

EXPERT BABY TIPS

Baby SLEEP CONSULTANT

Camping with small children 101

Camping with small children is possible, I promise – I've done it every New Year's for the past four years! All you need is good planning and preparation, along with a few survival tips to get you through. So here they are:

Keep it dark

Settling for naps or bedtime can be challenging, simply because there is more light which diminishes melatonin, the sleep hormone responsible for making us feel sleepy. I would recommend investing in some snoozeshade products (see www.sleepytot.co.nz) for great blackout options that will fit your pram or portacot to make naps possible anywhere! This will help your baby/babies settle to sleep, as well avoid possible early morning wake ups.



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Keep it cool

This can be challenging when camping so try to open up the windows of your tent first thing in the morning, and leave them open all day if possible. If it's too hot in the tent, then naps in a covered pram (use your new snoozeshade!) parked under a cool tree should also work well.

Use white noise

If you are out at the beach, camping, or any noisy environment, I would recommend that you use white noise, such as a baby shusher (see www.sleepytot.co.nz) or the baby shusher app, to cover up noises that may distract your child from settling to sleep. I used a baby shusher to settle my nearly three year old to sleep during our last camping trip, I wish I had it when she was smaller too!

Respect nap time

Maintain your usual routine where you can – a well rested child will deal with changes better, while an overtired child is likely to be more difficult to settle and may struggle to stay asleep. It's ok to do naps while out and about - this is where your pram comes in handy or a baby carrier (or two or three!). If you're down at the beach or out exploring a nap can still be had in a baby carrier or the pram. If you do have a busy day or naps have been hit and miss, try to offer an earlier bedtime or more naps. My babies only managed 45 min naps during camping so would sometimes have four naps!

Communicate to others what your babies' needs are

Let your spouse, partner, or others camping with you, know when nap times are and if you would like to be back at the tent for that. Sometimes Dads have grand ideas of what they would like to do but it doesn't always fit with the babies, so let him know ahead of time so that he can plan around that rather than get disappointed when you have to say no.

Plan ahead

Pack things like snacks, drink bottles, sunblock, hats, wipes and spare nappies just in case you're longer than you thought. All that playing in the sun can be exhausting so a few extra snacks are great to keep them going.

Plan your food

If you're just weaning your baby onto solids and they are seven months or older, so need that good protein boost for sleep, try adding a small amount of canned chicken (in brine), salmon or tuna to their lunch solids to increase the protein in a jar of bought baby food. Bought food isn't as high in protein as what homemade food is but we don't expect you to offer homemade food while camping – this is when bought food comes in handy. Take plenty of snack foods too just in case dinner is running late.

Pack for all weather

Sometimes the nights can cool off quickly, especially over Easter, so a good sleeping bag such as Merino Kids can help with this as well as packing extra layers just in case. The same can be said for the days, it's not always sunshine and roses so pack raincoats and warm clothes.



CAMP BATH

TENT CITY



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Do the best that you can but enjoy your trip and have a good time too. Remember, if you do have any issues or slip into bad habits you can sort these when you get home and Baby Sleep Consultant can help you to get back on track if needed. Follow us on Facebook for more tips from the experts!