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Toddlers: teaching our children body privacy, personal space, and consent

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Checklist: Packing list for traveling with a baby

Little travellers need a surprising amount of stuff! Here's a checklist of items that make traveling much easier, plus tips for efficient packing.

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Interesting Facts



1. The term "infant" is from the Latin infans, meaning "unable to speak" and typically refers to the ages from 1-12 months. A "new-born" usually refers to a neonate in the first 28 days of life.
2. Psychologists believe that a baby's self-awareness develops around 12 months old.
3. Object permanence is usually understood at 8-9 months of age.
4. A new-born baby has about one cup of blood in its body.
5. Children don't remember much before the age of 3, due to what psychologists call "infantile amnesia." Neuroscientists believe that early experiences never make it into long-term memory banks because the brain's recording machinery isn't functional yet or because memory is tied to language acquisition.
6. Most new-borns will lose all the hair they are born with in the first three or four months of life.
7. Eyesight is the least developed of all the new-born senses. New-borns can see best at a distance of only 8-14 inches, and until they are about three months old, they see best in their peripheral vision. Babies may also have difficulty distinguishing colour tones.
8. Babies are born with natural swimming abilities and can hold their breath. However, this ability quickly disappears.



Recognizing Anxiety During Pregnancy:

Pregnancy is an emotional time, and anxiety is just one of many feelings that pregnant women experience. A moderate amount of new fears and worries is normal and expected during this time of change. If you are experiencing quite a bit of anxiety, it is important that you know what anxiety is, and how it can show up during pregnancy.

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New moms: Travelling with kids from a very young age is a good idea

Travelling with kids from a very young age is good; it would give them an exposure to a lot of new things.

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To be dads: Keep Calm & Composed, Patience is the key!!

When the going gets tough, take a break. There will be moments when the world conspires to make dad mad: when you haven't slept, the baby is crying, the phone is ringing...

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Teaching our children body privacy, personal space, and consent

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DON'T REQUIRE AFFECTION.

As much as it warms our hearts to see our kids express affection in a healthy way, we will never require or cajole them into it. Yes, this means even to well-meaning grandparents or other trusted family members and friends. If the kids don't want to give someone a hug or a kiss, it is within their power to refuse and we don't allow others to violate that, even adult family members. (This means we will absolutely intervene if a child is resisting and an adult swoops in regardless of our child's posture toward them.)

RESPECTING PERSONAL AGENCY.

When others are over at bedtime (or during good-byes), we always say to the kids, "Time to say goodbye/goodnight! Why don't you give everyone a hug or high five or whatever you're comfortable with?" and then you need to leave it up to the children to determine what makes them feel comfortable and safe in that particular moment. Sometimes the entire group gets a round of hugs, whether or not the kids know everyone well. Other times a verbal "good night" is the only thing they offer. This is their prerogative and we as parents should fully support it.

We can encourage affection and polite manners without violating our children's personal agency. Start by offering choices to be verbal, wave, blow a kiss, give a high five, hug, etc. at greetings and goodbyes and go from there.

ONE YES DOESN'T MEAN A FOREVER YES.

We also have to teach our kids that a one-time yes isn't an always yes. Just because you felt like hugging Grandpa or Grandma or Uncle Adren last time they left doesn't mean you're required to hug them this time. This can be a sensitive one with family, but adults must recognize that the child's sense of safety is more important than an adult's feelings of rejection or offense or disappointment. If they don't already understand on their own, any respectful adult that loves the children in their life will understand if they are given an explanation by us as parents.

WORDS AND BODY LANGUAGE SOMETIMES CONFLICT.

When roughhousing or tickling our kids (which they love, of course!), there has to be a strict rule that as soon as anyone in the mix says "don't!" or "stop!" or "no!" it is to cease immediately even if they are still smiling and giggling. It can be confusing when someone is smiling and laughing and also saying no, but we have to teach them that the "no" is even more powerful than the smile. Even if our kids are teasing "stop it!" but actually want us to continue, abruptly stopping and respecting their verbal "no" helps teach them that their words are powerful. Increasingly they will learn to use the right words in the right context while also learning to take the words of others at face value.

Actively help them learn to read body language & signals. Asking permission does not make you a permissive parent, it makes you a respectful one. Once you Model Asking permissions your children are bound to copy the same.

TEACH THEM TO CARE FOR THEIR BODIES.

Another way to teach body consent is by allowing children to have some say over how they take care of their bodies as early as possible. This doesn't mean allowing them to only brush their teeth when they feel like it, but it does mean explaining why certain things will require your intervention for their own safety. "You must brush your teeth so you don't damage them and get a sore mouth, but you can decide whether you do it before or after you put on your jammies". Do this with food, teaching kids to listen to their body and ultimately bare the consequences of not finishing their dinner if they don't love the food (natural consequence: they get hungry). Teaching children that their bodies belong to them doesn't start with "stranger danger" talks, it starts at the dinner table and in the bath and while getting dressed. It starts with helping them to own and care for their body and to gain a sense of personal agency from a young age.

While teaching body privacy, use anatomically correct names for genitals (this removes the implication that certain parts are shameful or can't be talked about). We also make sure the kids know that sometimes those private parts need to be touched by a safe adult (when helping to bathe, wipe a bottom, or visit the doctor for instance), but when they do need to be touched it is only to clean or briefly examine. It's always quick, and it's never, ever a secret.

DON'T HAVE SECRETS.

Along those same lines, have a guideline in the family that there are no secrets, only surprises. As daddy's birthday is approaching, we might keep his present a surprise, but it's never a secret. While our children are still children, we want them to know and trust that everything is fair game to be shared in our family, especially if it's a "secret" thing that makes them feel uncomfortable. Rather than calling everything a secret, we differentiate between privacy, surprises, and secrets. If mom and dad need to talk about something that's not appropriate for the kids to be included in, it's not us sharing secrets, it's us talking privately. Banning the word "secret" from your vocabulary is hard at first, but you get used to it fairly quickly and think it's important for these early years. As the kids get older, begin to introduce the concept of "speaking in confidence" and how and when that's also appropriate.





Checklist: Packing list for traveling with a baby

Little travellers need a surprising amount of stuff! Here's a checklist of items that make traveling much easier, plus tips for efficient packing.

Packing Checklist

- **Diapers:** One for each hour you'll be in transit, plus extras in case of delays
- **Plastic to put under your baby during diaper changes:** You can buy disposable changing plastic at supermarkets or reusable ones at baby stores.
- **Blankets:** Carry a few – you'll use them to lay your baby on, cover your baby, cover yourself if you're nursing, protect your clothes from messy burps, shade your baby, and more
- **Plastic bags:** Carry a variety of sizes for storing soiled diapers, clothes, and blankets.
- **Diaper rash cream**
- **Wet Wipes**
- **Small bottles of disinfecting hand gel, baby wash, and baby lotion**
- **Tissues**
- **Extra pacifiers (if your baby uses one)**
- **Baby's favourite toys**
- **Clothes, socks, and booties or shoes:** One to two outfits per day is a good guideline.
- **Washable bibs**
- **Sun hat**
- **Lightweight plastic feeding set with utensils, and baby food** If your baby's eating solid foods
- **Formula, water, and juice** if appropriate
- **Extra bottles, nipples, and sippy cups** if appropriate
- **Energy-boosting snacks for you to munch on**
- **Breast pump (if you use one)**
- **Nightlight:** So you can keep the room lighting soothingly low during middle-of-the-night diaper changes
- **First-aid kit:** Baby pain reliever and supplies for treating minor injuries
- **Sling or front carrier:** Lightweight, hands-free way to keep your baby close in crowded places like airports
- **Portable crib:** A safe place for your baby to sleep
- **Inflatable baby bathtub:** Can make bath time easier at your destination.
- **Car seat for safer travel by car or plane**
- **Collapsible stroller:** Can be gate-checked or stored in the overhead bin of an airplane.

Tips

- Start preparing to pack a few days before you travel. Keep a running list of things to take, or put items out on a table or dresser as you think of them.
- Use a diaper bag with a waterproof lining and a shoulder strap.
- Be prepared for leaky diapers and baby spit-up on the airplane: Tuck an extra outfit or two for your baby - and an extra shirt for you - into your carry-on bag.
- Prevent leaks by packing medicines and toiletries in zip lock kind plastic bags.
- Pack each of your baby's outfits in its own zippered plastic bag so you don't have to hunt around for tiny socks, shirts, and so on.
- Take your camera, battery charger, and an extra memory card.
- Take a clip-on reading light so you can read without disturbing your baby.
- Take the phone number for your baby's healthcare provider in case you have questions while you're on the road.

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Recognizing Anxiety During Pregnancy:

Pregnancy is an emotional time, and anxiety is just one of many feelings that pregnant women experience. A moderate amount of new fears and worries is normal and expected during this time of change. If you are experiencing quite a bit of anxiety, it is important that you know what anxiety is, and how it can show up during pregnancy.

Anxiety is a natural, adaptive response we experience when we feel unsafe or threatened. We can experience many kinds of "threats" to the safety of ourselves and/or our loved ones. Sometimes we are anxious about something specific (e.g., waiting for the results of a diagnostic test). Some threats feel more vague, like a general sense that something bad will happen. We may also experience anxiety to a threat we are imagining in our heads, like picturing a loved one getting into an accident.

We can experience anxiety in these areas:

- In our bodies (increased heart rate, sore stomach, tight chest and throat, shallow breathing, loss of appetite, difficulty falling or staying asleep, etc.)
- In our mind (racing thoughts about the future; imagining the worst-case scenario; ruminating; worrying and obsessing, etc.)
- In our actions or behaviours (avoiding certain situations, activities, places, or people; over-controlling; asking others for constant reassurance; checking things repeatedly; being extra careful and vigilant of danger, etc.)

Other possible signs of anxiety during pregnancy:

- loss of appetite
- difficulty sleeping
- irritability
- muscle tension (grinding teeth, neck and shoulder pain, back pain, muscle twitching)
- difficulty concentrating and focusing
- forgetfulness



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TRAVELLING WITH KIDS FROM A VERY YOUNG AGE IS A GOOD IDEA

Travelling with kids from a very young age is good; it would give them an exposure to a lot of new things. We have penned down a few, for you to understand how travelling can impact your Child's life.

1. Teaches them about Life: Travelling domestically, or internationally, kids reap huge benefits from being exposed to culture and lifestyle that is different to their own.

2. Gives Family an Opportunity to Learn Together: When we travel together, we should put our entire family in a position as learners - learning about new places, different aspects of history, interesting traditions, new foods, and different worldviews.

3. Creates Spectacular Family Memories: Families that travel together create memories that stand apart from the other (just as important) family memories made from meals around the holiday table or summer backyard campouts.

4. Promotes Family Bonding: The family that piles in one hotel room together, or wades through villages in knee-deep mud together, or explores new cities together has an opportunity to grow closer through shared experiences that break their norm - both the inconvenient ones and the delightful ones.

5. Allows them to become Great Travellers: Kids know what to expect, they understand the different standards we have for rules and behaviour on the road, and they look forward to going new places. Kids are adaptable anyway, but the more they travel the better travellers they become.

6. Means You Get to go to "KID PLACES": Of course, you can go anywhere you want anyway, but when you're with kids it's kind of fun to have the "excuse" to visit a theme park, stay at a place with a pool, or delight in the zoo. When you travel with kids, you're more aware of looking for opportunities for fun.

7. Allow you to build a unique bridge into other Cultures: When you travel alone or with another adult, it's easy to bump along in your own little world and never meet any locals unless you put yourself out there and try. But when you're with kids you're almost forced to meet people - it becomes effortless. Kids make friends so easily, which is one of the simplest ways to have a door opened into local culture. If you're in a place very different to your own, locals may also want to take their pictures, hold them, or at minimum gush about how cute they are. Go with whatever you're comfortable with (and your kids are comfortable with), but enjoy the special way of connecting with people that comes through the shared bond of parenthood. It's a universal humanizer and really is a beautiful thing.

8. Helps you see the World with Curiosity, Wonder, and Imagination: Your kids will constantly surprise you with the things they notice, the differences and similarities they spot, and the questions they ask. Seeing the world through the eyes of a child is never a bad thing. Traveling affords you the opportunity to do that on a whole new level.



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1. When the going gets tough, take a break. There will be moments when the world conspires to make dads mad: when you haven't slept, the baby is crying, the phone is ringing, the milk is boiling over, and your partner is cranky. Turn off the stove, go outside, and take as many deep breaths as you need before re-entering the fray.

2. Make time with your family a priority. When you look back on your life years from now, you won't regret not having worked longer hours. What you might regret is not having spent more time with your kids. Time spent playing on the floor or watching your baby sleep is time well spent. Enjoy this great excuse to hang around and "do nothing."

3. Play a lot. Nothing is better than fun for dissipating tension and for forging trust and good relationships with babies.

4. Take advantage of your baby's portability. Don't be afraid to take your baby out with you. It's easier to take them out before they become mobile. Stimulation is good for kids, and babies make great adventure companions. Besides, you'll get lots of attention, too.

5. Be extra patient, supportive, and communicative with your partner. Giving birth can be traumatic, and hormones continue to ebb and flow after childbirth. If there is ever a time to be understanding of your baby's mom, and available to her, too, this is it.

6. Try not to schedule too many things in one day. Everything takes longer with a baby involved.

7. If you have a medical question about your baby, call your paediatrician, but don't panic. Babies are sturdier than they look.

8. Talk to other new fathers about your experience and theirs. Mothers' groups abound, and women love them. You don't need to call it a men's group, and you don't have to hug. Call it your "guys' night out."

9. Take care of yourself. Keep an eye on your driving, your diet, and your risk-taking. Your baby needs you for a long time. Being a healthy and happy dad is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your kids.

10. Follow your instincts and intuition. Listen to the advice of others, read about parenting, consult the care -9 experts, but consider yourself the authority on your child. No one will know your baby as well as you and your partner do.

