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Why Little Kids Love to Travel

It's tempting to put off vacations until your kids are older, but there's a lot preschoolers gain (and remember) from traveling at a young age.

BY JUDY KOUTSKY

AGES
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You'll inspire a passion

When preschoolers travel, they're exposed to things that may spark special interests that they (and you) didn't know they had. "A child who sees the Empire State Building may become fascinated with building. Another who walks through the forest in Yosemite may become interested in all kinds of plant life," says Barbara Harvey, a nationally certified family worker in Atlanta. You never know what kids will latch on to.

The memories will last

Traveling with little kids is particularly special because they remember feelings and moments adults may have overlooked: the warm sand under their feet, their first taste of a crunchy churro, being with you when fireworks light up the sky. Those emotional firsts really do create a lasting imprint—and they help fuel an internal happiness meter that preschoolers carry with them for years.

They develop a wider lens

Visiting a new place is one of the most active forms of learning. "Seeing the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls is a great way to explore the creative possibilities of a child's imagination," says Jarred Geller, a pre-K teacher in Oklahoma City. They can form new connections between ideas and experiences. It can even foster language development. "The students in my class who've traveled tend to be the most talkative because they have these special moments to share."

Their excitement is contagious

Another big joy you'll receive when traveling with preschoolers? Just about everything is brand new. They are truly amazed when they see real cowboys riding horseback or an actual giant sea turtle, and no one in the family (even ornery big sibs!) will be able to resist the wonder.

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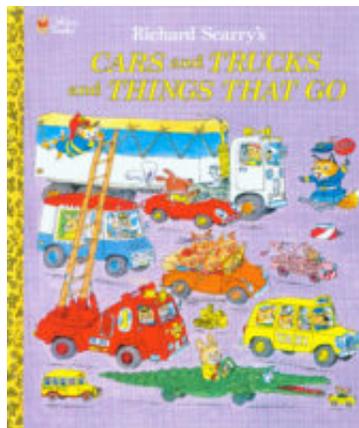
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On their way to the beach, the Pig family finds the road teeming with cars, buses, tractors, and even toothbrushes that go! There's a whimsical treasure in each of the richly illustrated pages of Richard Scarry's picture book. And, like generations before her, your young reader will search for the cleverly hidden Goldbug in each spread.

Learning Highlights

Encourage your child to learn **new vocabulary words** and develop **word-recognition skills** in this lively excursion.

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