

Traveling with a toddler

5 tips that will help you to survive long journeys



I will never fly again!

Travelling can be tiring and overwhelming for adults, so imagine how hard it must be for the little people! And when toddlers are overwhelmed and tired what do they do? Yep! you guessed it! They whinge, and cry and throw tantrums, and its no fun for anyone. What happens next is a snowball effect: the toddler is tired and they start acting up, the parent gets stressed out, toddler senses the stress and acts up even more- kicks the chair in front of them, screams loudly etc, other passengers start making faces and the parent burns with embarrassment, swearing they won't fly ever again. The more you tell them to stop, the more they act up, you feel like the whole plane is looking at you and you second guessing your parenting skills. By the time the flight is over you are exhausted and have no patience nor energy for the rest of the day.

Sound familiar? The good news is that

- a) It's perfectly normal, and every parent at least once in their lives experienced a flight from hell and
- b) it can be avoided!

Be prepared!



When you are planning a journey you have to control so many things: flights, travel insurance, accommodation, Covid tests, airport transfers, packing etc that it is very easy to forget things, however a key to a stress-free travel is being prepared! Always assume the worst: delays, bad weather, tiredness, hunger, falls.

Make a list of all the things you need, make a list of your child's daily habits and see how does it compare to the travel schedule- will they be due a nap or a feed? Try to avoid disturbing the routine as much as possible, this way all the transitions will go smoother.

Get your child involved and excited

Don't show travelling as something stressful. Make it as much fun as possible. Remember that toddlers can sense your stress and it affects them as well. So make it fun, make them involved, let them help you pack or chose their own bag, clothes etc. Let them have little responsibilities like helping carrying the bag, holding a ticket -if you are afraid that they may lose or destroy the ticket, print a second ticket that they will be allow to hold. It will make them feel important and they will have less reasons for tantrums.



Have a special "travelling pack"



Prepare a little bag full of toys that can be used on a plane, but something that your child haven't played with yet, so it's new and interesting. Have a choice of activities: some coloring, some figurines, some construction toys- there are loads of great ideas on the internet how to create this sort of travelling bag of tricks that will help to keep your child entertained. Play with them. when they have your attention they are less likely to act up!

Talk and describe

Explain to your toddler what is going on around you, remember that some new sounds and things may appear scary to as little person, and if toddlers are scared, they cry! Explain everything to them in a calm voice, so they know that they are in a safe environment. Things that seem obvious to us, do not sound obvious to toddlers,so it is important to explain everything to them.



Have snacks and drinks ready

Have a variety of snacks that will keep the hunger away but will not cause too big of a mess. Mess equals stress, and stress is something that you want to avoid! So think about what does your toddler like to eat that is easy to keep in a bag and won't cause too much mess. Its better to have more than not enough food, in case of delays etc Also a good idea is to have a lollipop as it can help in case the ears pop during the flight



What if they have a meltdown ?

Just hug them and explain that you understand that they are tired and that you will be in your destination soon. Remember that this is unusual situation for your toddler and it is reasonable for them to be upset. Allow them that feeling. You will achieve more when accepting the feeling than when trying to dismiss the tantrum.

Your toddler senses your stress, they don't care about other people looking, they want to feel safe. So hug them, talk to them, sing songs, play finger games, be close together and the journey will be much easier for the both of you
Good luck and safe travels!

