

TRAVELING



with babies

Pro-Tips

- ☐ Travel w/ [TSA Precheck](#): You will still have to break down the stroller at security, but you won't have to take off any clothing, which makes the entire process easier.
- ☐ Check car seat at check-in and keep your stroller until you get to the gate. Most airlines will check it for free and you'll get to use it while in the airport.
- ☐ Formula: travel with dry powder in its original container and purchase distilled water w/out additives in the airport once you get there. Keep formula powder that is traveling with you easily accessible and in its original packaging to speed up security checks. Powders like this will get searched EVERY time.
- ☐ Breastfeeding: Most airports have nursing rooms. Research each airport before you go. Here's info from [DTW](#).
- ☐ Pumping: See [this helpful post](#) from [Exclusive Pumping](#).
- ☐ Have a plan but be flexible. Adapt based on your baby's current state.

Necessary Travel Documents

- ☐ Pack your child's birth certificate. (It's to prove they are under 2 y/o and it's just easier to be able to identify who your child is.)
 - ☐ Always have a document with you that proves your relationship with your child when traveling.
- ☐ Your child needs a [Child Travel Consent](#) form when they're traveling without all their parents or legal guardians.
- ☐ No matter their age, everyone requires a passport to travel outside the United States.

Quick note: I've traveled within mainland USA and Hawaii and no one has ever asked to see my child's birth certificate. However, you don't want to risk flying without proper identification. If you forget it, don't worry about it. Just be prepared with other identifying documents (medical bills, prescriptions, etc. TSA likes to see documents or medication that have your current address on them).

Comfort Items

- ☐ Travel clothes + swaddle blanket (a swaddle blanket is more versatile than a swaddle but pack what makes sense for your kiddo)
 - ☐ Bring small bottles and pack big ones (See airline rules below for breast milk versus formula and water allotted amounts)
 - ☐ Cheap travel stroller (I have the [Baby Jogger](#), but [here](#) are some other great options.)
 - ☐ Car seat or booster seat, based on child's age ([0-8yo](#))
 - ☐ Pack a pillow (Side note: I always over pack and the pillow never makes it. If it helps you or the baby and you have room, pack away! I always check a satin pillow case because #luxury. You do you.)
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The Specifics

[TSA Regulations](#)

*Formula, breast milk, toddler drinks and baby/toddler food (to include puree pouches) in quantities **greater than 3.4 ounces or 100 milliliters are allowed in carry-on baggage and do not need to fit within a quart-sized bag.** Formula, breast milk, toddler drinks and baby/toddler food (to include puree pouches) are considered medically necessary liquids. This also applies to breast milk and formula cooling accessories, such as ice packs, freezer packs and gel packs (regardless of presence of breast milk). Your child or infant does not need to be present or traveling with you to bring breast milk, formula and/or related supplies.*

Inform the TSA officer at the beginning of the screening process that you are carrying formula, breast milk, toddler drinks and baby/toddler food (to include puree pouches) in excess of 3.4 ounces. Remove these items from your carry-on bag to be screened separately from your other belongings. TSA officers may need to test the liquids for explosives or concealed prohibited items.

It's helpful to the officers when formula and breast milk are in clear, translucent bottles and not plastic bags or pouches. Liquids in plastic bags or pouches may not be able to be screened by Bottle Liquid Scanners, and you may be asked to open them (if feasible) for alternate screening such as Explosive Trace Detection and Vapor Analysis for the presence

of liquid explosives. Screening will never include placing anything into the medically necessary liquid.

Navigating Breast Pumps on Airplanes

[Exclusive Pumping](#) has amazing tips and scenarios for mamas traveling with breast pumps. If you're nervous about what to pack, pumping on an airplane, or navigating tricky situations, check out their post "[Flying with a Breast Pump and Pumping on a Plane](#)."

Airline-Specific Regulations

If you have links to other airlines, please send them my [way](#). The standard for most airlines is that each person over 14 y/o is allowed one lap infant free of charge. For instance, if you are a family of five with three children under 2y/o, you have to pay for a seat for the third child. The other two children can sit in you and your partners' laps free of charge.

Airlines	Customer Service Number	Quick Deets
Delta	1 (800) 221-1212	You may check your car seat at the front check-in for free. You may check the stroller at the gate for free as long as it's below 50lbs. You can add your infant under 2y/o to your ticket by logging into Delta after you purchase your tickets.
United	1 (800) 864-8331	United follows TSA guidelines, so pack however much breastmilk or formula you need. Call the customer service number for more specifics. You may check your car seat at the front check-in for free. You may check the stroller at the gate for free. This airline offers pre-boarding for families with infants under 2y/o.
American	1 (800) 433- 7300	Only one carry-on diaper bag is allowed, but nursing mothers do get an additional bag for their supplies. You may check your car seat at the front check-in for free. You may check the stroller at the gate for free as long as it's below 20lbs.

Hawaiian	1 (877) 426- 4537	By far the most kid-friendly airline we've traveled on. You may check your car seat at the front check-in for free. You may check the stroller at the gate for free as long as it's below 50lbs. You must call the customer service number after you've booked tickets to add your infant to your ticket.
Southwest	1 (800) 435-9792	No clear information regarding which items you can check for free. Call before you start packing for measurements and weight limits.
Spirit	1 (855) 728-3555	Spirit will check your car seat and stroller for free, including double strollers.
Frontier	Not readily available. Use the FAQs page.	You may check your car seat at the front check-in for free. You may check the stroller at the gate for free.
JetBlue	1 (800) 538-2583	Weird rule from JetBlue: To adults traveling with two infants may be seated in the same row, but on opposite sides of the aisle. You can bring one diaper bag, one stroller, and one car seat for free.

Booking Flights

If your travel schedule affords it, extend a layover by a day with an infant to lessen the impact of drastic time zone changes. We stopped in LA and stayed with a sibling instead of flying direct from Detroit to Hawaii.

Some families prefer to book a lengthier flight and just get it over with, but you have to know your child. A fair expectation for our baby is that he'll be uncomfortable and therefore far too fussy after 6 or 7 hours. Do what makes sense for your family.

If you are forced to take a flight that doesn't quite fit your family's temperament, do the best you can. If your baby screams on a flight, remember that you aren't the first parent to experience that. You're human. Your baby is human. Most travelers have headphones at this point.

What are the best times to fly? During your child's normal nap schedule. We have the most success during these two times:

- The early morning flight (Feed, then nap, then arrival. Easy.)
- The red eye (Feed in airport, nap on takeoff with a pacifier for air pressure, your baby will usually stay asleep the entire flight.)

Packing for Airport

☐ **Baby's Diaper Bag** (*this extra bag should be free*)

☐ **Essential Items**

- ☐ Toys/ books your baby is currently interested in. Our baby loves [these](#)– they are great for plane rides, the car, the bathtub, etc.
- ☐ 1 diaper for every hour of your travel (if you don't have space you can always purchase diapers at the airport. Look up your terminal online before you go.)
- ☐ 2 pacifiers – you always need a backup. [These attachment straps](#) are super cheap and convenient.
- ☐ 2 burp cloths
- ☐ 2 bibs
- ☐ 2 extra outfits fit for travel (onesies are great for cold planes)
- ☐ Ziploc bag of wipes (again you can buy more in the airport)
- ☐ Age appropriate snacks
 - ☐ At 4 m/o your babe can start eating solids. Here are some [great purees](#) for the plane.
 - ☐ Once your kiddo has teeth, pack teetherers. Our 7 m/o is obsessed with [these](#).

- ☐ Ziploc bags or grocery bags for dirty cloths or diapers you can't immediately throw away.
- ☐ [White Noise Machine](#) (Backup: YouTube videos on your phone. The one below puts my kid out every. single. time.)



- ☐ **Non-essential Items**
 - ☐ baby headphones to block out sound
 - ☐ Extra blankets or swaddles
 - ☐ [Teethers](#)
 - ☐ Cooling Swabs for [Teething](#) – nothing else works for our baby.
 - ☐ Baby carriers or wraps (I love [Hope & Plum's ring sling](#) and it doubles as a blanket, but there are a million choices out there. Pack what you feel comfortable using.)
 - ☐ This [Frida Baby Push Pop feeder](#) is so easy to clean while traveling. We highly recommend it over the mesh feeders.
- ☐ **Bottle Bag or Nursing Bag**
 - ☐ 2oz bottle for takeoff/ landing
 - ☐ extra pacifiers
 - ☐ Children's Motrin and/or Tylenol
 - ☐ Our pediatrician said we could start giving our child Motrin once he reached 6 m/o and it's safe to use on a plane if he's fussy and uncomfortable. We use Motrin as our last resort because we can usually only use it once based on timing.
 - ☐ dry formula (that way you don't have to keep pre-made formula cold once opened)
 - ☐ bottles filled with pediatric water (depending on airline. Delta will just scan the bottles at security but allow them. Hawaiian airlines won't let you pack more than 3.4oz of liquid, including breast milk)
 - ☐ Airport kiosks will have distilled water, but you have to search for bottle water without additives. You can usually find distilled Dasani w/out fluoride.
- ☐ **Your Carry-on**
 - ☐ Snacks
 - ☐ Comfortable clothes + a backup shirt or jacket (layers)
 - ☐ Important documents for you and your baby (your license, the baby's birth certificate, and emergency contact sheet just in case you are hurt)
 - ☐ If you're traveling alone with your child, especially internationally, complete a [parental consent letter](#). They are required in Canada but not in the United States. They are required for international travel outside of the US.
 - ☐ Compression socks if you're doing a ton of walking

- ☐ Your medication + Excedrin (or a comparable medication for headaches)
- ☐ **Strollers and Car seats**
 - ☐ When our child was 4m/o we traveled with his stroller that had a car seat attachment. Since he couldn't hold his head up yet, we kept his front-facing car seat attached to the stroller until we boarded the plane. Then the airline (Delta) checked both pieces for free.
 - ☐ When your child can hold their neck up and therefore sit in a front-facing stroller, feel free to check the car seat at the initial check-in before security and take a smaller, more travel-friendly stroller to the gate. [Here's](#) the one we have – It's reasonably priced and folds small enough to fit in an overhead bin. [Here's](#) a great blog on different options.
 - ☐ Need a bag for your car seat? Here's a [cheap one](#) on Amazon. The same brand sells [stroller bags](#) as well.
- ☐ **Sleeping Arrangements**
 - ☐ This was the biggest headache for us because we didn't want to lug our child's pack-n-play around in Hawaii. Nor did we want to pay to load another item onto the flight. We did not expect to do as much research as we did to find an alternative.
 - ☐ We purchased the [Pod Diaper Bag and Changing Station](#) so that our child could have an easy play area/ sleep space when traveling or on roadtrips. While in Hawaii, we quickly noticed that the inner pad is a suffocation risk, so it wouldn't be an option for future trips. Most people end up buying some version of the [KidCo Pea Pod](#) or something similar. It's light weight and a safe sleeping area for your child.
 - ☐ The [SlumberPod](#) has great reviews and we've had family members sing the product's praises. We haven't used it, but it's something to consider if your kiddo loves to sleep in a pitch black atmosphere.
 - ☐ Most locations have companies that [rent out](#) baby supplies. We highly recommend looking into one of these companies if you're traveling to a high population destination. Here's [an example](#) of one such company in Miami: [Baby Quip](#).
- ☐ **Your Checked Suitcase**
 - ☐ Do not feel bad about checking a suitcase. You can put extra formula in there, diapers, etc.
 - ☐ Check whatever will make your life easier on your trip. Isn't life hard enough?

Partner Travel Systems

Boarding Together

- This is a tried and true system.
- One person can break down the stroller on the boarding ramp and ensures it has a *pink* tag on the outside of the stroller's bag. You get a *pink* tag at the desk attendant before you board. (Don't have a stroller bag? Here's a [cheap one](#). You can also fly without one. Your stroller just gets really dirty stored below the plane.

- We tend to book seats in the middle and the aisle so that we aren't asking a stranger to constantly get up during a flight.
- Hawaiian airlines is so kid friendly. If you aren't sitting together, they will actually change your seats and put you closer to a bathroom. Our flight attendants even held our baby when they realized we were exhausted. We cannot say enough great things about this airline.

Boarding Separately

- One partner boards the plane when called. They store the bags and get the seating area ready. The second partner boards at last call with the baby. This system allows the baby to keep moving in an open space before being confined in your assigned airplane seat. Travelers without babies will thank you for this pro move.
- *Note:* I tried this system with my husband and hated it. As an interracial couple, we are always nervous about being separated. He boarded the plane, got our seats ready, and I just remember having a ton of anxiety while I stood at the gate by myself. If this system works for you, great! If it doesn't, just board together.

Chaos Signals

- **Tap-Out Eye Contact:** You know this look. It's the look of utter exhaustion. See it. Recognize it. Allow that partner a walk in silence for at least ten minutes. Even if you're on the plane, that partner can get up and walk the aisles.
- **Verbal Cues:** Some couples have a chaos-word. When uttered, they get to step away without question. The trick is they have to provide space for the other partner to have a break when they return. Balance is key.
- **Ask for help from fellow plane parents.** We've had so many people lean over and give us extra teethingers they packed or a book their kiddo just finished reading.
- **Just remember to communicate.** Everyone has a breaking point. Take a break when you need it rather than getting angry and yelling. An airport is not the place to lose your cool.

Delegate Tasks

- This seems like something you shouldn't have to talk through, but knowing who handles what makes the stress of traveling so much easier.
- Security Lines: Have one partner be in charge of the bags, while the other partner navigates breaking down the stroller and re-positioning the baby.
- Diaper Changes: If you have to change every diaper during the trip, that fifth diaper could just put you over the edge. Switch off and stay sane.
- Feeding Schedules: Will you have to shift their feeding schedule based on time changes? Work this out ahead of time.
- Important Documents: Who keeps which documents? Where are they? What do you do if you get separated? What are your emergency numbers or plans?

Settling Fussy Babies

- Whether on the plane or in an airport, get up and move.
 - Put that baby in a stroller and get your steps in.
 - Snuggly wrap your baby in a ring sling or blanket and go for a walk.
- Snacks or an extra tiny bottle
- Looking in mirrors or out the window as planes take off/ land
- Motrin if your baby is at least 6m/o
- Toys in a confined area
- Distractor videos (see below)

Distractor Videos

Even without sound, the visuals will help keep your baby occupied in the airport or on the plane if you need an extra 20 minutes of peace.

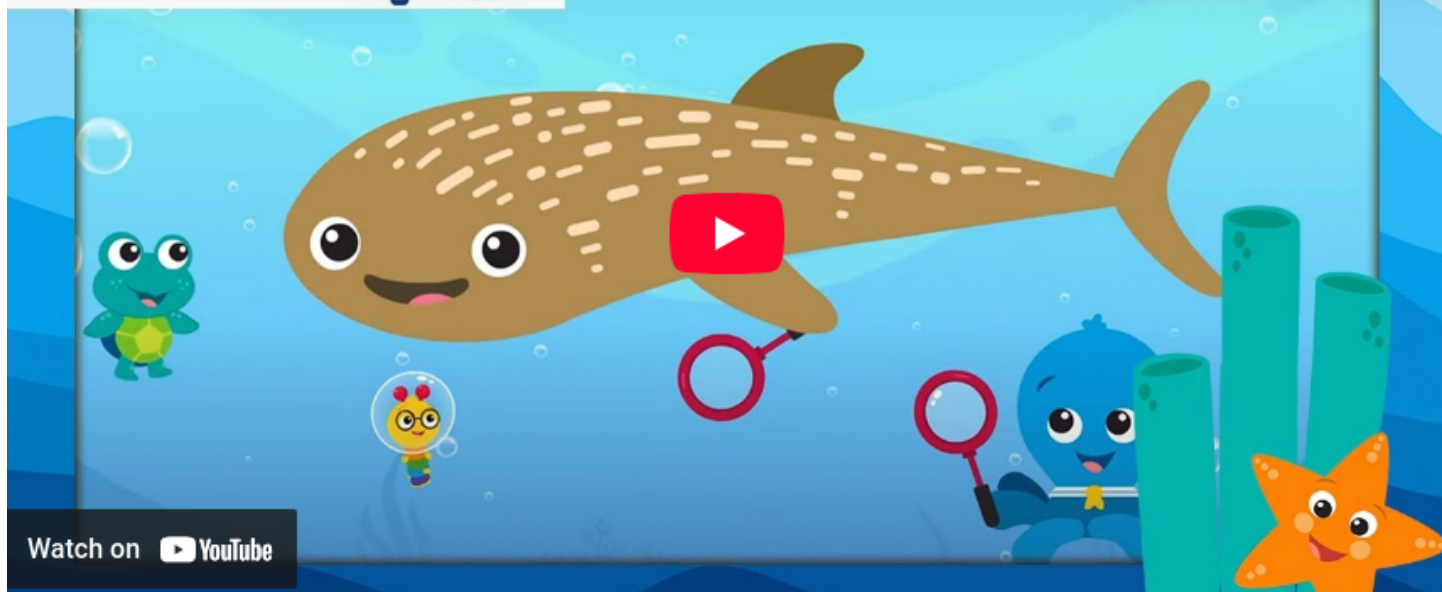




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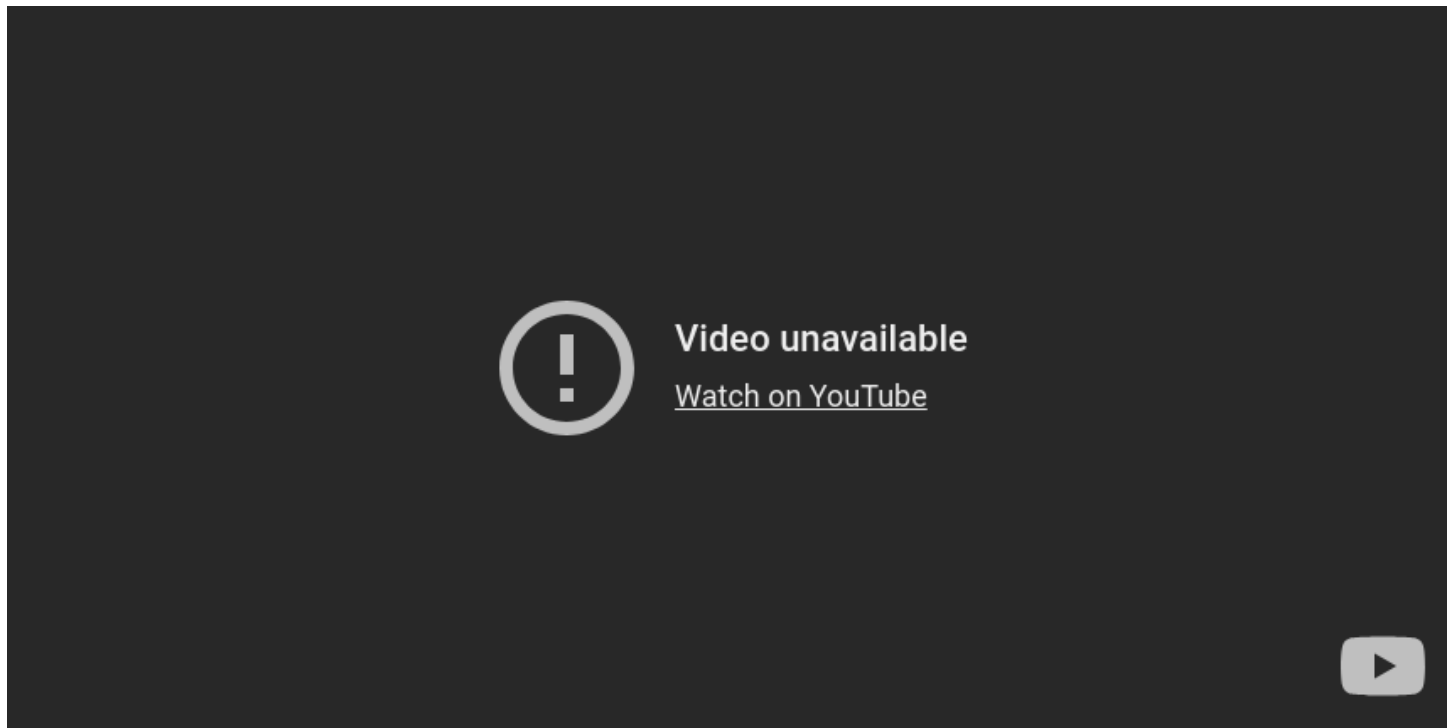
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Helpful Social Media Accounts

@[the_goddard_fam](#) has a [great post](#) on how to create a makeshift bed for your kiddo on a flight. Note: This trick only works if you purchased a seat for your child or if you happen to have an empty seat in your row.

@[takingcarababies](#) is a prominent baby and toddler sleep expert on Instagram. Here's a [helpful collection](#) of her travel tips. [This collection](#) includes how to develop a sleep schedule during road trips.

Last Updated Sep 10, 2024 *by Danielle Conti, Contelli Creative Solutions.*

Please email contellicreativesolutions@gmail.com if you have any questions or additional recommendations. Thanks for reading! Good luck on your future travels.

