

When Spouses Travel

Parenting becomes even tougher when a spouse's job requirements involve traveling for extended periods of time. Suddenly you are left with the challenge of being "on" twenty-four hours a day. Without the welcomed breaks you get from a spouse, these times alone can be difficult and tiring. Planning and organization prior to their departure can help to make the days easier. Maintaining routines and activities will help to make the parent's absence less disruptive to family life. It is also important to try to keep the children connected to the absent parent. With sensitivity, consistency, and love, the time will pass by less stressfully.

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED

- Have pictures of the traveling parent around where the child can touch and hold them.
- Talk about the traveling parent often and schedule regular phone calls.
- Allow and encourage older children to write, email, and phone their traveling parent.

MAKING THINGS EASIER

- Before your spouse leaves, make sure you have the house stocked with food and other necessities.
- Remain consistent with discipline and routines.
- Make sure you tell friends and family that you'll be alone, and ask for help if needed. You will be pleasantly surprised with the offers you get!
- Schedule play dates, and time with family and friends.

- Plan an evening meal with another family or parent whose spouse is also traveling. This will fill the most difficult time of day and provide social opportunities.
- Do a kid-swap with you watching your friend's kids, and then having them watch yours so you can get some errands done.
- It's inevitable that a child may sick or other unforeseen things happen. Have a good relationship with a neighbor or a friend close by to help in a time of need.
- Have all emergency phone numbers in a visible area.
- Schedule a babysitter in advance to help out during this time, so you can take a nap, or get some quiet time.
- Do what you need to do to make life less stressful for you. If your house gets messy, your kids don't get bathed, or you order a lot of take-out, it's OK!
- Enjoy quiet solitude when the kids are tucked in.
- Allow time for traveling parent to adjust back into the home.

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