

Top 10 Tips for Travelling in the Car

Professor Matt Sanders

IF YOU'RE PACKING UP THE CAR AND THE FAMILY AND HEADING OFF FOR SOME HOLIDAY FUN, YOU MIGHT APPRECIATE A FEW TRIED AND TESTED TIPS TO MAKE THE JOURNEY MORE PLEASANT FOR EVERYONE.

Tip No 1: The key is planning ahead. Explain to your children the need to be responsible in the car because of safety concerns. Accidents can occur when a parent is distracted by whining, teasing, fighting or complaining.

Tip No 2: Tell them about the car trip, how long it will take, and where you're going.

Tip No 3: Decide on two or three simple rules such as "use a quiet voice", and "keep your hands and feet to yourself". Ask your child to repeat the rules so everyone knows what's expected.

Tip No 4: Before you set off, start your child in an activity. As you drive, talk to them and ask them questions. Point out things of interest and regularly introduce new toys or activities to keep them interested.

Tip No 5: Play audio tapes of children's songs or stories, and don't forget old favourites like "I spy".

Tip No 6: For longer car trips, plan regular rest breaks so the kids can have a run around.

Tip No 7: Offer them snacks when they're behaving well and get them started on a new activity if you notice them losing interest.

Tip No 8: If you're packing a bag of activities include soft toys and paperback books that won't become missiles in the event of a sudden stop or accident.

Tip No 9: For younger children, learning how to behave in the car is a skill you need to teach them just like learning to dress themselves. Five-minute trips around quiet streets when you're not in a hurry is a good way to introduce your child to the car. Remember to praise good behaviour often, particularly in the early stages.

Tip No 10: With older children be prepared to stop the car if they're misbehaving, wait until peace is restored, then continue the journey. Sometimes it's not possible to immediately deal with problem behaviour, especially if you're driving in hazardous conditions. In these cases, if your child is crying or being noisy but is still safely secured in their seat, it's best to ignore the behaviour.

Parenting Tip: Plan your trips to avoid young children's sleep or meal times as hungry or tired children are likely to become irritable.

Find more parenting tips at: manitoba.ca/triplep or call 945-4777 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-877-945-4777.

Professor Matt Sanders is founder of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program.

