# Shopping

**Going shopping can be an exciting experience for children, and a chance to develop their talking skills by pointing out new and interesting things**

Going shopping can be an exciting experience for children, and a chance to develop their talking skills by pointing out new and interesting things. Sometimes, however, young children get overwhelmed and frustrated, which can be stressful for you.

Here are a few ideas to make shopping less stressful

### Plan ahead

* Try not to go close to meal times or when you’re in a hurry.
* If you have a young child that has a daytime nap, avoid going during or just before nap times.
* Try to avoid shopping at busy times, so you will be less likely to have to wait in queues.
* Pack a drink and healthy snack and bring along a small toy or book to distract a baby or toddler.
* If your child finds shopping overwhelming bring along something calming to the shops, like their favourite toy or a blanket for smaller children.
* For older children, let them help you to prepare a shopping list. They can draw pictures, cut out catalogue pictures or make marks on the paper with a crayon.
* Or you could give them their own list which depicts things you want to buy. For example you could draw 3 apples and 2 bananas on their list.
* For older children, explain that you will be going to shops, what you need to get and how long you will be. This will help to prepare them for the trip.

### At the shops

* For toddlers if they seem distressed going into a trolley, try to make it a fun experience by making car sound going through the shop and asking them to tell you when to stop and go and the end of the aisle.
* Point out things you see around the shops – talk about colours, sizes and shapes.
* You could let your child touch things that won’t easily bruise or break then talk about how they feel or sound when shaken.
* Talk about what your child is experiencing, for example if they are cold in the freezer aisle, if it is noisy at the checkout or smelly at the fish counter!
* Point out letters and numbers on signs around the shops.
* Let them hold their shopping list and look for those items.
* Let your child put things in the trolley; pass them things to put on the counter or in your shopping bag.
* Play games like I spy or sing a song like “The wheels on the bus go round and round.”
* Praise your child for finding things on the shopping list or for being patient while you shop.
* Try to keep shopping trips short. It is hard for children to be patient for long periods.
* Give them something to look forward to once the shopping is finished like a trip to the park.

### If things get stressful

* Don’t give in to demands for toys and sweets. When you say ‘no’, stick to it. If you say ‘no’ then give in, your child may get the message that pestering and whining can work. Try to distract your child instead.
* Try to stay calm if things get stressful. Counting to ten and taking a few deep breaths might help.
* Try to think about what triggered the problem. You might be able to avoid that situation next time.

### Don’t worry about what other people think!

It can be stressful if your child has a [**tantrum**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/tricky-moments-and-behaviours/tantrums) while out shopping. Don’t worry if there are people watching. Stay calm and forget about them – most people will be watching with sympathy as they’ve probably been through it too!