

On the Bus or Subway

Connect: Traveling on public transportation, especially if it crowded, can feel overwhelming to a young child, but it can also be an adventure. Encourage your child focus on travel as an adventure.

Watch and listen: How does your child react to the bus or subway? Help put words to your child's feelings, which will help your child feel known and understood. Notice how your child reacts to other people, sounds, sights, escalators, doors opening and closing or other things you see, feel and hear.

Extend:

For your baby

- Follow your baby's gaze while you travel and say aloud what you think he or she may be focusing on: "See the baby across from us" or "It is very noisy on the bus."

For your toddler

- Imagine what your child is feeling and try to see the experience through his or her eyes. Is she or he feeling overwhelmed or excited? Let your child help you by putting the fare in the fare box, asking the driver for a transfer or signaling the driver to stop. This helps develop a sense of confidence and mastery.

For your preschooler

- Talk with your child about the last time you went on the bus or subway or what interests him or her about where you are going and what you will do when you get there. This will give your child a greater sense of control over his or her experiences and will help build memory and planning skills.
- Make up special games on a bus or subway, such as counting the stops until you arrive. This helps children understand where they are going, and creates special fun routines or traditions that are always remembered. This makes the world feel predictable and safe to your child.

These tips were developed for Born Learning by [Mind in the Making](#), a project of the Families and Work Institute and New Screen Concepts.