

## Top tips for driving abroad with children

Taking a child on holiday is an exciting and a new experience for first time parents. But it can be stressful so make sure you plan ahead of time. Our head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, has put some helpful safety tips together for driving with young children abroad.

- Plan your journey. Going abroad with a child can be stressful, so make sure you know where you're going when you land. Know where the hire car company is based and how long the transfer is.
- Before setting off to your hotel/apartment make sure you are familiar with the car and that your child is safely secured. You will need to concentrate as you'll be driving on unfamiliar roads, plan your route before leaving.
- Child car seats. You must have a child car seat for any children up to 12 years old or 135cm tall, whichever comes first. Ensure you take a car seat on holiday with you, as not all car hire companies provide these.
- Most airlines will allow you to bring your car seats for free, but please call and check with your airline first. The last thing you want is to arrive at the airport and be charged a fee. Consider getting the car seat wrapped with padding at the airport as it will be going in the hold and may get damaged during flight. If you choose to hire a car seat from a hire car company, get them to send photos to ensure it is up to standard.
- Make the journey fun! If your children are old enough get them to look out for any landmarks. Or how about a game of car colour cricket or the first to spot a sports car? See games rules <https://www.topendsports.com/sport/cricket/car.htm>
- Comfortable? Make sure your child is as comfortable as possible and take off any thick coats as they can interfere with the correct operation of the child seat in a collision. Consider getting an extra child rear view mirror if you like to keep an eye on what's happening on the back seat. Make sure it doesn't obscure your forward view.
- What to pack. Bring your child's favourite toys, games and books to keep them entertained. Playing games in the car can take their focus off the journey but ensure you don't get distracted yourself.
- Pack some snacks. In case of any delays it's great to have snacks on hand and ready. Consider bringing a cool bag where you can bring healthy snacks such as carrot sticks, grapes and juice boxes.

Richard said: "If travelling a long distance try to arrange your travel to coincide with nap time or bed time – this may make for a more relaxing drive for you and the children. For short journeys encourage simple games. It not only distracts but can be educational too.

"Sometimes the entertainment is just listening to the conversations your children have when they think you are not listening. There are lots of blogs and tips on websites such as

Mumsnet and Gransnet on achieving in-car happiness. And remember that if you do have to stop, make sure it's in a safe place for you, your passengers and other road users."

## **ENDS**

Notes to editors:

1. Richard Gladman is IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards.
2. IAM RoadSmart has a mission to make better drivers and riders in order to improve road safety, inspire confidence and make driving and riding enjoyable. It does this through a range of courses for all road users, from online assessments through to the advanced driving and riding tests. IAM RoadSmart is the trading name of all businesses operated by the UK's largest road safety charity, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and was formed in April 2016 combining the IAM, IAM Drive & Survive, PDS and IAM Driver Retraining Academy. The organisation has 92,000 members and campaigns on road safety on their behalf. At any one time there are over 7,000 drivers and riders actively engaged with IAM RoadSmart's courses, from members of the public to company drivers, while our Driver Retraining Academy has helped 2,500 drivers to shorten their bans through education and support programmes.

To find out more about IAM RoadSmart products and services visit the new website [www.iamroadsmart.com](http://www.iamroadsmart.com)

To find out the name of your own local IAM RoadSmart group please visit: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/local-groups>

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