

Family Road Trip Essentials Checklist

Making Family Travel Smooth & Enjoyable

☐ Pre-Trip Planning

☐ Route planning with kids in mind

- ☐ Plan stops every 2 hours
- ☐ Identify parks for energy burns
- ☐ Mark kid-friendly restaurants
- ☐ Note clean rest stops
- ☐ Plan for nap times

☐ Set expectations

- ☐ Show kids the route on map
 - ☐ Discuss how long trip will take
 - ☐ Talk about what to expect
 - ☐ Assign "jobs" to older kids
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☐ For Babies (0-12 months)

☐ Feeding

- ☐ Formula (if bottle-feeding)
- ☐ Bottles (cleaned)
- ☐ Bottle warmer (car adapter)
- ☐ Nursing cover (if breastfeeding)
- ☐ Burp cloths
- ☐ Baby food/pouches
- ☐ Spoons
- ☐ Bibs

☐ Diapering

- ☐ Diapers (1 per hour + extras)
- ☐ Wipes (lots!)
- ☐ Changing pad
- ☐ Diaper cream
- ☐ Plastic bags for dirty diapers

☐ Clothing

- ☐ Onesies (2 per day)
- ☐ Pants (1 per day)
- ☐ Socks (2 pairs per day)
- ☐ Jacket
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Scratch mittens
- ☐ Extra complete outfit (in car)

☐ Comfort & Sleep

- ☐ Pacifiers (several)
- ☐ Favorite blanket
- ☐ White noise machine
- ☐ Portable bassinet/travel crib
- ☐ Swaddles
- ☐ Sleep sack

☐ **Entertainment**

- ☐ Soft toys
- ☐ Teething toys
- ☐ Car seat mirror
- ☐ Hanging car toys

☐ **Safety & Health**

- ☐ Baby Tylenol/Motrin
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Saline drops
- ☐ Nail clippers
- ☐ Baby sunscreen

☐ **For Toddlers (1-3 years)**

☐ **Food & Drinks**

- ☐ Sippy cups (2-3)
- ☐ Snack cups
- ☐ Favorite snacks in small portions
- ☐ Cheerios, crackers, fruit
- ☐ Juice boxes
- ☐ Water bottles

☐ **Clothing**

- ☐ Outfits (1.5 per day - accidents happen!)
- ☐ Extra shoes
- ☐ Pull-ups/training pants
- ☐ Regular diapers (backup)
- ☐ Wipes (can never have too many)

☐ **Entertainment**

- ☐ Favorite stuffed animal
- ☐ Board books
- ☐ Tablet with shows/apps
- ☐ Crayons & coloring books
- ☐ Sticker books (reusable)
- ☐ Small figurines/dolls
- ☐ New surprise toy (save for emergencies)

☐ **Comfort**

- ☐ Favorite blanket
- ☐ Lovey/security item

- ☐ Travel pillow
- ☐ Familiar bedtime book

☐ **Potty training**

- ☐ Portable potty seat
 - ☐ Travel potty (for roadside)
 - ☐ Flushable wipes
 - ☐ Hand sanitizer
 - ☐ Paper towels
 - ☐ Plastic bags
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☐ **For Kids (4-8 years)**

☐ **Entertainment**

- ☐ Tablet/iPad with movies
- ☐ Headphones (kid-safe volume)
- ☐ Coloring books & markers
- ☐ Activity books (mazes, puzzles)
- ☐ Mad Libs
- ☐ Small toys/action figures
- ☐ Card games (Go Fish, Uno)
- ☐ Travel games
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Audiobooks
- ☐ Travel journal & pen

☐ **Snacks**

- ☐ Individual snack bags
- ☐ Granola bars
- ☐ Fruit snacks
- ☐ Crackers
- ☐ String cheese
- ☐ Apple slices
- ☐ Cookies (treats)
- ☐ Water bottle

☐ **Comfort**

- ☐ Travel pillow
 - ☐ Blanket
 - ☐ Stuffed animal (if still desired)
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☐ **For Tweens/Teens (9-17 years)**

☐ **Entertainment**

- ☐ Smartphone/device
- ☐ Charger & portable battery
- ☐ Headphones
- ☐ Books/e-reader

- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Crossword/Sudoku books
- ☐ Travel games
- ☐ Sketchbook & pencils

☐ **Personal items**

- ☐ Own toiletries
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Hair brush
- ☐ Personal medications

☐ **Entertainment for All Ages**

☐ **Classic car games** (no materials needed!)

- ☐ I Spy
- ☐ License Plate Game
- ☐ 20 Questions
- ☐ Would You Rather
- ☐ Story Building (each person adds a sentence)
- ☐ Alphabet Game (find words on signs)
- ☐ Counting game (count red cars, cows, etc.)

☐ **Music & audio**

- ☐ Family playlist
- ☐ Kids' music
- ☐ Family-friendly podcasts
- ☐ Audiobooks everyone enjoys

☐ **Movie time**

- ☐ Downloaded movies on devices
- ☐ Portable DVD player (if no tablets)
- ☐ Movies everyone agrees on

☐ **Snacks & Meals**

☐ **Healthy snacks**

- ☐ Cut vegetables (carrots, celery)
- ☐ Fruit (apples, grapes, bananas)
- ☐ Cheese sticks
- ☐ Yogurt tubes (frozen for cooler)
- ☐ Granola bars
- ☐ Trail mix
- ☐ Crackers
- ☐ Pretzels

☐ **Treats** (in moderation)

- ☐ Cookies
- ☐ Candy

- ☐ Chips
- ☐ Fruit snacks

☐ **Drinks**

- ☐ Water bottles (one per child)
- ☐ Juice boxes
- ☐ Milk boxes (shelf-stable)

☐ **Meal planning**

- ☐ Sandwiches for first day
 - ☐ Easy car-friendly foods
 - ☐ Napkins (lots!)
 - ☐ Wet wipes
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☐ **Hygiene & Cleanup**

☐ **Essential supplies**

- ☐ Baby wipes (use for everything!)
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Tissues
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Plastic bags (for trash & accidents)
- ☐ Stain remover stick

☐ **Bathroom kit** (easy access bag)

- ☐ Toilet paper (for emergencies)
 - ☐ Flushable wipes
 - ☐ Hand soap
 - ☐ Paper towels
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☐ **Car Organization**

☐ **Backseat organization**

- ☐ Seat-back organizers
- ☐ Snack caddy between seats
- ☐ Trash bag hooked to seat
- ☐ Wet wipes container (easy reach)

☐ **Storage solutions**

- ☐ Clear bins for each child's items
 - ☐ Mesh bags for toys
 - ☐ Cooler for snacks & drinks
 - ☐ First aid kit (accessible)
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☐ **Safety & First Aid**

☐ **First aid basics**

- ☐ Band-aids (lots - kids love them)
- ☐ Antibiotic ointment
- ☐ Children's pain reliever
- ☐ Children's allergy medicine
- ☐ Motion sickness medication
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Instant cold pack

☐ **Medications**

- ☐ Any prescription meds (full supply)
- ☐ EpiPen (if needed)
- ☐ Inhaler (if needed)
- ☐ Allergy meds

☐ **Emergency info**

- ☐ List of allergies for each child
 - ☐ Emergency contact numbers
 - ☐ Pediatrician contact info
 - ☐ Insurance cards
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☐ **Overnight Essentials**

☐ **For hotel stays**

- ☐ Pajamas
 - ☐ Toothbrushes & toothpaste
 - ☐ Bath toys (for young kids)
 - ☐ Night lights
 - ☐ White noise machine
 - ☐ Favorite bedtime books
 - ☐ Comfort items
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☐ **Individual Kid Backpacks**

Give each child their own backpack with:

- ☐ Water bottle
 - ☐ Snacks
 - ☐ Activity book
 - ☐ Crayons/pencils
 - ☐ Small toys
 - ☐ Travel pillow
 - ☐ Sweater/jacket
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☐ **Technology Management**

☐ **Device rules** (set before trip)

- ☐ Decide on screen time limits

- ☐ Set device-free periods
 - ☐ Download content before trip
 - ☐ Bring chargers
 - ☐ Bring portable batteries
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☐ Stop Planning

☐ Rest stop strategy

- ☐ Stop every 2 hours minimum
- ☐ Plan 15-30 minute breaks
- ☐ Find parks with playgrounds
- ☐ Use rest area facilities
- ☐ Let kids run around

☐ Activities at stops

- ☐ Simon Says
 - ☐ Red Light, Green Light
 - ☐ Race to the tree and back
 - ☐ Jumping jacks/stretches
 - ☐ Quick catch with soft ball
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☐ Parent Sanity Savers

☐ For parents

- ☐ Coffee/caffeine
- ☐ Snacks for you
- ☐ Pain relievers (for headaches)
- ☐ Your own music playlist (for after kids sleep)
- ☐ Patience & sense of humor!

☐ Behavior management

- ☐ Reward system (stickers, treats)
 - ☐ Special privileges for good behavior
 - ☐ Calm consequences for bad behavior
 - ☐ Praise good behavior often
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☐ Surprise Box Ideas

Prepare a "surprise box" for rough moments:

- ☐ New small toys
 - ☐ Special snacks not seen before
 - ☐ New activity book
 - ☐ Stickers
 - ☐ Small games
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☐ Final Family Checklist

☐ All kids have used bathroom before departure ☐ Everyone has comfort items ☐ Snacks and drinks distributed ☐ Entertainment ready ☐ Car seats properly installed ☐ Emergency supplies accessible ☐ First aid kit stocked ☐ Everyone knows the "travel rules" ☐ Parents have caffeine!

☐ Family Travel Rules

Write your family's travel rules here:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
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☐ Trip Information

Number of Kids: ____ **Ages:** _____ **Number of Days:** ____ **Total Driving Distance:** ____ miles
Estimated Driving Time: ____ hours **Number of Planned Stops:** ____

Notes:

Pro Tips:

- Start with short trips to test what works
- Pack a change of clothes for everyone (in car, not trunk)
- Bring more snacks than you think you'll need
- Take lots of photos - kids grow up fast!
- Be flexible - if the schedule changes, go with it
- Make memories, not just miles

Download more travel resources at: ExitsExplorer.com/resources

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