

Top 5 Christmas Shopping Tips

Christmas shopping with children can be a wonderful opportunity to share the Christmas spirit and teach some valuable shopping skills, but it can also be a very stressful time for parents. Here are some handy tips to make your Christmas shopping memorable and enjoyable!

Tip No 1: The shops are busier in the lead up to Christmas, so choose the least hectic time of day that suits your child's routine. Try early morning. It avoids overlapping nap times and children will be fed and less demanding.

Tip No 2: Just because it's Christmas don't assume children will be able to cope with a long shopping trip. Several brief trips are better than one marathon encounter. Explain what the shopping trip is for, where you're going and what you're planning to buy. This will avoid nagging on the trip.

Tip No 3: If children are searching for gifts themselves, think ahead to the type of shop that will have items within your child's budget. Make sure your child understands they have to find something within that budget. Before you leave home, have a discussion about the kind of present someone might like rather than simply buying something your child likes. Don't dictate purchases. Good shopping is skill that needs to be learned. And be prepared to congratulate your child for wise purchases and say why – value for money, or choosing things that a person would like.

Tip No 4: Explain the ground rules for Christmas shopping before you leave home and be prepared to back this up with a consequence. Three simple rules should see you through any trip - stay close, use a pleasant voice and do as you're told. When children stick to ground rules make sure you give them occasional praise and encouragement. If they break the rules, remind them what rule they've broken and restate that rule. If they continue to break the rule use your usual discipline back up, such as quiet time.

Tip No 5: Schedule break periods for a snack or drink, but avoid giving a snack or drink to quiet a child as this will encourage misbehavior in the future. You may also like to plan break time around some of the free Christmas entertainment many shopping areas offer.

Author, Professor Matt Sanders is founder of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program. For more information, keep reading or contact the Social Worker available to you at your local Boys & Girls Club at 302-430-2127 or go to www.lewescounseling.com



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