

Are We There Yet?

Fuss-Free Travel With Your Children

(NAPSA)—Parents who want to ease the trauma of traveling with children should think food, fun and favorites,” says Barbara Anderson, Ed.D., vice president of education for KinderCare Learning Centers, which operates more than 1,250 early childhood education and childcare centers nationwide.

Anderson recommends packing a small bag for each child with games, toys, a favorite book, stuffed animals and snacks.

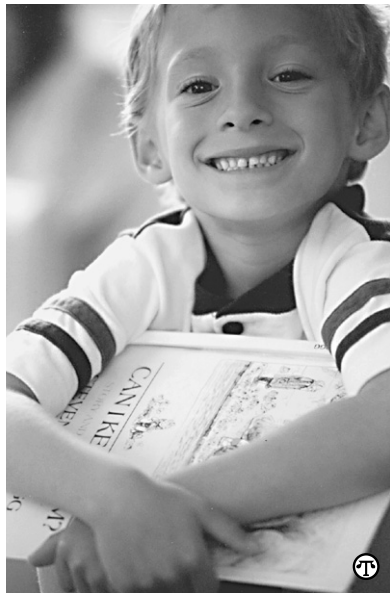
Also helpful on road trips are toys like Frisbees to provide some quick fun and exercise during rest stops. Saltines, goldfish crackers, juice boxes and flavored rice cakes make relatively mess-free snacks in the car.

Pack bottled water for drinking and clean-ups and pre-moistened wipes for cuts, scrapes and the occasional spill. It's a good idea to include a small first-aid kit, as well. Trash bags and paper towels, blankets and pillows will make traveling more comfortable for everyone.

Paper, pencils, and crayons will help pass the time and your child's favorite books, tapes and CDs are great for sing-a-longs and for quiet times, too. Tic Tac Toe can be played anywhere, using a clipboard as a lap desk.

Children can make their own maps of the trip, marking stops and points of interest with stickers. Older children can draw or write a journal of the trip. A disposable camera will encourage children to document the trip from their own perspective and they'll look forward to seeing the prints when they get home.

Car games can be fun for all ages. Teaching your children the car games you played when you were a child will give you a chance



to talk about your own childhood. Don't forget Odds or Evens (spotting license plates that end in odd or even numbers) and listing the states you see on license plates. Looking for tag colors, state mottos and even the makes and models of cars is entertaining for older, car-savvy children (and their parents).

I Spy and 20 Questions are always good for a few miles, as is A to Z, where you look for items beginning with the next letter of the alphabet.

In response to the inevitable “Are we there yet?” question, Anderson suggests answering in terms your child understands. You might respond, “We'll be there in the same amount of time as your *Madeline* video,” or “About as long as one *Sesame Street* program.”

With a little preparation and a lot of patience, traveling with children can be fun for the whole family.