

Let's Go Shopping

Age: Preschool-age (3-4 years)

This activity helps your child's development in this domain: Social-Emotional, Cognitive

What You Need:



- Empty, clean food boxes and containers
- Recyclable bags for groceries
- Slips of paper (to resemble dollar bills)
- Play cash register or a box or container to resemble a cash register
- Tape or white glue

What To Do:

1. Help your child collect empty, clean food containers such as cereal boxes, bread bags, juice cartons, yogurt containers, egg cartons, and plastic condiment bottles. (Do not use glass.)
2. As you and your child collect items, read the labels, pointing to the letters and words.
3. Make labels and price tags for food items such as "eggs," "juice," "milk," \$1, \$2, or \$3. Tape or glue them onto the containers.
4. Talk about the local grocery store and how it is organized (frozen foods in one section, breads in another, etc.) With your child, set up a pretend grocery store.
5. Take turns being the cashier and the customer. As you play together, talk about the food—where it comes from or how it's made, what it's used for, what it tastes like, and so on.
6. As you make a "purchase," count out the bills that would make up to the item's cost.



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VARIATIONS:

1. After playing store together, go to the kitchen and, using real food, make something with some of the ingredients you were just pretending to buy.
2. Have your child make suggestions as you write a grocery list of items to buy. Let her make her own list by helping her cut out pictures of food from the newspaper ads. Take her with you to the grocery store to help you select the items on the list.
3. Using empty food containers or pictures of "healthy" and "junk" food items cut from newspaper ads or food catalogs, sort items into the two categories. Talk about the importance of eating healthy foods. Encourage your child to pick nutritious and healthy foods as you make a grocery list to go shopping.

! Safety Alert: Remind your child not to put small objects in her mouth. They can get stuck in her throat and cause choking (and even death). Plastic bags that are big enough to cover her face or head can cause suffocation; caution her not to play with them in these ways. When you are done using these types of materials, put them away where your child cannot reach them. Childproofing your home creates a safe place for your child to explore and learn.

