

## Tips for a Successful Family Vacation with Young Children

Family vacations are wonderful for giving your child new experiences and creating lasting memories. But traveling with babies, toddlers, and preschoolers can bring a few unique challenges. The good news? There are ways to help make your trip more enjoyable for everyone.

Here are simple, proven tips to help your next family vacation go smoothly.



### Plan Ahead (But Keep It Flexible)

Children quickly pick up on our energy. To help avoid stress, plan as much as you can ahead of time. Book tickets and reservations in advance and research kid-friendly activities before you arrive. At the same time, leave room in your schedule for unexpected opportunities or changes in plans.

### Don't Overschedule

Too many plans can leave everyone feeling tired and overwhelmed. Try to schedule just one or two main activities each day. Then, let the rest of your time unfold naturally.

### Choose the Right Place to Stay

Think about what environment will work best for your family. Hotels offer great perks like pools, onsite restaurants, and daily housekeeping. Vacation rentals often provide more physical space, kitchens, laundry machines, and separate bedrooms.

### Follow These Packing Strategies

A thoughtful packing plan can help reduce stress and keep everything you need within easy reach.

- Pack each child's belongings separately to help keep your trip organized and make it easier to find what you need throughout your vacation.
- Pack activities to keep your child busy during plane or car rides. (Books, mess-free coloring pads, stickers, games)
- Bring a "just in case" kit. Surprises happen, and being ready prevents minor hiccups from ruining your day. Pack a small, easily accessible bag with sunscreen, bandages, medications, tissues & wipes, diapers & extra clothes, nail clippers or file. Think of it as your parenting first-aid kit for the road!

### Bring Healthy Snacks and Drinks

"Hanger" is a very real thing, especially for developing brains that burn energy fast. Pack easy, nutritious foods like fruit, cheese, and yogurt pouches. Refillable water bottles are also a must. Keeping blood sugar steady means happier kids and fewer emergency stops for fast food!

**Give Your Child Some Control**

Travel brings change and lots of transitions, which can be difficult for young kids. You can boost your child's confidence and help them cooperate by involving them in decisions. Let them pick between two outfits, choose between two places to eat, or decide which fun spot to visit first.

**Protect Rest Time**

Busy days are exciting, but young children still need time to recharge their batteries. Try to keep nap times and bedtimes as close to your home routine as possible. Scheduling a quiet block of time in the afternoon gives your child's nervous system a break and prevents sensory overload.

**Focus on Connection, Not Perfection**

Not every moment will go exactly as planned, and that is completely normal! A successful family vacation does not have to look picture-perfect. By staying flexible and keeping a sense of humor, you can focus on what truly matters: bonding, exploring, and returning home with a heart full of happy memories.