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Do You Have Tips For Traveling With Children?

Tom Lee

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A weekly question/answer column

Do You Have Tips For Traveling With Children?

Tom Lee answers:*

Traveling with children can be a pleasant experience with a little pre-trip planning. Consider these tips to make your trip enjoyable for everyone.

- Involve children in planning. The more they are involved, the more likely they will be enthusiastic, cooperative and helpful with packing and other preparations.
- Make checklists of things to be done and divide the tasks. Let children be in charge of their assignments. Even young children can be assigned tasks that are age appropriate.
- If you are traveling by car, plan time to stop and play along the way. Don't push travel time so hard that everyone is tired and irritable. Prepare a box or bag of surprises for each child to play with along the way. Label when they can be opened, such as "Open at 10 a.m. on day two," or "Don't open until Little America, Wyoming." This will give them things to look forward to along the way.
- Keep a record. Ask each child what he or she liked best at the end of each day and write it down. Involve everyone in gathering photos and postcards and make a scrapbook after the trip.
- Vacations are important for everyone. If you are not able to take a big one this year, plan an overnight stay at a nearby motel with a swimming pool and go out to eat. Doing something out of the ordinary will create happy memories.
- Most importantly, remember to expect the unexpected and not to demand perfection. The goal of vacationing is to relax and strengthen family relationships.

* Tom Lee is Utah State University Extension Family and Human Development Specialist