

# Pointers For Parents

## Fun Family Road Trip Activities

(NAPSA)—Instead of letting the kids watch DVDs during your next road trip, use those long hours in the car to sharpen their minds.

That's the advice from Dr. Katherine Wiesendanger, an education professor at Longwood University in Farmville, Va. She offers these tips for turning those mindless hours in the car to mind-sharpening opportunities.

### Official Navigator

No minivan sallying forth to vacation wonderlands can arrive without a designated navigator. Why not appoint your child to the post? An official trip navigator's title and duties are a great way to reinforce map reading, mathematics and geography skills.

Dr. Wiesendanger recommends that during the trip, parents require the navigator to trace the family's progress on a map. Every hour, call for an official report from the backseat, asking the navigator to detail location, current direction of travel, the next exit, the nearest town and the next state.

Mom or Dad can also add a mathematics component to navigator reports by asking for the total miles traveled and remaining, which the navigator can learn to compute using location information and the map's scale. The driver can use the odometer to double-check.

### A to Z

Dr. Wiesendanger suggests that road trips also present opportunities for kids and parents to sharpen verbal skills. Story-



**A road trip can be a great time to help keep kids' minds sharp.**

telling, for example, can involve the entire family and exercise everyone's mind.

One idea is to use "story starters." One family member starts the story with a simple "Once upon a time" statement. Each family member then takes a turn to build on the story. These stories can take imaginative, often humorous turns that entertain and create memories.

Another mind exercise idea is having kids keep a daily vacation journal, starting in the car. Writing brief reflections on the day's experience and tomorrow's anticipation lets kids practice expressing themselves. The journal also becomes a vacation keepsake that kids and parents are likely to treasure a few years down the road.

### Book It

Finally, Dr. Wiesendanger suggests there is no substitute for the book. Hours in the car provide plenty of time for reading—calisthenics for the mind anytime. Books on tape or CD are also great options to pass the time.