

If you are shopping with children, be alert to their needs: are they tired, hungry, overexcited by the noise and confusion, or simply in need of fresh air and exercise, or a reassuring hug?

Shopping with Children



I wonder if there is anyone out there who doesn't dread shopping with children. Who doesn't look with pity on any fellow mom dejectedly admitting to an afternoon of errands ahead-with toddlers in tow? Even mentioning a grocery store run brings on a shudder and heartfelt condolences. There have been times when I myself borrowed milk from a neighbor rather than face those aisles with my precious little darlings pattering along behind.

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Sometimes, it gets so bad, that I think the children have ruined shopping. My mother would suggest an afternoon at the mall, and I'd look at her as if she were some pod grandma from an alien torture mill. No, I most decidedly do not want to go to the mall, Mother, and watch my kids transform into bounding balls of greed, little proto mega consumers that want everything they see. I'm not 'Mom' at the mall; I'm 'MommommomcanIhave?'

Now, I understand that commerce is the American way, and ordinarily I do my part for the economy, don't get me wrong. I like malls as much as any other citizen and enjoy trolling for stuff I want but don't need. It used to be fun. I even used to like the grocery store-especially when I could score some tasty samples. Oh, and the warehouse super store with the giant everything? I could spend hours, not to mention dollars, there-back in the day.

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Children are naturally curious; this is how they learn about the world around them. If they want to examine an attractive item, please don't scold them. Instead, help them to hold the item safely, or let them know that it can be viewed but not touched.

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So what's a mother to do? I don't have a clue.

I'm waiting for some age and/or maturity to kick in as my first strategy. Some day my son won't expect to find baseball cards or lacrosse sticks in the women's lingerie store, and my daughter won't want every single stuffed or plastic animal she spies. I

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don't hold out much hope that we'll all agree on a shopping destination anytime soon, but I can foresee the day we'll manage it better. Groceries, at least, will be attainable, and the neighbors won't have to lock their refrigerators when they see me coming up their walk.

Another point in favor of just waiting it out: eventually the kids don't have to go with me. There will come a day when my son whines, "I don't wanna go!" (but probably in a deeper voice), and I'll be able to say, "Fine, don't," and it will all be legal. My daughter will balk at the thought of the hardware store, and I will be able to leave her home. It will all be fun again, I hope.

In the meantime, of course, there's the internet. I do online shopping for everything: groceries, clothes, toys, pet meds, and miscellaneous-which everyone knows in a typical American household is the largest category. All I have to do is fire up the hard drive and take off, and it's a win/win all the way: No kids in tow, no gas guzzled, no globe warmed. And the best part is, I don't even have to shower! I may miss the leisurely walk and talk through the mall with my mom, but I can make up for it surfing the net, where there are no aisles, no walls, and no worries.