



Home & away

Whether you're holidaying at home or away, here are some hints to ensure the whole family has a safe, fun-filled holiday.

On the road

One in two drivers has admitted to stopping their car to deal with distracting children, one in eight has almost had a crash and three out of five have taken their eyes off the road because they were distracted by children in the back seat. Alarmingly, almost one in five motorists has swerved out of their lane because of distracting children, according to NRMA Insurance.*

All of the above highlights the need for parents and carers to take steps to ensure children do not create distractions in the car, especially on long trips in school holidays.

"The majority of drivers surveyed (60%) said children's behaviour in vehicles left them feeling stressed and distracted," NRMA Insurance Road Safety Manager Pam Leicester said.

"These findings show it's important for peace of mind and safety to keep kids occupied in the car, especially on long trips.

"Drivers have told us that siblings fighting and children interfering with the driver are the main causes of distraction. Although seemingly innocent, this behaviour can easily take a driver's concentration away from the road.

"Families need to plan ways to keep kids occupied in the car and allow time to stop regularly on long trips," she said.

The five most popular strategies to keep children occupied in the car were:

- Having food and drinks on hand – 83% (keep snacks low in sugar)
- Playing family games, such as "I Spy" – 77%

- Having a selection of toys and games – 76%
- Planning regular stops to beat fatigue and let the kids run off energy – 72%
- Playing tapes and music – 64%.
- Research undertaken by Woolcott Research and commissioned by NRMA Insurance.

List it

You should never go on a holiday without a list. Specifically – what have you packed? Making a checklist in the weeks before the trip makes packing for the trip less stressful – and also increases the likelihood that you won't forget anything, according to www.takeabreak.com.au. You can use the same list whenever you're repacking to leave a destination to ensure everything is accounted for and nothing is left under the bed or lodged behind the television.

Other lists might include wishlists – what do the members of your family most want to see or do? Have a chat with each person before you go to ensure they get a say in the holiday too. A simple wish like, “going to a zoo” or “snorkelling” may be easier to include if you know in advance and can look up the facilities for the area and its surrounds. Another list to remember is where you’re going, what you plan to do there, what you need to bring (for example, attraction tickets), when you plan to be there, and alternatives in case the weather doesn’t do you any favours.

Pack up

If you’re planning plane travel with your family, draw up a list of what you’ll need to pack. This list can also be modified for car travel.

For your toddler’s pack, don’t forget a cuddly or favourite toy, a pack of crayons, colouring or activity book, stickers, small cars, plastic animals/dinosaurs or dolls, chewy sweets for take-off and landing, spill-resistant cup and inflatable neck cushion.

In your cabin bag, don’t forget a nappy change bag with a supply of nappies to cover your journey plus a few spares, a foldable plastic change mat, a refill of wet wipes, nappy rash cream, wash cloth in a plastic bag, baby soap and a small towel. Make sure you have extra sick bags for motion sickness emergencies.

Elsewhere in your cabin luggage, throw in a cotton cot sheet or sleeping sack for baby/toddler, travel pack of wet wipes, bottles for baby/cup for toddler, disposable or regular bibs, formula powder with measure, food rations, bowl with a tight-fitting lid, a couple of heat-sensitive baby spoons, spare nappy bags, a change of clothes for you and your

child, washbag with toiletries for you that conform to airline regulations, travel wallet with passport, e-tickets and money, and a few wrapped toys to surprise your children, such as soft fabric books, dress-up dolls, puzzles and play dough.

Source: www.flyingwithkids.com/travel_checklists.htm

One week to go

- Double check with your travel agent that all children’s meals have been ordered for every leg of your journey
- Reconfirm sky cot reservations and seating reservations if possible
- Pack cabin and hold luggage
- Put favourite cuddly in an easily accessible place in your cabin bag or in a child’s own pack
- Get older children to pack a small backpack to contain their own things
- Label cabin bag to help you and your partner find items quickly when needed
- Collect departure forms from your travel agent to complete at home
- Collect tickets and foreign currency if needed
- Pack travel documents in a belt bag.

Source: www.flyingwithkids.com/travel_checklists.htm

Find family accommodation

Anywhere you travel in Australia can be a fantastic learning opportunity and a load of fun. But cramming a family into a hotel room can often be a bit trying... so why bother? Every town and city in Australia has fabulous family-friendly places to stay, complete with kitchens and separate bedrooms. Many of these are unique cottages, holiday homes and

oceanfront apartments – there are loads of great choices. And, best of all, they’re usually around the same price as staying in a hotel room. For more information, check out the Take A Break family-friendly accommodation options. With more than 5000 choices, you’re bound to find the perfect choice for your next family holiday.

Source: www.takeabreak.com.au

Camp out

Kids will love this low-cost holiday option. You can hire, borrow or buy the necessary gear. Let them help you put up the tent, prepare food, toast marshmallows over the fire (check current fire regulations beforehand) and make pancakes for breakfast. Take short walks in the wilderness to observe wildlife or collect materials for craft activities.

Holiday at home

Not going away this year, but wondering how to keep your kids amused? You don’t have to fork out a fortune to have a good time. There are plenty of free or low-cost activities for the whole family.

Head to your local park or try a different park, further afield. Take some friends along, pack a picnic or barbecue lunch, a picnic rug, camping chairs, the kids’ bikes and a few extra toys. Don’t forget hats and sunblock.

Make the most of museums, zoos, aquariums, national parks, markets, summer festivals and amusement and theme parks. You don’t have to stay all day. Maybe just visit for an hour or two then return a few days or a week later to explore another part of the venue. Visit their associated websites for potential family discounts and to book holiday craft workshops.

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