

Grocery Store Literacy for Preschoolers

A simple trip to the grocery store can turn into a real learning experience for your preschooler. Below are some easy ways to build literacy and math skills while getting your shopping done at the same time!

Focus on reading readiness skills

Choose a letter as you're walking into the store. Make a game of finding things in the store that start with that letter. For example, for the letter "p" you could find **peanuts, popcorn, pineapple, paper** and **pizza**. Emphasize the letter "p" and the sound it makes with each of your "p" words.

Environmental print is the print of everyday life. This includes familiar symbols, words, and numbers found on signs, billboards, coupons, and stores. They are a natural way for children to learn that print carries meaning. Their understanding that the big **K** means **Kmart** and that the Dannon label means yogurt is a first step toward learning to read.

Focus on vocabulary skills

Position words are used every day at home and in the classroom. Use the items on the grocery shelf to give your child practice finding something **above** their belly button, **below** their nose, on the **bottom** shelf, and **between** other items on a shelf.

Opportunities to use superlatives, those little endings that help describe size, are all around the grocery store. Have your child find a **big** fruit, a **bigger** fruit and the **biggest** fruit in the produce section. What's the **smallest** item in the cart? The **largest** item?

Focus on math skills

Ask your child, "How many apples do we need so each person in the family gets one?" Encourage him to use his fingers to count the number of people in the family and how many apples to buy. Have him count the apples as you put them into the bag.

Look for **shapes** (e.g., circles, rectangles, or triangles) as you go through the store. Play a game with your child. Find a **shape**, such as the **rectangle** on the front of a cereal box, and then look for other items with the same **shape**.

You don't have to do all of these things each time you're at the store, but while you're there, find creative ways to turn your grocery store into a fun place of learning.

For more ideas, visit Reading Rockets' Reading Together section:
<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/c442/>

