

Quality Time in the Caribbean

If you're looking for advice on how to have the best family vacation in the Caribbean, here is a step-by-step guide to help ensure that your time in the Caribbean with your kids is one of the best times of your life.

Get Ready

In addition to the usual clothes to bring during a long trip to a tropical island, bring lots and lots of snacks. Candy bars will do as well as chips, cookies, chocolates, drinks, and any other quick snacks the kids would like. And really, you should never forget entertainment, too, which should come in handy particularly on long plane rides.

Below are some suggestions for fun stuff your kids can do during the plane trip to the Caribbean. The tips are divided into categories addressed to specific age groups.

For Babies:

Babies are definitely attracted to bright colors and sounds, so any object that is bright and new should do the trick. Anything that makes rattling sounds could also work, as well as music-makers and pop-up toys. Other things you can take along are:

Mega-blocks (not necessarily the entire set; a few pieces would be enough)

Magnetic blocks that stick together

Toys of entertaining shapes

Sturdy plastic mirrors

For Toddlers:

Toddlers are more active, with a better grasp on how things are done, so they tend to need stuff that is completely different from what a baby would need. Be sure to pack some of the following:

Things that can be placed into storage containers

Rubber or plastic balls

Little wind-up toys

Toys that "talk" # baby push buttons to activate the speak function (but not too loud)

Bubbles (not while on the plane; use in the airport before going through security)

Busy boxes with buttons, bells, moving parts

Cardboard books

Pre-Schoolers

Kids around ages three to five have a more sophisticated way of having fun than the toddler. You can occupy their attention by giving them picture books, stickers, or activity books to amuse themselves with. Lap-sized wipe-off easels will also work and for girls, you can give them small mirrors and costume jewelry to play with.

Other items you can bring:

Sticky notes

Sock puppets

Hole punch

Inexpensive sets of plastic toys (inexpensive because small items such as these tend to get easily misplaced)

Snacks, wrapped presents (they can enjoy unwrapping them)

Magnetic letters and metal to arrange them on

Interactive books

Almost anything can be used to amuse kids around this age. Just make sure that they don't harm themselves with any of these things, such as accidental swallowing.

For Older Children

This is for children who have already been to grade school and know how to read and write. Prior to the trip, stop by a good kid's bookstore and get real books that are small enough to store in your kid's backpack. Comic books and interactive puzzle books are good alternatives.

The best part of visiting a kid's bookstore these days is they usually have a non-book section somewhere inside where you can get all sorts of fun stuff for your older kid, including high-quality games like Hangman and Xs and Os, Monopoly (there's a travel-size version), Sorry, Snakes 'n' Ladders, Battleships, Speak 'n' Spell, miniature chess, and so on.