



We're thinking of taking a trip with friends who have children the ages of our kids. Any suggestions?



Vacationing with another family can be wonderful fun—complete with built-in playmates! But here are a few things to consider.

- Know the other family. Don't assume that your child (or you!) will enjoy playing with their kids or that your spouse (a hiker) will enjoy sharing a vacation with a person with whom he or she has little in common (a swimmer).
- Know your parenting styles. If you and your friends discipline your children in different ways, how will you expect your vacation mates to respond to your children? How will you respond to theirs?
- Agree on a safety plan to ensure that each child is adequately supervised at all times. Sometimes when several adults are together, a child can go unnoticed just long enough for trouble to happen.
- Plan ahead on the money angle. If you did the inviting, what do you expect your friends to pay for? What's included and what isn't? Will you rotate paying for meals?

Consider these and other concerns together over a cup of coffee. Thoughtful preparation of discipline guidelines, safety issues and financial concerns will allow for much more time for fun!