

## Feature Story

BY DEBBIE LAVDAS

# Form and function make the grade

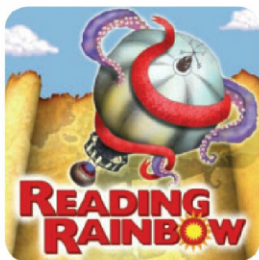
**Hip. Tech. Fashion-forward. It's all good news for the new school year.**

Looking for the latest, greatest goods for your kids for fall? Here you'll find cutting-edge gizmos, head-turning fashions and helpful apps – just don't expect any boring backpacks or puny pencil cases. We've got something for everyone, from fresh-faced first-graders to trending teens. The back-to-school clock is ticking, so note your favorites and get shopping, 2012 style. You can pick up whatever catches your eye for the apple of your eye in Orange County stores or online.



### TAPPING INTO TECH

Get guru tips, get "e-organized" and get a free reading app.



### Color them readers

Get your digital kids e-reading with this app designed for children ages 3 to 9. The Reading Rainbow app delivers hundreds of books and videos. Kids can digitally travel to themed islands such as Animal Kingdom and select books with audio storytelling by celebrity actors. The free Reading Rainbow app is downloadable for the iPad. A subscription is available for a limited introductory price of **\$9.99** a month or **\$29.99** for six months at the Apple App store.



### Less mess for less stress

Back-to-school season is stressful for parents too, and, whether it's juggling orientation schedules or organizing teacher supply lists, staying organized is tough. NeatDesk is a high-speed desktop scanner and digital filing system that turns paper clutter into organized e-files. The Neat software included identifies and extracts key information from paper files and automatically organizes them into an easy-to-use database. Available at [neat.com](http://neat.com). **\$399.95**



### Tech tips

Parents, get

connected with SoCal mom and tech guru Beth Blecher of [TechMamas.com](http://TechMamas.com). She discusses technology, social media and her obsession with consumer electronics, and covers a helpful assortment of topics.



### ROCK OUT



### For their ears only

Kids who think more clearly while listening to their favorite tunes can plug in stylin' ARTS Inner Earbuds by chicBuds. Choose Zebra Stripes, Pink Leopard or Blue Graffiti. Available at [chicbuds.com/arts.html](http://chicbuds.com/arts.html) **\$29.99**



### Photo finish

The versatile GoPro HD HERO2 produces top-quality, cutting-edge videos. It will amp up any slideshow presentation and just might blow the doors off a yearbook committee meeting. It's wearably small and just right for on-the-go students. In fact, the GoPro is gear-mountable to produce outdoor action videos (think: sports shots and field trips). Available at [gopro.com](http://gopro.com) and SoCo's Gear Co-Op. **\$299.99**



### Modern music lessons

Learn to play guitar at home with The Music Factory OC, available on Google+ Hangouts. The two-way video-chat app allows up to nine people to interact. Students just need a computer with a webcam and a Google+ profile. [themusicfactoryoc.com](http://themusicfactoryoc.com)

PHOTOS COURTESY MANUFACTURER

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### PLUG IN

There's so much tech to check out for the new school year. Hot gizmos and goods are designed to keep kids ahead of the curve.



### 1. Bike back in style

Free-wheeling students will make a graphic statement with the Paul Frank Art School Prep Cruiser (\$549) by Nirve, available at SoCo in Costa Mesa ([southcoastcollection.com](http://southcoastcollection.com)). The three-speed cruiser is retro cool and can be paired with Nirve's portable speakers (\$29.99) to play a variety of digital books, lectures or music; the stereo speakers fit all MP3 players and mount to any bike. Go online and visit [theocmartmix.com/nirve](http://theocmartmix.com/nirve).

### 2. That's one cheeky Clocky

Sleepyheads get one chance to hit the snooze button before Brookstone's Clocky Alarm Clock on Wheels jumps off the

nightstand and takes a high-octane joyride around the room. \$39.99

### 3. Brighter students

If your bookworms can't get enough, let 'em fall asleep to the new NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight. It emits a soft glow for low-light reading. In addition, it has an anti-glare screen protector that's great in bright sun, so kids can even study at the beach. As if. The NOOK Simple Touch is available at Barnes & Noble or [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com). \$139

### 4. Stuck like glue to iGuy

Brookstone has an impressive assortment of high-tech gear for all ages. One of our

favorites is for little guys - the iGuy case for the new iPad tablet. Kids can hold its "hands," stand it on its own two "feet" or lay it in their laps to enjoy learning apps, naptime music or bedtime stories. It's made of cushioning EVA foam to minimize the impact of accidental bumps. Available at Brookstone at The Irvine Spectrum or [brookstone.com](http://brookstone.com). \$39.99

### 5. Projecting your passions

The Pocket Projector for iPhone 4 lets student shine ... and project videos or photo slideshows onto any surface. Show off vacation pictures, create multimedia reports, make a movie. Possibilities: endless. From Brookstone. \$229.99



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### DRESS UP

Check out threads with cred for 7- to 17-year-olds. We found shoes, dresses, jackets and, to top it off, hoods.



### Stroll 'n roll

For mobile kicks or just kickin' it, try Heelys, the shoes with wheels in the heels. Girls can get girly-glam in Heelys Harmony shoes with pink pops of color, peace signs and flowers, while boys can go classic in Heelys Helix. Single-wheel styles make it easy to skate to school, pop out the wheels for class and then skate home. Visit [shop.heelys.com](http://shop.heelys.com). (\$49.99-\$69.99)



### A surfeit of style

Sanuk is named for the Thai word for "fun," and surfer Jeff Kelley gets a kick from Sidewalk Surfers for kids. Sanuk Standard with thick rubber outsole and poncho-inspired style (\$50) is great for boys. Its velcro-flap design makes them simple to slip on and off. Sanuk Scribble for girls (\$44) lets feet go wild with a trendy art/embroidery combo. Visit the Sanuk store at Downtown Disney, [sanuk.com](http://sanuk.com) or a local surf shop.



### A hit for the fashion miss

What if parents didn't have to buy everyday school clothes and dressy clothes for special occasions? Washable silks by Alejandra Kearl Designs are great for school days as well as recitals. The dresses are hand-embroidered, whimsical and oh-so expressive for girls to age 9. Available at Saige Nicole's at SoCo or [alejandrakearl.com](http://alejandrakearl.com). \$64



### 'Don't forget your jacket'

Here's a stealthy way for teens to save face and skip one humiliating reminder. The Ghost Whisper Anorak in loud yellow or see-through Sea Salt white is crazy lightweight – less than 2 ounces – and compressible enough to pack in a pocket, yet its wind- and water-resistant shell will get parents' approval. Visit Active R/S at The Camp in Costa Mesa or [mountainhardwear.com](http://mountainhardwear.com). \$135

### SpiritHood Kids

Doodle Hoods let artsy kids colorfully show their spirit with Cra-z-art markers. When it's time to update, just toss that customized furry into the wash and then let kids start over on a clean canvas. In Snow Leopard and Doodle Husky at [spirithoodkids.com](http://spirithoodkids.com). \$79

