KUALA LUMPUR: Parents are urged to exercise caution and shop within their limits when making purchases for their school going children, especially for those starting their primary education.

A psychologist with the Educational Psychology and Counselling Department of the University of Malaya, Associate Professor Dr Mariani Mohd Nor said the current lifestyle saw many parents, even the less fortunate ones, competing with each other to provide designer school items for their children.

"Nowadays, it is not only the children who are excited, the parents are even more excited and want to dress their children in branded goods from head to toe.

"If parents can afford, it is not a problem, but concern arises when parents who cannot afford, but still want their children to have all the luxurious and stylish goods, go to the extent of pawning other household needs," she told Bernama here today.

Describing it as human nature for parents to want to give their children the best, especially when they begin their new year school session, she said the practice should be stopped to avoid parents from facing financial difficulties or incur huge debts.

Mariani said children could understand their parents’ hardship and financial burden if parents took the initiative to explain to them the real situation, like the need for them to be prudent in their spending.

"Children have a gentle nature and pliable young minds, if they are aware of their parents burden, they will feel sorry and concede to some extent," she added.

Yusni Nadia Yusoff, 28, whose eldest son, four-year-old Ilkeel Yadiy Nayyar Iznan, is starting kindergarten classes comes January, said she let her son chose items portraying his favorite cartoon characters to inject the school spirit in him.

"As Ilkeel is just going to begin school, so I bought him school stuff he likes to instill in him the sense of fun and enthusiasm in going to school."
“But I made sure the things were not too expensive and affordable so as to convey the message that branded goods do not guarantee excellence in school,” she said.

Meanwhile, a survey by Bernama at several shopping centres in the city found several parents still doing last-minute shopping for school items. -- BERNAMA