

Shopping with Your Children

Anyone who has shopped at a grocery store or mall with children, especially young children, knows that the experience can be trying, and sometimes, stressful! Here are some tips that may prove useful on your next shopping trip:

Before You Go...

- How is everyone feeling? Is your child too tired or hungry to shop? Are YOU? It's best to go when you are rested, don't wait until the end of a tiring day. If possible, postpone your trip or arrange for a sitter.
- Have a talk with your child before you go shopping. Let your child know that it is a special outing to go shopping with you. You can go shopping and have fun, as long as you both understand your family's shopping rules.
- Make your expectations clear. For instance, "Stay close to me," "Use your quiet voice," and "When we leave, you can select a special treat if you remember the rules!"
- One last thing before you go: wear comfortable shoes and clothes (you and your child). If the climate calls for a winter coat, you may want to remove outerwear once in the store so that no one overheats.

Now you're ready to shop. Just a reminder, keep your children within sight in the store. Hold hands. Put them in the basket or let them hold onto the cart with you.

At the Store...

- Give your child some choices. When possible, allow your child to make some decisions. "Do you want red apples or green apples?"
- Give your child a responsibility. "Can you help me pick out the hardest apples?" Or let your child steer the cart.
- Never leave your child unattended in a shopping cart!
- Reinforce good behavior. Say things like, "You are being so helpful!" Talk and play with your child. A hug can be reassuring and say more than words sometimes!