



Wee Learn

Wee Explorers (18 months – 3 years): Surviving Holiday Travel with Babies & Toddlers



Traveling to grandmother's house with a baby or toddler this holiday season? It may be farther than over the river and through the woods, but don't worry. Traveling with small children can indeed be challenging and unpredictable, but it is well worth the effort.

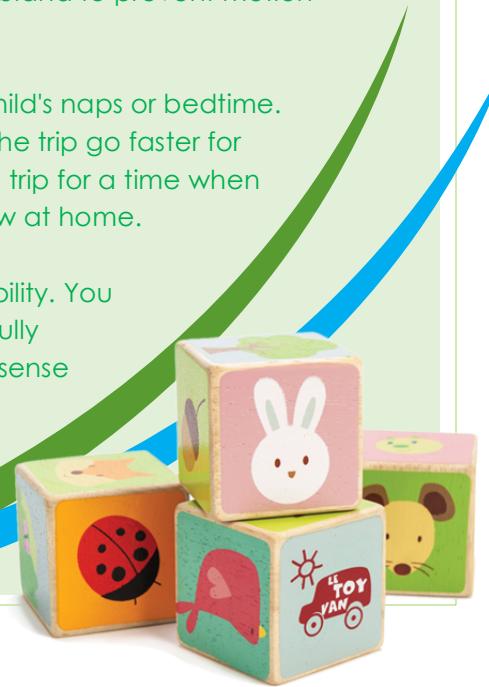
Getting ready. The best and most important part about getting ready is preparing your children. Show pictures and say the names of the people they will meet. Talk to them about what to expect and what will be expected of them. Is Aunt June a hugger? Will there be snow? Will they have to eat different foods? What does "be good" mean on an airplane or at Grandma's house? Talk them through every aspect of the trip, even if you think they won't understand it all. A little warning goes a long way.

Travel time. Believe it or not, uninterrupted travel time with nothing "better" to do can be some of the best moments you will get to spend with your children. Without the demands and comforts of home, you and your child are free to really interact. Make a list of simple songs and finger plays you can do together, such as Pat a Cake, Itsy Bitsy Spider or Where is Thumbkin. With toddlers, you might be able to play a simple game like I Spy or I'm Thinking of Something, or take turns making up the next sentence in a collaborative story. When you need a break, bring out your child's favourite toy or game. A trusted favorite toy or a game from home can be just as exciting for a small child and will keep them busy until you reach your destination.

Extra snacks and drinks. Be sure to bring everything you might need for feedings including bottles, warm water, drinks, snacks, bibs, burp cloths and spoons. Keep food and drinks consistently bland to prevent motion sickness.

Sleeping. It's usually a good idea to plan travel times that coincide with your child's naps or bedtime. The motion and noise of the vehicle will usually help children sleep and make the trip go faster for everyone. However, if you think your child will be too excited to sleep, plan the trip for a time when he or she will be well rested instead. Try to stay on the same schedule you follow at home.

Traveling with small children requires a lot of planning but it also demands flexibility. You need to prepare in advance for every possible situation, yet be able to gracefully handle the inevitable surprises that will occur along the way. Don't forget your sense of humor!





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Travel checklist for parents. You won't want to bring everything listed, but here are items to consider:

In your purse:

- Recent photo of your child, in case you get separated
- Identification for you and your child
- Money

In a diaper bag/luggage:

- Bottles/cups
- Cups with straws (for older babies and children)
- Snacks, bland and high-protein if possible
- Diapers, one per hour until you can get more
- Changing mats
- Baby wipes
- Diaper cream (3.4 oz or less)
- Resealable plastic bags
- Waterless anti-bacterial gel (3.4 oz or less)
- Small packets of tissues
- First Aid Kit
- Clothes
- Comfort object or lovey
- Small toys/books
- Portable music player with headphones
- Portable DVD player or laptop
- Any medications

Toys:

- Small stuffed toys
- Finger or hand puppets
- Crayons or washable markers
- Paper, colouring and/or activity books
- Small puzzles
- Lace-ups
- Stretchy or bendy toys

