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Planning a Trip Helps Children Practice Many Skills!

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When you plan a trip, there are many things to think about and coordinate. Who is going? When are we going? How are we getting there? What do we need to take? How much will it cost? And so on. Figuring out all these details requires planning skills. Planning skills help us to get everything done so that we may achieve our goals in a certain amount of time. Involving your children in the planning process for a fun family getaway is a great way to help them develop planning skills, as well as many other skills. You may even notice a sense of pride, or confidence, in your children as you ask for and value their opinions.

What Skills Can My Children Learn and Practice when Planning a Trip?

Planning a trip from start to finish requires many skills. Below are some skills your children can learn and practice as they help you plan a trip:



- **Managing time** — Create a calendar with your children for all the things that need to be done before going on the trip.



- **Managing money** — Help your children make a budget for their spending money on the trip.



- **Staying organized** — Help your children make lists of items to take on the trip. Make a food list, clothes list, supplies list, etc.



- **Remembering details** — Ask your children many questions as they help you plan the trip. For example, "What time do we need to leave on Sunday?" "What is the name of the hotel?"



- **Understanding maps** — Let your children help you map out the trip. Help them learn to read the symbols and numbers on different maps, like road maps and park maps.

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- **Working with others** — Encourage your children to talk with their sibling(s) about different places to visit and what activities to do there.



- **Negotiating within a group** — Teach your children about compromising and taking others' needs and wants into consideration as you talk about what each member of your family would like to do on the trip.



- **Sequencing events** — Help your children plan out all of the different activities to do on the trip. Go over what the events are, when they happen, and when you will leave to go to them.



- **Meeting expectations**— Discuss the good behavior you expect your children to show when away from home on the trip.



- **Thinking about safety** — Talk with your children about safety away from home. Discuss things like staying in a group (the "buddy system"), knowing how to ask for help, and basic first aid.

You can help your children develop these critical-thinking skills by providing them with *guiding questions* as they help you plan a trip. Guiding questions are questions you ask in order to help direct their thought processes. *Guiding questions* help your children focus on the specific question and topic of conversation—for example, "Where would you like to go on a trip?" "Do you think we should go to the beach or the mountains?" "How will we keep everyone happy on the trip?"



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