

Suggestions for Long Car Trips With Small Children

"My 6-year old (Emily) loves to listen to story and music tapes on her very own walkman. She can control what she listens to and how many times she listens to it (that way I don't have to hear "How The Grinch Stole Christmas" 18 times in a row!) Many of the story tapes have books that go along with them, which is even better. Let me know if you need to borrow any."

"You can also now find travel size 'magna doodles' which can keep preschoolers busy for a good period of time."

"Other than that, if you can, plan to leave just before nap time and hope they sleep half the way! =^)"

"allow plenty of time for stops (restrooms, food, run around time) - is there a mid-point side trip you could plan?"

hand held games/toys

plenty of yummy yet not messy food

beverages in spill proof cups

sing songs to pass time

kids tapes/CD's w/ music or stories"

"I understand you can now rent a portable DVD or TV/VCR combo that plugs into a cigarette lighter. I can't recall who told me about this, but we have a TV/VCR and my mom has a DVD player that we've used on long trips. It's a life saver! I also have a great on-the-road Bingo game I got from Pottery Barn, I think. The girls can compete against each other, trying to find things like a railroad crossing, 50 MPH speed limit sign, etc. I used to play this when I was a kid. You can borrow these for your trip if you like. New music tapes are also a hit in the car - Wee Sing are nice, come with books to follow along, and some are about travel or have little games to go with them. I also try to buy small, relatively inexpensive toys to surprise the kids on trips. James loves Pixter (Fisher Price) and Game Boy, and Danny likes things like Etch-A-Sketch."

"Will the kids sleep in the car? Another idea is to leave late, so they're only awake for a couple of hours of the trip - or time it for nap time so that at least Julia is out of commission for a while. Meals in the car can also help take up time (or can provide a much-needed break)."

"This may not be feasible for a one shot deal but since we travel alot with 3 children, (Ages 12, 9 3... all girls). I thought I would share what we do."

"We ended up buying a 9 inch Screen TV/with VCR with a Bag that straps around the seat to hold the TV in place. (on sale at Target \$179.00..the bag was free during the promotion otherwise it runs \$79.00). The kids each bring a movie and this so far has worked quite well. "

"I realize there will be those who would object with TV being the babysitter, but in my case, two kids get carsick if they play gameboy or read. WE have a place in Maine and it's a 2-1/2 - 3 hour drive each way and we plan driving to Disney next February . Many times I am driving by myself (husband leaves at different times) so I need t concentrate on the road not playing referee or entertaining. Travel games only last so long."

"The other thing we did one time when we drove to Florida and did not have the TV, was we left at 4:00 AM in the morning, had all the pillows and blankets in the car and they slept the first few hours before the whining began."

"Of course having snacks available helps."

"(We also bought earphones for the TV - so the kids can plug in and we don't hear the TV - we can listen to music or talk)"

"Plan to stop at least once to get out and stretch and get ice cream or a meal. Try to drive when you expect the 3 year old to nap. Books on tape were wonderful for my kids (who are a little older). Maybe music tapes/CDs would help."

"I usually bring a goody bag with new toys/coloring books/whatever that I dole out over the course of the trip, when they get bored with what they already have. Etch-a-Sketch (or the modern version) might work well for your older one."

"Last summer I took a similar length trip with my little one. I folded down the middle seat in the mini van and used it as a table for my laptop which has a DVD player in it. My son sat in the back seat and watched movies all the way. I also put a little cooler back there for him. He had a great time; I was wishing I could be back there with him."

"When I was a kid my mom used to wrap up little gifts (packs of baseball cards, etc) that had mile markers on them, so at 100 miles I'd open something, and at 200 miles something else. The downside of that was it led to a lot of "How many miles?" questions."

"I have not had that wonderful experience yet, as my kids are still young (4yrs and 3 mos.), however, I was just reading a weekly parenting magazine that had wonderful articles on ideas for long car trips and while vacationing with young children. I don't have the magazine with me, but I believe the name of it is Parents or Parents Weekly, which by the way is free and can be found at many grocery stores near the Worcester Magazines."

"I've done this alot with my kids, and it can actually work out pretty well. Pack lots of different stuff to eat, within whatever cleanliness rules you want. I pack peanut butter crackers, crackers, carrots, gogurts, and juice boxes. If you bring candy, lollipops work well -- I buy the little ones cause they're more fun. I also bring towels for their laps so that they can keep somewhat clean. I don't have one of those videoplayers, but I bet they work great. I bring audio tapes. I also bought boxes for them to use while writing (I got Scooby Doo ones from Walmart) which actually work pretty well, and then you can use them to store drawing stuff wherever it is you're going."

"The only 'car games' my kids (4 and 6 years old) get is 'I Spy', which they really like."

"Rent either a portable dvd or video player and then head off to Blockbuster and rent away!! My husband and I drove to Chicago last summer with our then 4 year old daughter and it worked like a charm! I also brought one of those portable "desks" (bean bag with a hard writing surface) and

she did arts and crafts as well. I filled a bag with new crayons, markers, paper and stickers. VERY popular... :) New and exciting snacks worked well too!"

"First, bless you and good luck!!! :) Second, my hubby and I took our girls to South Carolina last summer ages 2 and 5 at the time. I packed plenty of surprises...little games they could open and play together in the car. Those Crayola magic things (those ones that the markers only write on the paper) were life savers for us. They loved to color and draw pictures of what they saw. Maybe journals for them to collect things along the way and to remember the trip with. We also have a VCR in the minivan and that was great!!"

"Do you have a tv in your car with a video player? It's a tremendous help! When I took my kids to Sesame Place in Pennsylvania...it was all that I needed...that and lots of food!"

"Benadryl?
:-)"