

# School days, school days, shopping right by the rule days

I had imagined taking Leo with me on his school supplies shopping trip, happily skipping through the aisles together as we selected crayons and markers. But I thought it might be tedious for our new kindergartner, so I decided to go alone.

Then I got to the store, looked at the official school supply list, and realized I was in way over my head.

A package of 24 glue sticks? I didn't see anything larger than a six-pack. I grabbed four, even as I pictured our 5-year-old telling me sternly: "Then our teacher said, 'Pull out your pack of glue sticks. You should have 24 in there.' And mine was wrong, Mama."



I sailed through the "large but not jumbo" crayons, the child-safe scissors, and the Play-Doh.

But nothing could have prepared me for the folder dilemma. They had to be paper, one red and one blue, and they had to have clasps inside.

Let's hope that finding the right folders is harder than learning to read because there was only one red paper folder with clasps in the entire store. I had to dig through several boxes to find it.



The only comfort was that my fellow shoppers were also struggling.

"What do you think they mean by folders with barbs?" a frazzled grandmother leaned over to ask me. Her list was longer than mine, and she was buying for two children. I gave her my meager assistance and my sympathy—but I held on tightly to my red folder. It's a good thing she didn't need it.

Finally standing in line, looking at my purchases and feeling sure they were close to perfect, I felt a wave of relief. It was done.



I glanced up and saw the cashier grinning at me.

"Look at all this stuff!" she said, sliding the crayons over the scanner. "Those were the days when buying stuff for school was fun!"

"What's wrong with me?" I thought, smiling back at her. "She's so right."

That smile lasted a while. But as I was showing Leo my purchases later, his father gently pointed out that the marble composition book was wrong.

"Isn't it supposed to have those wider lines with the dotted line in the middle?" he

asked.



Argh.

Well, at least we have the right red folder.