

Your guide to back-to-school shopping after a very weird year

 [cnn.com/2021/08/13/cnn-underscored/canada-back-to-school/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/13/cnn-underscored/canada-back-to-school/index.html)

By Fiona Tapp

August 13, 2021



iStock
CNN —

It's back-to-school time! Grab your supplies list, make a note of your kids' favourite colours and characters and get shopping. Most Canadian kids will head back to in-person learning this September, but after months of virtual school, their resources likely need a total restock.

We've gathered the best tech options for those still learning at home or older kids who are beginning a new chapter at college or university. We also sourced back-to-school apparel for your growing kid, the cutest lunch boxes and backpacks, all the everyday essentials they'll need and new books to fuel their imagination and inspire a love of learning.

Sign up for Amazon Prime, and you'll benefit from exclusive deals, plus quick shipping times, so even if you've left your back-to-school shopping to the last minute, you'll be stocked and set come the first day of school.

Electronics and tech accessories

2020 Apple iPad Air 10.9-Inch, Wi-Fi, 64GB (\$699.99; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Apple

2020 Apple iPad Air 10.9-Inch, Wi-Fi, 64GB

An iPad is a great option for teens, as it has all the capabilities of a laptop yet feels familiar to kids who already have access to a smartphone. Combine it with the Apple Pencil and your young scholar can take notes, use art and design programs, edit photos and video and more. With a battery that lasts all day long, it's the perfect choice for students on the go.

Apple Magic Keyboard (\$399; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

Apple Magic Keyboard

Snap on a Magic Keyboard and your iPad becomes even more useful for writing essays, emails, short stories or reports, to name just a few applications. Comfortable, responsive and backlit keys make for an enjoyable typing experience, and the magnetic design makes it super easy to adjust to the perfect viewing angle as you go from tablet to a fast and functional mini computer.

Rocketbook Smart Reusable Notebook (\$48; amazon.ca)



Amazon

Rocketbook Smart Reusable Notebook

Sustainability-conscious kids will love this reusable notepad that saves paper and keeps their important class notes safely stored digitally in the cloud. Once they've uploaded their pages to Google Drive, Dropbox, Evernote, iCloud or email, they can simply wipe their pages clean and use them over and over.

iPhone 12 (starting at \$979; apple.com/ca)



Apple

iPhone 12

Make all your teens' dreams come true with this latest iPhone, which features the A14 Bionic, the fastest chip in a smartphone. They'll be able to download, watch, stream and Facetime in HD with gloriously fast 5G speed. With its ceramic shield and water-resistant design, this

phone features four-time better drop performance so that accidents need not be an issue.

Both cameras feature night mode for amazing quality photos in all lighting conditions. It comes in six colours, and both regular with a 6.1-inch display and the mini, which has a 5.4-inch display and is the smallest 5G phone you can buy.

Case-Mate Rifle Paper Co. Case for iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro (\$47.99; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

Case-Mate Rifle Paper Co. Case for iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro

Keep their phones safe and protected with these adorable floral design cases from Rifle Paper Co. Choose from a selection of seven different botanical- or floral-inspired designs, including strawberry fields and wildflowers. They make cases for a range of different iPhone models and Samsung Galaxy phones.

HP Chromebook (\$257.99; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

HP Chromebook

For a budget-friendly option, check out this affordable Chromebook, which has a 14-inch screen and easily fits inside backpacks to travel between classrooms. Running on the Chrome operating system, it connects seamlessly to the Google suite of products that kids are likely already familiar with. The ease of use makes it a good option for a first portable computer or a backup option for homeschooling.

Stationery and everyday essentials

Ultimate Back-to-School Combo (\$41.50; mabelslabels.ca)



Mabel's Labels

Ultimate Back-to-School Combo

Personalize these labels and mark up all your child's belongings, including their lunch boxes, pencil cases and water bottles, to prevent things going missing and to ensure hygiene standards are maintained. Get your little one involved by having them choose their own design, and they'll be so proud to show off their labels when they get to class. This Canadian company makes waterproof and durable labels as well as a brilliant [custom clothing stamp](#) that lasts for approximately 40 washes.

Crayola Round Organizer (\$13.99; joann.com/ca)



Joann
Crayola Round Organizer

This cute organizer keeps crayons, pencils and other stationery at hand in a choice of six bright colours. The comfortable handle makes it easy to transport to different rooms, and the design adds a pop of colour and whimsy to any desk. It's BPA- and phthalate-free and is suitable for kids as young as 3.

Hilroy Stitched Exercise Book (\$2.96; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon
Hilroy Stitched Exercise Book

Grab this affordable and colourful four-pack of exercise books that have hole punches so that you can carry them in a ring binder. They are lined and come in three different sizes from 30 pages to 80.

Crayola Super Tips Washable Markers (\$11.94; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

Crayola Super Tips Washable Markers

Fuel your child's creativity with this set of washable markers in over 100 different colours. The special tips allow you to make thick and thin lines simply by changing the angle or direction. Nontoxic, these markers are safe for even little kids.

My First Ticonderoga Primary Size #2 Beginner Pencils, Pre-Sharpended (\$7.09; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

My First Ticonderoga Primary Size #2 Beginner Pencils, Pre-Sharpended

These chunky pencils feel great in small hands and allow kids to develop fine motor control until they are ready to transition to a standard-size pencil. This four-pack set comes with a sharpener too.

Backpacks and lunch boxes

Funkins Designs (From \$3.75; myfunkins.ca)



Funkins
Funkins Designs

Proudly Canadian, Funkins makes reusable cloth napkins, table mats, lunch boxes, note cards and more in cute designs that little kids will love. Shop by design, and you can coordinate your child's entire school lunch set for a cohesive look. Choose from unicorns, dinosaurs, koalas, ballerinas, llamas and more.

Funkins Small Insulated Preschool Lunch Bag (\$22.95; amazon.ca)



Amazon
Funkins Small Insulated Preschool Lunch Bag

Without structured sides, these beautifully designed lunch bags easily fit inside backpacks and can be tossed in the washer when they get dirty. Made from neoprene, they are soft in little hands and stand upright for easy packing.

Coco Village Backpack & Pouch, Little Bear (\$99.99; ca.cocovillage.com)



Coco Village
Coco Village Backpack & Pouch, Little Bear

Your kid will feel like they're living out a fairy tale with this whimsical bear backpack. Made from vegan leather, it comes with a coordinating pouch from the same design palette. Lunch bags and boxes are also available, and other designs include llamas, a rocket ship, dinosaurs and sea creatures.

lil New York Small Backpack (\$237; illinyork.com)



lil New York
lil New York Small Backpack

Older girls may have outgrown traditional school backpacks but still need to haul their books and supplies around school. They'll love these small leather backpacks that come in bright colours like purple, red and jeans blue as well as more classic options like toffee and black.

lil New York Tech Backpack (\$307; illinyork.com)



lil New York

lil New York Tech Backpack

If your student needs to carry their laptop around, this Tech Backpack could be a perfect pick. Featuring two large compartments, it will keep school supplies organized as well as charging cables, agendas and more. The RFID-blocking lining will keep laptops and privacy protected. A small zippered pouch will keep her keys or change at hand too.

Bentgo Kids Prints 2-in-1 Backpack & Insulated Lunch Bag (\$46.99; amazon.ca)



Amazon

Bentgo Kids Prints 2-in-1 Backpack & Insulated Lunch Bag

These Bentgo matching lunch bags and backpacks come in the same coordinating designs as their lunch boxes, which include dinosaurs, sharks, butterflies and more. Wide, comfy straps feel good on kids' shoulders and help to distribute the weight evenly. Shop the [Bentgo](#) range on Amazon in your child's favourite patterns.

Welly Traveler, 18-Ounce (\$43; wellybottle.com)



Welly
Welly Traveler, 18-Ounce

Available in six base colours and a further 12 limited-edition patterns, any Welly bottle can be personalized with your child's name. Triple-walled and insulated, this bottle will keep water ice cold all day long. The removable infuser can be used for tea or to flavour water with fruit.

Apparel and shoes

Kamik The Stomp Rain Boot (\$39.99; kamik.com)



Kamik

Kamik The Stomp Rain Boot

Shop Canadian brand Kamik for rain boots and splash pants, and your little ones will be ready for rainy autumn days. Available in nine colours, they'll keep little feet warm and dry as they play and splash in the puddles.

Bienzoe Girl's Cotton Leggings, 3-Pack (starting at \$29.99; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

Bienzoe Girl's Cotton Leggings, 3-Pack

Choose from five colour palettes in this three-pack of girls' leggings so that they can mix and match with their existing wardrobe. Gentle ruching around the leg cuff gives a little more interest on these machine-washable basics.

Amazon Essentials Boys' \$2 2-Pack Performance Polo (\$27.50; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

Amazon Essentials Boys' 2-Pack Performance Polo

Stock up on these polo shirts that come in a two-pack featuring two different colours, including black and blue, orange and grey, and royal blue and white. The active stretch fabric provides a comfortable fit all day.

Kamik The Overpass Shoe (\$64.99; kamik.com)



Kamik

Kamik The Overpass Shoe

September is a great time to remeasure your kid's feet and pick up some new indoor shoes for school. These Kamik shoes have wide Velcro straps that are easy for little ones to get on and off for recess. The quick-drying fabric, tough-wearing toe bumper and breathable fabric allow kids to be active and play freely.

Elftees Happy First Day of School T-Shirt (starting at \$15.03; amazon.ca)



Amazon

Elftees Happy First Day of School T-Shirt

This cute T-shirt is perfect for your first day of school photos. The soft cotton material feels good against the skin and keeps children cool even when they're playing hard.

Virtual school resources

Yoto Player & 5 Cards My First Classic Stories Collection (\$159.98; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

Yoto Player & 5 Cards My First Classic Stories Collection

If you've chosen to keep your child home from in-person learning and have opted for virtual school, or if you're just preparing for any future lockdowns, you might be concerned about your kids' screen time. This story player is screen-free and is perfect for downtime after online class is over. Children simply insert story cards into the machine, and they'll be treated to an audio story time. It also doubles as a clock and night light.

Baloo 9-Pound Weighted Blanket for Kids (\$184; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon
Baloo 9-Pound Weighted Blanket for Kids

Whether kids are back at regular school or taking part in virtual school, the changes they have had to navigate can be stressful. Weighted blankets can help to reassure kids, relieve anxiety and improve sleep. This blanket provides 9 pounds of reassurance from glass microbead fill and is specially made for kids. Dyed with natural ingredients and made from chemical-free materials, it's soft, durable and breathable.

Cricut Joy Machine (\$206.17; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon
Cricut Joy Machine

Personalize your child's school resources, face masks, water bottles, lunch boxes and more with this multipurpose crafting machine. The options are endless, and with limitless tutorials and projects available online, you'll find new reasons to use your Cricut each and every week.

Kids can also use the machine to produce professional-looking bulletin boards for presentations, school fairs and extracurricular projects.

FosPower Kids' Headphones With LED Light-Up Cat Ears (\$22.99; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

FosPower Kids' Headphones With LED Light-Up Cat Ears

If you're working from home at the same time your child is in class, headphones are a must to mute the noise of classmates and teachers. These adorable headphones let your child express their personality with cute cat ears that light up. The padded ears are super comfortable and the laced cable prevents kinks and tangles.

FosPower Kids' Headphones With Microphone and 3.5mm Detachable Cables (\$20.99; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

FosPower Kids' Headphones With Microphone and 3.5mm Detachable Cables

These bright and colourful headphones feature a microphone so kids can contribute clearly to classroom discussions. The durable and flexible design stands up to daily use, and they come in pink or blue.

Learning Resources All About Me Sorting Neighborhood (\$25.97; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon
Learning Resources All About Me Sorting Neighborhood

Even though online learning is virtual, small children still need something tangible to hold and count to make learning come alive. These manipulatives can be used for counting, multiplication, sorting and comparing.

Sony WF1000XM4 Industry-Leading Noise-Cancelling True Wireless Earbuds (\$398; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))

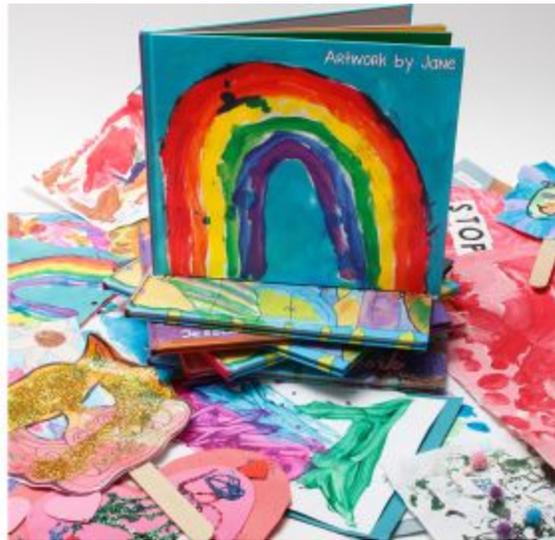


Amazon
Sony WF1000XM4 Industry-Leading Noise-Cancelling True Wireless Earbuds

Older kids will love these Sony headphones, which provide outstanding sound quality and noise-cancelling technology. The speak-to-chat feature automatically reduces volume during conversations, and the sleek black-and-gold look is sure to impress picky teens.

Books

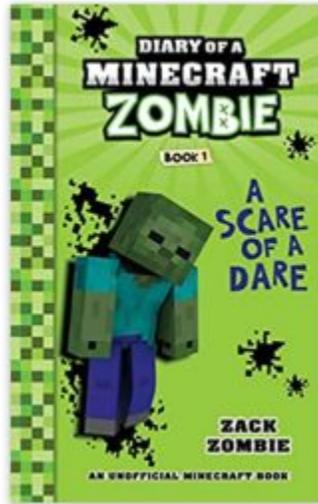
Hardcover Art Book (\$223; plumprint.com)



Plum Print
Hardcover Art Book

Start the school year on top by compiling all of your child's artwork and transforming it into a beautiful book with Plum Print. All you need to do is gather drawings, paintings or even sculptures, and they'll be captured in a glossy coffee table book featuring library binding. They'll even return all your original artwork at an extra fee if you want to keep the physical pieces.

'Diary of a Minecraft Zombie Book 1: A Scare of a Dare' Paperback (\$7.48; amazon.ca)

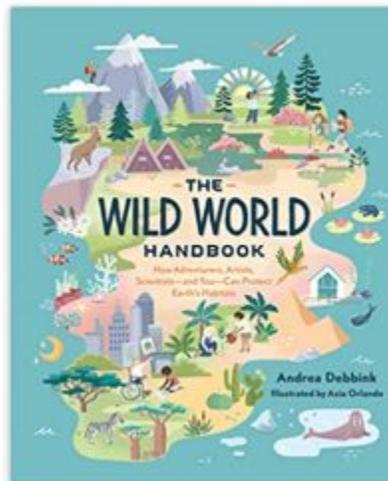


Amazon

"Diary of a Minecraft Zombie Book 1: A Scare of a Dare Paperback

Minecraft-obsessed kids will love to practice their reading skills with this early reader series, the first in a set of 12. This hilarious tale will have kids rolling with giggles, while the short chapters keep the pace quick and fun.

‘The Wild World Handbook: Habitats’ (\$24.74; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

"The Wild World Handbook: Habitats"

This gorgeous book features beautifully detailed illustrations, facts, stories and tips on making your own biome and helping to protect the environment. Suitable for kids aged 8 to 12 years old, it's a practical guide for young climate activists and junior conservationists.

‘Kid Innovators: True Tales of Childhood From Inventors and Trailblazers’ (\$15.83; [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca))



Amazon

"Kid Innovators: True Tales of Childhood From Inventors and Trailblazers"

These biographies bring famous people's lives into fresh perspective for kids. Telling the true stories of famous people's childhoods, this book inspires kids to think big and humanizes historical figures in a new and fresh way.