

Prepare games and snacks for long car trips this summer

BY SUZANNE KEENE

LANCASTER — When packing for vacation this summer, don't forget that your little ones find car rides boring when they last longer than a quick trip to the local grocery store.

To help avoid woeful cries of "Aren't we there yet?" and "Mommy, I'm hungry. When do we eat?" take a few minutes to plan and pack some games and snacks for your children. A little preparation should make the ride more enjoyable for everyone. Mom and dad will be able to spend more time enjoying the sights and less time breaking up the arguments that result when kids get bored.

Donna Markley, a housewife and mother from Elizabethtown, said she has taught her three children, aged two, five and 10, to play pinch bug during trips. The game involves spotting Volkswagen bugs. The first one to see a bug calls out "pinch bug" followed by the color of the car. For example if a child spots a green Volkswagen beetle, he says "pinch bug green" and

receives a point. The person who gets the most points wins the game, but most likely no one will remember how many points they have. The fun lies in spotting the cars.

Donna said that although her two-year-old, Jesse, is really too young to play the game, he has fun trying.

Mt. Joy homemaker Helen Miller said she entertains her two children by playing alphabet and number games. The children look for letters in the alphabet, starting with A and working toward Z, on road signs and license plates. The same type of game can be played with numbers.

Helen said she has found that "Traffic Safety Bingo" by Regal Games is another good travel entertainer. The game involves searching for road signs, such as hospital signs, railroad signs, yield signs and slippery when wet signs.

"I know Matthew (her five-year-old son) has learned an awful lot through this," Helen said. "I think it's very helpful."

Sandy Little of Lancaster has also found that alphabet games are good travel entertainment. She said she also packs a tablet and crayons, a bag of books and some favorite toys for her three-year-old when she travels. Between the toys and the games, she said, her daughter, Alexis, stayed entertained during a recent four-hour car trip.

Denise Koser, a nurse and mother from Elizabethtown, has a few other ideas to keep children entertained in the car. She said she plays "I'm going on a trip" with her two-year-old daughter Carolyn. A version of an alphabet game, this game involves naming things you would take on a trip that begin with each letter of the alphabet. Two or more people can play the game, with the first person naming something he would take on a trip that starts with the letter A. The second person then repeats that item and says something that begins with the letter B. For example, person number one would say, "I'm going on a trip and I'm taking an alarm clock." The next player would say "I'm going on a trip and I'm taking an alarm clock and a ball." The game continues until the players reach the end of the alphabet.

Another fun car game for little ones is "Duck your head for the bridge." In this simple, but fun game, the children duck their heads every time the car travels under a bridge "to avoid hitting their head on the bridge." Denise said her daughter enjoys the game and rarely misses a bridge.

"It gives them something to look for," she said. "It keeps them occupied."

During a long trip to the shore last summer, Denise said she kept Carolyn busy with a small bag of inexpensive plastic animals which she had purchased specifically for the trip. Each time Carolyn showed signs of boredom, Denise pulled a new animal out of the bag.

Toy stores offer a variety of travel games for children. Elaine Barr, from the Toy Barr in Lancaster's Park City Shopping Center, said the Toy Barr stocks a line of "Little Thinker Tapes" for use in the car's tape deck. The



Extended car trips can be boring for children. To help keep your children happy during vacation time this summer, plan ahead by preparing some games and snacks for them.

tapes include songs and stories about a variety of topics, including safety, dinosaurs, music and famous places. The tapes come with drawing utensils, and the tapes urge the children to draw pictures to illustrate the stories.

"They're fabulous," Mrs. Barr said.

Magnetic puzzles are a good travel toy, Mrs. Barr continued. "If you have a younger child, they can play with these in the car and not worry about losing the pieces."

The Toy Barr also has a selection of Golden Books, coloring books, sticker albums, magnetic board games and trivia books to keep kids entertained.

When it comes to selecting travel toys, she said, "It's an individual choice."

Snacks are also important when making long car trips, because eating schedules during trips often differ from those at home. To silent tiny, growling tummies, Donna Markley said she packs

tangerines or oranges, peeled and sectioned in Tupperware containers. Other fruits that work well in the car include raisins and apples that are pared and cored.

Sandy Little agreed that fruits make good car snacks, but said that she also packs a box of animal crackers and some sip-ups. Helen Miller added crackers and dry cereal to the growing list of nutritious hunger stoppers.

Lancaster Extension Home Economist Michelle Rodgers said fruit leather is another good car treat, because it keeps well and isn't messy. Michelle's recipe for fruit leather is this week's featured recipe.

By adopting a some of these ideas and adding a few of your own, you should be well-prepared for your next trip. When the children start arguing and fussing, you'll be prepared with a game to ease their boredom or a snack to satisfy their hunger.

BACK HOME



By Michelle S. Rodgers

Lancaster Extension
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Memories

Summertime "back home" meant baling hay, swimming in the creek, camping, ice tea with lots of lemon and visiting grandparents.

I grew up with my paternal grandparents and great grandmother. They lived at the "upper place" as the house and barn on the northern end of the farm were called. Visiting them was almost a daily occurrence. However, my maternal grandparents live in the southern end of the county and we did not see them as often. As a child, traveling the forty-five minutes to Quarryville seemed like driving to another state.

I have fond memories of visiting with Grammy and Grandpap on their steer farm. Two of us grandchildren were allowed to visit at one time for about a week. Highlights of the visits included watching Grammy oil paint, getting a free soda from Grandpa's soda machine, sitting on the combine, and attending their big church on Sunday. And best of all was the time spent cleaning out the four foot long fish pond, choosing and buying new goldfish for the pond.

Grandparents do enrich children's lives. (My grandparents are still a vital, enriching source of my life.) Grandparents elicit feelings of security and love. They provide opportunities to bridge the gap between past and present and tie the family together. They serve as role models of both values and philosophies of life gained through years of living.

Sending your children to visit their grandparents may be a part of your summer plans. This visit can be a positive and memorable experience. To ensure that it is a

happy time for everyone involved it is best to discuss and agree on some plans in advance.

The rules of the grandparent's home need to be openly discussed. Every home is unique, and parents and grandparents may run their households differently. (I always enjoyed the later bedtime hour at Grammy's.)

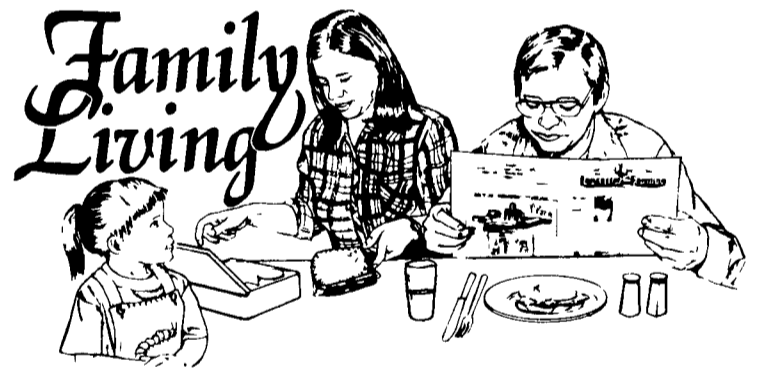
Sometimes grandparents like to plan special activities to do during the visit. Spacing out the activities will do both parties a favor. Balance out special activities with normal, at-home activities. Neither grandparent or child enjoy the pace of big, special events everyday. Regardless of the activities, try to maintain some of the child's daily routine such as mealtime and bedtime.

Some ideas of things to do at home might include playing board games, reading books together, or looking at family photo albums. I always enjoyed listening to stories about my mother's childhood... especially the story about her dropping all the eggs she had gathered.

It is not a bad idea to list the things your child likes to do or places he or she likes to go to help grandparents become familiar with your child's normal activities. And don't forget to discuss the length of the visit ahead of time! Whether you set a definite date of return or a flexible schedule, ending the visit while everyone is still having a good time is a good rule of thumb.

Grandparents do make a difference in our lives... no matter what age we are as a grandchild!

For more information about family life education programs, contact the Penn State Extension office, an equal opportunity educational organization.



What to do when horseplay turns to violence

LAFAYETTE, In. — "Who started the trouble?"

"He hit me first!"

"No! He hit me first!"

"Well, he knocked me in the back!"

"No I didn't! It was an accident!"

The more a parent tries to play the role of judge in a fight, the more confusing the situation becomes, reminds Growing Up, the child development newsletter about school-age children. There are more worthwhile and important things parents can do when a child is engaged in a vigorous wrestling match with a playmate or sibling.

First, realize that vigorous physical activity is normal, particularly in boys. As bodies grow and develop, muscles become stronger. Children love to experience strength and to experiment to find out what their bodies can do.

What appears to an adult to be fighting may be a form of social interaction to the child — a way of making friends.

But be observant. If a child appears to initiate real fighting behavior often, he may need help to learn other appropriate ways to handle situations.

Limits sometimes need to be set

on physical rough-housing since children may not be aware of their own strength and the damage they may cause either to themselves or to others. There are several effective ways a parent can deal with fighting behavior when it needs to be controlled.

- Early intervention. Before a situation gets out of hand, a mild correction is usually enough.

- Group punishment. When a group of children is involved in fighting, it is usually best to have all of them suffer the same con-

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