

Pointers For Parents

Brainy Backpacks Bust Kids' Boredom

(NAPSA)—Parents who plan ahead—whether it's for a family road trip or the ride home from school—find they can actually look forward to some quality time in the car.

A few tips can make for learning and laughing around each curve:

- Make each kid a tote packed with work sheets, crayons and stickers. Schedule boredom-breaking intervals to encourage kids to engage with their surroundings, companions and “smart” gear. For example, plan for 15 minutes each of family game time, independent playtime and “kids’ choice” activity time.

Roll Down the Reading Highway

- Get the kids to read their favorite story or book chapter to the family. Kids can touch LeapFrog's new Tag reader to any of the 17 books in the Tag library to hear stories aloud, play comprehension games and practice reading skills independently or with you. For quiet time in the car, parents can connect headphones (sold separately) to the Tag reader.

You can learn more at www.leapfrog.com/tag.

- Have your own spelling bee. Choose words appropriate for each kid's grade level, and don't forget to challenge the grown-ups. Bring a pocket dictionary for word ideas and definitions.

- Listen to They Might Be Giants' “Here Come the ABCs” kid-friendly CD together and work on memorizing the words and singing the songs to each other.

Play Road Trip Arithmetic

- Help your children calculate



Following a few boredom-busting tips in the car steers your family toward quality time on the road.

your gas mileage and figure out how long it will take to reach your destination, given your average speed. Have them predict how much it will cost to fill up the tank based on the price per gallon.

- Give your kids a snack and souvenir allowance for the travel day, helping them to build decision-making and money-management skills.

Become Geography Gurus

- Bring a child-friendly compass and map and help the kids chart your course, pointing out where you started, where you're going and how you're getting there. Every time they ask “How much farther?” have them name from the map towns or states you've already passed, as well as what's on the horizon. They can keep track of your progress with a crayon and let you know “Are we there yet?”