

How can I teach my preschooler to help with the shopping?

Young children sometimes want to help their parents shop. Giving them simple jobs at the store can make them feel that they are helping. One simple job is to help you find some items on your shopping list. This also can help show them how you make buying decisions.

Shopping Helper

Materials needed:

- Paper, glue or tape, and scissors
- Grocery ads from the newspaper
- Pencil, crayons, or colored pencils

Step 1: Explain what you will be doing together (read through entire activity before you begin)

Tell your child you need help at the grocery store. Explain that your child will help you find some of the items you need to buy.



Decide together which items on your list your child will help you find.

Step 2: Prepare your child's list

Read your written shopping list to your child. Decide together which items on the list your child will help you find. (Think of items your child can reach and hold safely, whether walking or sitting in the shopping cart.)

Help your child find those items in newspaper ads and cut them out. On a sheet of paper, glue or tape pictures of the items that your child will look for at the store. If you cannot find pictures of some items, let your child draw them. This sheet will be your child's list.

Step 3: Set the rules

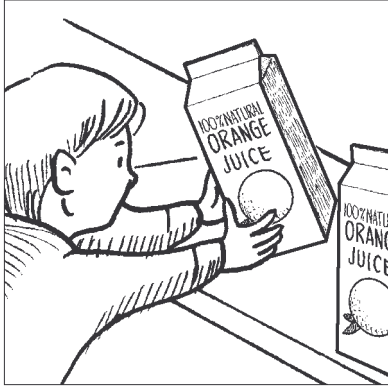
Set the rules for this activity before you leave the house. Make sure your child knows the rules by repeating a few of the most important ones. For example:

- Your child must not take items off the shelf without your permission.
- You might decide to buy items not on your list, but your child cannot.
- Your child must stay with you at all times.

(continued)

Step 4: Shop together

Help your child pick out items on the list and put them in the shopping cart. Help your child mark items off the list as they are put in the cart.



Think of items that your child can reach and hold safely.

Ideas to talk about

- ★ Shopping means making choices. Some examples are deciding which size package to buy, how many packages or items you need, and how much money to spend.
- ★ Deciding to buy something at a later date is also a shopping choice. So is deciding not to buy a certain item at all.
- ★ People make shopping lists to remember what they need to buy. Lists also help them avoid spending more money than they planned.
- ★ Shopping is a chore that family members help each other with. Other ways to help include carrying shopping bags and putting food away.
- ★ Shoppers compare prices and choose items that cost less or are on sale.

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To start, plan a shopping trip when you have only a few things to buy and are not in a hurry.

Letting children help might add extra time to shopping trips at first. However, in time, shopping with your children's help can take less time and be more fun.

With experience, your child will be able to give you more shopping help. When buying multiple items such as fruit, help your child count out the correct number. Help older children write the names of items next to their pictures. In time, you should be able to skip making a separate list for the child.



Help your child count out the correct number of multiple items such as fruit.

This activity goes well with “A One-Dollar Treat” (in “How can I teach my preschooler that when money is spent, it’s gone?”).

Find more “How can I teach my preschooler about money” activities at www.creditunion.coop.

