

# SHOPPING

Supermarkets – of all places to shop in – can bring out the worst in kids

They are open and spacious with shelves full of potential missiles. Even the trolleys are hazardous – they make great substitutes for billycarts.



Shopping at supermarkets and shopping centres offer a huge potential for promoting children's language and maths skills. Supermarkets, in particular, are full of goods of all shapes and sizes, with letters and numbers everywhere.

With a little planning, shopping can be enjoyable and educational – the trick is to keep children busy and encourage them to help.

## IDEAS FOR SHOPPING WITH CHILDREN

### GIVE YOUNG CHILDREN SIMPLE TASKS.

Encourage them to find the products that they use. Your directions can teach a great deal about colours, numbers, letters and words. For example:

- 'Can you find me the jar with the red lid, please?'
- 'Pass me the biggest tub of ice-cream, please.'
- 'Look on the second shelf.'
- 'Which jar is heaviest? Good, I'll buy that one!'
- 'Pass me the packet that begins with S.'

### OLDER CHILDREN WITH MORE COMPLEX SKILLS CAN ASSIST IN ANY NUMBER OF WAYS:

- **They can help to compile a shopping list.** With assistance they can itemise a part of the list, such as fruit, vegetables or the toiletry items. Let them buy the things they have listed, sticking to a budget.
- **Encourage them to plan and cook a meal.** They can list the ingredients and take charge of buying each item at the supermarket.
- **Ask children to select things for you,** but make sure that they choose carefully. For example 'Get me the cheapest jar, please. 'Look at the weight on the jars and compare the value'.

- **They can use a calculator to add up** the prices as you shop. This activity teaches children about money, numbers, decimals and the importance of sticking to a budget.
- **They can identify 'specials' in a supermarket** catalogue and help you select them as you shop.
- **If children pester** you to buy them something perhaps you can suggest that they buy it out of their pocket-money.

Avoid bribing children to behave with treats or other reward; otherwise they will only behave if you give them something. Make shopping an interesting experience for both of you and don't forget to show your genuine appreciation when children cooperate on a shopping trip.