

TRAVELING WITH PRESCHOOLERS

by Anna Lee Blancato

During the summer, many families will take trips. Just the thought of traveling with a preschooler brings fear and anxiety to many parents. Traveling with a child does not have to be stressful. Here are a few tips to help make your trip an enjoyable time for all.

PLAN EARLY

- Know where you are going. Gather information and choose “kid friendly” vacation spots.
- Get travel directions.
- When possible, avoid peak travel times.
- Plan around your child’s regular schedule (sleep, meals, playtime).
- Keep things simple. Don’t try too much in one day. Make a realistic itinerary. Be flexible!
- Make overnight arrangements ahead of time.
- Make a list of emergency contact numbers.

WHAT TO TAKE

- Pack comfortable clothes and shoes.
- Place each day’s outfit in a resealable bag.
- Pack several extra outfits and shoes.
- Pack plastic bags for wet or soiled clothes.
- Take a beach ball to use at a rest stop.
- Take a stroller.
- Help your child pack a special bag for the car. He can choose a few favorite things: books, music, toys, and security object such as a blanket or stuffed animal.
- Prepare several “surprise bags” with toys, books or snacks. Give these to your child at rest stops.

Taking the time to plan for traveling with preschoolers will make for a happier vacation for the entire family. Finally, leave home at home and work at work and focus on having a good time with your family. Relax, have fun, and enjoy your time together.

Children grow up fast, and a happy, fun vacation will be stored in your memory forever.

GOING BY CAR

- Keep your child in his car seat at all times.
- Stop often to let your child stretch and run.
- Stop every two hours to help you stay alert and fresh and give your child a chance to move.
- Keep paper towels, storage bags and premoistened wipes handy.
- Take healthy snacks for the entire family.
- Take water or juice in a sippy cup even if your child does not use one.
- Use sunblock (even in the car).
- Prepare a first aid kit for the car. Include basic medicines such as pain relievers and cough syrup.
- Keep toys and games readily available.

KEEP THEM OCCUPIED

- Sing songs, play games such as “I See” (something red) or “Can You Find?” (a blue car).
- Talk about a few things you will do on your trip.
- Plan a rest stop right before your child’s usual naptime. Tell your child a story or play soft music while he goes to sleep.
- Be flexible. Even though you make plans, be willing to make changes when needed.

