

# TOP TWELVE TIPS

for Shopping with Kids

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**1 Make Shopping Enjoyable for All.** Plan short trips or take “fun” breaks while shopping. Bring along juice, a favorite snack, a well-loved picture book or favorite toy to help pass the time.

**2 Avoid the Crowds.** Shopping when stores are crowded can be very stressful for both parents and kids. Try creative solutions such as shopping during lunch breaks or on weekday mornings.

**3 Keep an Eye on Your Child.** Avoid the frightening and dangerous experience of losing a child in the crowd by keeping them close at all times. Your children will feel more confident, too.

**4 Set a Good Example.** Treat salespeople with kindness, respect and politeness, and your kids will likely follow suit. Remember that children “do as you do, not as you say,” so it’s important to teach children through your own actions.

**5 Share Their Curiosity.** Things they see in stores easily fascinate children. Take a moment to share their enthusiasm by looking at and talking about “off-limits” items you don’t intend to buy.

**6 Include Toddlers in Decisions.** Engage your toddler with questions such as “which of these peaches looks better to you?” and turn an endurance experience into quality time together.

**7 Make Shopping a Game.** Bring along clipped-out pictures of food from the newspaper grocery ads, and let your older child give you a hand locating items on the shelves.

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**8 The Check-Out Challenge.** A healthful snack from home is an easy alternative to enticing candy displays: “That package looks pretty, but candy isn’t very nutritious. Here’s the oatmeal cookie and juice we brought.”

**9 When You Need to Say “No,”** convey respect for your child’s desires, even if you can’t satisfy them immediately. It might help to say, “That’s nice, isn’t it? Take a good look and when we get home, we’ll add it to your wish list.”

**10 Consider Special Needs.** If you have a shy child or one that needs special attention, try to shop at less busy times. Weekdays are better than weekends, but if you need to shop on weekends, try to be at the store as early as possible.

**11 Respect Their Limits.** Pay attention and respect your child’s emotional and physical limits. Shopping can wait; an exhausted, hungry, or overly excited child cannot.

**12 Respect Your Own Limits.** If you find your patience wearing thin, take a short break. A few moments of fresh air away from crowds and distractions can make a big difference.

*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 emotional support.*



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Adapted from Jan Hunt’s *Top Ten Tips for Shopping with Children*, a feature of The Natural Child Project.

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