



Grocery Shopping with a Toddler

Grocery shopping is one of those necessary tasks in life that can be complicated by the presence of a toddler. How can this activity be turned into something that is pleasant and even a learning experience for your child?

Plan Ahead

- **Make a shopping list** to help keep the shopping trip to 30 minutes or less.
- **Pack a favorite small toy** for emergency moments.
- **Talk about what will happen at the store** as you drive. “This will be fun. You can help me get our food for dinner tonight.”

At the Store

- **Make him part of the shopping experience.** Let your child hold items such as small cans or cereal boxes so he can see them and help put them in the cart. “You are good helper!”
- **Make eye contact** with your child as you go down the aisles. Talk about what you are doing together.
- **Add some fun to the cart ride**, “Whee, here we go around the corner.”
- **Have realistic expectations.** Depending on the length of time in the store, your child may not be able to walk or ride in the cart the entire time.
- **Let your child help at check out.** “Will you help me put the food on the counter?” Hand him safe items as you handle the heavier, breakable ones.

Fun and Learning

Grocery shopping uses many of your child’s senses—sight, smell, sound and touch. Besides the sensory input, you are teaching your child the correct words for each food item, proper public behavior and making your child feel valued and important. You can make grocery shopping enjoyable for both you and your child by making it a shared experience.