



On the road with...

Dr. Jo Lichten

Have kid, will travel

I don't know who cried more — my four-year-old, Allie, or me. When I called home on my first business trip, I wasn't sure whether I made the right choice in accepting the job on the speaking circuit.

But that wasn't why I took my daughter with me on my next five-day business trip. It just so happened that my husband announced at the last minute that he, too, would need to travel the very same week.

Yikes! What were we going to do? We lived more than 1,000 miles away from our nearest relative — and what "friend" would want to take care of a four-year-old for five days.

When I frantically called my parents for advice, they volunteered to accompany me and Allie for those five days.

I know what you're thinking. It didn't sound like too much fun to me either, but what choice did I have?

Surprisingly, it turned out to be a great week! Work was easier knowing my daughter was close — and in good hands. Allie and my parents began to develop a relationship that had previously been impossible based on our 2,000-mile difference. My parents also got to see an area of the country that they hadn't seen before — with free room and board on me. And, much to my surprise, I enjoyed my parent's company.

Since then, Allie has accompanied me on nearly 50 business trips. It turns out we're not alone. More than 32 million business trips last year included children, according to The Travel Industry Association of America. While that's only 16% of all business excursions, it's nearly a 100% increase over the last decade.

If you want to take the kids on your next business trip, here's some advice to heed:

Sometimes, it doesn't hurt to ask

Lisa Earle McLeod, author of *Forget Perfect*, took her 6-month-old baby, nanny in tow, to Las Vegas for a weeklong sales meeting. "My boss said I had to be there, and as a nursing mom, I wasn't about to go away for a week without the baby," she recalls. "In a moment of hormone-induced hysteria, I told him I wouldn't go unless I could bring my nanny and baby and have him pay for it. The words left my mouth, and I thought I would get fired on the spot. When he said yes, I realized if you're a top performer, you can get away with way more than you think you can."

It doesn't always cost you extra

McLeod's not the only one who's gotten the boss to pay. Paul Saldana, president/CEO of Economic Development Corporation in Tulare County, California, negotiated with the board of directors to allow him to take family members on two trips per year. "I'm glad that my 12-year-old son gets to see what my job is all about," he explains. "Last year we went to Washington, D.C., where he got to tour the Capitol and meet his congressman."

If the company won't pay, don't overlook tax advantages. Ken Milani, professor of accountancy at Notre Dame's business school says, "There are federal income tax advantages of paying someone to take care of your child or children (under the age of 13) during the trip. If this spending enables the

Places to leave the kids

You don't have to drag the kids along with you to your meetings or leave the kids in the hotel room. If you do some planning your child will be able to take dance classes, go rock climbing, invent things, and much more. Here are some ideas of where to start looking for fun:

Camp Invention

A program of the National Inventors Hall of Fame and located in 600 schools across the country, this one-week summer enrichment program is designed for girls and boys entering

parent(s) to work or look for work during the trip, the expenditure qualifies for the child and dependent care credit."

Make it an educational experience

You can take your trips during the school year, too. Just because your child will miss class, doesn't mean they can't study on the road. Plus, teachers may more likely grant an excused absence if make it educational, too. Have your child write a paper about what was seen and done on the trip, or arrange for your son or daughter to give a speech to the class about what they learned on their trip.

"We try to get assignments ahead of time, and I also make them do a search on the Internet to find out more about the city," says Meryl Pearlstein, senior vice president at Nancy J. Friedman PR. "When my son found out that we would be able to visit the Parthenon replica in Nashville, he shouted, 'We're studying Greece in school. Let's take lots of pictures so they'll know I'm not playing hooky.' "

Put them to work

My daughter has attended many camps and programs when she travels with me on business, but she also enjoys hanging out with me to collate handouts, register participants and work my booth. Barbara Hemphill, creator of *Taming the Paper Tiger* (a software program for organizing your files), takes her daughter to help bring people to her booth. "Heidi, who loves to talk to people, walks around the exhibit hall wearing a button that reads: Find Anything in 5 Seconds or Less. Ask My Mom How. Booth Number --."

Plan some fun

Travel and business both involve a great deal of idle time so Allie packs her backpack with books, handheld games and art supplies. She also brings a few DVD movies to watch on my laptop. For convenience, we subscribe to Netflix — they'll send us new DVD movies at our destination and, after watching the movie, we just mail them back in their postage paid envelope.

Jennifer Keitt, another speaker, currently is planning a trip with her four children and husband to Las Vegas. "We always get a hotel suite and plan fun activities before, during, and after my work," she explains. "On this trip we're visiting Hoover Dam and the Grand Canyon." To plan a great road trip, visit *Motor Trends* magazine's "Summer Travel Guide" at www.motortrend.com or www.byways.com.

"Do the fun stuff before the work," suggests Laura Olinger, CEO of Eleuria. After three days playing at the ocean and Disneyland, her two kids were exhausted and enjoyed television, swimming and lounging while she went to her training course. But "fun" doesn't have to be expensive; Maria Bailey's (CEO and cofounder of BlueSuitMom.com) eight year old son says that all he wants is a "hotel with a good pool".

Find a nanny or day care

If you don't have family or friends that can travel with you, you always can find a babysitter through your destination hotel concierge. You'll also find organized programs at many of the hotels, community colleges and private facilities.

grades 2 through 6. www.campinvention.org.

Community colleges

Many community colleges offer fun classes with their "Kids on Campus" program (to find a community college at your destination, go to www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/cc/).

Fairmont Hotels

From tea with Eloise to eco-adventures, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts offers a variety of activities for those traveling with children. 1-800-441-1414 or www.fairmont.com.

Four Seasons

Fifteen properties currently offer the "Kids for all Seasons" program. Most activities are scheduled between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. www.fshr.com.

Hilton

Hilton Vacation Station offers day (and some evening) programs in 13 of their hotels during school breaks or year round. www.hilton.com/families.

Hyatt Resorts

Children can learn about the local wonders at 16 different Camp Hyatt locations which offer supervised half or full day sessions for children age 3 to 12. www.hyatt.com, Special Offers.

Loews Hotels

Each of the company's 18 hotels and resorts organize activities through their "Loews Loves Kids" program. "T. Loews," their teens program, offers product samples, a list of things to do in the area and "cool stuff" to borrow from Did You Forget? Closet. 1-800-23-LOEWS or check www.loewshotels.com.

Marriot/Renaissance

Many of the Marriott and Renaissance hotels and resorts offer supervised child care as well as special programs for kids (even some in the evening) that are designed at the property level to incorporate the uniqueness of each location. www.marriot.com.

Preferred Hotels

Currently, 66 of the Preferred Hotels offer babysitting/kids drop-off services. Some require advance reservations or request at time of check-in, but they will work to accommodate their guests' needs. 1-800-323-7500 or www.preferredhotels.com.

YMCA

More than 2,400 YMCAs are located across the United States; many offer day camps and overnight camps during the summer and other school vacations. www.ymca.com.

ActivitiesForKids.com

Select your destination and then click on "camps" to find out about day and overnight camps at your destination. There you'll find zoo that specialize in zoos, sports, acting, dance, and more. www.activitiesforkids.com

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Dr. Jo helps busy people stay healthy, sane and productive through her books, articles, media appearances, speaking engagements and Web site, www.drjo.com. She has written Dining Lean, How to Stay Healthy & Fit on the Road and Dr. Jo's No Big Deal Diet. Tell her what you think of her latest column by sending her an e-mail at travel@usatoday.com. Include your name, hometown and daytime phone number, and she may use your feedback in a future column.