely visit to purchase school supplies from? (Select all that apply)



# Which of the following methods are you likely use to obtain school supplies? (Select all that apply)

N = 798





If you're looking to learn more about the weight of Ratings & Reviews, visit our post on the Plum Blog about the importance of having verified ratings.

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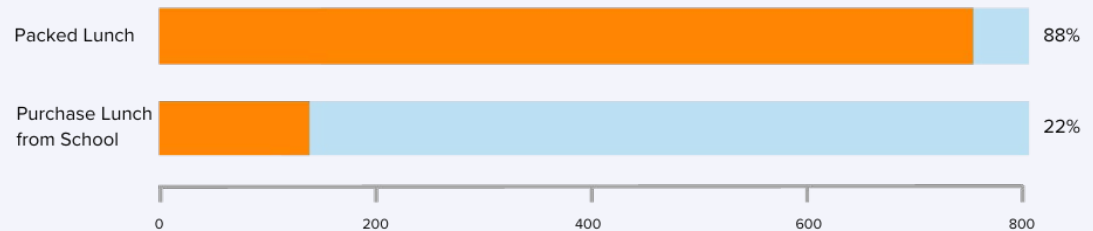
# 6 Bagged Lunch for Back-to-School

Shopping habits transition when students return to school in the fall, and one of the biggest budget line items that shift? Groceries.

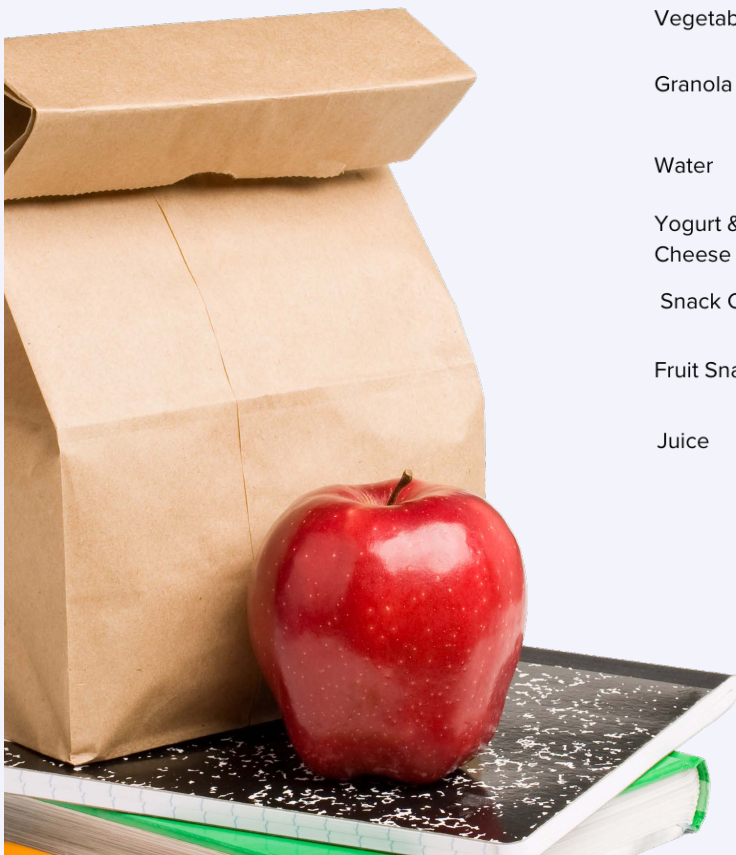
Whether children are bringing a packed lunch from home or eating a meal provided from the school, brands need to prepare for this change in season. According to our survey, most parents (88%) are planning to send their kids to school with a lunch from home.

How are you planning for your children to eat lunch for most of the 2023-24 school year?

N = 1,004

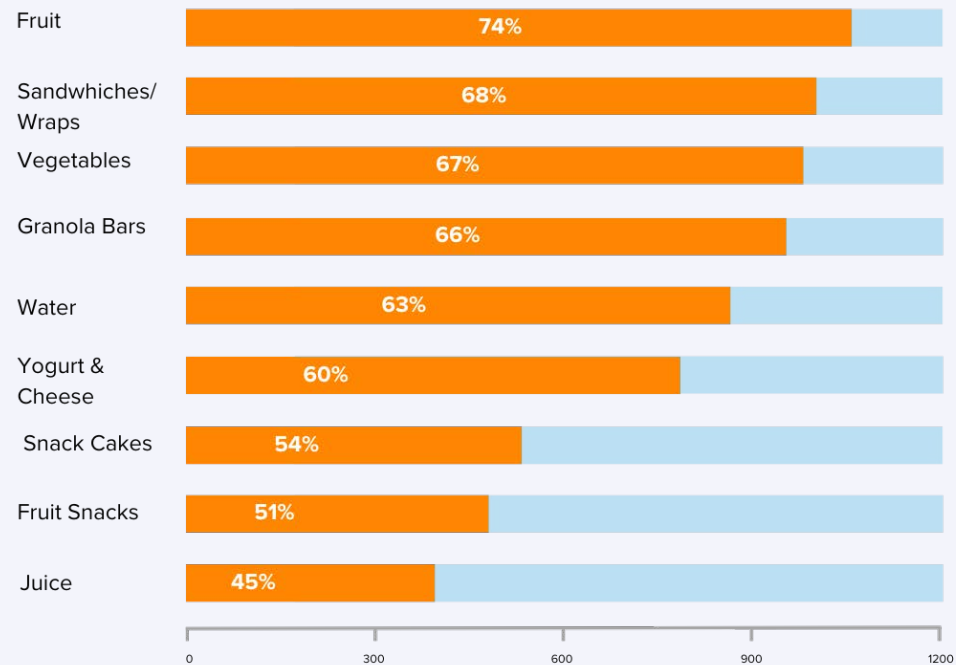


We asked parents what they'll prep to have in their pantries and refrigerators for the Monday through Friday school grind, and they said lots of fruit, sandwiches, veggies, granola bars and water.



### What will your child's packed lunches likely contain? (Select all that apply)

N = 992





# 7 Retailers Revealed: Top Lunch-Time Choices

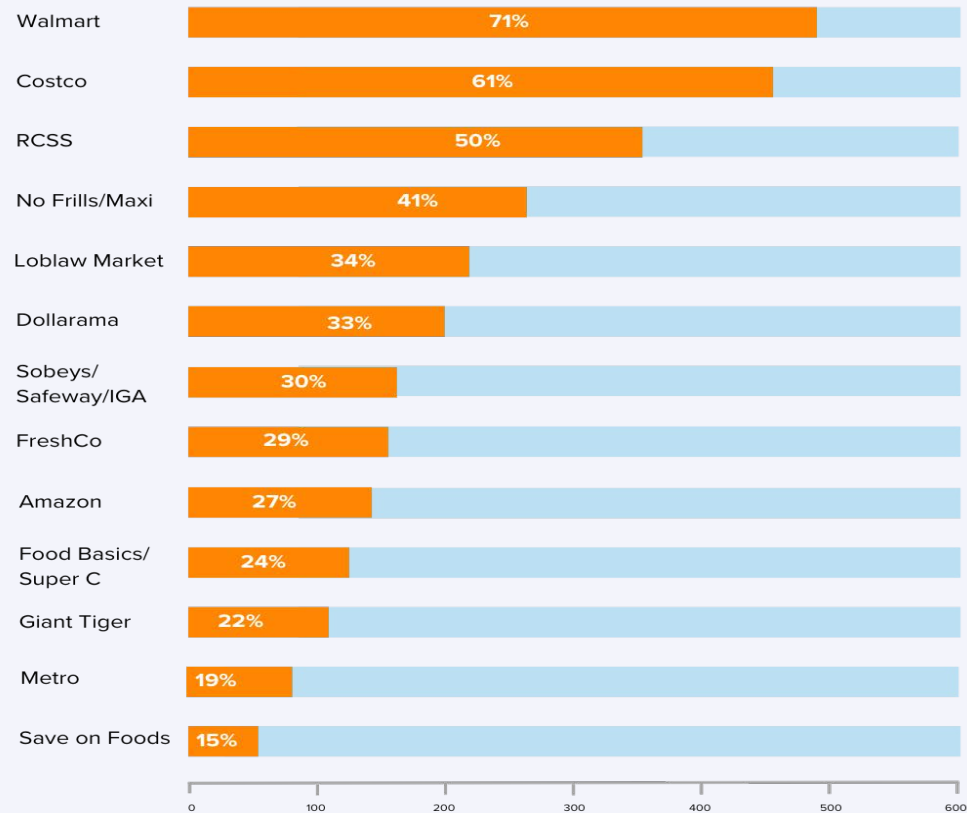
Do parents choose to grab groceries for packed lunches while they're out and about for school supplies? Or do they make a separate trip to their favorite grocery store?

We surveyed which retailers parents preferred when shopping for food for their child's sack lunch for the 2023-2024 school year.

Reflecting the price pressures faced by Canadian households, we see discount retailers such as Dollarama and Giant Tiger rank well among shoppers preferred destinations to buy groceries.

What retailers will you shop at the most this year when packing your child's school lunch? (Select all that apply)

N = 1,004



# 8 Back to School 'Fits

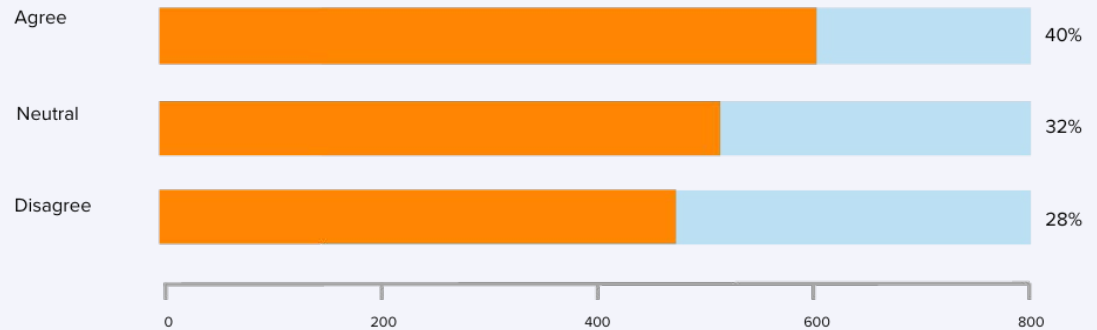
Rachel is starting kindergarten and wants a new skirt. Charlie outgrew her shoes, she needs new ones for middle school volleyball. Jack saw an ad on Instagram for new joggers, Back to School seems like the right time to ask his parents.

With 86% of parents saying they'll be purchasing some sort of clothing or footwear for their children for the 2023 school year, clothing brands are ramping up for stacked sales.

40% of Canadian parents indicated that they will buy Clothing / Footwear from on-line retailers drawing some visits away from the mall and saving children from countless embarrassing moments with Mom in-store.

What is the likelihood you will purchase clothing/footwear online/in-app for Back-to-School 2023-24?

N = 987



And, half (52%) are confident they'll purchase these clothing items online.

6-10 parents are likely to pick up new clothes for their students at the retailers they'll be shopping at already, instead of making a separate trip. Convenience and cost are king, and what better way to double dip than picking up clothes just a few aisles over?

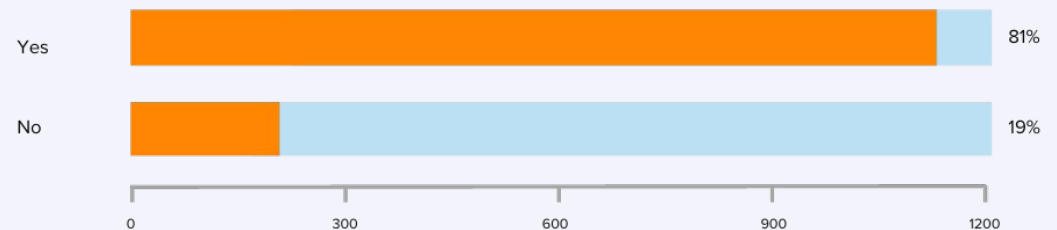
## 9 Staying Connected: Phones for School

Technology is growing every consecutive year, and phones are leading the way. Some students and their parents are utilizing the Back to School 2023 shopping season to purchase or upgrade their phone plans.

One out of five parents plan to purchase a new phone or upgrade their current phone plan while they are out doing their BTS shopping.

Do you plan to purchase a new phone or upgrade your existing phone plan while Back-to-School shopping?

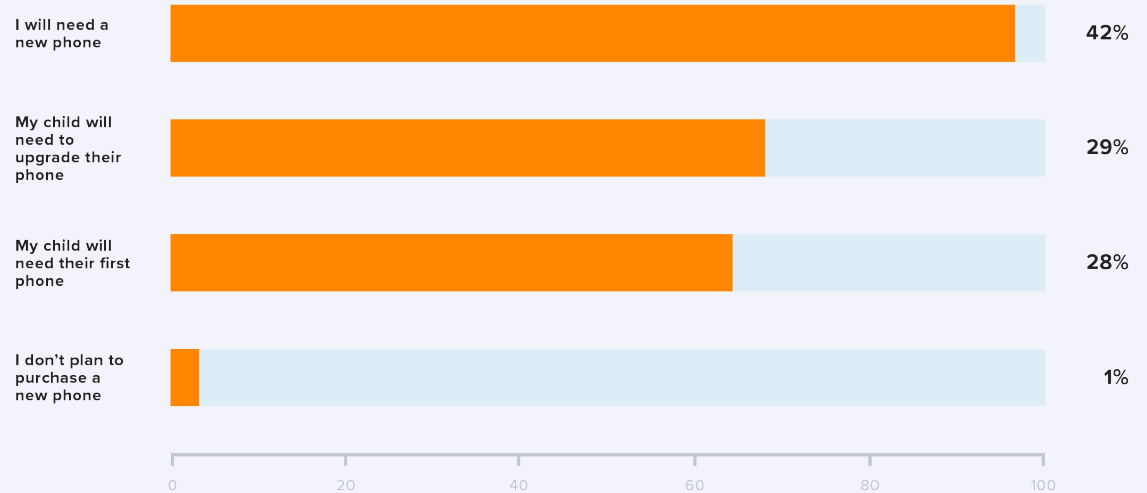
N = 1,003





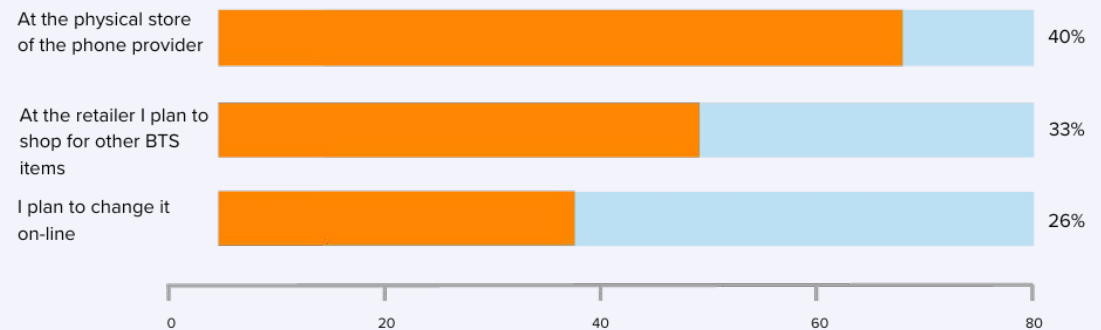
## Which of the following best explains why you plan to purchase a new phone? (Select all that apply)

N = 206



## When looking to upgrade your purchase existing phone plan or changing your existing phone plan? Where do you plan to make those changes?

N = 188



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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### 1: More spending is expected.

With 48% of parents planning to spend more, there will be more cash flow around Back-to-School items.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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### 2: BTS Season is getting earlier and earlier each year.

40% of Canadian parents said they would start shopping for BTS earlier this year.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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### 3: Walmart, Dollarama & Costco are the golden trio.

As low cost, convenient options for Canadian shoppers – these retailers will take the lions share of Back-to-School dollars.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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**4: The brown bag lunch is still going strong in Canadian schools. 88% of Canadian parents will send their kids to school with a lunch from home compared to just 60% in the US.**

Don't lose Back to School dollars. Make the most of the season with Field Agent's retail solutions. At Field Agent, we understand the frustrations your brand faces during this crucial season.

Our comprehensive retail solutions are designed to help you make the most of this bustling time. Meet the demands of retailers, brand managers, parents and kids during Back to School season.

Stay ahead of the competition with Field Agent's trusted data-driven strategies and solutions.

**GET STARTED WITH FIELD AGENT TODAY!**

