

# Travelling with children on long-haul flights



In March 2016, parenting author and educator Maggie Dent put a post on Facebook asking for advice from parents about managing long distance travel with babies and young children.

*DISCLAIMER: These tips are shared from our Facebook community – please [do your own research](#) when making choices for your family. Also please note we have left people's entries largely unedited so there will be imperfections in grammar and spelling.*

## The original Facebook post:

*Dear FB Village - CAN YOU PLEASE HELP!*

*Very soon my dear grand daughter Elli will be taking the long journey from Sydney to London in a big jet to visit her Mum's extended family!*

*Elli is very active - by then 14 months old and I am seeking suggestions from the mums and dads who have done this before!*

*Other than walking most of the trip - how else can she cope with the long haul flights - what works and what did you think might work that failed miserably. Thanks heaps Maggie*

## Most common suggestions:

- Choose flights with a lay-over if you can
- Choose your food wisely, lots of small snacks (don't over feed)
- Bring a diversity of toys, books, colouring stuff, puzzles, games, kid-friendly headphones. Activities in zip folders are great (toys on strings so they don't fall under the seat are also good).
- Try to book flights that coincide with your child's bedtime
- Breast feeding/Comforters/Bottles are good for babies at take off and landing to help with sore ears.
- Brush up on your nursery rhymes and hand games.
- Surrender yourself to the idea of walking up and down the plane... it's a good chance to meet other passengers!
- Don't forget a few changes of clothes (for parents and baby... just in case!)
- Leave some time at the end of the journey to rest and recharge before you go about your travels.
- If you can afford to get them their own seat, it can help (and maybe bring your child's familiar booster so they can sit up high).
- Use calming aromatherapies to help calm your child's (and your) nervous system.
- If travelling with a partner, ask the crew to hold one of your meals so you can both have a chance to eat in peace.
- Stay calm and relaxed yourself...

## Responses

### **Alexx Stuart**

Funny story first... Over feeding can go very pear shaped. Of course one packs a multitude of spare clothing options for the bub but for oneself? Nothing of course and being thrown up on because he overate the dinner I prepared for him, 30 minutes into the long haul flight was, well, not great. So light snacky meals and something a little more substantial with healthy fats before sleepy time to help them settle. A whole large carrot can be 30 mins of being occupied while they try to make their way through it too... A little screen time, a book, some play with toys. Then walking walking walking and befriending tween girls on the flight - they are the greatest ally for flying in the toddler years. Nothing sugary / processed as a baby on an msg / sugar high will not make for a great travel companion either. In the end I found creating a bit of a circuit of activity worked. The circuit was about 2 hours and we moved through and went back to the first thing of the 4-5 things each 2 hours and then he was more than ready for sleep after a couple of circuits. Best of luck <3

### **Stefany Cogley**

I've done it lots of times with my little ones. We have found that it works well to get a flight via Dubai. From Perth it takes 10hrs to get there. So you may need to add 4hrs onto that from SYD. We aim to have a 10hr lay over in Dubai airport as in the terminal there is a hotel which we book into. This allows us to sleep, play, run around, eat proper food before embarking on the 7hr flight to London. I have tried the trip without the break and we are all so tired at the end of it. I have tried red eye flights hoping the children will sleep better, but they don't and end up super cranky. We take a few books, cuddly toy, colouring in, snacks. Take changes of clothes Biggest tip is don't stress, just relax as baby will take the trip in their stride. Emirates are fantastic to fly long haul with children!

### **Sabrina Roberts**

I bought a lot of new things for our two boys we went last year they were 2.5 and 8 months at the time. The ipad worked a treat for my 2.5 yr old. Only time he got to watch it and he was pretty happy. I also had colouring in books, pencils, books, little toys, playdough which was all in rotation. My 8 month all pretty much had a rotation of toys every 15 mins when he was awake thankfully he slept a lot and lots of snacks that kept him happy. When we were heading home my younger son had learnt to crawl (we were away for 8 weeks) so that was a little harder!! Best advice try not to stress out too much and let others looks get to you (i did and it made my flight a little more upsetting) work as a team with your partner, my husband and I did but hard when the kids just wanted to hang on mum!! And if you can we paid the little bit extra for a seat for our 8 month old just having the extra space was helpful and not worrying if someone else was going to sit there!! You can't always count on a spare seat near you especially on a full flight xx good luck

### **Jane McDermott**

It's a long way but my advice would be for the parents to try and keep it in perspective. Sydney to London, 20 hour flight, with new toys, puzzles, food, to pass the time. Passage from Syria to somewhere in Europe which will hopefully be better than where they came from .... Weeks, months, with very little.

### **Kate Ashfaq**

Food! It's all about the food! All their favourite snacks and treats. Resign yourself to an unhealthy 24 hours. We've done this trip a couple of times with small children, last I was on my own with a 5 year old and 2 year old. iPads are great so download some easy games, give up your limits on screen time for the day! One of ours spent ages playing a bubble popping game! A couple of favourite books and some bits to scribble with/on. But remember they give kids little packs to play with, although they are less suitable for babies and smaller toddlers and if they pay any attention to the screens there's kids programmes.

### **Adam Stone**

Miles of walking is a given, you will be on first name terms with everyone on the aisle by the end of the flight! We've done presents to unwrap - books, puzzles, things to engage brains for periods of time. Always have something to suck for take off and landing. It used to be a bottle of milk when my boys were young, but chuppa-chups are the way to go for the boys now. Sleeping in the bassinet? ensure you have something that can cover Elli if she can see out. Lots of heads and movement can be very interesting for a very tired child. Don't know where you will be stopping off but the transit hotel inside Singapore airport is a great idea. We stopped there for 6 hours in-between flights the last time we moved to Aus (yes, we have moved to Aus twice, the second time with a 2 year old and 6 month old) and the 6 hours meant we could sleep, shower, forget we were on a plane etc...all without having to leave the airport. it was like have a day in-between flights. The last flight to England, my boys were older so the tv / inflight entertainment solved a lot of "what to do" problems. I did, however, try to keep them going for as long as i could on the first leg to the UK, just to move them closer to time zone and to ensure they slept a big chunk of the longest flight. Don't forget that parents need to sleep too!!

### **Angela Mills**

Hi Maggie, I have done the trip to the uk with my two boys and I had one very active boy(still is) who did not watch to etc. I literally had to just walk up and down the aisle the whole time except when he slept whilst Dad sat and watched movies (Lol) and kept a eye on our older child who was 5. With a child at that age ,I am sorry to say that it is all about entertaining them. My son Harvey spent the majority of his time walking up and down the isle throwing his blank is at random people along the way. If the child is a good sleeper, I suggest maybe trying to get a flight that suits their bedtime, so that they have an hour on the plane before they get tired so they can calm down and get over the excitement. Going on a night flight did not work for me the one time I did it because they where over tired before they got on the plane. Basically I just tell my self if the worst comes to the worst it ,Evans I do not sleep for 36 hours..... It would be great if someone could pick them up from the airport as you are generally too exhausted to drive. I must say my last trip was great and I got to a tually sleep, eat and turn on the to screen but my boys are now nearly 10 and 7. Sorry probably not want she wants to hear.

### **Michelle Kuipers**

I travelled within Aust only when mine were [little] so nowhere near as long a flight but I always travelled with extra of their favourite food and treats, their favour SMALL toys to play with (My Little Ponies, Littlest Pet Shop) and even once I remember taking my little girl her own baby doll with a bag full of accessories so we were both kept busy changing, feeding and role playing with each other) obviously as a last alternative there is always the kids movies on the screen too (if the plane doesn't have one, take your own). The hard part is the take-off and landing, so the dummy or bottle is always a good thing there. Good Luck :)

### **Alinta Fidzewicz**

Choose your airline wisely. Some are very child friendly, and will even have your child with them doing food deliveries (Master 3 thought this was brilliant!) Others are atrocious and so unaccommodating. Don't over pack, chances are they wont actually want to play with that much of the stuff you bring. Book the large part of the trip for during the night, if your lucky they will sleep 8-10 hours and wake up as your near landing! Singapore airport is the best for stop overs travelling to the UK, it has a playground in the middle of the terminal. Gate check your pram, this makes life easy as you get off the flight. Bring snacks, their comforter, a change of clothes, jumper. Lastly stay calm, and be prepared for the absolute worst. That way you may be pleasantly surprised. I have had some brilliant flights and some with stories to tell! The Perth - Manchester one with a 5 month&23 month old on my own was not very pleasant!! Good luck!

### **Emma Bunch**

Hi Maggie, I left Oz to come home to Scotland last year. My little one was almost 17 months. I took books, colouring books & crayons, headphones for her, pouches of food (which she didn't eat). We went from Cairns to Hong Kong and she slept for a bit of it. We got a flight direct to London and all 3 of us slept for the full flight ☺. She was awake during our stay in Hong Kong which worked out well. Couldn't of hoped for a better flight

### **Annie Mackintosh**

Yes I was going to suggest a dummy or a bottle for take off and landing maybe if possible if its a afternoon flight don't let her have a nap until after take off that way she will sleep part of the way which won't make the trip so long for mum and dad. If its a night time flight some thing hopefully if she is a good sleep though the night baby she'll sleep all night on the plane.

### **Andrea Byrne**

When my son was 15 months, we did 30 hours from NY to Perth. Breastfeeding helped but i reckon a dummy would help too. A comfy and easy baby carrier so hands are free helped. I walked my son up and down the aisles. A lot.

### **Audra Stanton**

If they can book the baby capsule area on the plane there is enough room to sit on the floor in front of parents which means they can roll balls, drive cars, roll around etc. Try to fly late evening so they are tired and will sleep at least a few hours and if they don't think that will work book shorter flight legs so they can stop and get off and really run around an airport - even if it's only for half an hour! We flew Karratha Perth Singapore Seoul Vancouver with a 1 year old (pre ipads/screens) and have done a few other long haul flights with two very active young ones (even easier with screens) and they have been fine. It's the one time you probably won't

mind breaking your normal rules about screen time! Always bring changes of clothes for everyone (reflux teaches you that!) Allow time at the other end for everyone to rest and recharge before you start madly visiting relatives :)

### **Kate Ashfaq**

OMG nearly forgot! Take a bottle of panadol, neurofen, and inhalers if they've ever needed one and some anti sickness and anti diarrhoea tablets for yourself!

### **Victoria Hay**

It might be a bit late for this but we found it all comes down to the timing of flights. With our two hectic boys we have done this trip a number of times and have learnt that night flights are hugely preferable and a stopover in kl or Dubai is essential. This is not just for surviving the flight but also surviving the "holiday" which is far from relaxing as everyone back home wants a piece of you! The stopovers help with jetlag but also getting a few days proper family time on a trip which is never really a holiday!

### **Kym Evangelellis**

I would definitely get a seat if she can for her child and invest in a product called kids fly safe kids harness which attaches to the plane seat and fits over them like a car harness it really helped make my little man feel safe and secure on the flight and he slept almost all of the flights from Perth to the U.S. hope she has a nice journey over .... Luv your work magpie xox

### **Jess Burke Bass**

Hi Maggie, we travelled from Perth to Ireland with 3 under 3yrs! I packed a new small backpack for each of them to have on the plane. Inside it were snacks, some new books, some new colouring in some stickers and a few small toys none of which they had seen before. Gradually during the flight we would take something else out, having never seen it before we managed to hold their interest for a while. The snacks were very important and none were left over. We took muesli bars, dry fruit etc. Hope this helps.

### **Carmel Mary Killackey**

Bring a few small toys books and lots of snacks also and baby panadol liquid as their ears can get sore when taking off/landing also a dummy may help also or a bottle for take off and landing. If they are stopping off for a good few hours good idea to stay in the actual airport hotel there's ones in Dubai airport itself and the ones in Singapore airport is very nice and clean also. A lot of the air hostesses are quite helpful also and be sure to book the bassinette with the travel agent booking the flight and the child's meals also.

### **Let's Hypnobirth Baby**

Changes of clothes for Mum and Elli! A few balloons, plenty of snacks (of course)..... and low expectations! (We did the same with our VERY busy 14 month old boy and were pleasantly surprised). The thought of it is worse than the actual event (as is the case with so many things)

### **Caroline Maxwell**

Maggie we did this journey with our very active 13month old rooster.

My biggest tip is to save like crazy and buy the little one a seat on the plane.

Once they have their own seat you can take their familiar car seat on board and use the seat



belt to tether the car seat to the plane. The little one gets to sit higher and can see more in a familiar and secure place. If they happen to fall asleep mum and dad can nod off too with their hand on the little one for reassurance. The other piece of advice I have is to stop over for a night on the way over and back to break up the trip. Enjoy.

### **Saffron Jay-wetzstein**

There are heaps of good suggestion here but I am going add one that I am uncomfortable with, but there have been flights were its been a god sent. Some kind of medication that can help them sleep. When my son was two Pamol was enough. We were on this flight between Perth and Germany and my son got a little upset because he was tired and we just need a little bit of time to settle him. Unfortunately this women behind us went off and made it impossible to settle him in the end I agreed to a little Pamol to settle him, he slept the next 6-7 hours. And I am the mother who just about never give my kids anything I normally have to throw out medicines because they go past their used by dates.

### **Hailey Oates**

We took our 14m boy on a trip to Europe. It was better than staying home, but yikes what a crap age to travel!! Too young to occupy him with a screen, but old enough to wriggle constantly. Nonetheless:

1. Pack light. Often people think the opposite, wanting to be prepared I guess, but theres nothing worse than lugging around everything you own. We went to Europe as a family of three with one suitcase and a carry-on.
2. Do not let her sleep during layovers!! We thought this would be a great time to break out our compact 'kindercot' so the little guy could have a proper nap... such sad desperate rookies. He was wired on the next flight. On the way home, we took turns (my giant husband and I) curling up in this tiny little baby tent, trying to nap, while the other parent (and a random kind old Arabic man in a wheelchair) played with the boy.
3. Pack lots of compact little toys that will be easy to carry around - a little ball, Magna doodle, book, novelty key chains, stickers, figurines, clothes pegs, a crayon, 5 pieces of duplo, and most importantly a hand puppet - it's a long time to try and keep a kid captivated! Oh and they're probably going to need the mother load of Cheerios too.
4. Jet lag will be a beast. Seek help.

### **Deirdre Atkinson-Byrne**

Balloons on strings worked a treat for a good 30minutes for us once. We also had a plastic slinky which bought another 30minutes. Any toys with strings so dropping it isn't as much of an issue. Spare clothes for child & you in case you get spewed on. Yummy healthy snacks. If breastfeeding feed on demand. Good luck! xx

### **Sonia Hills**

I haven't read all replies so apologies if I double up. We have travelled lots with our kids- I often overpacked hand luggage and didn't use things and regretted carrying too much. They loved the airline packs and if you have a kid who likes TV book with an airline with individual screens. Your own full size pillow helps with sleep- maybe take a cheapy you'd be happy to abandon and buy another for return trip if you don't want to carry around on your trip. And sticker books... Lots of detailed fun. My younger child can't sit for a minute so I just had to let her walk, and remind her not to jump or skip, or touch everyone's arms. You'd be amazed how

many laps you can do on a plane, and she really enjoyed peering into all the faces! A few even smile back. A friend of mine swears by transit stop over approx 8 hours book into the airport transit hotel and sleep then press on. Enjoy the trip!!

### **Kylie Dougall**

We took our car seat on the plane and put that on the seat. Oliver was strapped into that so when we were asleep he didn't wander off. We walked up and down and met up with some other little people for a little play. We also took food as we have a fussy eater. He loved the in-flight tv. Colouring book, blank note book, kids magazine. Not too many pencils/crayons as you will spend most of the time looking for them on the floor!

### **Lucas and Laura Modrich**

Snacks and lots of things to keep her entertained, from books to toys to stickers to pencils to hand puppets. Buy a set of kid friendly headphones and get her used to them now, I think ours were \$10 from Kmart. Thankfully our son wasn't a hassle as for the parents you can only prepare so much so try not to stress out and just take it as it comes.

### **Jodie Winnett**

When you are thinking of snacks, think small food that is entertaining for them to pick up; cheerios, small fish biscuits, sultanas, grapes cut in half, etc. Don't order the kids meals, we've ordered on both Qatar Airways and Emirates and it has been a festival of chocolate. Nursery rhymes that have the hand/small movements like 'happy and you know it touch your nose, etc', where is thumbkin are good for when you need to be seated and calm (on tarmacs). Lots of sleep for everyone beforehand! Good luck!

### **Christine Pearse**

A comfy baby carrier for check in and other queues, also handy for on plane when trying to put Bub to sleep ;)

### **Jess Allen**

A great tip from my GP sister, was 'ear plane' earplugs. It's distressing for littlies when they can't equalise their ears. These work a treat if they are no longer on a bottle or don't use a dummy. You just need to try them out before hand in a fun way. Toddler snacks. We even took our Tupperware Puzzle ball! Plus, a few surprises work a treat.

### **Bree Donaldson**

Backpack with all hand luggage. So hands free. Ergo/Manduca for transit and settling. Lots of little toy gifts. Wrapped. So unwrapping is part of the time wasted!! Little Lego key ring torch. Others that make noise. National geographic have heaps. Stickers, stick on them on you on seats. Pulling safety card and magazines out of slot and back again. Bouncing on knee songs "this is the way the farmer rides..." And boob if still breastfed!

### **Emma Woods**

we took our son from Perth to Ireland at the same age. If he has his own seat we found it extremely helpful to take a car seat with us. When our son wasn't running up and down the aisles he was comfortable AND secure in his familiar surroundings. He slept well in the chair



and when we arrived at the other end we could put it straight into the car! Best to check with airlines first as this was about 8 years ago and I am not sure if still applicable.

### **Robyn McMeikan**

We booked our son his own seat when we flew to London. It was the best decision ever, he was 13mths at the time. We also booked an evening flight, so that he was ready for sleep by the time we boarded the plane. I also only took enough of what I'd need for the flight. Nappies, food, bottles etc. I just bought it all in London. That way your luggage is overrun!

### **Amy Gould**

I know this may sound common, but we were told to have a dummy or a bottle ready for take off & landing as kids can't pop their ears like adults can

### **Shelley O'Connor**

Go to \$2 store/red dot buy a few cheap age appropriate toys that you do not mind losing along the way, that way they have something new to keep them interested for a few minutes and if you accidentally leave them or they break they can go in the bin. Give them the toys when you first sit on a plane and wait for take off as it can take ages and the crew like you to sit down while passengers get organised, it also gives you a few minutes to get organised. Take nurophen/panadol in case of illness, always good to have on hand.

### **Rebekah Rankine**

Favourites for my children were magic painting (paint with water) and one tub of play doh (small enough for the carry on and you can use plastic cups, forks, spoons etc available on board to play with it). I have also taken magnetic tiles which proved very popular with miss 20mths.

### **Silvana French**

Hi Maggie Dent, I am an Aromatherapist and would advise that they use a calming massage blend made up in a roller or bottle so they can apply to Elli's pulse points and massage into her feet to calm her nervous system. Chamomile Roman, Lavender angustifolia and Mandarin 100% pure essential oils are great for that age group and are safe to apply diluted in a carrier such as sweet almond or jojoba oil (check nut allergies for sweet almond). Blend no more than 5 drops to 20ml of carrier as this will be strong enough for a toddler. Will help keep the parents calm as well which helps all round lol. Just another suggestion to add to the arsenal.

### **Lisa Flaherty**

Items in a zip folder: activity book, a big sticker book, magnet activity games, small tub play dough, small light reading books, small cars, finger puppets. Kid friendly earphones. You will likely be given some pencils in the free kids pack (check online prior to flying). Head to the \$2 shop so if it is lost it is not a favourite. I also had a foldable travel train station which came in handy in the plane & airport.

### **Lynley Greenslade**

When mine were little I would wrap up little presents from the two Buck shop. Do u know those little fluffy worms on a string? I remember that being a hit!

### **Nicole Barrett**

Make the most of stop overs, Singapore has an excellent indoor playground, head straight for that when landing. I did several packs up filled with items from the \$2 shop, balls, gadgets etc, a bit like surprise bags, all different. Obviously all rest / bed time comforters. The more relaxed mum and dad are the more relaxed Elli will be x

### **Andy Howell**

I found pipe cleaners of different shapes, sizes, lengths are great, can make anything with them, toys, games... they aren't messy, light and easy to pack, quiet to play with, safe and only limited by their imagination. We have a pack in the car and my 8 year old still builds things on long car trips

### **Lynne Colley**

You can take small bottles of bubbles(wedding size ones) . Accept any help offered. Let the hosties play with child. Don't be embarrassed if the little ones test their lung strength at loud volumes on the way. They are people too and they are just acting out what the adults are feeling! Take extra food/ formula in case something happens and split it between bags. Enjoy the journey it will go down in your memory bank. Definitely night flight and tire them out before you get on. Tie a long string on the fave teddy and connect it to something you wont leave behind!!!!

### **Melissa McNamara**

Spare clothes for everyone, sleeping bag they usually sleep in, infants friend (the change in wind pressure can cause wind pains), ask the flight attendants to serve you and your partners meals at different times so one can have Bub while the other eats, dummy to suck during take off and landing to help ears, small fold up stroller for use at the transit airport. Good luck!

### **An Gie**

Saw one post a while ago where parents handed out a 'survival pack' for other commuters- had mints/ear plugs and other bits n pieces in along with a note along lines of 'please be patient first time traveller' in with it! Doesn't help you occupy child but might get less glares from other passengers! Not meant to be offensive in any way just thought I'd share what I'd seen!

### **Claire Bellamy**

If she's walking by then, at any airport layovers encourage her to walk or run along the flat travelators. Only if not super busy of course, uses up a lot of energy. I also got my toddlers to run and play a lot before getting in car to airport.

### **Sandra Mcalpine**

Smile at people if you can. They're more likely to be tolerant if you can be friendly, even though it might be very stressful for you. Try to relax as your little one will reflect your temperament. Nurofen's great for blocked ears as it's an anti inflammatory.

### **Claire Kelly**

We did London to Perth with a lively 13mth little lady. Aim for a flight after tea-time, if you can, so that she's fed at the airport and therefore less likely to be cranky waiting for them to serve

out meals. Pack snacks. Book the bulkhead seats and if she's light enough, a bassinet (if only to be hands free for a few minutes!). Make sure she has something to suck on (bottle of milk or dummy) for take off and landing. I packed lots of new toys, wrapped up as presents and barely used any. She was content with walking, "chatting" to people, playing with the toys the flight attendant gave her and sleeping (thankfully!). Mine stayed in pjs the whole way for comfort. You are able to take a child's car seat on the plane and use the lap belt to secure it to the plane seat. It gives the added benefit that they're used to sleeping in it and the 5-point harness makes them very secure. We used it for our son when he was 18mths old, London to Perth, and he slept 6hrs straight, bliss. Bear in mind though, it's bulky, but when in transit we just stuck it on a trolley.

### **Dinah Griffith**

My strategy is:

1. book an evening departure.
2. have everything done the day before departure (packing/house clean) so the whole departure day is spent wearing the kids out with as much physical activity as I can muster.
3. Ride on trunki suitcase for happy rides in the departure lounge & up/down the plane aisles.
4. Balloons x a million. On short wrist strings is good fun for a crawler to chase.
5. Sleep upon boarding (fingers x'd the wearing out did the job)
5. Download apps/digital books on the iPad - ABC Kids, colour by number (there's little kids versions of this). Most local libraries have free Ebooks (+ mags for mum) avail for download.
6. Mini bubble bottles (for down the back of the plane) & 1 of those tiny ball pit balls for crawling after down the aisle.
7. Lots of wipes & spare clothes so they can crawl, get dirty & be changed. (Plastic bag for dirty clothes).
8. All their favourite foods (I put away my Mum hat of what \*should\* be eaten & go with what \*will\* be eaten.
9. I put myself to bed early for a week leading up to the flight so I'm firing & can tolerate some lost sleep on the flight.

### **Maria Shevlin**

You can ask for a baby seat belt and hold baby during take off and landing- I breast fed my children for take of and landing as it minimises the ear pain. A bottle of eucalyptus oil in case a nose gets blocked (again to release ear pressure) and bring your own baby pain relief just in case. Little finger puppets for story telling, a soft squishy toy that can double as a pillow, a light muslin sheet that can be used like a tent over the head of the sleeping child (I guess they will be in the provided cot) to help block out the light and movement of the people on the plane. Sew a piece of ribbon to favourite toys so they can be tied to the arm rest - it is a REAL pain trying to get under and between the seats to retrieve the ones that fall. Little Tupperware containers with different manipulatives are also fun - small magnet boards, so a few magnetic letters (or glue a small magnet into the finger puppets) may also entertain. Run around / crawl around at any airport you stop at - even if the grown ups are tired, it pays to have well moved children before you get on the plane. Good luck and I hope they enjoy their trip.

### **Emma Petrig**

My experience...don't plan anything to rigidly, it is a bit like childbirth (plan for nothing to go as planned) and just see how it pans out. Have some of her favourite things with you just in case &

"security items" such as a teddy / blanket and definitely something to suck, but the whole excitement of being a plane and all the new sounds, etc. will be entertainment enough. Sleep, despite being small, little people actually find it really hard to get comfortable enough on the plane to sleep. The smell of a familiar blanket might help. And take extra extra nappies - sometimes plans do funny things to little tummies! And parents try to stay relaxed and enjoy the time, which will be hard but always the best outcome if you can. Each of my flights with children has always been different - I thought they would sleep, they had 1 hour (over a 20 hour flight!), I thought they would run around, they cuddled up to me, I thought they would cry - not a peep. And there will be a kind person around you that has been there, done that if you need help...you will get "the look" and "nod". I would also pre-order your food so it comes at the same time as the kids meals. That way you are normally finished eating by the time everyone gets there so there is less of a queue for the toilet, etc. etc. etc. OR you can ask the crew to hold your meal for you - you know what works best in your family. HAVE FUN!

### **Marta Pérez Rey**

I have been travelling to Spain once a year for 9 years, first with only one boy and for 7 of those with 2 boys. I started when my oldest was 2 months old. It is surprising how little they need sometimes. If it's the night flight they mostly sleep. Mine are older now and want to watch tv all the time, but I make sure that they turn it off and sleep as well. I have always packed a Trunki full of miscellaneous bits and pieces (small new toys, things they have never seen before). It sounds long if you are not used to it, but the trip is not as long as you think. Travel in the evening flight and they'll be tired enough to sleep for 10 hours straight (I wouldn't recommend booking a flight in the early morning, which means they have to be woken up too early only to go to a boring airport and they start off the trip on the wrong foot).. I once travelled next to a new mum who kept trying to distract her (obviously very tired 6 month old) only to get him more and more worked up and crying while mine were sleeping peacefully. She was also feeding him bottles of juice (water only is what I would recommend). I felt sorry for her. If she had left the child sleep things would have been better for her. I recommend taking food they like and what you'd want them to eat. Airplane food is not very good and even the toddler food (that you have to specifically request) is only a jar of cold mash and not much else. I had a tricky eater and would carry wheetabix and stuff like that so that at least he would get a full tummy. Little books, something to chew....Good luck. I'll be going back with my two in July, again. Ah, and changes of clothes, that is very important, for everybody!!!

### **Anni Thompson**

Most airlines have packages and activity sets for little ones on request. Some will even cater a special meal or re-heat formula. Book an extra seat if you can afford it - the lap is not so great for such a long flight. I would definitely not recommend the phrase "going on a plane to see..." as the dismay when 'so and so' is NOT ON the plane is hard to explain to your fellow passengers. I have been that passenger with the screaming toddler and it's not so great.

### **Marina Lambert Farook**

When we had 3 children(we now have 4) we took them from Arizona in the western USA all the way to Sri Lanka on the opposite side of the world. It took 45hours door to door. Nearly 2

days(in which I had NO sleep). They were 15mo, 3yrs, and 5yrs. I packed them backpacks with some snacks, triangular fat crayons that wouldn't easily break or roll away, and a small new toy that wouldn't roll away(picturing climbing over people to get a toy while child shrieks-no thanks!). I also brought a bag with a lot more snacks(even some treat type, but mostly fairly healthy to prevent blood sugar meltdowns) I also packed tiny versions of whatever I may need, and a few extra outfits, and more diapers than I thought I might need because you don't want to run out in the middle of a flight! I made the airline aware we had small travellers and booked children's meals- also booked the seats to be the first row without chairs in front of us to kick, and it gave a bit of extra floor space for my child to stand and move a bit without constantly being in the aisles. In the airports before the longest flight(16.5 hours!) we walked and walked and walked and played on the floor and got freshly diapered soon before boarding and had a last snack. I nursed the youngest during take off to help soothe any fear and prevent his ears from hurting during the pressure change. On the flight they were fascinated with everything and received children's bags of activities, stuffed animal, blanket etc. I also decided they could watch as many cartoons as they liked during the flight and that I wouldn't be doing any standing my ground during the flight because I didn't want to disturb any others. The flight attendants provided plenty of snacks as well, and we hung out at the window near the bathrooms whenever possible to spin in circles if people were sleeping. I kept them awake until the lights went off and put the arm rest up and they slept well. During 45 hours they never fussed or got upset- it was such a relief that everything went so well.

### **Sandra Bennett**

I've done a lot of long haul travelling with my two (now 10 & 8) and they were pretty good travellers.. I think parents become extremely anxious before a flight because we've all been on a flight with 'the child that screams the entire journey'. My two weren't so active and quite enjoyed staying in one place so as to avoid contact with humans (they were shy) ;-)- You'll probably find the flight is a night flight and bub will sleep most of it, but generally the staff on planes are really great at helping out. If it's a night flight then get them in their pjs before you get on the plane (space is limited). I take an extra pillow as I always have a child on me and it just makes it a lot more comfortable for both of us. The biggest issue for babies and kids is their ears. If she's breastfeeding then it won't hurt to pop her on immediately after take off and during landing. If she's not then give her something to suck on. Kids soon get bored of walking up and down the aisle ;-). To be honest the majority of kids are pretty good travellers, it's the grown ups ;-)

### **Jayne Taylor**

My son and I travelled a lot including long haul before year one school. I reckon don't let them know it can be an issue. Healthy snacks. Books. Surprises. Be relaxed yourself. Don't talk too much or over stimulate. He never ever said "are we there yet?". Now claims because if we were it would be obvious. So don't mention the destination.

### **Kellie Jones**

Dental floss! My active little boy spent a very long time pulling out the 2 packs of dental floss I had packed for boredom emergencies.... Apparently the never ending floss is very entertaining :/

### **Caroline Maxwell**

One more tip...

Take a pair of reins for your little cherub. They give you a free hand and also give Elli the feeling of freedom to walk/run without getting away or into mischief. I found that after a long flight in close quarters my little one did not want to be touched...let alone held.

### **Kym Adkinson**

Invest in one of those cheap plastic flip wallets for business cards, and fill with old cards. My boys used to spend ages taking them out and putting them back in.

Also a magnetic puzzle book called: "Stick to it: Pets" was very loved on flights:

[http://www.amazon.com/Stick.../dp/0740797263/ref=sr\\_1\\_1...](http://www.amazon.com/Stick.../dp/0740797263/ref=sr_1_1...)

Stick to it: Pets: A Magnetic Puzzle Book

AMAZON.COM

### **Michelle Carberry**

Buy some cheap toys and wrap them individually. Every hour she gets to open a new toy. My friend did it with her two girls from Ireland to Perth & said it worked a treat

### **Julie Miles**

Get a few new small toys and keep them away from her and hand her them and take the other away, so it's new and interesting each time. Keep up the fluids by asking for a cup of ice and getting her to suck on ice.

### **Ruth Benjamin-Thomas**

One thing not mentioned is clothing. Make sure she is in natural fibres and all blankets are natural too. I once did a bassinet trip with my son and the microfibre blanket seriously overheated him AND gave me electric shocks!

### **Sam Skinner**

Lavender oil! I love it just to dab on teddy/clothes- keeps them calm and relaxed. And I also do a little backpack of goodies.

### **Libby Ferrari**

A sheet of stickers. End up in Mum's hair and on Dad's nose but keep little ones occupied for a solid 2-3 min Good luck x

### **Allison Cumins Madden**

I'm no help! Our 18 month old (at the time) screamed the entire way to and from London!

### **Margot Wilson**

Everything will be fine as long as the parent/parents don't expect to get sleep or rest or enough time to eat their dinner :)

### **Michelle Smith**

I went to kmart and bought all the age appropriate toys and books under \$5. Wrapped them up and opened them over the flight.



### **Samara Jane Wheeldon**

Ignore the death stares as you first walk up the aisle with your baby because it's actually something that does happen!!!

### **Su Mariani**

If travelling through Dubai, you will need to get off the plane for about 2 hours and take all your hand luggage with you, so try and keep it to one bag, particularly if you are on your own. A change of clothes for yourself in case bub is sick and it is important for them to have a bottle or dummy for take off and landing as that is the time most babies really get upset with the change in pressure. Sticker books are great too! If you fly the Australian carrier they are pretty helpful with mums and bubs. Can't speak for other airlines. :)

### **Skye Hodge**

I've heard toy catalogues are great. Toys r us often have a few different available.

### **Michelle Mcgrath**

New smaller toys (package off). DVD player with her favourites DVDs. Small snacks (in packet). Small books also. If it's a night flight you have to exhaust them before hand if possible.

### **Louis Fury**

A trunk is a must! Filled with new toys to explore!

### **Lisa Flaherty**

Book a seat with floor space in front or on side of seat.

### **Karen Temme**

Puffy stickers that little fingers can stick and unstick everywhere.

### **Sinead Chidlow**

Wrap up little toys as they love unwrapping things

### **Ann Scotten**

Book your seats in the "baby zone" that way you will be surrounded by people who understand what traveling with young children is like.

### **Vee Kathy**

Tactile books

### **Lisa Stewart**

iPad!!

### **Vicky Morsley**

Sounds daft but padding! Whether it's coats, jumpers or a pillow. To fill and or cover all the metal bits and lumps and bumps between the seats so when they are sleeping they can get comfy and fall asleep before they roll into overtiredness and the nightmare begins!

### **Kat Backhouse**

With 3 kids and family in Europe we have done a few trips. Best tips for me were spare clothes for mum as well as the kids; new little toys wrapped up as presents to receive at certain times (if they sit quietly through dinner etc); snacks & water bottles; kids headphones with plug for airplane so the headphones would stay on; ipad with games; tissue box to play with (nothing better than pulling them all out...) but also to use for spills; travel pillow and blanket to make a comfy bed somehow. Best travel time leaving Perth was afternoon so kids could see what we were doing and then go to sleep after dinner when they were ready, rather than midnight where they were over tired. And then if the toddler plays up, don't get stressed - it happens all the time, stressing doesn't help and any grumbling passengers should just be quiet as it's not something done deliberately and the parent is probably mortified enough without being told about it...

### **Rebekah Madureira**

We haven't done a long haul flight with kids yet but I can only suggest loading an iPad up with heaps of toddler apps and games and letting her go nuts on it!

### **Narissa Perks**

We took 2 little ones from Perth to Europe and it went pretty well. We packed plenty of snacks for the times you needed to sit waiting for takeoff and landing (and those unexpected delays on the tarmac just sitting around). I also made some activity packs with crayons, stickers, paper etc and things such as pegs and coloured milk bottle tops which they could play with and it didn't matter if they got lost down the seats. Also I bought a few new little toys as a surprise which were great to bring out progressively throughout the flight to keep them happy. Also a change of clothes for the child and also for mum who often wears the vomit or gets food spilt on them. Before we went someone said to me "expect the worst and you might be pleasantly surprised" and we were. Hope this helps!

**Asher Buck** Hi maggie, we have managed two long hauls with our very active kids! Patience and lots and lots of snacks! Hopefully a good amount of the flying time is during the night so she can sleep. Good luck to your daughter and thanks for being so awesome!!!

**Kathryn Bonnington** We had a 18 month old, 2.5 year old and I was 4 mths pregnant with twins when we went to uk. Definitely book them their own seat, more roommate and request bulkhead!! Ours had tiny 'drawing machines' (magma doodle) books, stickers, small games. We kept them until we were on the plane so they weren't bored from them. We also aren't big users of technology so the individual tv was a hit. It's exhausting, we did it in one go and luckily kids slept pretty well... What an adventure!!

### **Jacqui Gilbert Deacon**

Countless long haul flights on my own with a newbie and a toddy. Presents! First and foremost, an aisle seat! Don't worry about the looks, thoughts or opinions of other passengers (unless she's kicking their seats etc of course) Anything you bring to amuse her, extend its novelty value by wrapping it in cheap wrapping paper first. Everytime things are going pear shaped it's PRESENT TIME!!!! Make sure anything you bring you are happy to lose, everything will get

dropped! Throw schedules and perfect eating out the window. If she likes sandwiches, bring sandwiches, this works better than you could ever believe. (Most flights aren't allergy friendly so hello peanut butter and jam!!) I personally didn't encourage the constant walking up and down the aisles, it always had a purpose i.e. nappy change otherwise that's all they want to do and will drive u nuts! My biggest tip: I used to pack a separate (small) bag with everything required for each leg of the journey, that way by the last leg of the journey when you're exhausted you have a well organised bag ready and can just chuck everything icky into the other bag. Most of the airlines give the kids oodles of activity stuff but be aware they sometimes run out.

### **Jillian Abé**

Choose a long haul leg that is "overnight", as infants & toddler will naturally sleep for longer periods. Keep them up or wake them up until take off (if after their "bed time"), then give a bottle/sipper cup of milk whilst ascending (to help equalize ears). Infants/toddlers will be more likely to settle to sleep at this time and sleep for longer periods. Take a grow bag/sleeping bag to put on them after boarding to give them a sleep association and keep them warm to sleep. Flight crew will assist with extra pillows.

PS. If she is sleeping on/across you - make sure your bladder is empty before she settles to sleep so you don't need to disturb her whilst she sleeps!

Good luck!

### **Rob Daniel**

Great airline Emirates, heaps of movies and games, and children's packs too.

Take a couple of hand puppets for sharing the adventure through the window with, and meeting the air staff, a favourite pillow and blanket for snuggling down. Stars appear on the ceiling of the A380's at night and the lights are dimmed.

Most young children do the journey really well, as long as the parents stay calm, happy and are good at going one on one around the plane with them a couple of times.

### **Kay Whiteley**

We've done this six times in 4 years!! These are my top tips and essential must-knows.

1. Get a Trunki suitcase (great for making the airport waits and transfers fun) and fill it with all sorts of little games, books, sticker books, dry-wipe cards and pens, play doh and plastic cutters, a small ball/balloons/bubbles (airports), small crafts sets (like a couple of different socks and various stickers and eyes to make puppets, then make up stories; also big bead necklace crafts are good.) Explain that each time the Trunki is opened she can choose only one thing - we made a game out of ours only being allowed to open it every half hour ... The excitement was palpable!!

2. If she is usually a tv watcher, don't let her watch it for a few days before the flight so it's a novelty again. Do all the craft, games, etc first and then use the screen as a last resort. Don't put the telly on if she's tired though - mine can stay awake for hours on a flight if there's a screen he can watch.

3. An absolute must is a small baby bottle with a teat/hole size smaller than normal. Use this in landings - the smaller size means more sucking motion, which helps pop the ears.

4. The other trick we use is ours doesn't have the iPad for the whole flight. I bring it out during descent only and put a favourite game or program on. It takes his mind off what's going on.

5. AN ABSOLUTE MUST!!!! Take a baby sling!! Yes, really. Use it to one side under her bottom so she is sitting up but can cuddle you. If she's tired during the transfer stop, you need a comforting way to carry her while still being able to carry hand luggage and walk quickly to your connection. It's impossible to get an exhausted child to walk quickly at the best of times but when you have to rush for a connection it is awful and creates a horrid relationship breakdown. Much better to sling it and cuddle. We used our one (sized for up to nine months old) right up until he was five!!

Sounds like my boy has loads of screen time in this! While this is restricted during normal circumstances, needs must when you're stuck in a tin can full of people trying to sleep!

### **Kate Hatley**

I've done a couple of long hauls on my own with my very active son who was 16 months old. My advice is - don't let her know that she can get down and walk around for as long as possible because this is what you will be doing for the whole flight! I brought lots of food and lots of new toys. Travel Aqua doodle is a good one. Drinks or dummies for take off and particularly landing. Order a bassinet well in advance. Ask for help if you need it. If the going gets tough...breathe ! Pack lots of spare clothes and nappies and 1 change of clothes for yourself. My son wore grow suits and to make life easier, I packed 1 nappy, 1 grow suit, 1 vest, 1 bib etc into separate plastic sandwich bags so when it came time to change him, I just grabbed a bag rather than having to rummage through my big travel bag. Use the airlines formula - much easier than bringing your own tin of formula onboard and trying to make it up on the go. Just go with it ! Good luck.

### **Sarah Meager**

Take loads of snacks! I've done this trip several times with babies and toddlers and food is always a good distraction for the kids. Lots of walking up and down the isles, sticker books, ipad (if you're open to allowing your child to use one). Be wary of them playing with the inflight entertainment remote.....mine both loved pressing the call button and then whenever I actually wanted anything (ie. G&T) I couldn't get anyone to come!

### **Caroline Foster**

Portable Activity Kit for Little Travellers <http://mamapapabubba.com/.../portable-activity-kit-for.../>

### **Meg Grant**

Always got for a window seat never in the middle of the plane - this allows for only one exit. Aim for a seat at the back of the plane - as there is always room behind to move about. Ask for extra blankets. Build a cubby house out of the blankets (it makes them feel special and tucked away). Little things they love eg. Toys/ plastic cups/ books with little doors to open are great. And eye mask can be handy. Empty the pocket out in front on the child so they can store things. Emirates airlines are brilliant with kids - air hostess always have things as well - little toys. Defiantly check the meal options - always ask if there is anything left from Business class (sometimes there's pancakes and little cakes and things).

And Breathe!! Don't stress I've found the only thing people on flights get really upset about is a little one kicking there chair.

### **Jacqueline Waters**

Even if she is too big for the bassinets, try to get seated in a bassinet row - that extra floor space is perfect to sit and play. Fly Emirates if possible - splits the legs of the journey fairly evenly so there isn't one daunting enormous leg, plus the staff are amazing. Pack spare outfits into zip-lock bags - that way if there are any accidents you have a sealable bag ready to go for the soiled clothes without having to hunt around for one. A few small toys and books (I hide several for a few weeks beforehand so they're 'new', plus a couple of genuinely new ones) but our son tends to prefer to make toys out of everything around him so we've learned to halve what we think he'll need; and as many snacks as you can fit in your bag. Happy travels!

### **Joanne Beveridge**

I bought my little boy small books and cars ..... Basically things that can be played with on the tray table and then wrapped them up individually, it took him quite awhile to unwrap them which killed some time to unwrap them and then a play before he moved into the next one

### **Jude Daxi**

Don't overpack! The 'stuff' doesn't distract them for very long and you just get crazy with it all. See if you can get seats near the bulkhead so you have more room, more interesting things to watch - stewards coming and going, people moving about. You get a bit more floor space too.

### **Louise Pekan**

Using a plane blanket, tuck it under the seat and then over the chair in front creating a hammock. Not safe to play in but will make picking up all the little toys that inevitable get dropped easier.

*Thanks everyone for your wonderful suggestions!*

NB: [From the Raising Children Network](#): "Medications that help children sleep – including the antihistamine drugs Vallergran and Phenergan – should be used only under the supervision of your doctor. These medications aren't recommended for children under two years because they're associated with a risk of [sudden unexpected death in infancy \(SUDI\)](#). They can also cause side effects like crankiness, hyperactivity, challenging behaviour and daytime drowsiness in some children."

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