

Tips for making your trip to the grocery store a fun learning experience for you and your young child:

- 1 Make a list.** You'll spend less time shopping, so your child won't get fussy.
- 2 Bring a snack for your child.** If your child gets bored or restless, give him a snack.
- 3 Take a book or toy with you.** This will keep your child busy and learning while you shop.
- 4 Let your older child help.** Make a list together. Then ask her to help you find those items in the store.
- 5 Try to shop when your child is rested.** Plan shopping trips to avoid nap time.
- 6 Know when to go.** If your child gets really fussy, it may be best to just leave the store until he calms down.





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Every package tells a story.

INFANTS

Shop and Tell

Is there a cow on your milk carton? Show your child the picture. Ask her, “What does a cow say?” Or say, “A cow says moo!” Then make up a little story about going to visit a cow.

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Memory Aisle

Use groceries to spark memories. If you're looking at apples, ask, “Remember when we made applesauce with Aunt Maria?” Ask her to tell you about it, then ask what else she can make with apples.

Telling stories about the past, present, and future gives everyone a chance to get what they need at the store. You get your groceries. Your child gets to learn and have fun.

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Follow your child's interests.

INFANTS

Check It Out

Is your child staring or pointing at balloons by the checkout counter? Talk about it. Ask, “Do you see a balloon?” Then pause before continuing, “It’s a big one. It’s a big blue balloon.”



TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Show and Talk

Is there something you know your child enjoys — a food item or a picture of a favorite animal? Point to and name the item. Or, ask her to find it and say what it is.



There are so many things for your child to notice and learn about at the store. When you can, take a moment to pay attention to the things that catch her eye.



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Play as you shop and pay.

INFANTS

The Wheels on the Cart Go Round and Round

As you shop, change the words to your favorite nursery rhymes. For example, plug in your child's name or favorite things. "*Johnny* had a little lamb."



TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Shopping Twist

Change a single sound of items on your list. Ask, "I'm looking for chicken *doodle* soup. Do you see it?" Wait for your child to giggle.

Rhyme and sing softly with your child as you shop. Your child will love your attention. He will also love playing along, and your shopping time will be easier.



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Point out what's alike and what's not.

INFANTS


Looks like a ...

Name different foods and talk about the way they smell, taste, look, and feel. Pick up a banana. Say “banana.” Let her touch it as you talk about how it feels.

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

The Same Game

What is your child looking at? Have her find things that look the same or different. Use a rhyme to make it fun. “Same, same, a naming game. What is different, what looks the same?”



By naming things and pointing out when things are the same and different, you help your child understand the world around her in a way that is fun for her and helpful to you.

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Play games with words and pictures while you shop.

INFANTS

See and Say

Find packages with pictures of fun and familiar things, like the bear on a cereal box. Point to the pictures. Say, “I see a bear. Do you see a bear? It’s a brown bear.”

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

I Spy

Ask your child what food you are looking at. Say, “I spy something small, red, and sweet to eat.” Ask her to find and name it. Then let her “spy” and you “guess.”

By playing games with pictures and objects, you help your child learn new words and make your trip easier at the same time.

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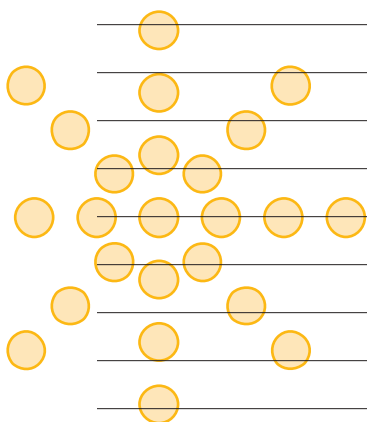
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LOOK shop & listen



Take time to look at and talk with your child as you find the items on the shelves. Your child may fuss less and be more helpful when you pay attention to him.



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Look at your child as well as your list.



INFANTS


While You Wait

When you wait at the checkout line, tune in to your baby. Look at him. Smile and stick out your tongue. See if he does what you do.

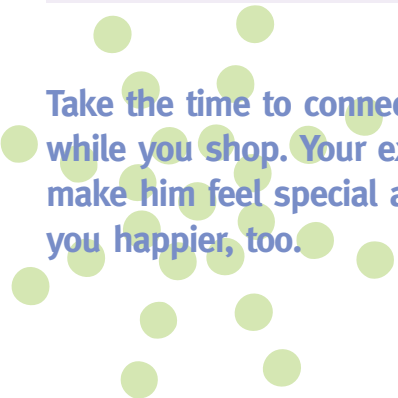
TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Milk, Eggs, and Hugs

Each time you add something to your cart, give some attention to your child. Ask him to name what you added. Give him a thumbs up or wink when he gets it right, or just for trying!



Take the time to connect with your child while you shop. Your extra attention will make him feel special and will make you happier, too.



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Take time to talk.

INFANTS

Show and Tell

Show your baby an item. Then, talk about it. Pick up a pear and say, “Do you know what this is?” Pause and then say, “It’s a pear. Pears are green. Pears are yummy.”

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Meet and Greet

You meet lots of people at the grocery store. Say “hello” and “thank you” to the people at the deli counter or bakery. Then ask your child to say “hello,” “thank you,” and “good-bye.”

You can teach conversation at the store, even if your child can’t talk. Just remember to pause after you speak and listen to your child, even if he just coos or gurgles.

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comparison SHOP

As you pick out items, **teach your child to measure and compare.** Show him the different sizes, shapes, and colors of the foods you see.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, with three starburst graphics in green, orange, and blue.

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Stop and compare.

INFANTS

Shop for Shapes

Look for shapes and sizes on any shelf. You might say, “Look, this orange is round, like a circle. Let’s see if we can find something else that’s round. Oh, yes, a grapefruit!”

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Hey, That’s Heavy

Use fruit to teach your child about weight and length. Let your child hold two different kinds of fruit. Say, “This melon feels heavy. Is it heavier or lighter than this orange?”

Children love to compare this and that. Which object is bigger, longer, or taller? Follow your child’s interests. Help her think as you shop.

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Bring along a book.



INFANTS

Read in Line

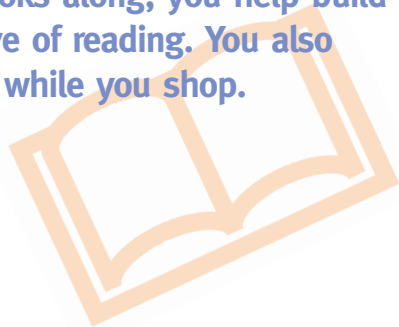
What can you do while standing in line at the deli? Read! Take a book with you. You can use those few minutes to read a story or look at the pictures together.

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Look, It's a Book!

Keep a few small books in your bag or purse. If your child gets restless, pull one out. Let your child hold it and “tell” you the story as you shop.

By bringing books along, you help build your child's love of reading. You also keep her busy while you shop.



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Make the most of your routines.



INFANTS

Start with a Cart

Do things in order when you get to the store, and explain each step to your child along the way. Say, “First we will find a grocery cart. Then we will look for some bananas.”

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Looks Like We Made It

Set up a signal that it is time to go. Let your child hold your wallet or a card at checkout. Older children can help unload items from your cart.

By creating these simple steps, you help your child to know what will happen at the store. Knowing what to expect helps her feel safe and secure.

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READ AND

ROLL

Sound out words as you ride.

The grocery store is a great place to find things to read. As you stroll, **read the flyers, banners, and signs** to your child.

Handwriting practice lines with large background letters 'a', 'b', and 'c'.

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Read all around the store.

INFANTS

Point It Out

Point to the signs in the aisle and say, “Where is the soup?” When you find it, show her the can, point to the label, and say, “Here is the soup.” Then talk about soup.

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

One Letter at a Time

On each trip, pick one letter and keep pointing it out. If the letter is P, look for peaches, plums, pickles, and pasta. Point out the printed letter each time you see it.

By reading and talking about words with your child, you help her learn that letters and words have meaning. Before you know it, she will be pointing out the words, too.

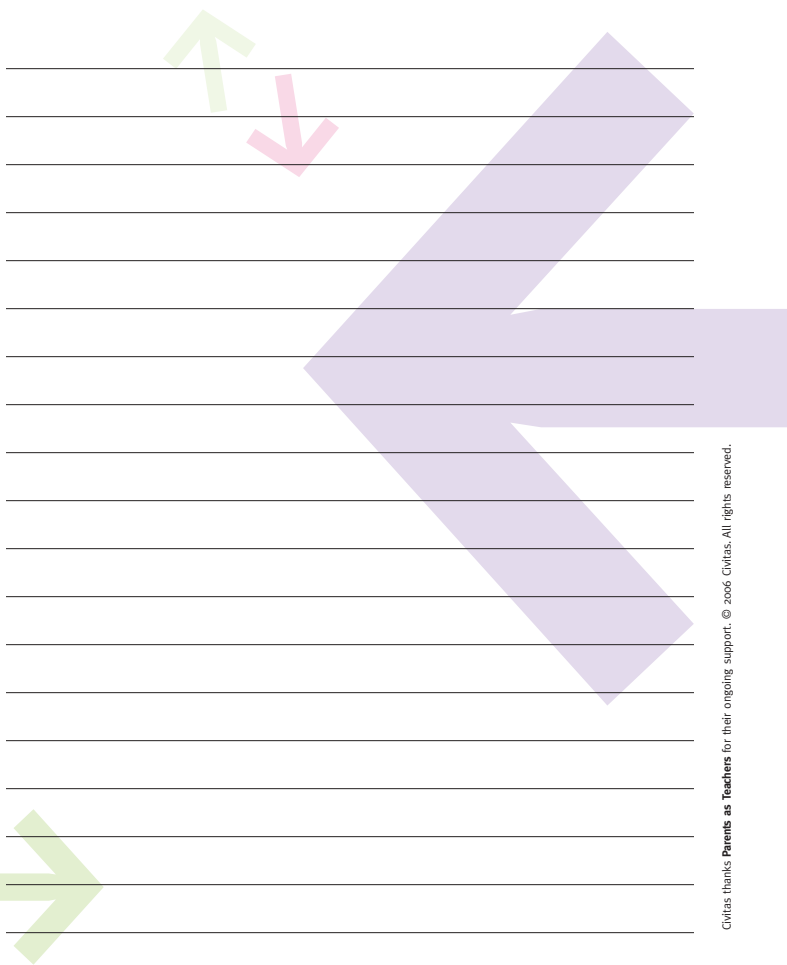
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PLAY around with opposites

Use shopping time to talk about opposites, like up / down or in / out. Your child will catch on quickly. And you both will have fun as you shop.



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Opposites add action to your trip.

INFANTS

In and Out

Let your child put items into the grocery cart and say “in” each time. Talk to her about what you are doing: “Now we put the apples in the bag.” Do the same with “out.”



TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Stop and Go

When you start your cart, say “go.” When you stop, say “stop.” Speed up a little and say “fast.” Go very slowly and say “slow.” Do the same with moving forward and backward.

Even very young children can get the hang of opposites. Not only will they learn important ideas and words as you shop, they'll have fun helping you, too.



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Shake, scribble, and shop.

INFANTS

Shop with Props

Bring a few toys for your baby to use as you shop. Try teething rings, rattles, or a spoon. Holding these items is great practice for holding a crayon or marker when she's older.

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

I Spy

Have your child draw a picture of something she sees in the store. It could be a person, food, or anything that interests her. Ask her to tell you what she is drawing.

Drawing and coloring build your child's creativity and hand and finger muscles. It's also fun. Why not let her practice as you shop?

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Point out and praise good behavior.

INFANTS

Monkey See, Monkey Do

Show your child how you want him to act. You can put items in the cart, then give your infant objects to drop in. Say, “Thank you for helping” every time he does.

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Little Helper

Let your child hold your shopping list or put something in the cart. When he does, you can say, “Thank you for being so helpful. You make shopping so easy for me.”

Be sure to tell him when you like what he is doing and when he is being helpful. Your attention will boost his confidence and make you both feel good.

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Put it in writing.



INFANTS

Let's Make a List

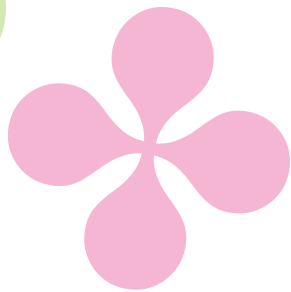
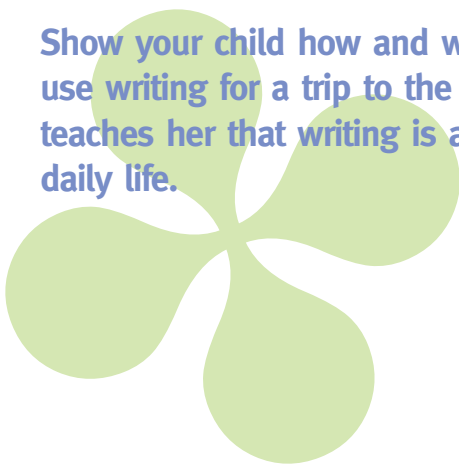
Make your grocery list with your child. Let her sit on your lap so she can watch you write. Read the words aloud as you write them.

TODDLERS / PRESCHOOLERS

Cross It Off

Add an item to your cart. Then use a pen to cross it off your list. Or let your child do it for you. Say the name of the item as you mark it.

Show your child how and when you use writing for a trip to the store. This teaches her that writing is a big part of daily life.



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