

TIPS ON TRIPS

Towards Stress-Free Travel

by *Emily Kaufman,*
The Travel Mom

(NAPSA)—Families take an average of 5.3 road trips each year. With a little planning and organization, parents can make travel time easier and more stress-free for the whole family.

One of the most important things you can do when you travel is to prepare as much as possible beforehand by getting directions and planning your route. Parents need to be flexible and prepared for the unexpected traffic delays and car troubles and keep in mind that when you get tense—so do your kids. Also, make sure you look into alternate routes just in case roads are closed or traffic is unusually heavy.

When you're on the road, make your travel time an enjoyable experience for everyone. Here are a few ideas to make the miles pass faster:

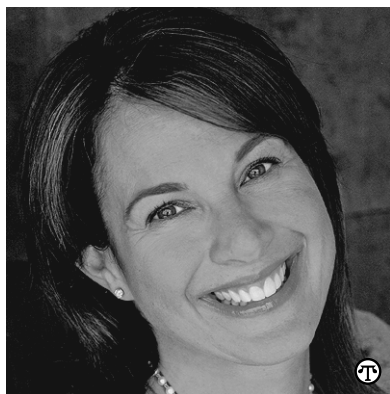
- Create a "Boredom Bag" for each child, with age-appropriate toys such as crayons, activity books and electronic games.

- Pack a baking sheet in the back pocket of the seat, which the kids can use as a desk for coloring or as a tray for snacks and mealtimes.

- Don't forget the comfy favorites like pillows, blankets and stuffed animals so the kids can feel comfortable napping in the car.

- When the kids start to get a little anxious, play word games and reward them with little trinkets, stickers or goodies from your "Surprise Bag."

- Help small children select special toys that are appropriate



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for car travel and make sure they pack a blankie for nighttime.

- Make the most of your stops by choosing locations that allow you to grab snacks, get a cup of fresh coffee or a cold soda, give everyone a bathroom break and gas up the car at the same time.

- Take advantage of convenient time-savers such as Speedpass™, which can be used at Exxon and Mobil gas stations and On the Run® convenience stores across the country. It lets you quickly pay for gas or convenience store items with the wave of your hand, so you can get what you need and be on your way in a flash.

A road trip is a great opportunity to create family memories—it's about the journey, not just the destination. You can relish the quality time together and build memories that will last for years to come.

For more great stress-free travel tips, visit www.thetravelmom.com.