

“Errands Survival Kit”

To many kids, shopping and errands are boring, tiring, and just a big drag. If you’re a parent trying to juggle driving, your to-do list, and keeping an eye on your child, errands are probably no picnic for you either.

Here are steps you can take to make errand-running easier on all of you.

Getting Ready To Go

- Go over the game plan. Before you leave the house, discuss where you will be going, how long the trip will take, and what you will be getting while you’re out.
- Go over the ground rules before you leave. Some rules for the car: wear a seatbelt, use your indoor voice, and keep your hands to yourself. Some for the store: walk don’t run, stay where a parent can see you, and use your indoor voice.
- Give your child something to do. In the car, your child can count cars and license plates from different states. You can play games or sing together. Your child might want to bring a toy or stuffed animal along. In the store, your child can find things on the shelves, count items in the cart, and find the prices.
- Reward good behavior. If your child behaves well on the trip, encourage and praise him or her for following the rules. Plan to do fun things at home. If your child breaks a rule, calmly remind your child of that afterwards.

Quick Tips!

- Keep errands short
- Time errands so that your child is not hungry or tired
- Remind your child of the rules, and word those rules positively
- Have activities for your child to do on the trip
- Praise your child for following the rules
- Use time-outs if behavior problems occur

While You’re Out

- It’s more effective to tell a child what to do rather than to tell the child to stop doing something. Say things like: “keep your hands and feet on your side,” “use your indoor voice,” or “stay where I can see you.”
- You can overlook mild misbehavior, and reward your child’s good behavior with your attention. For example, if your child is whining, you might say, “I’m not going to talk to you until you use your big boy voice,” then ignore your child until he speaks in an appropriate tone.
- If your child continues to misbehave, take him or her to a quiet place in the aisle or outside the store and stand there quietly for 30 seconds. If you’re in the car, and the bad behavior continues, pull the car over when it is safe and stop for a brief time-out.