

# FAMILY Ties



## Vacation Time

### TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN

Some people say children and car trips don't mix. However, if you have a family, car travel is a part of your life. The goal is the same whether you are driving across town to a ballgame, traveling to visit grandparents a couple of hours away, or starting out on a family vacation. You want to keep the children comfortable, occupied and safe. The result is happier children and less stressed parents.

The secret is simple – plan ahead. Here are some basic ideas for the entire family.

- Dress everyone in comfortable, loose clothing and shoes that are easy to put on and take off.
- Take along pillows and lightweight blankets.
- Rotate where everyone sits to limit arguments about doors and windows. Occasionally put an adult in the back seat.
- Give advance warning before stops so people can finish up activities and get ready.
- Eat at family restaurants and avoid busy mealtime hours if possible.

Be sure everyone travels buckled up in car safety seats or safety belts – no exceptions!

“I want a drink” or “I’m hungry” are frequent cries. Pack a covered container with water, straws, cup holders, cups, napkins, plates, moist towelettes and trash bags. Water is the best thirst quencher and is easy to clean up after spills. Limit fruit drinks, juice and pop. Finger foods are a good choice. Consider: cereal, crackers, fruit and small cookies. Try to limit the amount of drinks and snack foods. Otherwise the car will be a messy restaurant on wheels and no one will want to eat when you stop for a meal.

Rotate toys and games throughout a trip. Pack some away and trade in “old” toys for “new” ones when you make a stop. Soft toys and books, art kits, magnetized board games, handheld electronic games and tape or CD players with headphones are all good options depending upon the children's ages. Stop every couple of hours to let children run off energy. Pack a few items for active play like a Frisbee, ball or jump rope. Time each stop and give a two-minute warning to get everyone back in the car.



A travel diary can be fun for the whole family. Give each member a special notebook where they can write, draw, tape in souvenirs, etc. Suggest they work on the diary after a stop, while waiting for food at a restaurant, or right before going to bed. The diaries can become special reminders of a family trip.

Enjoy the trip!

### NORTHWEST AREA Family Newsletter

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### FAMILY MEAL MONTH

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
University Extension

Popular advice for parents from professionals includes offering healthy food choices and allowing kids to choose what and how much to eat. A good way to get kids to eat more fruits and vegetables is to get them involved in shopping and preparing the food. Here are some ideas to try!

- Take a trip to the local farmers' market to pick out fresh produce. Then allow the kids to help wash and prepare the fresh produce they selected at the market. Have kids wash their hands before any food preparation. They can wash items under cold running water, shuck corn, stir lettuce in a sink of water, or place cut items in a bag. Adults

should always be the one to use knives, peelers or other sharp objects.

- Allow children to sample items they have chosen and encourage them to try something new.
- For an easy meal or snack try a potato bar. Have children wash potatoes and help pierce them with a fork. Allow them to place them in the microwave and operate the buttons to turn it on with adult supervision. While potatoes are cooking, prepare bowls of nonfat sour cream, steamed broccoli and shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese. Allow them to stuff their own potatoes.

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## Food Safety

### PREPARING FRESH VEGETABLES & FRUIT

Harmful bacteria that may be in the soil or water where produce grows may come in contact with the fruits and vegetables and contaminate them. Or, fresh produce may become contaminated after it is harvested, such as during preparation or storage.

Eating contaminated produce (or fruit and vegetable juices made from contaminated produce) can lead to food-borne illness, which can cause serious - and sometimes fatal - infections. However, it's easy to help protect yourself and your family from illness by following these safe handling tips!

Begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.

Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing and/or eating. Produce that looks rotten



should be discarded.

All produce should be thoroughly washed before eating. This includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or produce that is purchased from a grocery store or farmers' market. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking.

Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first. Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is not recommended.

Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.

Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel may further reduce bacteria that may be present.

Source: FDA Consumer

## Spending Leaks

WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM? \_\_\_\_\_

Planning for a winter vacation since the summer vacation did not happen? You wonder how you can even think about this with the high cost of heating bills around the corner and the extra school expenses that are here.

Sitting down to a family meeting may help to keep the goals in mind and saving for the day ahead. Look at your wants verses needs. Iowa State University Extension has low, medium and high family food allowance charts that would help you look at these needs. Paying bills on time will avoid financial charges.



Dairy Queen is one of my favorite stops. If I spend a dollar a day at the DQ spot then I pay \$365.00 a year. I can look at saving for a vacation by eliminating a few cones. If all the family members do the same, and that money is saved on a weekly basis, then you can start to change the vacation into reality.

Did you know that bottle water can also range from free to over a dollar a container? The principle of taking from home in a bottled water container verses stopping at Casey's, can save you some money. Taking ice cubes and putting them in a bottle and letting them melt can offer you cool refreshment throughout the day.

In order to determine your spending leaks, you can track your spending by putting the receipts in a coffee can. At the end of the week, add up the receipts and see where the leaks are. You can also take your calendar and write your expenses on the calendar as a daily log. Some individuals prefer to log it on the calendar or with computer software program. Whatever works for you, as long as you see the leaks and decide a game plan.

Some families will use an envelope system to put money in for entertainment. The envelope goes in the drawer and you determine how much is

spent. Once the money is gone, you will not be able to spend additional money. The envelope becomes the "bad guy". When the kids ask you to order out a pizza, you tell them to go to the envelope and see if there is money there. If there is then you can order the pizza, if not, then you tell them to wait until next month.

Dividing out payments for car insurance and license and housing taxes into monthly payments also takes the surprise out of the yearly bills. If your yearly car insurance is \$720.00, divide this by 12 months. You will need to take \$60.00 a month out of your check and put it in savings for when the bill is due. No surprises! This spending plan helps to set a road map for the future and reduces stress.