



## all about kids

# 'To Grandmother's House We Go' ... 10 Tips for Stress-Free Holiday Travel

Holidays are a time for families to be together. As families with young children and toddlers begin to make their holiday plans, the first national baby equipment rental association, Baby Travel Pros, offers the following tips to reduce holiday stress:

➔ **Travel light** — Consider renting baby equipment at your destination. It allows you to travel with minimal basics and avoid extra luggage fees. Where a stroller is essential, try an inexpensive umbrella model for the airport portion of your trip and rent a full-sized one at your destination. It's likely that even your gate-checked gear will be scuffed, squished, or in some way damaged during your flight.

Baby equipment rental companies can supply parents or grandparents with cribs, car seats, strollers, high chairs and even toys. When you rent from a company associated with Baby Travel Pros, you know that the company adheres to safety and cleanliness standards. Many car rental agencies that supply car seats or hotels that supply cribs, do not monitor recalls or maintain gear to any standard.

Two products that we particularly recommend for easy traveling with toddlers include the GoGo Kidz Travelmate, and the Kids Fly Safe Child Aviation Restraint System (CARES) (see photo) that can also be rented from many baby gear rental agencies prior to your flight, or shipped to your residence if booked in advance.

➔ **For airline travel, choose your seat carefully.** Some airlines offer infant bassinets for long flights, but they must be reserved when you book the ticket. Keep in mind that bassinets are only available in the bulkhead rows that do not have any under-seat storage.

For older children, you may want to avoid the bulkhead area since the seat armrests cannot be moved. A toddler may sleep better lying down with their head on your lap. Seating your toddler next to a window can also be great entertainment, but only if you also have easy access to the aisle for bathroom trips.

For longer flights, consider sitting in a different isle than

your spouse. This allows one parent to relax or sleep while the other is on entertainment duty.

➔ **Tell your toddler what to expect** at the airport and establish some behavior rules and safety instructions, such as to stay exactly where they are if you become separated. Dress your child in distinctive clothing so you can easily spot him.

➔ **Avoid discomfort caused by cabin pressure changes** by using EarPlanes, soft ear filters that regulate air pressure.

Drinks, hard candy (if appropriate for your child's age), or giving a bottle to your baby during take-off and landing will also help regulate ear pressure.

➔ **A traveling toy bag is essential.**

Pack the bag with a few new toys and also a few old favorites. Produce each book or toy individually to keep the other activities a surprise, and consider wrapping them for extra excitement value. Coloring and drawing activities or a new DVD can help pass the time for toddlers. A portable activity tray can be attached to your child's car seat or airline tray, to prevent crayons from falling onto the floor.

➔ **Carry a diaper for every hour** you'll be at the airport or on the plane. Consider using pull-up style diapers since most airplanes do not have changing tables. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Pull-ups are not ideal for poopy diaper changes, however.) Extra snacks are essential and be sure to tell the attendant if your child has any food allergies, especially to typical airplane snacks such as peanuts.

➔ **Vacation close to home.** Explore beautiful areas close to home and consider camping. Some baby items designed for outdoor use may be available for rent from Baby Travel Pros members.

➔ **If driving, schedule your departure just before nap time,** or leave in the early hours while kids are sleeping and keep them in their pajamas. Also consider a train trip, which will be memorable and avoid driver fatigue or airport stress.

➔ **Don't over-schedule.** Let your kids have fun while you read a good book or enjoy the sunset.

Happy traveling!

For family travel resources and a checklist of items commonly available to rent, visit [www.babytravelpros.com/resources.html](http://www.babytravelpros.com/resources.html).

