



Shopping with your child

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Development Markers

12 months

- ◇ Waving "bye-bye"
- ◇ Reaching for toys
- ◇ Crawling

18 months

- ◇ Spoon-feeding self
- ◇ Following simple directions
- ◇ Pulling off shoes and mittens

2 years

- ◇ Jumping
- ◇ Running
- ◇ Using 2-3 word sentences

3 years

- ◇ Kicking a ball
- ◇ Riding a tricycle
- ◇ Opening doors

Nutritional Tips

12 months

- ◇ Switch from formula to whole milk

18 months

- ◇ Offer variety of foods and allow your child to choose

2 years

- ◇ Talk to your child's doctor about switching to low-fat milk

3 years

- ◇ Make sure to provide nutritious snacks



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Shopping with Your Child

Shopping at the grocery store can be a daunting experience for both child and parent. During these necessary excursions into the community you and your child often feel the stress of the moment. It starts with safety concerns in the parking lot but quickly moves to guiding your child through aisles of colorful boxes, jars, and bottles and ends waiting in the checkout line (often the icing on the cake), shopping can be an intimidating and overwhelming experience. Well there things you can do to not only lessen the stress of the shopping outing but, hopefully, make it a fun activity for everyone involved.

Dr. Michele Borba, Ed.D. is an internationally renowned educator and an award-winning author outlined the three main reasons children have difficulty at the supermarket: Number 1 is hunger. Number 2 is boredom, and Number 3 is fatigue. So first and foremost, avoid shopping if your child is tired and hungry. In fact, try to avoid shopping if YOU are tired and hungry. Next, make sure they've had a nap and are well rested.

Before shopping be organized. Create a list and organize it by aisle so that you are not in the store any longer than you need to be, backtracking to and from aisles.

Tell your child ahead of time what type of behavior you expect. Children cannot read your mind. Spell it out for them. Will you be buying them a snack or taking one? Let them know beforehand. Do you want your children to take turns at putting items in the cart? Let them know. If needed create a social story that you can read to your child so they can be familiar with how to act in a store.

Have your child go to the toilet or change their diaper before you get in to the store. Now your child will go when they have to go but start off with a "clean" slate so to speak. Bring entertainment. Don't even think about leaving the house without something for your little one to do. Maybe stickers and/or (toddler-safe) toys from a dollar store to keep things new and interesting for your child.

Get Comfortable. Take a moment to make your child comfortable in the shopping-cart seat. "Hypersensitive kids can find those seats really uncomfortable," says Dr. Borba. "Then your kid will always have a memory of a tight-squeeze place that's no fun to be in." To make the seat as comfortable as possible, line it with your sweater or jacket, or a small towel or blanket you've brought along.

Give yourself enough time when shopping. Children feel stressed when they are rushed, and this is when the behavior often starts to go downhill. Slow down. If that means letting your child have a 'turn' at pushing the cart or stopping to look at the doggies and kitties on the packets in the pet food aisle, then that is what you do.

Involve your child in shopping by helping to look for certain items, placing items in the cart, and crossing off items from the list. Children love to help. This keeps your toddler busy and makes shopping fun. You might say, "We need two cans of green beans. Can you get those for me?" or "I'll hold the bag while you put the apples inside." This tip can also help the fussy eater. If a child has helped to choose a food, then she is more likely to eat it. At the checkout, ask your toddler to help you place the groceries on the conveyer counter.

Look the other way and ignore minor tantrums as long as possible. "Figure out your Code Red and Code Yellow behaviors," says Dr. Borba, "And you only have to attend to Code Red, which is behavior that is hurtful or dangerous." If it's Code Yellow, such as whining or sulking, "turn your back to your kid and pretend you're doing something else," she advises. "If you attend to it, that escalates it."

Ignore the looks you get. Maybe you've prepped for the trip and done everything right, but everything is going wrong and people are *looking*. Do what you have to do and keep shopping. Those who are judging you either don't have children or have forgotten the early years. Tell yourself what an awesome parent you are, focus on your child, and keep moving.

Remember to praise your child for good behavior. For example "I really liked the way you are staying close to the cart today".

If, after trying some of the above suggestions, your child has simply reached the end of their ability to handle any more errands, please respect that. Shopping can wait; an exhausted, hungry, or overly-excited child cannot.

Remember that all children behave as well as they are treated. A child who is regularly given our time, undivided attention, patience, and understanding will have more tolerance for a shopping trip - and any other challenging situation - than the child who must face stressful situations without this emotional support.



Looking for something to do with your child???

Here are some ways to work on development...

12-15 months

- ◇ Take your child with you on outings
- ◇ Play ball to work on catching and throwing
- ◇ Encourage your child to draw and play with toys in the bath
- ◇ Read picture books to your child

15-18 months

- ◇ Have your child help you pick up toys after playing
- ◇ Work on stringing large toys together
- ◇ Have conversations with your child
- ◇ Take your child to the playground

18-24 months

- ◇ Work on puzzles with your child
- ◇ Dance with your child
- ◇ Put educational programming on the television and allow your child to watch up to 30 minutes each day
- ◇ Start working on buttoning clothing when getting dressed

2-3 years

- ◇ Tell your child stories about them when they were younger
- ◇ Play sorting games
- ◇ Work on bouncing and catching
- ◇ Play dress up with your child

Here are additional web resources that you may find very helpful.

Check them out:

- Parent to Parent (parenttoparentnys.org)
- Pathways.org
- Exceptional Parent (eparent.com)
- Cayuga County Website- Health-Children with Special Needs