



Preparing to go to the grocery store.



We are going to the grocery store to buy groceries.





Groceries include food like eggs, bread, fruit, meat, and snacks and drinks like milk, soda and orange juice.





Groceries also include paper towels, trash bags, cleaning products, toothpaste, shampoo and toilet paper.





Before I go to the store, I make a shopping list of the things we need.

We try to only buy what's on the list, so let me know what you want before we go and I'll add it to the list.





There may be lots of noisy people at the grocery store.





There may be lots of sounds and bright lights.





When we get to the store we will get a basket or a shopping cart.



We will carry the groceries in the basket or cart.







**Younger kids can sit  
in the cart.**

**It is very important  
that you do not stand  
up in the cart.**





The grocery store has lots of rows.

Each row has a number and a description of what is sold in the row.





**We need to be very careful when pushing the cart.**

**We cannot go fast and we need to avoid hitting other carts, shelves or people.**

**We do not want to hurt anyone or break anything.**





**When we find the item on the list, we take it off the shelf and put it in the basket or cart.**

**Don't take anything out of our basket or touch the baskets of other shoppers.**





**Tell me if you knock  
something off the  
shelf. I'll help you put  
it back.**

**That happens  
sometimes.**





If you need to go to the bathroom, let me know.

There is a bathroom in the grocery store.





When we have everything we need we will go to the checkout to buy them.

We might need to stand in line and wait our turn.



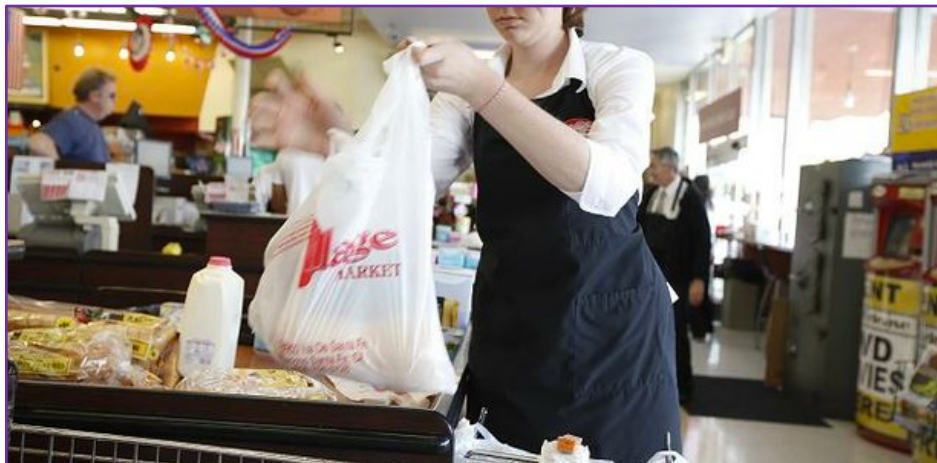


**We will take all of our groceries out of the basket or cart and put them on the conveyor belt.**

**The clerk will scan each item and tell us how much we need to pay.**







**Someone may help me put our groceries into bags.**

**If we have a lot of bags, we will put them back into the cart.**





We will then push the cart to our car and unload the bags into the car.





**We will put the cart  
into the cart return.**

**We need to be careful  
not to push the cart  
into parked cars.**

**We need to watch for  
moving cars.**



## Tips to prepare a child with autism for grocery shopping.



### **PREPARE**

- Use this picture story to start preparing your child for a successful shopping trip.
  - We recommend that you read the social picture story every day at the same time each day during the time leading up to the shopping trip.
  - Customize the picture story by adding or eliminating elements that are not relevant for your child.
- Go the store without your child to identify meltdown triggers and prepare for them.
  - Fluorescent lights – bring sunglasses or a hat with a bill.
  - Beeps on the checkout scanner or hum from the refrigerators – bring noise cancelling headphones.
  - Large crowds – determine the least crowded times to shop.
- Have a signal
  - If your child can communicate, have a verbal or a gesture signal that tells you that your son / daughter needs a break.



## Tips to prepare a child with autism for grocery shopping.

### **PLAN**

- Make sure your child is well rested before you go on the shopping trip.
  - Tired children are more prone to meltdowns.
- Prepare a schedule for the shopping day.
  - Children on the autism spectrum often benefit from a clear schedule of the day.
- Make a grocery list separated by section so you can be as efficient as possible.
  - Involve your child when you make the list and/or review the list with him/her before you shop.
  - Stick to the list to avoid conflict in the store.
  - If your child wants something in the store, add it to the list for the next trip.
- Meltdowns happen so be ready with something that will soothe your child, like a favorite toy or blanket.

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### **GIVE FAIR WARNING**

- Let your child know when you are going to the store before you go to prepare him/her.
- Avoid surprise or last minute shopping trips.

### **START SLOW**

- Start with a short shopping trip to buy a few items. (A quick in and out)
- Reward success.
- For your child's first shopping experience, you might want to go on a day that it is less crowded, perhaps Sunday early in the morning.
- If your child is comfortable with the quick trip, gradually extend the shopping trip.

## Tips to prepare a child with autism for grocery shopping.



### **BE METHODICAL**

- Go to through the store in the same pattern each time. For example, go to the right to start each time and work your way left.
- Limit going down rows more than once and doubling back to sections you have already visited.
  - This can be stressful for someone with autism because they do not know what to expect.

### **RELAX**

- Plan for the best and deal with any problems.
- If your child has a meltdown, don't take it personally. Focus on your child and don't worry about explaining the issue to other people.
- Many people do not understand autism, so If you want, you can give the offended person a card that explains autism.