

# Reduce Stress When Shopping With Children

Anyone who has gone shopping with children, especially young children, at a grocery store or mall knows that the experience can be trying and stressful! Here are some tips that may prove useful on your next shopping trip to help keep stress levels low and make the experience quicker and better for everyone involved.



## Tips to Handle Shopping with your Children

The grocery store can be an exciting place for kids. With big aisles to run around in, fun treats to find, and obstacles like endcaps (and other shoppers' legs!) to dodge, it's easy to see how a quick trip to the grocery store can quickly become overwhelming for parents.

More stress is the last thing parents need, so we've compiled some tips to help make your shopping trip easier to handle. The below suggestions are both for before you buckle everyone into the car and after you've grabbed your cart and are ready to shop.

### Tips for Before the Trip

- **First, determine how everyone is 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. If the climate calls for a winter coat, you may want to remove outerwear once in the store so that no one overheats. The more comfortable your child is, the less likely they are to get distressed by environmental factors outside your control.

### Tips for When You're 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?" This not only promotes active communication between you and your child, but also keeps them engaged in the trip.
- **If your child is feeling restless, give them a responsibility.** For example, ask your child "can you help me pick out the nicest apples?" Or let them steer the cart or hold your shopping list. By keeping your child engaged in the trip, you can help prevent them from getting bored and restless.
- **Reinforce good behavior.** Say things like, "You are being so helpful!" or "Thank you for being so calm when you were sitting in the cart!" **Labeled praise is important for reinforcing good behavior**, so make sure your child knows when you're happy with their behavior and be specific!

Have you found something that works particularly well for you when you're shopping with your children? We want to hear it! **Tweet us at @PCAAmerica** or leave a comment on **our Facebook page** and share your ideas with us!

**Together, we can prevent child abuse, America...** *Because childhood lasts a lifetime.*