

My Supermarket Visit

A friendly, flexible guide for autistic children
and the grown-ups who support them



FIRST: we get ready

Plans can change

NEXT: we shop together

Plans can change

THEN: we finish and rest

Plans can change

This guide is for you.

Look at it, draw on it, point to it or ask someone to read with you. You can skip any part. A good visit means your needs are listened to - it does not mean doing every job or staying until the trolley is full.

GETTING READY

Before we go

A little information can make the visit feel more predictable.



My grown-up and I can make a small plan

Tell me what will happen in a clear order. A photo of the shop, a short list or three picture cards can help. Let me know if anything may be different today.

Choose a good time

If we can, we can choose a quieter time and keep the visit short. We can check whether I am tired, hungry, unwell or already overloaded.

Pack my supports

I might bring ear defenders, sunglasses, a comfort item, a drink, a visual list or something safe to fidget with.

What would help me feel ready today?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ See a photo or map | ☐ Know what we are buying |
| ☐ Know how long we may stay | ☐ Bring my comfort item |
| ☐ Plan a quiet break | ☐ Know how we will leave |

One thing I want my grown-up to know:

MY PLAN

My visit plan

Fill this in together, or draw pictures instead of writing.

The plan belongs to me too

My grown-up can explain the plan and listen to what I need. Plans can change. I can ask to pause, change the job or go home.

We are going to:

We are going on:

We need to get:

We can leave when:

My visit steps

FIRST

We get ready

NEXT

We go inside

THEN

Choose what to do

LAST

Leave and rest

I can communicate by...

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Talking | ☐ Pointing or showing |
| ☐ Pictures or visual cards | ☐ AAC / communication device |
| ☐ Signs, gestures or writing | ☐ Another way: _____ |

My pause / finish signal

I can say, show or point to PAUSE for a break, or FINISHED to leave. My grown-up will help me use my signal.

Notice what feels okay

Different parts of a shop can feel different to different people.

There is no right or wrong answer. I can notice what feels comfortable, what feels tricky and what might help me. I do not have to try anything that feels too much.

LIGHTS

Bright, flickery or shiny?

Feels: ☐ okay ☐ tricky ☐ not sure

SOUNDS

Beeping, voices or trolley wheels?

Feels: ☐ okay ☐ tricky ☐ not sure

SMELLS

Food, perfume or cleaning smells?

Feels: ☐ okay ☐ tricky ☐ not sure

CROWDS

People close by or moving around?

Feels: ☐ okay ☐ tricky ☐ not sure

WAITING

Queues or not knowing?

Feels: ☐ okay ☐ tricky ☐ not sure

TOUCH

Clothes, handles or packaging?

Feels: ☐ okay ☐ tricky ☐ not sure

My body may give me clues

I might cover my ears, move away, get quiet, talk quickly, fidget, feel hot, freeze, cry or need more space. My grown-up can notice and check in gently - I do not have to explain straight away.

Things that may help me feel safer or more comfortable:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Ear defenders | ☐ Sunglasses or cap |
| ☐ Space from other people | ☐ A short, clear reminder |
| ☐ A quieter place | ☐ A break or going home |

Something else that helps me:

Choosing and helping

I can be part of the visit in a way that works for me.



I can choose a job - or choose no job

My grown-up can offer two clear options and give me time to answer. I can use words, point, show a picture, use AAC or say no. I do not have to make eye contact or speak to a shop worker.

Jobs I might choose

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Hold the picture list | ☐ Find one familiar item |
| ☐ Put one item in the basket | ☐ Point to what we need |
| ☐ Choose the route or aisle | ☐ Watch while my grown-up shops |
| ☐ Use the scanner with help | ☐ Take a break or be finished |

My way counts

Helping can mean taking a break, pointing, staying nearby or communicating what I need.

Safety is a grown-up job

My grown-up stays responsible for traffic, money, heavy items and keeping me safe.

Today I might choose to:

If it feels like too much

Getting overwhelmed is a signal that I need support, not trouble.



My grown-up can help me in three steps:

1 STOP

Pause the shopping. Do not add more jobs or questions.

2 MAKE SPACE

Move to a quieter safe place if I want. Offer my supports.

3 CHOOSE

Offer one simple choice: break, try one small step, or leave.

Helpful words

"I can see this is hard." "You are safe with me." "We can pause." "Would you like the quiet place or to go home?" Then wait. Give me time to understand and respond.

Please remember

Do not tell me to "just carry on" or insist on one more aisle. Keep your voice calm, reduce words, give me space and avoid touching me unless I need help to stay safe. Leaving is an okay choice.

The signal my grown-up should look out for:

Finishing and leaving

The visit can finish before every item is found. I can leave when I need to.



A clear ending can make things easier

Before the checkout, my grown-up can tell me what is happening next. If the plan changes, they can explain it in a few clear words or show me.

1

We stop shopping

2

We pay or leave

3

Go to our next place

4

I can rest

Checkout can be a lot

There may be beeps, a queue and quick changes. My grown-up can explain what happens next, ask if I want help, or change the plan if I need to leave.

When I am ready to finish, I can...

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Show my FINISHED card | ☐ Go to a quieter place |
| ☐ Leave with my grown-up | ☐ Sit somewhere safe |
| ☐ Use my ear defenders | ☐ Hold my comfort item |

Leaving is allowed

If I need to finish early, my grown-up can help me leave safely. We can talk about what helped after I have had time to rest.

MY VISIT REFLECTION

When we get home

We can talk, draw, point, or leave this page blank.

I do not have to decide whether the whole visit was “good” or “bad.” One small thing I managed, communicated or learned is enough to notice. My grown-up can fill this in with me when I am ready.

One thing that went okay for me:

Something that felt hard or surprising:

Next time, I would like to change:

I can show how I feel about going again:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Ready to try again | ☐ Maybe another day |
| ☐ I need a different plan | ☐ I am not sure yet |

A note for grown-ups

Change the visit to fit the child: reduce the length, choose a quieter time, use clear steps, offer real choices and respect the child’s communication. Do not use this guide to force a child to tolerate distress. If visits remain very difficult, consider asking the child’s school or relevant health/support team for individual advice.

The goal is feeling heard and supported - not doing the shop perfectly.