

Planning a Trip? Encourage Your Child to Help

Deborah Farmer Kris



No matter where you're going—whether running errands around town or to a big gathering far away—you can encourage your child to practice their literacy skills as you plan together. Here are some resources and tips from PBS KIDS to help.

In the *Molly of Denali: The Big Gathering* shorts, Molly and her family prepare to go to the annual Alaska Federation of Natives gathering, where Alaska Native people from across the state come together. As Molly learns how a trip is planned, she uses literacy skills—and contributes to her family and community.

Here are four ways to involve your child in preparing for a trip.

1. **Set a schedule together.** To find her dance performance time, Molly checks the event schedule. Making a schedule with your child can help them anticipate what comes next. Create a table with time indicators, words, and pictures for activities. Your child can help decide which activities to include.
2. **Explore with a map.** Molly uses a map to learn how far her family and friends travel to get together. Share a map (digital or printed) that shows your home and destination. Discuss the places you'll visit and the different routes you can take. Encourage your child to consider distances, travel times, and what factors make one route preferred over another.
3. **Get more information.** Molly helps her friends prepare for the gathering by looking up information online, including ferry schedules and delivery dates. Researching together can help your child practice using keywords and finding information for planning. With the schedule and map as a reference, your child can help research questions—independently or with support—like the following:
 - › What is the weather forecast during the trip?
 - › What are some sites and attractions at our destination?
 - › How will we get around?
4. **Create checklists.** Molly and Grandpa Nat use a checklist to keep track of items to pack. Offering help as needed, invite your child to create and use a checklist by writing a title and listing items to pack or tasks to complete. Checking off items after completion can also help children develop handwriting skills while remembering the details.

These activities encourage children to engage in literacy skills that are essential for practical, everyday tasks. Children thrive when they feel useful and have something important to contribute. Happy travels!

Deborah Farmer Kris is an education journalist, parent educator, and the author of the *All the Time* picture book series.

The contents of this article were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, this content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. The project is funded by a Ready To Learn grant [PR/Award No S295A200004 CFDA No. 84.295A] provided by the Department of Education to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. All rights reserved.