

# Eight Tips for Over Night Trips!

## Sleep Overs

Try a practice run and offer your child an opportunity to stay overnight somewhere they feel safe. You might start with a family member before progressing to a friend. In extremely anxious kids, see if they can start by sleeping in a different room and then invite a friend to their home for a less challenging start!

## Packing their bags

Encourage your little one to pack their bags with you and include things like ear plugs and eye masks so that they can get a good night's sleep. Maybe you can spray something with your perfume/cologne for comfort or hide notes in their socks, shoes or wash bags so that they have little thoughts from home.

## Communication Cards

Speaking up when you're overwhelmed is hard. Try printing off "phone home" or "time out" cards that your child can show a designated teacher for those moments when trying to explain is just a little too much.

## Choose your words carefully

See if some of your child's anxiety is actually excitement and encourage them to use this word instead. This is a great way to 'hack' your brain as using positive words elicits a positive neurochemical response resulting in happy hormones being released!

If as a parent, you're anxious, be careful to keep this well-hidden so that your child isn't worried about you!

## Talk it through

Find a quiet time to discuss what they might be anxious about. They might feel some embarrassment about their concerns so find a non-confrontational way to approach them such as in the car or on a walk. Use open ended questions such as "what are you thinking/feeling about the trip?" to encourage exploration. Then discuss how, together, you can find solutions.

## Plan their partners

If your child struggles with someone in their class try speaking to their teacher to ensure they're not in a room with someone that doesn't offer them support.

Plan with another parent for your kids to sit together or share a room if they'd like.

## Get acquainted with their destination

Explore the area they're visiting online and show them maps of where they're going and the journey from home or school to get there. We often fear what we don't know so being familiar is a great way to ease anxiety.

## Coming home

Assure them that they can come home if they need to, feeling trapped and powerless is a recipe for anxiety and this reassurance will go a long way.

When they do come home, ask open questions such as "what was your favourite/least favourite parts of the trip" as this will encourage emotional processing.

