



SURVIVE YOUR LITTLE ONE'S FIRST FLIGHT

The plane is done climbing into the sky and you're just starting to relax when, with no warning, it begins. "Waaaa," wails your infant. "Mama, off, mama, off!" shrieks your toddler.

What's the best way to survive that first flight with your little one without going bonkers?

"It's best to go into the trip knowing that there are some things that are just out of your control, including how often your child cries and how other passengers are going to react," says Stuart W. Teplin, M.D., a developmental-behavioral pediatrician at the University of North Carolina medical school in Chapel Hill. "Because of that, parents need to plan ahead and then be prepared to focus their energy on soothing, distracting or comforting their child during the flight."



Dr. Teplin suggests you book a direct, nonstop flight. If possible, have it coincide with your infant or toddler's natural sleep schedule. Buying a separate seat for baby can cut your "frazzle factor." A bulkhead seat, if the plane has one, provides a little extra room.

TO ENSURE A MORE STRESS-FREE FLIGHT:

- Bring bottles filled with water, milk or juice. Make sure babies suck during landing to prevent painful ear pressure changes.
- Use a fanny pack to keep tickets, passports and other key items at hand.
- Bring a carry-on bag stocked with essentials. Include extra absorbent diapers, wipes, favorite "comfort objects" (blanket, stuffed animals, pacifiers), change of clothing for baby and extra shirt for parent in case of spills.
- Provide toys, stickers and books to entertain the kids, as well as a wrapped surprise gift or two. A portable DVD player can work wonders.

- Pack juice boxes, sippy cups and favorite snack foods for your toddler. For mealtime flights, bring jars of baby food or ask for a child's meal in advance.

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