

Let's Play Store!

Materials:

- Toy shopping cart or basket
- Toy cash register or shoe box
- Small bags (paper, plastic and/or reusable)
- Grocery items (whatever you can find in your pantry and fridge!)
- Play money (or use imaginary money)
- Construction paper or labels and marker

For this game you can use real food or play food and make it as simple or involved as you like, based on the developmental readiness of the children in your group. Take your cues from the kids and let them drive the process.

Preparation:

- Categorize the food into the 5 food groups: Fruits, Vegetables, Protein, Grains and Dairy.
- Group them together on shelves or on a table and make big labels each group. You may also make labels for each food item or a select few like Apple, Bread, Corn (All preschool-age children benefit from a print-rich environment, even if they're not starting to read!)
- Set up a checkout station with your cash register (or shoe box) and shopping bags.

Instructions:

Start by making a shopping list. Ask kids to help with suggestions for each of the food groups, or for each meal of the day. Remind the class about the importance of eating a balance of foods from the 5 food groups each day.

Now you can all go "shopping" in your store! Take turns playing checkout clerk and bagger. Based on the number of children in your group, decide how you'd like to divide up the shopping list. Improvise and have some fun!