

# Tips for a Screen-Free Road Trip

In our digital era, we often want to avoid boredom, discomfort, and dealing with the hard stuff. It's much easier to hand everyone a device and just let everyone zone out, but if we do this, we miss out on unique opportunities to connect with one another.

Being confined to the same space for hours on end allows families to have a shared experience and promotes family unity—bickering and all! Easy isn't always best.

Here are some strategies we've used over the years to enjoy the journey and keep our family tight.



## GENERAL TIPS

- 1. Communicate with a spouse and kids about what you'd like your road trip to look like.** Ex: what kind of tech (if any) will you bring and how will your family use it?
- 2. Focus on the fun.** What will make the trip memorable for you and the kids?
- 3. Get everyone involved in planning the trip.** Get the kid's input on their favorite activities so everyone is looking forward to something fun.
- 4. Have your kids help prepare for the trip.** Have the kids help you clean the car, bake goodies, pack lunches and plan fun stops along the way.
- 5. Keep a tradition alive (or start a new one!).** Share traditions that you remember having as a kid taking a road trip. One of my family's favorites is "name that tune".
- 6. Add an element of surprise.** The dollar section at Target, the Dollar Store, Cracker Barrel, Amazon, and local shops to find fun and unique games and books. You can hand these out every few hours or when you hit a certain amount of miles on your trip! Some of our kids' favorite surprises include packs of gum or a special treat.

## FOR LITTLES

- **Podcasts** with fairytale stories or other short stories ([Stories Podcast](#) and [Circle Round](#) are popular ones!)
- **Painters Tape** and **aluminum foil** to keep little hands busy
- **Cookie Sheets** with [magnet shapes and letters](#)
- **Bubbles** (in front of the air conditioner)
- **Puzzles** like the [Melissa and Doug Wooden Latches Board](#) and [Melissa and Doug Wooden Peg Puzzles Set](#), small toy figurines or [stuffed animals sets](#), and [matchbox cars](#)
- **Drawing/Coloring activities** like [Water Wow](#), [AquaDoodle](#), [Melissa and Doug TAPE Activity Book](#), and [Boogie Board writing tablets](#)
- **Sticker books** like:
  - [First 100 Words Sticker Book](#)
  - [Melissa and Doug's Reusable Sticker Pad Face It](#),
  - [Melissa and Doug's Puffy Sticker Pad Set](#),
  - [Usborne's Sticker Dolly Dressing on Vacation](#)
  - [Paint by Sticker Kids](#)

## FOR SCHOOL-AGE KIDS

- **Yoto Player** with audiobooks
- **Mad Libs** and [Garfield comic books](#)
- **Geography/map books**
- **License plate math games** (add, subtract, multiply or divide numbers you see on plates)
- **Games** like [Connect 4](#), [Qwirkle](#), [Mini-Game Pad](#), [On-The-Go Game Pad](#), [Melissa and Doug Flip to Win!](#), [Memory Games](#)
- **Window crayons**
- **Lego sets**, [The Everything Kids' Puzzle Book](#), [Travel Tangram](#), and [Brain Games for Clever Kids](#)

## FOR TEENS

- **The trick is to find what YOUR teen is interested in.** If your teen is into art, try [Wreck This Journal](#), [Paint by Sticker](#), [Hand Lettering 101](#), [window crayons](#), and a [dual brush pen set](#).
- **Get them involved** in choosing fun stops on the way.
- Have them take pictures and/or video of the trip and **make a vlog** of the adventure.
- Let teens create a **road trip playlist** ahead of time! Play "name-that-tune" along the way.
- Play "name that movie" by making a **music score playlist!** Include everyone's favorite movies!
- **Share memories** from some of your favorite trips (think of themes, like scary, silly, or surprising stories)

## FOR EVERYONE

- **Travel Games** such as [U.S.A. License Plate Game](#), [US Road Trip Atlas](#), [The 50 States Activity Book](#), [License Plates Across the States](#), and [Rubberneckers](#)
- **Conversation games** like "Disney character guessing game (like 20 questions), Alphabet game, make up a story and have each child chip in, Name that Tune, Would You Rather.
- **Audio Books** - download the [free Libby app](#) and connect it to your library card. Check out [Read Aloud Revival](#) or [Modern Mrs. Darcy](#) for book recommendations! You can also check out [Audible](#) as there are many options for immediate download.
- **Podcasts** - For younger kids try [Circle Round](#) and the older ones try [How I Built This](#) or [Brains On!](#) For fun campfire stories, try REI co-op's "[Camp Monsters](#)".
- **Download movies** from your favorite streaming service ahead of time on a tablet for the whole family to enjoy together as a special surprise once in a while.
- **Individual snack bags**
- Show how far you've gone with sticky note reminders on the windows
- [Travel pillow](#), library books, and [reading light](#)
- [Clipboards](#) and paper
- [Markers](#) or [crayons](#) to share

## Here's to making more memories!



Share your screen-free journey with us by tagging us on Instagram [@betterscreentime](#) (after your road trip of course!)

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