



TRAVEL TIPS

Top Travel “TimeBusters” For Baby And You

by Julie Edelman

(NAPSA)—Travel plans are a wonderful thing. Then the day arrives: it's time to leave, but your baby has fallen asleep and your toddler is screaming. What's a parent to do? Well, with the right time-passing tools, or what I like to call “Travel TimeBusters,” what seems like a sure formula for stress can turn into a formula for time well spent, whether you're traveling by train, plane or automobile.

• **Mesmerize from start to finish with an enriching, playful video**—portable video and DVD players are the newest and one of the most valuable trends in baby-friendly travel. I first realized the power of a quality video when my son was a toddler. It was from Baby Einstein and turned out to be an amazing interactive experience for both of us. Their videos, DVDs, books and CDs are all developmentally right on. Best thing was they captured his attention from start to finish and mine, too...oh to be a babe again!

If your car doesn't have a DVD or VHS system or you don't own a portable player, you have options both on the ground and in the air. Car systems are now priced as low as \$99 at electronic superstores. Many rental car companies offer this feature as well. If you're traveling by plane, DVD player rental companies, such as InMotion Pictures, are conveniently located in almost every



Ask friends who are parents what travel toys they've found to be fun—“been there, done that” advice in this case is priceless.

major airport (visit www.inmotionpictures.com). Request two pairs of headphones so you can share in their fun.

• **Bring along fun, interactive activities.** Select easy-to-pack items that are developmentally appropriate for your baby or toddler; washable markers or crayons and a notepad for coloring, doodling or scribbling; cloth puppets for interacting and playing games. You'll be amazed to see how age-appropriate “timebusters” will keep a smile on both of your faces. I've often found it helpful to ask my parent-friends what they have found to be fun—“been there, done that” advice in this case is priceless.

• **Choose open-ended books to share.** Books are both easy-to-pack tools and a terrific way to keep you and your baby busy for hours. Fortunately, there are a number of engaging books to choose from. I always look for something open-ended and interactive. Even the simplest books offer opportunities to ask baby a number of questions from what colors and shapes they see, to what activities the characters are doing.

• **Play soothing music.** Find music that suits all parties—newborn to adult. Exchange raucous sing-a-long children's albums for classical music that often soothes or lulls baby to sleep. Try the award-winning, baby-friendly favorites Baby Mozart, Baby Bach or Baby Beethoven from the folks at Baby Einstein. The collection provides classical tunes re-orchestrated for babies' ears.

• **Buy a new plaything to capture a baby's natural curiosity.** This translates into holding your baby's attention longer than a familiar plaything and lessens the amount of toys you need to take with you. Consider saving one new toy for the trip home.

Now get ready to enjoy your baby and the ride.

Ms. Edelman is a family lifestyle expert, published author and frequent guest on “CBS The Early Show” and “Early Today.”