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Vacations: Getting There Can Be Fun, Too

If you and your family are planning to hit the road this summer, you may already be thinking about what you'll do once you arrive at your destination. But take some time to plan for the drive, too. Some ideas for fun in the car may make for a more pleasant — and safe — trip.

- The driver's attention should stay focused on the road, not the backseat. To keep a driver from being distracted, set some rules for behavior in the car before you leave; for example, wear seat belts at all times, no screaming.
- Before the trip, let your young children help you put together an entertainment kit for the car with games, books, crayons and toys. But make sure all items are lightweight and secured so they don't pose a danger in case of a collision.
- Play recorded children's stories and songs or let older kids choose the radio station (or listen to a cassette or CD player with headphones.)
- Road games, such as "Twenty Questions" or "I Spy," can also help keep children occupied. Many popular board games are available in smaller magnetic versions for travel.
- Your children can participate in planning the vacation as they ride by picking a restaurant to stop at or an activity to do once you've arrived. If driving conditions permit, consider allowing any newly licensed or permitted drivers to take the wheel for short periods. It will give them a chance to practice their new skills and give the drive a break.
- Stop every two hours for 10 to 15 minutes to allow your children to expend some pent-up energy, and so you can stretch your legs.
- Bring pillows so that your children can doze off more comfortably, but keep them buckled up!

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