

By Umar Nsubuga

The back-to-school season is around the corner. As a parent, your child will expect you to provide the school requirements.

However, due to the economic hardships, which have led to a rise in commodity prices, many parents may not be able to meet all the needs on a child's shopping list.

As a parent, the first step is to explain to your child why you are not able to provide everything on the shopping list.

Mariam Nalwanga, a resident of Kitagobwa in Wakiso district, says whenever her 15-year-old daughter presents a list of her needs, it includes juice, sugar, roasted groundnuts, biscuits, milk and bread among others.

"I do not want to deprive my daughter of anything she asks for yet I cannot afford it all," Nalwanga says.

Peter Kiseembo, a children learning psychologist in Wakiso says there are parents who might be able to scrounge around and find money to meet their children's needs and some who send their children to school without all the items on the shopping list.

According to Kiseembo, the essentials have to be catered for and these may include toiletries, clothes and uniforms.

"Set priorities in consultation with the child. Do not abuse, threaten or shout at the child

# Start planning for your



If a parent has paid school fees, the child can be taken to school

when they inquire why you are not providing everything on the shopping list," Kiseembo advises parents. He says for many parents,

essentials are the requirements specifically asked for by the school, which include school fees, reams of paper, brooms and toilet paper.

Children should be given the things that the school will not provide yet they cannot do without them. Items they will need for grooming such as

*As a parent, you should not shy away from prioritising the school needs of the child*

soap, toothpaste, toilet rolls, sanitary towels, especially for students in boarding school. "The essentials on my list are school fees, uniform, a school bag and scholastic materials such as books and pens," he says. For students in day school, Kiseembo says paying for school lunch is an essential and transport for students travelling long distances.

Carrying a lot of stuff Godfrey Wafula, the director of God's Will

Junior School in Matugga, Wakiso district, says sometimes having a lot of stuff affects a child's concentration in class.

He says for those who have plenty, there will be a tendency to become prideful and to look down upon less privileged. On the other hand, students whose parents cannot afford a lot of stuff will develop a sense of unworthiness and tendency to covet that, which others have.

According to Wafula, those who lack may in some cases steal from those who have even if such acts could ultimately ruin their academic life.

**Need for regulations** Aisha Nalule, an educationist in Mukono says schools



# child's school shopping now



Talk to your child and explain why you cannot provide all the requirements on the shopping list

should put in place strict rules to regulate consumption of grub and possession of other items. Where possible, the school can provide some of the items at their premises at subsidised prices to prevent learners from bringing items that end up distracting them.

According to Nalule, consultation must be done between students and parents concerning this, it is important to inform them about the implications of students having too much. "If a parent thinks that what the child is asking for is more than what is necessary, they

can consult with the teachers, then sit the child down to discuss the issue," she says. She also says a simple budget could be all that your child needs to go through the school term. You should not keep a child at home because you have not yet got everything on the shopping list. If you have paid the fees and the child will be assured

## WHAT TO DO

### 1 MAKE A LIST

Ask your child to make a list of the requirements and look through it together

### 2 PRIORITISE

Given the economic situation, you need to prioritise what is important and urgent

## ESSENTIALS

- Soap
- Toothpaste
- Toilet rolls
- Sanitary towels
- Scholastic materials such as books and pens
- Uniforms
- School fees
- School bag



Do not wait for the last minute to go shopping for school

of having meals at school, then there is no need of keeping a child home.

**What parents say** Joseph Male, a parent says school children need basic necessities, the bread, the juice and biscuits that many parents usually pack are not important. And when they are more than enough, students end up choosing them over school food.

Immaculate Namukasa, who is also a parent, says at times schools do not provide learners with quality food. And this applies to other necessities.

In such a situation, the child suffers when their parents overly rely on school provisions.





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