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**Comfort Play
& Teach:**

A Positive Approach to Parenting™

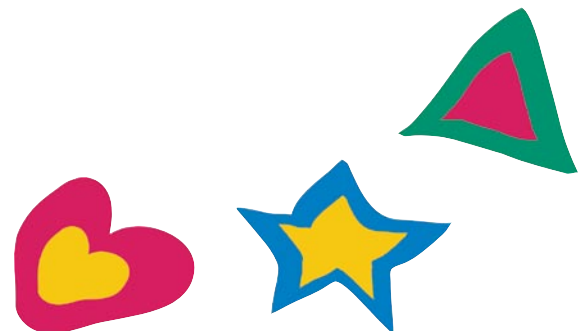
Every Day

Invest in Kids: Preparing Children for when their Parents will be Away

Being a parent is a demanding, full-time job. It takes a lot of energy to raise children and it is normal for parents to need a break sometimes, or even to want to take a vacation without taking their children along. It is important for parents to take care of themselves, and for children to experience dealing with feelings that arise when their parents are absent. What can parents do to prepare their children for those times they will be away, and to feel reassured themselves that their child will be alright? Invest in Kids has a number of suggestions to help parents plan for having a truly enjoyable vacation!

Preparing Your Child

- From a very early age, parents prepare their children for being separated from them, by playing games like Peek-a-boo and Hide and Seek. Games like these are not only fun, but they help children to understand that their parents are still there, even when they can't be seen.
- While you are vacationing, arrange for the care provider to stay at your home rather than expecting your child to adjust to a new environment as well as to a new person. Being surrounded by familiar things will help your child to feel more comfortable and secure while you are away.
- To facilitate separating from your child, provide a calendar that shows when you are departing and when you are returning and show her how she can mark off the days in between. Provide photos of you for your child to look at or a personal effect that may comfort her.





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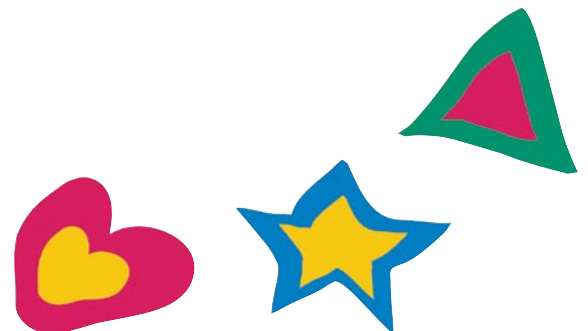
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Preparing Yourself

- Be sure that you feel confident about your care provider, especially if the person is someone other than a family member. Check their resumé and contact their references as well. The more comfortable you are with your care provider, the less you will worry about your children when you are away from them.
- Invite the caregiver to come to your home to provide your child with opportunities to spend time with her. Gradually increase the time your child spends with the caregiver, to increase her comfort level. Prior to your vacation, ensure that your child understands that this is the person who will be care for her while you are away. It is important for both you and your child to feel comfortable.
- Remember that you are the expert when it comes to your own children and their needs. Share as much information as you can with the care provider and let her know what your own needs and expectations are. She is there to support you and to help maintain continuity while you are away. Everything that you share with her will enable her to fulfill this role to your satisfaction.
- Be comfortable with the amount of time you will be away. If this is your first time taking a vacation, consider beginning with one night, or trying a weekend getaway. As your comfort increases, you can explore taking longer vacations. You can always call your children, feeling greater confidence that they are fine.





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Preparing Your Care Provider

- Provide the care provider with the contact information for friends, neighbours and family members that can supply help, if needed. If you are away for several days, the care provider might appreciate a break from time to time and will feel very supported knowing there is someone they can call.
- Shop for groceries ahead of time and plan menus that you know your children will enjoy. If ingredients and recipes are ready in advance, this will help your caregiver with meal preparation. Make sure that your caregiver knows about any allergies or food restrictions.
- Ensure that your care giver has all needed information such as health cards, history of illnesses and allergies, contact information for the family doctor and dentist, your travel itinerary with contact information, rules and routines and instructions for household appliances such as dishwasher, DVD player.

For more information visit www.investinkids.ca

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