✱ TIPS for Grocery Shopping with Young Children

✱ With planning and patience, shopping with your son or daughter can be an educational and fun experience.

Taking your toddler or preschooler shopping with you can sometimes feel like a chore, but it can teach your child about your expectations about behaving in public. Shopping can also improve your child's motor skills, which include pushing, carrying and unloading.

Try these 10 TIPS to make grocery shopping a more pleasant and learning experience:

PREPARE A LIST. This keeps you from forgetting must-have items, especially since your child may require extra attention.

AVOID SHOPPING WHEN HUNGRY. Provide a snack before shopping or carry them with you. Bring water, too.

MAKE YOUR CHILD A HELPER. Ask your child to locate items by color or shape, hold or read the list, add non-breakable items to the cart or carry light bags inside the home. He or she may also help you to put groceries away.

MAKE IT FUN. Turn shopping into a game. Make your child his or her own grocery list with photos at **www.thetripclip.com.** The personalized list makes it easier for your child to help find items.

THINK ABOUT TIMING. The experience will be better if your child is well-rested or the store is less crowded. Also, add in extra time. Shopping with a small child will likely take longer.

GIVE YOUR CHILD SOMETHING FAMILIAR. Allow your child to bring a favorite toy or blanket. A big store with products in many colors and shapes can be overwhelming for a child.

SET LIMITS TO MINIMIZE WHINING. Explain at home how you expect your child to act in the store. Explain the rules and stick to them.

BE STRATEGIC. Take a bathroom break at home or before shopping. Everyone goes.

KNOW WHEN TO LEAVE. Sometimes the best plans go awry. If your child is having a temper tantrum, consider leaving the store. Children can be unpredictable.

REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR. Show your appreciation for good listening skills and conduct while shopping. Consider allowing your child to choose one healthy treat or a fun activity to do afterward.