

# Kids on a plane: Tips for averting a horror feature

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Summer is winding down, but if you're still fitting in that last end-of-summer trip, here are some suggestions to keep kids happy and entertained on that long flight. Traveling with kids is stressful, but these tips can help make the trip a little smoother. Bonus: Many of these apply to car trips as well.

## Travel and time

Never try to rush travel with children or infants. Make sure you have plenty of time to check in and work off some energy before boarding the plane. If you have a layover, make sure it's long enough to allow some wiggle room if your first flight is late. You might also want to research which airports are best for your layover and your children's ages. Some airports have playgrounds for young children, separate infant care rooms, or even technology hubs for teens and older kids to charge tablets and other electronic devices. You may also want to plan your flight times based on your specific family. Some children will sleep on an overnight flight, making the time pass quickly, but others may be too excited to doze. A little bit of pre-planning can save you a lot of stress during the trip itself.

## Talk it over

Before heading to the airport, talk to your kids about exactly where you'll be going and what will happen during the process. This

can include if you're driving to the airport, what security will be like, and how long you'll be traveling for. Travel can be scary for any kids and adults not used to it – regardless of age – so make sure everyone knows what to expect. Younger children may need to understand their toys will have to go through the x-ray machine, and older kids might need a refresher on how to handle technology and security screening.

approved for air travel, and, if so, that you are allowed to install it on the plane for your child to use. It can make the flight more familiar, and it relieves you of renting a car seat at your destination. Strollers can help during layovers or travel through the airport, and you'll likely be able to turn them in at the door of the plane. The stroller will have a tag with your information on it, and you'll be able to reclaim it as you



## Strategies

exit the plane. Strollers, car seats and booster seats do not count toward your baggage or carry on – and strollers are checked for free.

## Busy bags

Kids love surprises, and they love receiving new items. Combine the two by creating travel boxes (or bags) for your kids to open during the flight – or even while waiting at the gate. Boxes should be spaced out every hour or two hours – depending on the length of travel, the types of items inside and the average attention investment of your child – and should include a small snack and a couple entertainment items. Some suggestions: coloring books (and crayons or colored pencils), sticker or magnetic books, lacing puzzles, card games, pipe cleaners or glow stick bracelets. You can even combine the snack and the activity by having kids string Cheerios



For younger kids, you may want to print out some maps showing where you'll be traveling so they can check off stops or sites along the way (even ones you fly over and can't always see).

## Seats and strollers

If you have children who use car seats or strollers at home, you may be able to bring them on the flight. Check your car seat to see if it is



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