

Turn everyday chores into lessons for life

Learning happens all around us, every day. Many aspects of our daily routines can give children the opportunity to practise a new skill.

Grocery shopping is a great learning activity.

Before leaving home, have your preschooler help make a shopping list. Talk about the things you need to buy.

At the store, your child can count the apples as they are put into the bag, identify his or her favourite cereal by the colour and logo on the box, or look for signs to indicate an item is on sale. Choose a different letter or number in each aisle and see if your child can find it on signs or packages.

As children get older, they can print

the grocery list themselves, and be in charge of it during the shopping trip. Challenge them to look at two different brands of the same product to determine which one is the better value. Let them count out the money to pay for the purchase.

Most parents have experienced a child's meltdown in the grocery store, so having something to do while shopping can also help prevent unwanted behaviour.

Baking or preparing a meal is also full of learning opportunities.

Very young children need to learn the importance of kitchen safety rules, such as: don't touch the stove, ask for a grown up's assistance with knives and other sharp utensils, and

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PARENTING POINTS

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always wash your hands before and after handling food.

Stirring is a great job for beginning

cooks. Preschoolers can help with measuring, pouring, mixing, and scooping. Read the recipe aloud and talk about what you are doing. Older children can read the recipe on their own and, with supervision, follow it through.

Food preparation not only builds counting, measuring, reading and comprehension skills, but it also gives children an understanding and appreciation of where their food comes from.

Even a task as mundane as **doing laundry** can be a fun learning experience.

Children can sort clothes that need to be washed by colours or by type (jeans, towels, etc.). They can count

the pieces as they go into the machine.

Small children can read the letters on the box of detergent, and older children can read some or all of the words.

Matching clean socks lets children compare by colour and size.

Give your child a basket full of towels and show them how to make squares, triangles or rectangles.

Folding sheets is an exercise in co-ordination as well as co-operation.

Without even realising it, children are constantly learning. By simply including them in day to day activities, parents can help them build their skills and have fun in the process.