

Community Outing Tips

Grocery Store

Going to the supermarket or grocery store is a common activity for most people. There are many sights, sounds, smells, movements, and social interactions that can make a trip to the market a challenge for a person with autism, but a great deal of self esteem can be gained by mastering the activity.

Get permission from the store manager to take some pictures of the store and the items you frequently purchase. You can use the photos as flash cards or you can create your own social story (or use the template provided). Build the grocery list at home, start with a few of the person's favorite items and build to a larger list from there. You can use the store's flyers and pictures you have taken to build a visual list. Since it may take some time for a person to adjust to these store visits, trips should initially be short.



In the store:

- Staying close to the cart is important, especially if the person has a tendency to wander. Have the person hold the push bar. Place your hands on either side of theirs and guide the cart around the store.
- Take photos of the food(s) typically purchased; label the back of the photo and use as flash cards. While shopping, use the cards to have the person pick out the food and place in the cart. Each time the person correctly identifies the item, reward with praise.
- Bring toys or a game to engage the person **when waiting in line**.
- Participation is encouraged; have the person place items on the belt or counter, bag the groceries or hand payment to the cashier.
- The grocery store is a nice place to start teaching the value of money and promote interacting with others.
- To reinforce appropriate behavior, add a favorite snack to the list or bring along one with you to the store.

www.childrens-specialized.org/KohlsAutismAwareness

For more information about this program contact: KohlsAutismAwareness@childrens-specialized.org