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# metro parent

Greater Milwaukee's family resource



## Don't be **THAT** family on the plane

by April Spray Newton

**M**y sister went on a long car trip and got her kids pipe cleaners to play with on the ride," says Sara Walloch. "She showed me pictures of what they did with them and I ran out and got two packages."

Walloch, a Muskego mother of two, has flown with both her 19-month-old and her 4-year-old in tow. The kids loved playing with the cheap and portable pipe cleaners during their flight.

"We still play with them now. Probably once a week I bring them out," Walloch says.

Milwaukee pediatrician Jennifer Twente thinks toys that require extra imagination, like pipe cleaners, are a good option when kids are cooped up during a flight.

"I think the best toys are those they can assemble, like Legos," Twente says. "Also, stuff they can't identify as only one thing or only having one purpose is good."

Walloch got her children a number of new toys to play with on the plane ... and made a big deal out of them.

"I told them ahead of time, 'I have new things for you but you can't see them until we get on the plane,'" Walloch recalls.

Toys and books are a very good option but cartoons and movies can also keep toddlers and older children occupied for big chunks of time. An airplane is not the place to worry about how much television your child is watching, Twente says. If you have a portable DVD player or a laptop, use it.

Traveling with children isn't just about keeping them entertained. Twente cautions that it's also about keeping them safe.

"I always tell parents that if they are able to pay for it, get an extra seat for their child and use a car seat. It's the best thing safety-wise. Also, car seats are a zone where children are used to parents not being involved and having to entertain them every minute," she adds.

The Federal Aviation Administration recommends using only FAA-approved car seats.



### CARES ON A PLANE →

Milwaukee pediatrician Jennifer Twente says there's a new child safety option for flying called CARES. CARES, for children weighing 22-44 pounds, is like an auxiliary seat belt made specifically for airplanes. Designed by a grandmother, the CARES device is lighter than a car seat but safer than letting a child sit alone in a plane seat. The device is approved by the FAA as an approved option to car seats. CARES is not currently available in local stores but can be purchased online. \$74.95, [www.kidsflysafe.com](http://www.kidsflysafe.com).

