

# *Lowenstein & Associates*

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## **Are We There Yet? Keeping Family Vacations with your Kids Fun and Stress Free**

Does it ever seem practically impossible to travel with your children? Do you feel like just staying home and forgetting the trip rather than travel with your kids again? Most parents have those feelings at one time or another. However, if you take some time to prepare, realize you are dealing with little energy machines and include your children in your plans, travel can become one of those times the children, and you, remember fondly for a lifetime. Here are some tips for making family vacations more fun and less stressful:

1. The frequent phrase, "Are we there yet?" just gets worse when traveling. It's best to break trips into short segments. Then you can tell the kids that the next stop is the state park in two hours, not Grandma's house in two days.
2. Include rest stops in your travel plans. Many states are blessed with roadside parks, perfect for energy abatement. Allow your children to work off some energy - running races, playing ball or just exploring their surroundings.
3. Include your children in vacation planning. Give each child five wishes. Although the final choice is yours, of course, you can accommodate at least one or two of each child's wishes on your trip. And if you can, under plan your trips, leaving room for spontaneity. This makes travel a time of sharing and adventure.
4. Try to spend time alone with each child during the trip. And don't forget to meet the needs of the youngest member of the family, who often gets forgotten or overruled on family vacations.
5. Plan ahead with activities for car or plane, restaurant, and especially rainy days. Have an "art pack," which can be as simple as a folder with colored paper, pencils and postcards.
6. And always, when you arrive at your destination, whether motel or Grandpa's house, do a safety check. Remove dangerous or breakable items (with your host's permission of course!) before trouble starts.

Children are inherently adaptable, open-minded and enthusiastic and can be wonderful, upbeat traveling companions. Take advantage of this by properly preparing for your summer vacation and you'll have wonderful memories for your whole family.

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**Dr. David Lowenstein is a Psychologist with over 25 years of clinical experience in his private practice in Columbus, OH. He specializes in individual, family and group therapy with children and adolescents. Dr. Lowenstein provides expert testimony around the country relating to adolescent and adult psychopathology and is a frequent guest on radio, television and print media.**

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