



Make vacations fun *and* educational

Planning a vacation?

Before you leave on a vacation, think about how a fun experience can also be a learning one. Consider the following:

- Discuss in advance with your children where you will be going and what they can expect to see and do. Encourage children to learn more about where you will be going and what you will be seeing.
- Make plans to stop at historical or geographic points of interest while on a trip.
- Encourage children to learn how to use road maps to sharpen skills on directions, scales and distances.
- Note rivers, lakes and other bodies of water when traveling. Note how cities depend on rivers and lakes.
- Note geological feature like mountains, valleys, deserts, and grasslands.

Fun things to do while on the road

• Play the alphabet game. Look at road signs and/or license plates and spot the words that begin with "A" then "B" then "C," etc. The first person to reach "Z" wins.

• Keep a log of where you have been and what you are doing. Ask your child to make sure things are listed in the order in which they occurred.

*Before a trip, have your child write for information from the Chamber of Commerce or the Office-of-Tourism on places you plan to visit.

Keep a travel diary. Ask your child to draw a picture or write about something he/she saw that day that was special. These are great for back-to-school "show and tell."

• Show your children how to read and use a road map. Ask them to serve as navigators. Have them plan the route each day. Use the scale on the map to predict how far you must go and estimate how long it will take you to get there.

• While on a trip have your child write and send postcards to friends and relatives.

• To practice numbers on a trip, ask your child to make a list of license plate numbers and put them in numerical order. Sort them into "odds and evens."

• Count the number of out-of-state license plates your

child sees. See how many of the 50 states you can find.

• Discuss cities and states you visit. Describe to your child how a country, and a state, a county, and a city are different from one another.

• Ask your children to count the number of different kinds of animals they see on the trip. If they are farm animals, ask the child what kind of food each provides. For example: cows provide milk; chickens provide eggs.

• Point out changes in agricultural patterns while traveling. Note the kinds of crops being planted and irrigation patterns. Describe how cultivation is done to prevent erosion in hilly terrain. Point out growth patterns of crops and when the material will be harvested.

• Determine in advance if industrial tours are available in cities being visited. Tours are an inexpensive way to learn about commerce, mass production, and working habits. Check age limits. Many factories do not allow small children.

• When visiting area locations, ask if your child has been to the place as part of a school field trip. If so, have them take YOU on the tour.

• While traveling have children keep a list of automobile mileage, gasoline fill-ups and money spent on fuel. Not only will it allow your youngsters an opportunity to compute miles per gallon, it will also help them better understand family travel expenses. Even on short trips you can have your child watch how much gas you put into the tank and calculate how much it costs per mile, per trip and per tank.

• On the highway, ask your children to read the signs and check the different speed limits. Then ask them to watch the speedometer readings and notice how fast or slow the car is going. Have your children estimate distances between cities and check the estimates on a road map. How long will it take to get there?

• Explain the meaning of road signs, road lines, marking and the laws of the road to your children.

• Books, games and magazines are helpful for keeping children occupied in the car while on a trip. Find a special book or game and hide it until later in the trip. Something new and different will hold the interest longer.