

Traveling with Young Children

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Whether you take a car ride to grandma's home or a long airplane trip, traveling with kids can be challenging. However, thoughtful planning can make traveling a fun experience you'll always treasure.

How well children adapt to new environments may depend in part on their temperament or natural behavior style. Here are some things to think about when planning a trip:

Active children:

- Bring new things to do, like books, markers and paper, card games, and crafts.
- Try boarding the airplane at the last moment instead of pre-boarding so they can run around until the last minute. If you're taking a car trip, plan for lots of stops to stretch and play.
- Pack healthy snacks and drinks, not sugary treats and soda.
- Keep a good eye on high-energy kids. Their energy can propel them into dangerous situations. Make sure the windows and doors in your lodging are locked, and keep grandma's medications out of sight.

Cautious children:

- Children who are slow to warm up may take time to observe new situations before participating. At the beach, they may sit in the sand for a while before going in the water.
- Pack and take with you a favorite stuffed animal or toy.
- Talk frequently about what to expect in upcoming situations.
- Cautious children might like to take pictures with a disposable camera as a way to feel more comfortable in new situations.

Slow to adapt children:

- In general, the fewer transitions the better. Pick a fun destination your family will enjoy, instead of trying to visit many places. Keep to a regular routine as much as possible.
- Have children help pack for the trip and when possible, read books and watch videos about where you're going.
- Go over details, like how to check in at the airport, or who will be at grandma's house.
- Bring a timer with you, to set up routines and communicate how long things will take.
- Slow adapting children often have trouble getting to sleep. Bring soft music to play at night, and lots of stories to read at bedtime.

Intense children:

- They're more likely to have tantrums when tired or hungry, so pay attention when they start to get fussy. If children act out in public, take them to a quiet space (like a bathroom), try to figure out what they need, and remind them of the rules. Yelling at children in public is bound to make everyone more tense, and cause passionate children to cry more.
- Engage children in helping you and in noticing the world around them.

Get advice from your doctor about medications, immunizations, and supplies to bring on your next trip. And enjoy the outdoors with your children this summer! For more information, check out *Travels with Baby*, by Shelly Rivoli.

