



PEN Notes: Fact Sheet # 23

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Toll-free 1-877-900-9736 or (307) 684-7441; Website: www.wpen.net

Adventuring With Children

Family Adventure can be as simple as following a creek to see where it goes or as challenging as climbing the highest mountain peak. The wonderful thing about children is that just about anything can become a family adventure. Adventure may involve difficulty or pleasure, fear or excitement, but in the end, it always seems to bring the family closer together.

Benefits of a family adventure:

- ✳ an appreciation for other cultures
- ✳ a sense of family cohesion
- ✳ independence
- ✳ adaptability
- ✳ tolerance
- ✳ learning things about the world no book can teach
- ✳ cultivation of self-sufficiency
- ✳ an intimate awareness of life beyond your neighborhood boundaries



Travel Choices

Consider visiting state and national parks and forests to explore nature. Historical sites, the beach, guest ranches, and family resorts offer many different activities. Some people never visit nearby canyons, lakes, mountains, zoos, historical spots or museums. These are good for day trips and weekends.



Travel Arrangements

To get the most from your trip, find out about points of interest and attractions suitable for families. Talk to friends or a travel agent; read guidebooks, brochures, and travel articles; look at maps and contact an auto club if you are traveling by car. Write for information and schedules of special events from chamber of commerce and tourists offices near your destination.

Source: Butler, Traveling With Children, 1991

Family Travel Plans

What is it you want from the trip?

A change of pace, rest, solitude, activity, adventure, entertainment, education, family togetherness, a visit with friends and family?

Do the plans respect everyone's limitations and age capabilities?

Is the distance too far for the time available? Will the activities overtire, frighten or overwhelm any one person?

Does the trip offer something of interest to everyone?

Can the adult and children's activities be alternated so that everyone feels a part of the adventure?

Source: Jeffery, Adventuring With Children, 1991.

Is there room for flexibility?

Does the success of the trip depend upon everything going just right? Are you overbooked or under-organized?

Is there some leisure time and quiet days for rest and relaxation scheduled?

Is there enough time allowed to discover and enjoy the sights?

Are the plans in keeping with the budget?

Does everyone feel comfortable and understand the budget?



One person's adventure might be another person's nightmare. What makes an "adventure" is as personalized and intangible as that which triggers moments of joy or flashes of fear. Keep each person in the family in mind, and include older kids in the planning. A great adventure will be less stressful if the following can be avoided:

- Too fast a pace
- Too difficult a schedule
- Over-eager parents
- Not enough breaks
- Spoiling your children's enthusiasm
- Too many "No's"

"We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm, and adventure. There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open." (Jawaharlal Nehru (Indian Prime Minister. 1889-1964)