

7 Ways to De-Stress Your Next Family Vacation

“Vacation stress” may sound like a contradiction in terms. But any kind of change—even a fun one—can trigger stress. Add children to the mix, and you have a recipe for more work than relaxation. But some preplanning can help keep everyone smiling:

- 1** Involve older children in decisions about where to go and what to do on vacation.
- 2** Let kids be kids. Plan at least one child-oriented activity a day, such as a visit to the zoo.
- 3** Make sure your children get enough sleep and relaxation time. Otherwise, they can get burned-out or cranky.

4 Plan fewer activities than you think you have time for. Rushing to reach a destination or catch a plane can add unwelcome stress to your family vacation.

5 Schedule time for stress-busting naps and exercise along the way.

6 Bring a “fun bag” stuffed with favorite snacks, books, games and other items your kids enjoy.

7 Try to keep to a daily routine as much as possible. Children are reassured by structure and predictability.

Sources include American Academy of Family Physicians; American Academy of Pediatrics; American Psychiatric Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Federal Citizen Information Center; U.S. General Services Administration; and National Sleep Foundation.

