TRAVEL TOOLBOX: 10 IDEAS FOR BACKSEAT FUN

Long road trips can be rough on parents and kids alike. Packing a toolbox of fun ideas can not only make the drive bearable, it might even make it fun! Here are ten ideas to get you started:

1. **Baking Sheet Magnets**: Magnetic letters, numbers, and shapes are great fun to play with. Take them on the road by giving your child a baking sheet, and letting her arrange magnets on the magnetic surface!

2. **Mystery Foldover Drawing**: Create a funny figure with this collaborative drawing game. Fold a piece of paper into three horizontal sections. Have one person draw a silly head on the top section, extending the lines of the neck into the second section a bit. Fold the head section over backwards so that it is hidden, and have the second person draw a torso, fold it, and have the third person draw legs and feet. Then, unfold for a silly surprise!

3. **Paper Bag Puppets**: Got paper bags? You can reuse them to make fun hand puppets for a long trip. Decorate with markers (and other craft supplies if you have them), and cut holes for the thumb and pinky fingers to stick through like arms.

4. **License Plate Bingo**: Have your child write down all 26 letters of the alphabet, and then scour the road for cars. When he sees a letter on a license plate, he can cross it off the list. When he finds all 26, it’s time to shout “Bingo!”

5. **Make your own Mad Libs**: Mad Libs are fun, but making your own is even better! Have your child write out a story in pencil, then erase a selection of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Without revealing the story, he should ask for random replacements words. Read it out loud for lots of laughs!

6. **I Spy**: “I spy with my little eyes something that is … blue!” This guessing game is a hit with young travelers and helps with color recognition. Guess what the “spy” sees!

7. **Etch-a-Sketch**: This essential toy fits into bags and pockets, and provides lots of creative fun. When your child is finished, just shake it up and start again!

8. **20 Questions**: This classic game is tried and true. One person thinks of something, and the rest have only 20 questions to guess what it is (“yes” or “no” answers only). Hours of guaranteed fun!

9. **Travel Tic-Tac-Toe**: With some felt and Velcro, you can create a reusable tic-tac-toe game for the car. Just cut out an approximately 7x7 inch square of felt, and draw a tic-tac-toe grid with a permanent marker. Then use coins (one player can be pennies, the other nickels, for instance) to play!

10. **Audio Books**: Lifesavers on long journeys, books on CD are a great way to enjoy new stories and revisit old favorites. Stock a selection and when all else fails, just hit “play”!