

A Grocery Store Trip

When planning an integrated unit, be aware of the children's interests, abilities, and life experiences. A visit to the grocery store falls into the realm of everyday life for most young children, including children with disabilities. Find out what the children already know about the grocery store and what else they would like to learn. Parents can also be involved in the planning.

Teacher's Role

Prepare children for the field trip by reading books on the subject, bringing in examples of food items bought at a grocery store, and involving them in discussions about their experiences at a grocery store. Some examples of questions might include: "What do you do when you go to the grocery store?" "What do you like to buy at the grocery store?" "What happens to the food you buy at the store once it gets home?" Make a list of the children's favorite food items. As a group, pick a few of these items to purchase while at the store, to have on hand for the Tasting Party. Have children make invitations for the Tasting Party, and also have them invite their parents to come along on the field trip to the store.



Outcomes

When participating in this activity, children will . . .

- Develop an interest in the grocery store and other points of interest in the community.
- Discover the behind-the-scenes activities of the grocery store (e.g., meat department, bakery, and produce department).
- Recognize favorite food and non-food products through environmental print such as the store displays and grocery store ads in the newspaper.
- Become familiar with the farm-to-market system.
- Explore the different roles (e.g., cashier, manager, stocker, bagger) of the grocery store.
- Collect information about the marketing process from ads and coupons in the mail.
- Try samples of food or merchandise in the store.
- Experience the concept of paying for goods and services.
- Compare the similarities and differences among foods, grocery stores, and other retail stores.
- Apply their new skills through role-playing in the dramatic play area.

Grocery Store Activities

- Taking field trips provides young children with disabilities the initial contact and background that will later assist them in developing the social and vocational skills important in adulthood. Before the field trip, make sure the grocery store is wheelchair accessible. During the field trip, help children observe colors, shapes, and environmental print, and have them name the foods they recognize. Try to arrange with the grocery store manager or the person responsible for the tour to allow each child to bring something (e.g., a flyer, a coupon) back from the field trip. Purchase food items from the list the children made.
- After the field trip, have the children draw thank-you pictures either with markers or crayons or on the computer. They could draw their favorite things or something they remembered from the visit. Send these to the manager of the grocery store, along with a thank-you note.
- Provide additional props for the dramatic play area such as any of the following:

toy shopping carts	plastic fruit & vegetables	countertop
plastic eggs & cartons	food boxes (empty)	shelves
plastic bottles	paper & pencils	cash register
paper bags	aprons, shirts & name tags	price signs
play money	food signs	
- Encourage and facilitate making props in the art area. The finished products can be used in dramatic play.
- Role play and model grocery store play. Children can be clerks, customers, checkers, and sackers. Model and invite the children to fill grocery bags with food props, fill a grocery cart with food, push the cart around the room, stack food boxes and containers, sort plastic fruits and vegetables, and pay for food at the checkout counter.