



Things to Think About!

Check it Out

By Karen Morgan

Need more information? Try a few of the following websites to find resources and information for your next family trip.



www.nps.gov



www.aaa.com

Once you've found what you're looking for, these websites can help you map the best route to your chosen destination.



If you have a topic you would like to see covered in our newsletter, or have a specific question that we can answer directly, please feel free to contact us anytime through the following email address...

snrproject@hotmail.com

"Are We There Yet?"

By Linda Jorgensen

What to do with summer vacation time.

The weather is warm, school is out and everywhere families are enjoying the first weeks of summer vacation. For a large number of families that means travel by car. Traveling with a medically fragile child and all the paraphernalia they require for daily care can be a serious challenge. Most parents are worn out just by the very thought of packing all the gear. So what's a parent to do?

There are a lot more options out there for summer recreation than you may have considered. The following may (*or may not*) fit with your family's idea of fun. The key here is "flexibility". Be open to possibilities and make a plan that your entire family can enjoy.



According to the Travel Industry Association of America, family vacations are trending to being shorter, closer to home, 3-day weekends instead of traditional 1-2 week (*exhaustive*) adventures. This idea offers many advantages for a family with special needs. Multiple short trips spread out over a number of weeks can be easier for small children and also children whose physical condition makes long car trips difficult to tolerate. Gasoline costs are lower. Time spent in the car driving is lessened, and the majority of the family's time can be devoted to destination activities instead of simply "getting there".

For this sort of trip, many families enjoy hopping to large, nearby cities where all manner of restaurants, hotels, and site-seeing locations are available within a small geographical area. A short family trip to a nearby city can be a grand adventure for children unaccustomed to staying in hotel rooms and eating in restaurants.

Local State or National parks can also make great destinations. Most National Park areas have made great strides in meeting ADA standards.

Tip: Families visiting State or National Parks can acquire a **Golden Access Passport (Federal Recreation Pass) or a **State Park & Recreation Special Access Pass**, available by state (in Utah contact the State of Utah Natural Resources Division of Parks & Recreation) which will allow for free or reduced fee access to most Federal and State park and recreation areas.*



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Deciding on a destination that will meet the entire family's recreation goals will take some homework but can be done. Take a look at how much driving your family can accommodate. For some this could mean an hour-long drive to the nearest city or a 4-hour trip to a nearby State Park. Once you know how far you are willing to travel, locate a destination that fits within your travel radius.



There are many resources for information near you. Contact your town tourism/recreation office, consult a map of your area, or contact your state Tourism/Travel Council for destination listings. The internet can offer excellent destination resources with not only specific details on the destination you are considering for your trip but will usually also include contact information with addresses, directions, and phone numbers. This becomes extremely useful if you have specific access needs: i.e. travel with a wheelchair. Call ahead to ask if the destination you are considering is accessible. Due to the physical nature of some parks, not all will be accessible though some may be accessible with reservations. Contact the individual park offices for accessibility information and suggestions before you go.

Whether it's a single day-trip or a multi-day "weekender", a little bit of research can go a long way in organizing and planning your family's vacation. Look for simple things that offer high interest or excitement for children such as tours



through a candy factory, a visit to an aquarium, the zoo, or planetarium. Look for local historic sites or find out if there is a local, county, or state fair held in your area. Activities and locations that will keep your children enthralled will make your day that much easier to manage. Shorter trips also lessen the need for frequent pit-stops and can allow for more side trips should you see something interesting along the way.

Some additional items to consider...



Hotel reservations. For those traveling with a family member using a wheelchair, be sure to specify a wheelchair accessible room when making your reservations. An in-room microwave or refrigerator will

also be useful for storing medications or preparing special meal items if needed. Look for these room features before confirming a reservation. Discounts may also be available. It never hurts to ask!

Vehicle safety check. Before leaving on any road trip, no matter the distance, check to make sure your vehicle is in proper working condition. Check your tires, belts, wiper blades, and all fluid levels. Keep some basic emergency essentials packed in your vehicle. Vacations are an adventure. You never know what might happen.



Sitting around the house for 2 months is no way to spend a summer. Don't let yourself become so overwhelmed with the logistics of a family outing that you miss out on the really important things. Get out there and have some fun with your family! Plan your trip, be flexible and travel safely. The fun you have and the memories you make may very well last a lifetime!



*Hope you all have a wonderful summer!
Sincerely,
Linda Jorgensen & Karen Morgan*