

# Beyond the backpack: Back-to-school shoe shopping tips to keep kids healthy and parents happy



For parents faced with kids' changing tastes and opinions, navigating back-to-school shopping can be a harrowing process. Buy him the wrong backpack and he'll be the uncool kid on the bus. Pick out the wrong jeans for her and she'll be shamed by society. While neither scenario will cause kids any real harm, there is one area of back-to-school shopping where a wrong move could have health ramifications for kids - shoe shopping.

"Foot health is directly related to overall health, no matter your age," says Dr. Matthew G. Garoufalas, a podiatrist and immediate past president of the American Podiatric Medical Association. "Proper footwear is essential to foot health, so it's important for parents to ensure kids go back to school with a good foundation on their feet. Shoes are one of the most important back-to-school purchases parents will make."

Children's feet change and grow with them, and parents may find they need to update their kids' shoes and socks every few months to accommodate this growth. Shoes that don't fit properly can irritate the feet and affect how well a child walks, runs and plays. Garoufalas offers parents some advice for finding shoes that are good for kids' feet and also live up to their exacting tastes:

\* **Always buy new, never used, and never hand down footwear.** Sharing shoes can spread fungi like athlete's foot. What's more, children's feet are as unique as they are. A shoe that fits one child comfortably may not fit another child as well. Plus, shoes that have been worn will tend to conform to the foot of the wearer, and may be uncomfortable for anyone else to put on.

- \* **Test the shoe before allowing a child to try it on.** Check for a stiff heel by pressing on both sides of the heel counter; it shouldn't collapse under the pressure. Bend the shoe with your hands to ensure it will bend with your child's toes; it shouldn't be too stiff. Try twisting the shoe; it should be rigid in the middle and never twist in that area.
- \* **Go shopping together.** Shopping with your child ensures you can have his foot professionally measured, that he can test the shoe for a proper fit, give you his opinion of it and learn from you the finer points of buying a good shoe. "Kids who learn how to select a comfortable, supportive shoe may be less likely to make wrong footwear choices as adults - which could save them a lot of discomfort," Garoufalas says.
- \* **Remember to shop for shoes later in the day when feet are at their largest, and always buy for the larger foot.** Having your child's feet measured will help identify which foot is larger. Additionally, remember to have the child wear the type of socks or tights he or she will most likely wear with the shoe.
- \* **Avoid buying shoes that need a "break-in" period.** Optimal footwear should be comfortable right away. Once the school year is underway, keep an eye on your child's shoes - active kids may wear out footwear faster than adults. Be vigilant for signs of irritation, such as your child always wanting to remove one or both shoes. The footwear may no longer fit properly, especially if it's been a few months since you bought the shoes.

Finally, be sure children wear shoes that are appropriate for their activities. If your daughter plays sports, she should wear a good athletic shoe designed for that sport. If your son is a runner, he'll need a good running shoe. For daily wear when kids do a lot of walking, choose a good, supportive shoe. Keep sandals, flip-flops and heels for occasional wear only.

If your child complains of foot pain or experiences an injury, take him or her to a podiatrist. Podiatrists are uniquely qualified to diagnose and treat ailments of the feet. You can learn more about foot health and find a podiatrist in your area by visiting [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org). (BPT)

## Why it's critical to make eye exams part of your back-to-school routine

Reading the computer, chalkboard and books are critical elements of getting an education that can lead students to reaching their full potential and making their goals and dreams come true.

Surprisingly, vision disability is the single most prevalent disabling condition among children.

In fact, one in four students in kindergarten through sixth grade has an undetected vision problem that can interfere with their ability to read and learn, according to the American Optometric Association.

While scheduling your children's doctor and dentist visits before they head back to school this year, it's important to remember that an eye exam is just as important. The ability to see clearly and comfortably can directly impact children's performance both in and out of the classroom.

Three-time Grammy Award winner Darius Rucker knows firsthand the role that vision plays in seeing and achieving your best: "Vision is such an important part of my life, both professionally and personally," Rucker says. "And it's surprising just how many kids don't receive quality vision care, especially since seeing their best can help them pursue their biggest dreams."

While your children might receive vision screenings in school at the beginning of the year, some of the most common vision issues such as eye coordination, lazy eye and farsightedness can only be

detected through a comprehensive exam with an eye doctor.

Some signs that your child might need a comprehensive eye exam include:

- \* **Squinting or rubbing eyes continuously**
- \* **Complaining about headaches**
- \* **Holding reading materials too close or too far away**
- \* **Using fingers to trace words while reading**
- \* **Exhibiting lack of attention or fatigue during school**

It's also important to make sure that your children have eyewear that not only enhances their vision, but protects it as well. Consider Transitions adaptive lenses, which automatically change from clear indoors to dark outdoors, blocking 100 percent of harmful UV rays to keep their eyes comfortable whether they are inside for class or outside for recess.

"I've worn Transitions lenses for years, and always make sure that my family and I get to the eye doctor regularly so we can all see our best," says Rucker.

Access to quality vision care is important here in the United States, and is even more of an issue worldwide, affecting approximately half a billion people globally. Transitions Optical and Darius Rucker have recently teamed up with OneSight - a nonprofit organization working to provide access to quality eye care and eyewear in underserved communities worldwide. To find out how you can help, visit [www.onesight.org](http://www.onesight.org).

For more information and the opportunity to experience enhanced vision with Transitions lenses for yourself, visit [transitionsoptical.com](http://transitionsoptical.com) to receive a free pair of Transitions Trial Decals. (BPT)



### New School Hours

## School Arrival/Dismissal

School hours for grades 1-4 are:

8:25 AM - 3:00 PM at CLARK  
8:25 AM - 3:05 PM at WILKINS

Students should arrive after 8:10 AM to assure staff supervision. Students arriving after the 8:25 AM start bell must be escorted to the main office by a parent.

- **Preschool (Monday-Thursday only) and Kindergarten:**
- **Morning session 8:25 AM - 11:20 AM**
- **Afternoon session 12:05 PM - 3:00 PM**
- **Afternoon Preschool and Kindergarten drop-off time is from 11:55 - 12:05 noon on Foundry Street. Parents who arrive after 12:05 PM should escort their child to the front of Clark School.**

To keep classroom interruptions at a minimum, please leave items to be delivered to the classroom in the school office. They will be delivered at an appropriate time.

Pickup Patrol is our online system to manage special instructions or exceptions for dismissal purposes. Parents are responsible for entering this information before 12:30pm on the school day on which the change begins. Any changes made after 12:30pm will be exceptions and related to unexpected, emergency events. Such changes can be made via phone directly to the Main Office. Given the number of students we ask that you limit these exceptions to assure the safety of all students.

Below are the definitions we are using to clarify the four major types of dismissal:

**WALKER:** defined as any student who is leaving the school property by foot, bike, skateboard, or scooter and not in a vehicle. All Wilkins walkers will meet a designated staff member and be escorted down to the crosswalk. If you are meeting your child please do so at the end of the walkway rather than in front of the building as this space is dedicated to dismissing pick-ups.

**GROUP PICK-UP:** defined as groups of students, such as Scouts or Daisies, who are meeting an adult leader in the Wilkins multipurpose room before heading to a destination.

**PICK-UP:** defined as any student who is being picked up by vehicle using the vehicle pick-up line.

**BUS:** defined as any student who will be going home by bus, either regularly assigned or on a different bus as entered by parent into Pickup Patrol.

**BICYCLES:** Students riding bicycles should not arrive before 8:10 AM. Bicycle racks are provided for the purpose of parking student bikes for the day. Bicycles should be walked on school property at all times. For the safety of our students we recommend they wear appropriately sized bicycle helmets. The school cannot assume responsibility for damage to bicycles, scooters, etc...

### Amherst Middle School Start and Dismissal Times

AMS will start at 7:25 AM and end at 2:19 PM

### Souhegan High School Start and Dismissal Times

SHS will now begin at 7:25 AM and end at 2:23 PM

The previously announced hours-based calendar for the 2014/2015 school-year for the entire SAU #39 has created changes in start and dismissal times at Souhegan. SHS will now begin at 7:25 AM and end at 2:23 PM

### Preschool Registrations Now Being Accepted For 2014-2015 Amherst Clark-Wilkins Preschool

Registrations are being accepted for the Clark-Wilkins Preschool program for the 2014-2015 school year. The program will run from Monday through Thursday with combined 3 year old and 4 year old classrooms. The morning program is from 8:25 to 11:20 a.m. and the afternoon program is from 12:05 to 3:00 p.m. Registration packets and necessary forms can be downloaded by going to [www.sprise.org](http://www.sprise.org) and clicking on the Schools tab, then choose Clark-Wilkins Elementary school in the website. Enrollment documents will be under the Parents Section. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis, as attendance is limited.



For additional information, please contact Karen Rimol, Amherst Preschool Coordinator at [krimol@sprise.com](mailto:krimol@sprise.com) or 673-2343.

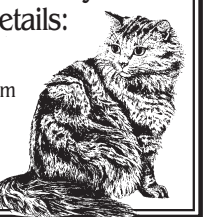
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### SAU #39 Amherst, Mont Vernon and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts

#### INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) AND SECTION 504 CHILDFIND NOTICE

The School Districts of Amherst, Mont Vernon and Souhegan Cooperative have a duty to locate, evaluate and identify any child residing in the respective District(s) who qualify for Special Education and/or related aids, accommodations, and services.

Children eligible for special education under IDEA may include those children with disabilities who have an intellectual disability, autism, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, acquired brain injury, visual impairment, or developmental delay and who, because of such an impairment, need special education services.

Children eligible under Section 504 for special education and/or related aids, accommodations, and services may include those children who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

If you suspect your child has a disability and may need special education and/or related aids, accommodations, and services, or if you would like additional information, please contact Paula Learoyd, office of Special Instructional Services, at 603-673-2690, extension 2113.

### Another reason to Take A Look at Applewild: EMPOWERMENT

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