
insights and encouragement from the “home front”

MEMOIRS OF A MOM

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Camping with Kids

Our family has just returned from three weeks of camping in Montana and Utah. I feel well equipped to address the topic of camping with kids. Camping itself is always an adventure. If you are not prepared camping with kids can turn into a misadventure. Here are some helpful hints that I've learned over the years to make your next camping trip great.

- ◆ Pick a campsite with interest to children. Rocks to climb on, sandpiles to play in, or water features (supervised, of course) are fun for the kids and give you some rest too!
- ◆ Start small. Not used to camping? Try somewhere close first, borrow gear rather than purchasing and just go for one night. Or try camping out in your backyard.
- ◆ Be prepared for dirt. As a toddler I dressed my daughter in black pants and dark-colored long sleeve shirts (weather permitting) so she could get grubby and it wouldn't show. My two-year-old son loves to lie on the ground and run his cars back and forth in the dirt. Since I am mentally prepared for it I can let both of us enjoy the moment.
- ◆ If you are camping with children four years of age and younger bring a backpack child carrier. Carry it on your back empty until your child gets tired or fussy. If your child uses a highchair at home bring one with you. Your child will eat better. It also keeps him contained while you are fixing dinner in camp.
- ◆ Be realistic in your expectations for your camping adventure. Camping with young children will involve more work for you than at home. Fix simple, kid-friendly meals that involve little preparation. Plan some fun activities like making s'mores around the campfire, but have a back-up plan if it's not going well. Piling into the tent and watching a movie on the portable DVD player might be just what you all need to be “happy campers”!

Happy Camping!

Lisa Potts