

Travel with a Little One

Now that you've put in the time, effort, and energy to plan a family getaway, the trip that you've scheduled for next month is starting to stress you out! If you're like most parents, your biggest fear is that a vacation is going to derail all the progress you and your child have made and cause you to start this process all over again.

Sometimes the mere thought of it frightens parents so much that they cancel all trips and just vow to stay home until the child leaves for college. That is how important your child's new sleep schedule has become to the whole family.

Fortunately, you don't have to cancel all travel plans and confine yourself to the house for the rest of your child's life. It is possible to have children who travel really well, if you keep a few things in mind.



An occasional car nap or slightly later bedtime for a day or so probably isn't going to do too much harm to your schedule. However, if your child spends a couple of days taking car seat naps and having later bedtimes, they may become so overtired that by the time bedtime rolls around on day three, they have a complete meltdown and seem to "forget" all of their sleep skills and healthy habits.

It's very normal for children to test the boundaries around sleep when they are somewhere new. Just because the rule is the rule at home, that does not necessarily mean the rule is the same at Grandma's house.

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TRAVEL TIPS

1. **Pack thumbtacks** - You can always pin up a sheet between you and your little one to create separation between you, so they don't see you in the middle of the night and look to you for something.
2. **Bring a portable sound-machine** - I place it on the side of the little one, to drown out any external noises that are in the room.
3. **Hit up the store for some black trash bags** and throw them into your suitcase in the event you are somewhere where there are no curtains or blackout blinds on the windows.
4. **Always error on any sort of power-nap, vs. overtired** - An overtired child is always harder to manage vs. one who got a quick refreshing power nap.
5. **Be on the lookout for vacation jet lag** - Typically this happens when you get home or the day after a long day out and about. Kids are often more active and it can tire them out sooner than you realize. You can bump bedtime earlier for a few days or pay attention to mood changes and upset.

These small tips can help ensure fun in the sun. **CONSISTENCY** in your routine is the most important. Children like consistency and respond to the same expectations that you have at home, so do your best to keep that consistency in your routine, sleep space, and day.



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PARENT AND SLEEP COACHING