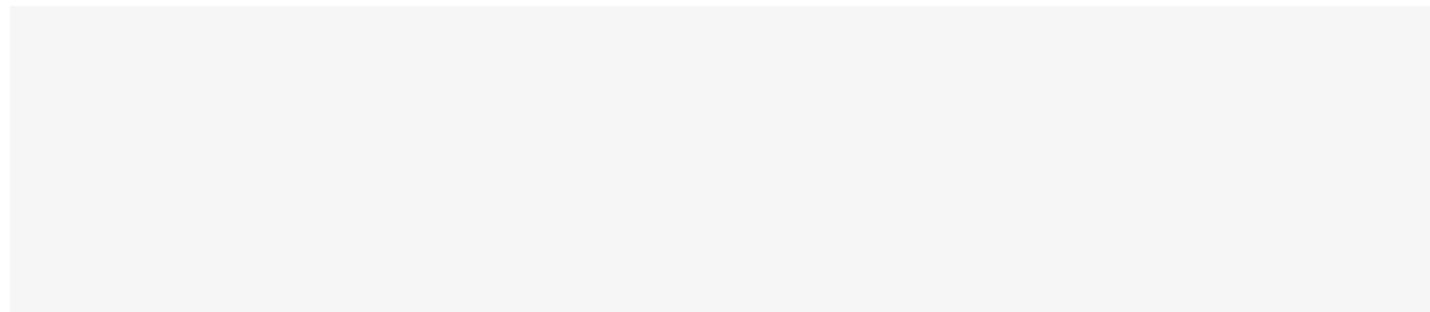


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**ALL AGES**

# One on One Trips With Kids



BY JUDY KOUTSKY ▾

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As a travel writer, I love traveling with my two boys, ages 5 and 7, but I also try and take at least one trip a year with just one child. The special bonding that ensues (when there's no competition from the other brother) creates great memories for both of us.

"There is nothing worth more than the time you invest one-on-one with your child," says Dr. Lisa Long, a licensed clinical psychologist based in Charlotte, North Carolina. "This time is a direct message to your child that they matter to you." Whether you have two kids or six, it's not always easy finding the time (or money) to take each child on a solo trip, but the end result makes it

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“When a parent gives a child attention independent of the rest of the family, the child will develop a greater sense of self-esteem and importance.” For me, my two boys are always competing. So on vacation, everything is a contest or a race to see who can do it better. When I travel with just one child, it immediately takes the pressure off and my solo son gets to just be himself. I get to know him better as an individual, not just a part of the family unit.

Solo travel is also a good way for kids to get to know their parents better. “As parents invest this time with their child, the child also is able to gain a better sense of who their parent is,” says Long. “This is a great way to help build a child’s confidence and foster a closeness in the parental bond.”

When I recently took Jack to Mexico on a solo sojourn, he was surprised when I willingly held an alligator at the [Croco Cun Zoo](#) outside Cancun. Suddenly, I wasn't just his mom, but a brave person who likes doing things slightly outside her comfort zone. He looked at his mom with new eyes (and hopefully appreciation). While he may have reacted differently with his brother there, since it was just the two of us, he asked if he could hold the alligator, too.

When you have one-on-one time with kids, they feel more apt to take chances. “Kids learn to venture out while they have their parent’s full attention and they can take more risks and learn to experience the environment more freely while on a one-on-one trip with mom or dad,” says Long.

### **Tips for One on One Trips With Kids**

#### **Alone time is not a bad thing.**

When Jack and I first checked into Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun, I thought we would spend all five days together, all day every day. After touring the kids’ camp, however, he asked if he could attend. We soon fell into a groove of mornings separate (he did fun camp activities while I hung out at the beach), but then afternoons and evenings together. I let him guide our time: hiking, biking, playing in the pool or snorkeling. “Traveling with your child allows the two of you to create memories together,” says Long. “You both experience new things and appreciate the time you are giving each other.” We will always remember the afternoon we spent collecting seashells along the beach; had an authentic Mexican dinner with a real mariachi band playing; and Jack hitting the pinata and eating the booty.

Learn more about [\*\*Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun\*\*](#).

Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun

#### **Make sure your child doesn’t feel slighted.**

While it worked for Jack and I to have alone time, you don’t want to send your kids to camp if they’re not into it, simply because you want some down time. “When a child feels a parent would rather spend their time doing something else than being present on a one-to-one trip, the child is likely to feel hurt,”

says Long. So make sure you talk to your child about the plan so there are no misunderstandings.

Try

**something new.**

I took Jack on an eco-adventure sea turtle weekend at the [Four Seasons Resort Nevis](#). It was his first time staying up until midnight to see the mama sea turtles lay their eggs. We also did a catamaran trip and I taught Jack to snorkel

for the first time, the morning of our tour. The happiness we both felt when he snorkeled like a pro off the catamaran was another memory neither of us will forget. “Sharing new experiences is a great way to show your child that they are valued,” says Long. Jack and I will always have our special memories—watching sea turtles in the moonlight and seeing an array of colorful fish and coral underwater—that we can revisit through pictures and videos.

## Trips for One on One Time With Kids

### Resorts

When picking a resort, make sure it has activities that will maximize your quality time with kids and appeal to both children and parents. At Woodloch Pines, a family-friendly all-inclusive resort in the Poconos, you can do plenty of bonding with your child when you go hiking, rock climbing, and swimming in both indoor and outdoor pools. Plus, there's bumper cars, go karts, bumper boats and kayaking.

Learn more about [Woodloch Pines](#).

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## **Destinations**

If you're picking a kid-friendly destination, like New York City, choose activities that appeal to both kids and adults. A great option is Circle Line Sightseeing Tours, where you can do the BEAST Speedboat Ride (high-speed twists and turns) or a more relaxing landmark cruise where you can see the top sites around the island of Manhattan. Combine that with a double-decker bus tour that's hop on and hop off and you'll avoid walking/whining syndrome and instead talk and bond while seeing top sights like Central Park and Yankee Stadium.

## **Making**

### **Memories On One On One Trips With Kids**

Jack likes to create a memory book of our trips together. It can include just about anything: a ticket stub from the Croco Cun Zoo, a favorite seashell found on the beach, or a video of Jack hitting the pinata. While traveling, before we go to bed at night, we go through the day and list our top three favorite things that we did. This is one of the most invaluable ways to spend quality time with kids.

“When we make a child feel important and fun to be around, the child will then experience the world in the same manner,” says Long. My goal as a parent on these trips, is to create fabulous memories, make my son feel special and allow him to know the world is an amazing place full of adventure and experiences just waiting to happen.

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