

Tracks to Transitions: Shopping in a Mall.

Your teen can best learn when placed in a situation where they can practice their skills like going shopping in a mall. Below are some tips to help your teen learn:

- The best learning occurs when used for a purpose that is motivating, interesting and fun for the individual.
- Practicing skills in the real world is essential. This allows the individual to apply skills being taught or mastered in a new environment. The more an individual practice the easier it will become.
- Teaching, while doing tasks with family, is an excellent way to assess skills needed for improved success when your child is a little older.

Skills to Discuss and Practice

1. Safety in Parking Lots:

Teaching Idea. Beware of what is around you.

Example – Set up a Scavenger Hunt to find a car with back up lights on, a stop sign, a cross walk, a security officer, an entry door.

2. Walking Appropriately:

Teaching Idea: Praise your young adult getting it right.

Examples - hands to self, sit on the benches when tired, use a quiet voice, stay with your family.

3. Shopping from a List:

Teaching Idea: Each person gets their own list.

Example - Go through ads for items they are looking for prior to arriving. Make a list using paper or phone or technology for support. Use the Mall Directory online or at the mall to figure out which stores you need to visit to get the items on the list.

4. Reading a Map:

Teaching Idea: Print out a map and mark the stores. Plan a path for how to get each item.

Example - Use technology by dropping a pin to find the car when finished, take a picture of your car to show a security officer (to help find your car at the end). Let them use your GPS to tell you how to get to the store. Example – turn left at the next corner.

5. Expressing Opinions

Teaching Idea: Give your teen three choices to increase the opportunity to choose an item. Ask your teen to ask for a specific need.

Example – Do you have this shirt in a large or where can I find the stuffed animals. Discuss the reason behind why they select a certain item. Practice what you need to say at check out and then prompt the store clerk to speak to your son or daughter.

6. Staying Within a Budget

Teaching Idea: Give your teen a specific amount of money for a specific item and ask them to find something that costs less.

Example – let your teen carry a calculator to keep track of costs.

7. Polite Communication:

Teaching Idea: Pre-teach communication opportunities before you go and again as you enter the stores. Look for opportunities for your teen to speak to someone.

Example – Say hello to the store clerk, ask where to find an item or a different size, give details such as the color of a shirt they are looking for, ask where the restroom is.

8. Being on Their Own

Teaching Idea: Independence can be mastered at different levels.

Example - When possible, teach your teen to complete the tasks with a caregiver nearby, then with caregiver a few yards away, and finally with a caregiver out of sight. Always keep safety first.