



Checklist for Traveling with Kids

1. Schedule the flight as best around their usual awake time as possible. Kids don't understand why they are on a plane instead on in their bed for their normal nap, so don't push their buttons by scheduling a flight smack dab in the middle of sleepy time.
2. Bring snacks that will pass through security. Hunger is another sure-fire way to get a kid screaming on the plane. Pack pre-packaged snacks like gold fish, string cheese, and granola bars. If your kids are like mine, they think the novelty of eating a new kind of snack (or a favorite) is an event in and of itself. They are occupied eating bite by bite, while you buy some more quiet time on the plane.
3. Bring drinks and more than one sippy cup on the plane. You will have to take empty sippy cups through security, but stop at the first gift shop or restaurant and fill up one. My son is allergic to regular milk, so we stop at Starbucks and fill up on soy milk. You can buy a backup juice or favorite drink for the plane (for the clean sippy cup). Always give them an option to drink when you are taking off and landing (helps clear their little ears).
4. Opt to bring the car seat. Some kids do much better if they are traveling in their normal car seat or restraint. However, lugging that through the airport is less than appealing for parents, trust me. You can either use a car seat/stroller system, or I found this great device that weighs less than a pound! [CARES](#) airplane toddler restraint system is designed for children over 1 weighing 22-44 pounds. CARES is certified by the FAA for air travel. Check with your airline, they may even discount the ticket for the child up to 50%.
5. Strategically place parents and other relatives. You know your children and you know who they listen to best. Put the child with that person or right next to them. My son is only 15 months old, but for some reason he listens to everything my husband tells him. Also, consider other family members that are traveling with you who may be a distraction to good behavior (sorry, but my kids know Grandma will give in, so she is usually one row over).

6. Take shorter flights. If you are traveling across country, it may be better for the child and for you to break up the route into more manageable flights. This allows you and the kids to get out, stretch your legs, take restroom breaks, and refill on snacks and drinks. If you are planning your first trip, try taking one short flight. It will make the experience a tad bit easier so you are likely to try again successfully!
7. Have sympathy for other travelers. Don't forget, you used to be there. Think back to the days when all you worried about was making sure you had all your magazines packed, the DVD player (now iPad) was charged, and the drink coupons where in your purse. Traveling as a couple is way different than traveling with kids. Try to remember they can hear every outburst you hear. If it is really bad, you might consider passing along more drink coupons!



If you find that great sitter, keep her! But not just to yourself. Sitterpals.com is a great way to build a network of trusted sitters you hire, and the sitters your close friends trust and hire. Leverage the power of your network of trusted sitters online, so you can Share and Take Care! Search, Book, and Communicate online - forget phone tag, exchanging voicemails, and wasted time!