



In The Car

Here are some tips to help you keep your “cool” on the road.

Plan Ahead

Set Rules: For example, keep seatbelts fastened at all times; keep hand, feet, and objects to yourself.

don't start the car unless the rules are being followed.

Take a Pack: Have children pack a backpack (or bag) with things to keep them occupied and comfortable (books, tapes, games, snacks, etc.).

Use Rewards: Establish a reward for good behavior, for example, stopping at the video store and renting a movie.

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Navigator Role: Children like to feel useful and can be put in charge of reading road signs, watching for the right exit, or picking the next gas station. On a long trip, let your child mark the route on a map with the highlighter as you travel.

Counting Games: Count billboards on each side of the road, out-of-state or weird license plates; number of cows or horses (if traveling in the country.)

Take Turns: Give each child a turn in deciding which tape to play or radio station to tune in. This can cut down on complaints such as “he always gets to choose the music.”

Fighting: Ignore fighting and compliment them when they are behaving well.

Set Consequences: Let children know what the consequences are for misbehavior, for example, losing the privilege of stopping at the library or renting a video. Remember, consequences work only when you consistently follow through.

When All Else Fails...

Stop the car: Find a safe place to pull off the road. Take some deep breaths and say: “I don't want to drive when you are ...(fighting, arguing, etc.) If we can't solve the problem, I'm going to turn around and drive home.” When everyone is calm, take a few minutes to try to negotiate a solution. If nothing works, drive home.

For more information call the Family Help Line: 800.932.4673