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Kindred *Spirits*

Prepare for the unexpected!

Traveling With Your Children

Travel Tips

Here are a few more tips for successful travel:

- ◆ Plan ahead. Don't feel like you have to do everything you planned.
- ◆ Take time for rest and good nourishment. Don't take your home schedule along.
- ◆ Learn about where you're going and let the kids help plan some activities.
- ◆ Let your kids know you enjoy their company. You'll be amazed at how long you'll treasure the memories.

No doubt about it, travel with children is different from travel without them. But thoughtful planning can make your trip a good one for both you and your child. Expect the unexpected and be prepared to change plans when your child becomes bored, overtired or ill.

Keep in mind that when people look back on their lives, the times they remember most are the trips they've taken with their families. Saralee Jaimeson, MU Extension human development specialist reminds, "Don't get bogged down by little problems and try these ideas to survive and enjoy travel with kids."

- ◆ Bring a camera for the children, so they can record the trip themselves.
- ◆ Make sure fingers are safely out of the way before closing car doors by playing the "all hands reach for the sky" game before you close the door.
- ◆ Plan on stops every two or three hours. Kids need the change of pace. If you

travel into the night, schedule a last stop so kids can brush their teeth, wash their faces or even change into PJ's.

- ◆ Bring healthy snacks, such as fruit, veggies, string cheese, whole-grain crackers, water and 100% fruit juice.
- ◆ Keep kids occupied on the road with toys, games and books. Make up silly family-travel rules such as "Raise your hands when you go under a bridge" or "Hold your breath when you pass a cemetery" and "Don't talk when you cross a bridge" Word games—from making crazy menus to calling things by their wrong names—can fill a car with laughter and fun.
- ◆ Avoid back-seat bickering by rotating seats. Figure out a rotation system that works for you—a timer, by the day (odd/even), etc.
- ◆ Take a pair of binoculars. They are good for reading bumper stickers.

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A Moving Experience

Help children face a move in a positive way

Each year, about one out of five U.S. families moves. Because it's less disruptive to the child's routine, many families plan these moves to coincide with the summer break from school.

"If you're a grandparent or relative raising children, you may not have the luxury of waiting for the 'best' time to make a move," says Diana Milne, MU Extension human development specialist. Often, children come to live with you on a moment's notice, necessitating the move. If you're a grandparent

raising grandchildren, you may be looking for a larger home to accommodate everyone!

The moving experience can be stressful, but can also be a positive force that helps draw families closer. The experience can also teach kids coping skills.

Here are tips to reduce stress:

- ◆ Stay calm. Children, especially young ones, take cues from adults, so keep your emotions in check.
- ◆ Explain the move in a way that kids can understand. You may be moving because you need the extra space. However, the

reason may be more complicated. Simply say to the children that they needed a safe place to live and your home is a safe place.

- ◆ Involve the kids in packing for the move—if possible.
- ◆ Let them personalize their "space" in the new home. Even if they share a bedroom, they should feel that they have some personal space; such as their own bed, a dresser, desk, room decorations, etc.

As we've all heard, "a house is not a home...it's the people who live inside the house that make it a home." This still rings true!

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Play is Practicing Reality

Children look forward to summer only to complain about being bored after a few weeks. You can help your grandchildren overcome summer boredom by being prepared. According to Lisa Wallace, MU Extension human development specialist, "A fun and interesting activity for most kids is to play office."

You don't need very much to spark their imagination: You'll need a small desk or table, a couple of shoe boxes, junk mail, pencils and crayons, an old phone or a toy phone. Any other office accessories you may have like, "in" and "out" trays, tape, an old appointment book and scratch pad will add to the fun.

Encourage them to play act by asking the children what appointments they have and if they want a lunch date.

Remember, children play to practice reality. They can use their imagination to organize their office and work with imaginary clients.