






We're Going on a Trip!

Get your kids super pumped for vacation with these ingenious ideas.

BY JUDY KOUTSKY

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Half the fun of traveling with preschoolers is building the excitement leading up to the trip. Discover creative ways to make the big reveal, along with tips for getting kids invested before they leave home.

The Big Reveal

The under-5 set is easily wowed by new adventures, so breaking the news about your upcoming vacation is a thrill for you too. Here are a couple of fun ways to tip-off your preschooler:

- Plan a kid-friendly scavenger hunt with hints scattered throughout the house. If your trip is a beach vacation, hide flip-flops and beach toys as part of the clues, suggests Lori Wall, a mom of two and travel agent who focuses on family travel at *Destinations to Explore*.
- Create a “reveal box” with helium balloons or other fun items that signify the destination, says Wall: a boat if you’re taking a cruise, or mini skis, cotton balls (e.g. snow), and hot-chocolate packets if you’re going on a winter adventure.
- Do a photo slideshow on your computer or camera. If the trip is cross-country to grandma’s house, show pictures of grandma’s dog, an airplane, and some of grandma’s famous double chocolate-chip crunch cookies.
- Play Twenty Questions. You can have your preschooler come up with some questions and also have some ready to help her along. (Is it hot? Will there be sand? Will we roast marshmallows? Will my cousins be there?).

Plus: 14 Best Travel Apps, Games and Toys for Preschoolers

(<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/parent-child/14-best-travel-apps-games-toys-preschoolers?eml=PCM/intraapp/20150129/PlusLink/PreKTravelGames>)

Fuel the Excitement

Once you’ve disclosed the destination, keep the momentum going with these easy steps:

- Make a countdown chain leading up to the trip, removing a link each day. This can be done at bedtime and then you can tell a story about the destination (“We can build sand castles and bring beach toys!”).
- Create a piggy-bank savings fund for travel souvenirs, suggests Wall. Every

time your little one does something well—eats all his veggies, goes to bed on time—you add money to the bank for souvenirs. Then talk about some of the things you can buy.

- Watch movies about the destination. “We recently watched *Madeline* for a trip to Paris,” says Jessica Averett, who has four kids under 8 and is a writer for **Bring The Kids** (<http://bring-the-kids.com/>). Watching the movie brought Paris to the level that young kids can understand.
- Go to the library and take out simple books about trains, planes, or boats—or whatever transportation you’ll be using during your vacation—and talk up that experience (“On the plane, you’ll get to look out the window and see clouds!”). Also check out books with plenty of pictures on the destination, so kids have a basic understanding—and a sense of wonder—before they go.

Plus: How to Make Travel with Preschoolers Easy

(<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/parent-child/traveling-preschoolers-made-easy?eml=PCM/intraapp/20150129/PlusLink/EasyPrekTravel>)

Let the Kids Plan!

Be sure to include your preschooler in the initial stages of trip prep.

- If you have family and friends who live or are from that location, have the kids call them to find out about the cool things there are to do, suggests Zach Everson, father of two young girls in Washington, D.C., and a senior editor at MapQuest/Aol Travel. Then, together as a family, start to plan what activities you’ll do once you get there.
- Make a set of tickets or trading cards that feature possible activities at your destination. Let each kid pick their favorites to set the family itinerary for a day.
- Take out a big map and show the kids the route. Then have them pick a few places along the way to explore. If you’re road-tripping from New York to Indiana, take a highlighter and mark the map showing them various options where you can stop (a great kid’s museum in Philly or an

outdoor water park in Ohio).

Plus: Why Little Kids Love to Travel

([http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/parent-child/why-little-kids-love-to-travel?](http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/parent-child/why-little-kids-love-to-travel?eml=PCM/intraapp/20150129/PlusLink/KidsLoveTravel)

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Of course, a big part of a child's excitement stems from the parents. So go ahead and get jazzed and silly about the trip. Talk about it at dinnertime or on the drive to preschool to make it real and tangible. Tell teachers, friends and playmates in front of your child, so they can reinforce how lucky your preschooler is to travel to such a great destination.

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