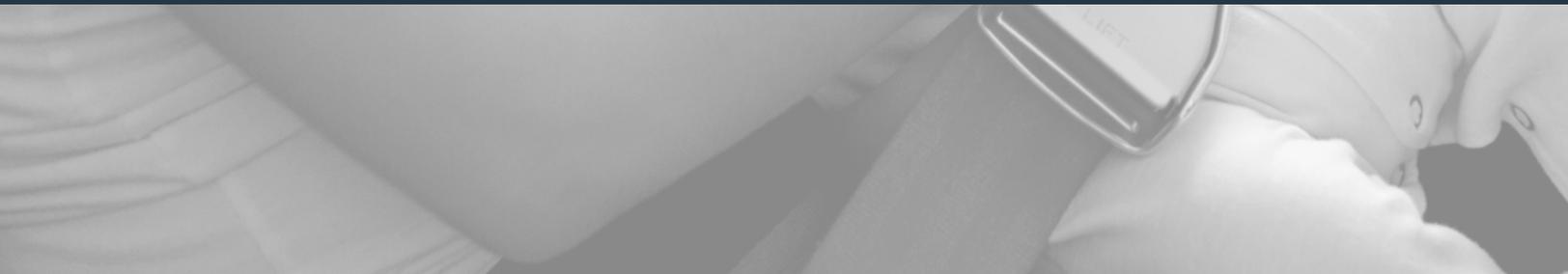




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TRAVEL GUIDE





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A Note from Carrie

Traveling is so much fun, but can be a tricky endeavor when you're trying to keep your child on a sleep schedule!

There's always something exciting going on and friends and relatives who are anxious to see your family. They may not understand the priority you have chosen to give your child's sleep.

While traveling, it can be very tempting to let your child skip a nap or push bedtime back an hour or two so that you can fit those extra activities into your trip. I recommend finding a balance that works well for your entire family. Find a way to enjoy the activities you want to do without sacrificing too much of your child's sleep.

Here are some tips to make your travels go more smoothly...



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Getting There

Plan your travel during your child's "day" whenever possible. Resist the temptation to book an early morning or later evening flight. Night sleep is the most important. If they can get a full night of sleep before traveling, it will make your travel day much smoother!

If you have a shorter drive and your child sleeps well in the car, plan your drive to take place around naptime.

Get some special toys/snacks you can use along the way.

Don't give them everything at once, space them out throughout your travel day to keep things exciting for them!

Relax your rules. If a snack is the only thing that will keep them happy, keep giving them snacks! Travel days are hard on everyone. Sometimes simply surviving is the best goal.

AIRPLANE TRAVEL TIPS

- Do what you need to do to keep your child happy
- Help your baby to sleep if needed - breaking the rules is ok!
- If you are flying during your child's night, have them in their PJ's to encourage sleep



Room Set Up

UNDER 2 YEARS

For babies or young toddlers, sleep should always be in a crib or pack n play.

If you will be sharing a room with your child, try to create some kind of partition in the room so that they can't see you from their bed. (Hang a blanket from a line running across the room, rearrange furniture to create some kind of a wall, etc.). Black out the room if possible.

The Slumberpod is a great option for travel! It fits around a pack-n-play, crib or toddler bed and keeps your child's sleep environment completely dark. If you have a slumberpod, you don't have to black out the room or worry about a partition between you and your child.



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Room Set Up

2 YEARS AND OLDER

If your toddler sleeps in a crib but that is not an available option on your trip (or a pack in play is too small), try to create a defined “sleep space”.

You can do this by moving furniture around or purchasing a toddler bed.

Since they are used to the boundaries of the crib, a defined sleep space will help them feel secure. Be aware that sudden freedom at night (that they aren't used to) may give you some trouble!

If your child is already in a big bed, make your expectations very clear to them. Keep the rules exactly the same as at home. If you expect them to stay in their bed until morning, tell them!



Sleep Environment

Try to match your sleep environment at home as closely as possible.

If you use a sound machine at home, bring it with you (or use a white noise app on your phone).

Keep it dark! You can bring black trash bags to cover the window, or use these [travel shades](#).

If your toddler is used to a night light, bring it with you!

Bring along loveys, PJ's, anything that is familiar to your child. It will help them feel secure while sleeping.



Sleep Schedule

Stick to a schedule...within reason. Make sure you have fun and make lasting memories while you are away!

Your child (and you!) will enjoy your trip more if they are well rested.

SCHEDULE TIPS

- If your child naps, try to get in at least one crib nap per day (first nap is ideal for babies with 2+ naps)
- Aim for most bedtimes to be on time or within a half hour of their regular bedtime.
- The occasional late night won't derail their sleep too much, but you will want to be aware of how it will likely affect them. Expect to see any of the following: increased struggle to fall asleep, night wakings, early waking the following day, overtired behavior.



Sleep Schedule cont.

ROUTINE

Use the same bedtime and nap routines you use at home. It may be tempting to deviate from your routine, but resist that temptation. The familiar bedtime routine will help your child feel secure and fall asleep more peacefully.

GET CREATIVE

- Plan a drive around naptime.
- Plan activities during your child's awake time.
- If you are out past bedtime, can you still get your child to sleep at an appropriate hour? (This may be in a baby carrier, or even in a pack n play in a friend's guest room)
- If you plan to be out late one night, plan to make naps a priority the next day.

COMMUNICATE

Be clear with your friends and family with you that you've made sleep a priority for your child. Ask them to work with you and schedule activities around their sleep when possible.



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Bedtime

Your child may need some wind down time before starting the bedtime routine.

Remove your child from the environment and engage in some quieter, one on one play with less stimulation. This will help them calm down and prepare to sleep.

If a parent is around, they should be the ones to do the bedtime routine. Keeping it consistent will be very helpful for your toddler or preschooler.

Traveling brings a lot of changes and uncertainties. If bedtime can be the same as it is at home, it will help them feel secure in their new environment.





Traveling with Toddlers

Try to provide your toddler a strong sense of security while traveling.

Give them details about your day, what you plan to do and who you will be with. Explain where they will be sleeping and where you will be once they go to bed. Overcommunication is the key.

Try to find places to give them control. Let them make choices along the way – where to eat, where to set up their bed in the room, who will read their book at night. Involve them in the process.

Expect some strong reactions and emotions from your toddler over the course of your trip. This is perfectly normal. Do your best to have patience and respond to their emotions with empathy!





Time Changes

TRAVELING FOR MORE THAN 3 DAYS

Switch to the new time zone immediately (this will likely take 1-2 days depending on the time difference).

This will mean some extended awake windows, an early or late bedtime, BUT the quicker you get on the new time, the smoother your trip will go.

TRAVELING FOR LESS THAN 3 DAYS

Either stay on your home time or try splitting the difference between your home time and the new time zone. For example, if there is a two hour difference, go with a 1 hour difference for those 3 days.

GENERAL NOTE

Some children will handle time changes better than others. Be patient as your children adjust to time changes (it generally takes our bodies 1-2 weeks to fully adjust to a new time.)





Time Changes

TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (6+ HOUR TIME DIFFERENCE)

- If you arrive in the morning (local time), spend some time outside right away. The sun will help regulate your child's circadian rhythm that, in turn, regulates their sleep.
- If you arrive in the evening or at night (local time), move straight to your bedtime routine and into bed.
- Get plenty of sunlight exposure throughout the day as well as lots of active play.
- Utilize naps in order to make it to an appropriate bedtime.
- Follow appropriate awake times with your baby.
- If your child is wide awake in the middle of the night, let them stay up for 1 hour. Keep the lights low and do some calm playing or reading (no screens!). After an hour, put them back into bed. This may be necessary for 2-3 nights.



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Returning Home

GENERAL TIPS

- Be patient.
- Give your child a couple days to adjust back to your time zone.
- With babies, use their awake time as a guide for their sleep until you are back on schedule.
- If you notice any regression upon your return, address it immediately. The longer you wait to do something, the worse it will become.
- Follow the following steps based on the level of regression your child is experiencing.



Returning Home

SLEEP REGRESSIONS

After you return from your trip, it's always the hope that your baby will bounce back to their established sleeping habits! Unfortunately this isn't always the case. If you find that your child has regressed, use one of the methods below, depending on the extent of the regression.

MINIMAL REGRESSION

When you put your child down for bed, implement a "leave and check" response. Lay them down and leave the room.

If they start to protest, wait 10 minutes. If they are still protesting at the end of the 10 minutes, go in and offer some comfort. (No longer than 30 seconds in the room).

Leave the room and repeat if necessary until they fall asleep.



Returning Home

MODERATE REGRESSION

Use a more rapid sleep training approach. If you want to be in the room with them as they learn to fall asleep on their own again, stay next to their bed 1-2 nights, then ease out of their room (1-2 nights sitting in the middle of the room, then out of the room). If you choose to do regular check-ins, go with 10 minutes between checks.

SEVERE REGRESSION

In this case, your child has developed significant attachment to outside support in falling asleep. You will want to start from scratch and re-sleep train. If needed, please reach out for support through this process.





Packing List

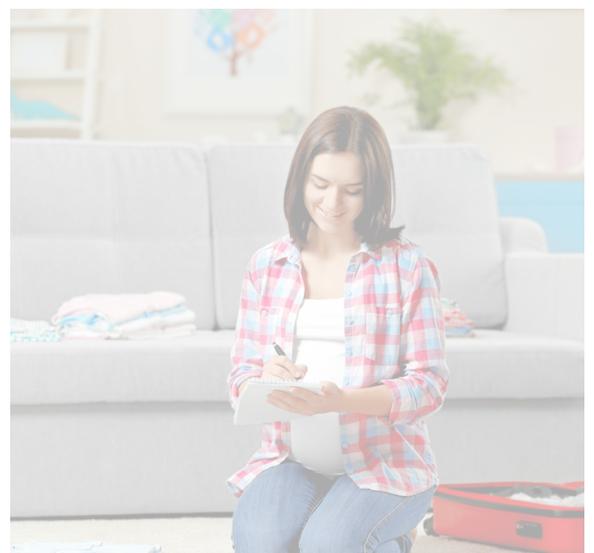
Diapers & Wipes/Pull Ups
PJs/Sleep Sack
Blanket/Lovie
Toothbrush and Toothpaste
Night light
Sound machine
Favorite Book/Toy
Toddler clock
Pack n play/toddler bed/sleeping bag
Clothes – shirts, pants, socks, underwear
Cold weather – jackets, hats, gloves
Warm weather – hats, sandals, sunscreen
Swimsuit/swim diapers/beach towel
Shoes
Items for meals – bib, utensils, baby food
Snacks (lots of snacks!)
Sippy cups/bottles/water bottle
Breast pump and accessories
Burp rags
2 extra outfits for travel day
Travel documents – Passport/Birth Certificate

Items for blacking out room:

- Slumberpod
- Trash bags and painters tape
- Travel shades

Some of my favorites travel activities for toddlers:

- Melissa & Doug restickable sticker books
- Water Wow activity pads
- Coloring book and crayons
- Fidgets





Final Thoughts

Babies differ in their flexibility. Some will do fine with an interrupted schedule and not miss a beat. Others are more sensitive to overtiredness and change in routine. You will quickly find out where your baby falls on the “adaptability” scale.

Remember, that this is a short season of life. Soon your child will be old enough to have the stamina to enjoy some long, memory-filled days on vacation. This time of making sleep (especially daytime sleep) one of your priorities on vacation will pass in a few years.

Traveling can be hard with children. If you find yourself anxiously concerned about how things will go with their sleep, it can impact your level of enjoyment on your trip. Try to relax your expectations. Things won't be perfect, they won't look like home, and that is okay! Once you can come to terms with that, it will make the trip much more enjoyable!

Most importantly, let the little things go and have fun!

Safe Travels,

Carrie