

# Tips for Traveling Dads

## Being a dad is one tough job

If you are a working dad, travel often comes with the job. While it is difficult to miss first words, school plays, or even bedtime, your job is important in allowing you to provide for your family and keep them healthy and happy. Even though traveling may take a toll on you and your family, there are ways to stay connected while you are on the road.

## How to be there when you're not

**Communication is key.** These days, it's easy to stay in touch from almost anywhere. When you're away, make sure you call home at least once a day. In fact, you can try to set a regular time that works for both you and your family, like before breakfast, after dinner, or before bed when everyone has time to be present and to listen and talk. Tell your kids details about your day and ask questions about theirs. Sending daily emails or emailing pictures of where you are and having your child do the same is another way to stay connected. Some computers and phones are even equipped with video capabilities so you can see the person you are speaking to. If you will be missing a school performance, sports game, or other event, see if another parent might be taping it and watch it with your child when you return.

**Support your family.** Supporting your family means more than providing for them. In many families where dads travel, they often become the good guy – the one who is around on the weekend or brings presents. Make sure you also take on the role of disciplinarian when you're in town, and even when you're away, as much as you can. Support your partner/spouse (or caregiver of your children if you're a single dad) by speaking with them daily, as well, and letting them know that they can reach you if and when needed. If you do have a partner or spouse, give them a break when you return by taking over childcare, but also make sure you and that person get to spend some quality alone time together.

**Ready, set, go!** Before you head out of town, make sure you have taken care of anything that might need your attention while you are gone. For example, sign and camp or school forms, know what events or activities your child will be attending, and help your partner, spouse, or children's caregiver in planning meals, childcare, or rides. Show your children where you will be on the map and mark on a calendar how long you will be gone. Talk to them about helping out around the house and listening to whomever is in charge while you are gone. You can even leave notes under their pillows or on near the cereal box for them to find, so that they be reminded of your presence.

**Talk to your boss.** Being a working parent is far from unusual at most workplaces. Have a talk with your boss about flexibility in general, not just for when you are traveling. Having children means things will come up during the workday. Be ready to give and take and put in some time from home or some overtime when needed in exchange for being able to coach a soccer team or staying home when a child is sick. When it comes to travel, try to keep trips short or work out coming home for the weekend if it is an extended trip.

This information was compiled by <http://onetoughjob.org/stress.aspx>