

December 2018

Fun activities, aligned with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards, to help prepare children for school success!

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## We're learning while in the car or on the bus!

### Babies

While traveling, take advantage of those who enjoy interacting with babies. Encourage your baby to look at those who greet her and return their smiles.

Some babies respond better to gentle voices and gestures while others prefer more animation. Assist your baby by letting her adjust at her own pace, rather than trying to force her into uncomfortable situations. Give your baby time and reassurance if she is feeling uncomfortable. Try different approaches to meet her needs depending on her stage of development and her social style. [Read more.](#)

### Toddlers

Take a travel break. In a park, rest stop, or even the less populated corner of a parking lot, get out of the car and encourage your toddler to move. Have him pretend he's a little bird and flap his fingers, then a bigger bird (flap his hands), and then an even bigger bird (flap his arms). [Read more.](#)

### Preschoolers

Before your trip, help your preschooler cut out pictures from a magazine of things she might see while in the car, such as a stop sign, a bicycle, a bus, etc. and store in an envelope or plastic zip-top bag. Allow your preschooler to help pack a bag to take on the trip. Include special items to help her feel at home, as well as some surprises. [Read more.](#)

### Kindergartners

Give your kindergartner a puppet while traveling. Have the puppet sing the alphabet and count to 10. Ask the puppet to name as many colors as it can.

Using a book, have the puppet "read" the story. (See the book list below for some great suggestions!) The puppet can sing children's songs or say nursery rhymes as well. Use different voices to increase your kindergartner's interest in the activity.

Use the puppet to teach your kindergartner a new skill, or increase his communication by teaching him a new sign. [Read more.](#)

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## 10 Books About Riding in the Car or on the Bus

*Cars and Trucks and Things That Go* by Richard Scarry

*The Wheels on the Bus* by Paul O. Zelinsky

*The School Bus Driver from the Black Lagoon* by Mike Thaler

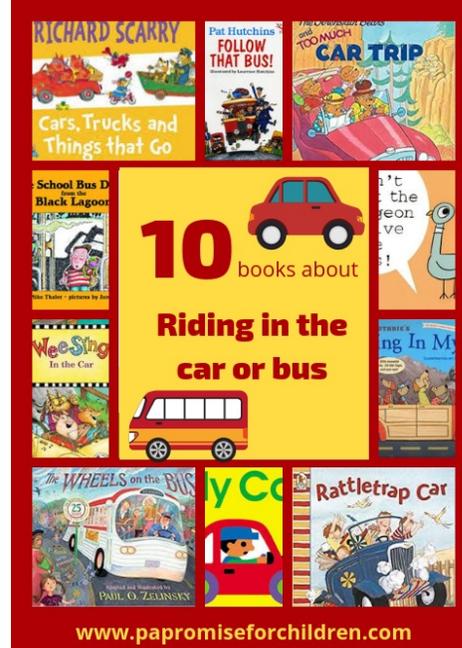
*Wee Sing in the Car* by Wee Sing

*Riding In My Car* by Woody Guthrie

*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willem

*Follow That Bus!* by Pat Hutchins  
*Rattletrap Car* by Phyllis Root  
*My Car* by Byron Barton  
*The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Car Trip* by  
Stan and Jan Berenstain

[Print this list!](#)



## The secret to a successful car trip

The secret to a successful car trip is planning!

- Before you leave **decide where and when to stop**. Ask friends who know the route to recommend stops.
- **Research online** for playgrounds, parks, and services, like bathrooms and medical facilities along the route. There are several apps for your smartphone that will make recommendations during the trip.
- **Be realistic** and try not to drive more than a couple hours at a stretch.
- Taking **mini breaks** to stretch and move can make your time in the car more enjoyable.

## TOP 5 GIFTS TO GIVE A CHILD *this holiday season*

**TIME** Spending time with your child helps him develop a stronger bond with you. It allows him to watch and learn skills he will need throughout his entire life.

**ATTENTION** Children learn through experiences with their world. Your attention to her is at the heart of her learning.

**PATIENCE** Children developing new skills need lots of practice. Activities done over and over again allow your child multiple opportunities to learn.

**CONVERSATION** Your child is able to understand language before he can speak it! New words and sounds repeated in conversations with him help form his foundation for reading.

**ENCOURAGEMENT** Positive words of encouragement will create a bond between you and your child. This supports her while trying new learning experiences.



[www.papromiseforchildren.com](http://www.papromiseforchildren.com)

## Top 5 Gifts to Give to a Child This Holiday Season

Need a gift this holiday season for the child in your life? Learning is Everywhere has the perfect gift list! [Click here to print the list.](#)



## Discipline Without Spanking

Spanking a child may increase aggression in a child, and may actually do long term harm to a child, says a [new study by the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP).

The AAP recently released an updated policy statement about the harmful effects spanking can have on children. The use of spanking is also ineffective in teaching a child responsibility and self-control. New evidence shows that it may actually cause harm by impacting a child's normal brain development.

Research has shown that striking a child, yelling at or shaming them can elevate stress hormones and lead to changes to a child's brain. Harsh verbal abuse is also linked to mental health problems as children get older.

There are other methods that teach children right from wrong and are safer and more effective. Depending on the age and development of a child, other methods may include redirecting their attention, distraction, changing the subject, positive reinforcement, time out and natural consequences. Visit the [PA Promise website](#) and watch the video below for resources related to parenting and discipline.

Contact your [Early Learning Resource Center](#) for more information about programs to support families in your community.



## Mindfulness for Children

Children of all ages can benefit from mindfulness, the simple practice of bringing a gentle, accepting attitude to the present moment. It can help families and caregivers, too, by promoting happiness and relieving stress.

[This article from The New York Times](#) offers basic tips for children and adults of all ages, as well as several activities that develop compassion, focus, curiosity and empathy. Mindfulness can be fun!

## Keeping Kids Safe with Winter Safety Tips

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has [valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm](#).

## Preventing the Flu

It's time to prepare for the 2018-2019 influenza (flu) season, as the flu is often more serious than the common cold in children. Each year, millions of children get sick with the flu, which can result in hospitalization or death.

Annual influenza vaccine is recommended for all people 6 months of age and older. Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old, are at an increased risk of hospitalization and complications due to influenza.

Since infants younger than 6 months are too young to get their own flu shot, the best way to protect these very young children is for all family members and caregivers to get the flu vaccine. This is called "cocooning", and it is especially important for adults who care for infants younger than 6 months.

Children who have chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes or neurologic conditions, are also at higher risk for serious complications due to influenza. Parents and caregivers can help protect more vulnerable children by vaccinating both the children and themselves.

Talk to your child's healthcare provider about flu shots and keeping your child healthy, and visit the [HealthyChildren.org website](http://HealthyChildren.org) for more info.

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## Curbing the Gimmes

Turn on the television or radio, or open the newspaper, and you're surrounded by ads trying to catch your attention. During the holidays, this can be overwhelming!

What to do? Find out how you can keep the focus on what's important to your family during the holiday season...[read more!](#)



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## Our Favorite Pinterest Pins



[12 Multi-Cultural Holiday Books](#)  
[Christmas themed lunches for kids](#)  
[Free Kwanzaa Songs and Rhymes for Circle Time](#)  
[17 Easy Hanukkah Crafts for Kids](#)  
[Making a Winter Solstice Tree](#)

Are you following the [Happening Holidays](#) or [Christmas is Calling](#) boards on Pinterest?

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## Do you have a new Preschooler?

Did your child start preschool? [Sign up for the FREE monthly Kindergarten, Here I Come eNews!](#) Each month get activities, tips and resources you can use to help your child prepare for and transition into their Kindergarten year.



The PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) provides families access to high quality services to prepare children for school and life success.

Find more information about Quality Early Learning in Pennsylvania  
[Pennsylvania Department of Education](#) | [Pennsylvania Department of Human Services](#)  
[Pennsylvania Keys to Quality](#) | [Pennsylvania's Promise for Children](#)  
[Early Intervention Technical Assistance](#)

We are where you are.

