

Pointers For Parents

Taking Children On Their First Airplane Ride

(NAPSA)—More than five million American families are expected to go on vacation this year, according to a Travel Industry Association of America “Family Vacation Study” done for Meredith Magazines.

Family flying will be so prevalent this summer that even children’s TV is preparing to take flight. Starting this June, “Jay Jay the Jet Plane” will air on PBS stations nationwide. “Jay Jay” follows the adventures of a perky and curious six-year-old jet and his airplane friends at Tarrytown Airport. The series combines 3-D performance animation and real-life characters to introduce pre-school children to the concepts of science, nature, safety, the importance of friendship and much more.

For young children, the first few trips on an airplane can be scary and confusing. Parents can make their pre-schooler’s first flight as easy as possible by being prepared for any challenges that may arise before or during flight. Watching episodes of “Jay Jay the Jet Plane” is one way to introduce children to their first adventure in the air.

Donna Erickson, creative parenting expert and best-selling author of the *Travel Fun Book*, recommends the following useful tips for parents flying with young children:

1. Whenever possible, book nonstop flights. If you have layovers, look for designated play areas for kids featuring a “play” cockpit, control tower and “baggage claim” slide.
2. Pack a bag of healthy snacks to calm impatient pre-schoolers during possible delays.
3. Call ahead to make meal requests. Many carriers will provide a special child’s meal if you



“Jay Jay the Jet Plane” on PBS Kids can help children and parents prepare for a first flight.

make the request when you book the ticket or at least 24 hours prior to the flight.

4. Help your child with the possible discomfort of changing cabin pressure by making “funny faces” at each other, like spreading your lips wide, puckering your mouth or yawning repeatedly. If your child has a cold, contact your pediatrician prior to the flight to obtain a decongestant to ease sinus pressure.

5. Exercise in your seat. Simple exercises include: Reaching arms upward one at a time to catch the stars or twisting your neck to spot the far left window and then around to the far right window. Never let your child wander around the aircraft alone.

“Jay Jay The Jet Plane” is produced by *PorchLight Entertainment* and *Modern Cartoons*. For another entertaining way to introduce your kids to flying, check out the flight simulator game on pbskids.org/jayjay.