



## THE FAMILY TREE

### Running Holiday Errands with Children

Running errands during the holidays can be stressful, and that stress can be multiplied if your children are in tow. In order to help you get all of your errands done, keep your children happy and yourself as calm as you can be, take a moment to review these tips to help make running your holiday errands a little easier.

- **A little preparation can go a long way.** Before you head out on your errands, ask yourself how you and your children are feeling. Are you or your children too tired or hungry to run errands? Also, try to choose times when the stores are less likely to be crowded.
- **If you decide to head out, talk with your children beforehand.** Let your children know that running errands with you for holiday preparations is a privilege. This will make them feel special and more eager to please you.
- **Consider providing your children with an incentive.** Let your children know that if they follow your rules they will be rewarded with a special treat, such as getting to choose a certain cereal or snack at the end of the outing, or agreeing to play a special game with them when you get home.
- **Let your children know what you expect of them.** Focus on what you want your children to do, instead of what you don't want them do. For instance, instead of saying 'don't touch anything', try telling your children to keep their hands to themselves, or better yet, to hold your hand.
- **Talk to your children about what to do if they become separated from you.** Tell small children to stay where they are if they become separated from you and that you will find them. Talk about who it would be safe for your children to talk to in order to get help. With older children, discuss where a good place to meet up would be.
- **Keep your children involved by giving them choices.** For instance, let them pick which store you go to first. You could also make a game out of shopping; have your children find something that is a certain shape or color, or pick out a certain letter to find on boxes and bags. Or, give your children some responsibility and let them feel important by doing something grown-ups usually do, like handing the cashier the money.

- **Praise your child's good behavior.** Give them a hug, tell them they did a good job, or give them a high five.