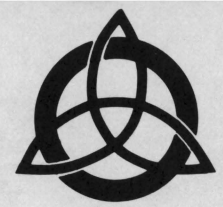


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Traveling With Children

Phyllis A. Pirner

State Child and Family Development Specialist

Ruth Pirch

Area Child and Family Development Specialist

"Are we there yet? I'm hungry. How much further do we have to go?" These are words often heard by parents while traveling with their children. However, with some careful planning, traveling can be enjoyable for the entire family.

What can you do to get ready? Stories about travel could help children understand the purpose of vacations. You might plan a short practice trip taking your children to an airport or train station to become familiar with the sights, sounds and other sensations they might experience.

Older children can write to tourist bureaus, chambers of commerce and request information. They will get mail in their names which they like. Checking out books from the library is helpful for both adults and children as trips are planned. Travel guides from automobile organizations also provide information for planning and family decision-making.

Tell children in advance what they will see on a trip, new things they might experience, and rules that will be necessary. Young children require lots of patience and explanations to remember the rules. Older children can be given more responsibility in helping to set up the rules. Some rules that might be considered are who sits with who in the car, plane, or train; how much money children may spend on souvenirs, snacks or whatever; how long you'll travel each day, how often to stop.

Each child might be given a shoe box or small suitcase and select toys, they want to pack. Shopping for a small game or toy could also be part of the trip planning process. Learning to make decisions and live with them is a valuable experience for children.

Where To Go? Who To See?

How do you decide where to go on a trip? Guided tours and sightseeing may be fun for adults, but children frequently like more activity and things to do. They learn and enjoy by doing, not just looking. If you will be visiting in other homes, remember that children may become frightened or confused by all the attention from relatives and friends.

Grandparents who see their grandchildren infrequently may



be eager for the grandchild to respond to them immediately, but to the children they may be strangers. Children need time to adjust. They may also be very tired from travel and changes in routine. A friendly reminder may be needed to help adults understand the shy behavior. Also, think about letting children have time to blow off steam.

When To Go? How Long To Stay?

What about time? The time or the season of the year, the length of your travel, the total time away from home—all these should affect your planning. Extremes in weather are hard on children. The season will affect what clothes you will need and also what side trips you might schedule.

Most families have established patterns for eating and sleeping and it is important to try and stay close to that routine. Children are more comfortable if kept on their regular routine. You should also decide how many hours a day you will travel if you are in a car. There is often a temptation to drive too far each day on long trips. If motel reservations and other plans are made in advance, based on a reasonable driving schedule, extreme fatigue won't be a problem.

Are There Any Games To Play?

There are many games that are fun to play while traveling. Some of these are:

Alphabet Game—Try to find all the letters in the alphabet in road signs as you pass them.

State Licenses—Keep track of how many different license plates you see each day on the road.

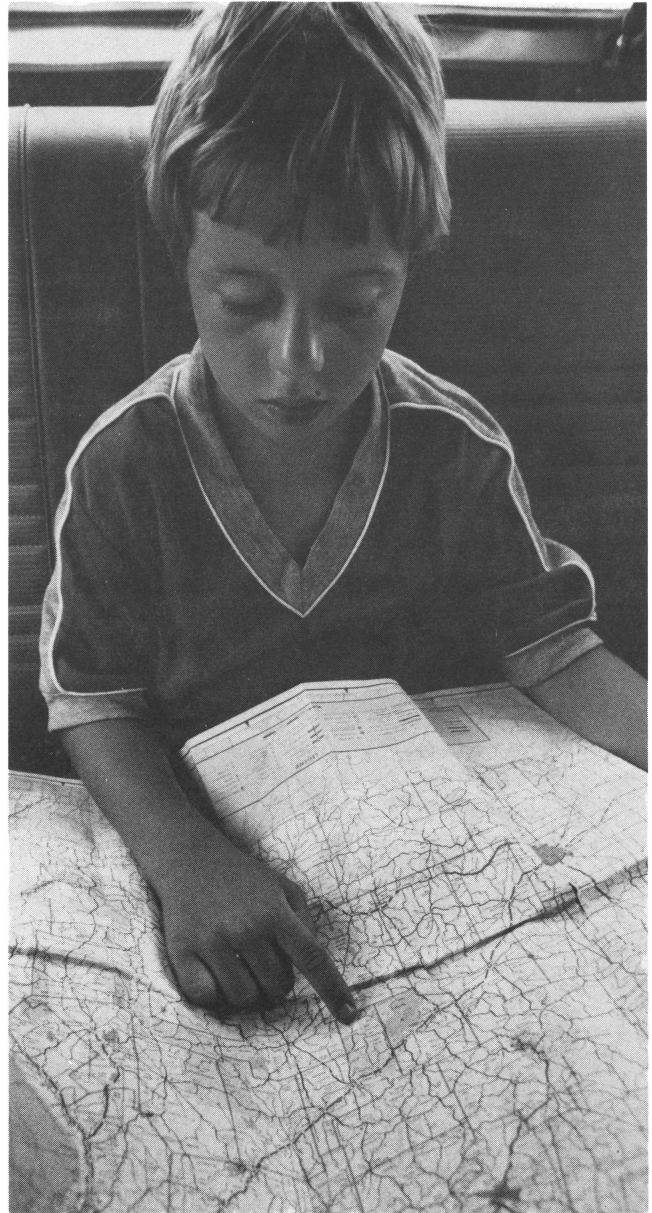
Place Names—Keep track of the names of towns you pass for the strangest name, the longest name, the most common name, or the funniest name.

I Took A Trip—the object of this game is to remember sequence. The leader begins with “I took a trip, and in my suitcase I put a toothbrush.” The next person repeats that and adds another item for the suitcase. As the list gets longer each person who forgets the exact order of items is out until the next round.

Mystery Person—This is similar to 20 questions. This version could be “Who Am I?” With small children, the mystery person could be a friend, the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus. With older children you could choose a well-known personality living or dead. The player who is the mystery person gives only the initials of the famous person. Players then ask direct questions which the mystery person answers with a yes or no. The game continues until someone guesses correctly. Another version is to limit it to 20 questions.

I Am Thinking Of—In this game the leader chooses a category such as food and says, “I’m thinking of a food beginning with the letter H.” Players then try to guess the food by asking indirect questions such as, “Is it eaten in a bun?” The leader must answer right away, “No.” The one who guesses correctly begins the next round choosing another letter and if he wishes another category.

Caboose—Choose a category—cities, for example. The first player calls out a city—Sedalia—the next player must name a city beginning with the last letter of the previous one—Ava, for instance. The next player must come up with a city beginning with A. If



a player is stumped, the player drops out and the rounds continue until one person, the winner, is left.

What Did I See and On The Way Back Home—From your descriptive clues the children can guess and finally identify places they have seen on the trip. This is a wonderful way to review some sights you have seen.

Give children a map of their own, and each evening check where you have been and where you will go the next day. If you have a cassette recorder, take along tapes with their favorite books recorded. Older children can use the tape recorder to interview each other or make an oral trip diary. A deck of cards helps keep children busy. They can play War, Fish, and other types of games.

Remember that careful planning will result in more enjoyment for everyone.

How Should You Plan?

Traveling by car is probably the most common way, but you might also consider trains, planes, or buses. Each method of travel will require special preparation.

One basic rule for all forms of travel is don't overpack. As children are more comfortable in clothes they have worn before—a totally new wardrobe may be unwise for a trip. Easy-care clothes for adults and children and disposable diapers for infants are probably the most efficient when traveling.

Plan to have a first-aid kit along with you. You might need some baby aspirin, antinauseant for travel sickness (used only on doctor's orders), petroleum jelly, band-aids, and other things which you may need.

A parent's survival kit should include a wet washcloth in a plastic bag, a large towel for wipe ups, some small empty jars for leftovers or children's collections, tissues, pad and pencil, and maybe a surprise toy or two. A change of clothes might also be considered.

What about snacks in the car? Carrot and celery sticks and apples are nutritious and not as messy as crackers and other snack foods. A thermos of water or juice helps.

When selecting toys for children, remember that old favorites may lend security while new toys provide novelty. Older children should be encouraged to select a specific number of toys. Parents can help with these decisions, but it is a good decision-making experience for children.

Going By Car?

There are many rules to think about when traveling with children in a car. Normally all children, infants, and toddlers should ride in the back. Toddlers should be safety strapped and infants strapped in car seats or lying down in car beds. Also, keep the rear window ledge clear of sharp, heavy, or hard-edged objects. A sudden stop could send these objects flying and cause severe injury. While this may seem obvious, under *no* circumstances should children be left alone in a car.

Another good rule for any car traveling family, is simply to take it easy. Schedule at least one hot, restful meal a day; take time to get enough sleep; plan a rest stop every hour or two and get off the road early in the evening to avoid stressful night driving and to allow adequate rest.

If you have a small car, you will need to plan well since there is less room for luggage and leg room. The more crowded the car, the more frequently you need to stop and stretch. Fatigue sets in sooner under crowded conditions.

Children travel best when their stomachs are full and their bladders are empty. **Start each day with a good breakfast**, combine lunch with sight-seeing or having a picnic and make rest stops. Remember that for young children distance in time may mean very little. Putting time in sequence can sometimes help and for older children you might want to mount a road map on cardboard and plot the travel with a colored string or magic marker.

Going By Plane, Train, or Bus?

If you are traveling by plane, bus, or train, similar suggestions are recommended. This will probably be a new

experience for many children. Remember that airports are busy, noisy, and crowded as are train and bus stations. This is sometimes confusing even to adults and can be frightening to children. Allow extra time to get to the airport, bus or train station so you do not feel pressured. Airlines will often board parents with young children early if you request it at the gate.

During takeoff and landing, there may be a great deal of noise or air pressure which can be scary for children. Have the children suck on something or laugh with their mouth open for relief during these pressure changes. Children's noises usually bother parents more than the other passengers so try not to become too tense. Children may have a sudden need to go to the bathroom. This is just a child's way of checking out new surroundings.

Again, be sure to set up safety rules. Most children do not like seat belts and a firm explanation may be needed to enforce the safety rules. Again, you may wish to have a survival kit with washcloths, toy, and a favorite book. Flight attendants are trained to assist with children so don't hesitate to ask for help.

Traveling by train is very similar to plane travel except that you may have more opportunity to play or color in the club car and move around in the aisle. On the bus you may again be more restricted. One caution, you may be handling your own luggage, so plan ahead.

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