

# Easy ideas for screen-free car rides: 2-5

## Long Car Rides:

1. A metal cookie sheet with fun magnet shapes (letters, numbers, or TOMY Gearation magnets)
2. Clipboard and paper with a few pens tied on
3. Melissa and Doug's Water Wow
4. Sticker books
5. A playlist of favorite songs
6. Podcasts or Audiobooks (See Better Tech for 2-6 for ideas)
7. Crayola Window Crayons

## Short Car Rides:

Even regular car rides around town can feel long for younger kids, which makes it tempting to hand over a phone. Using things outside the car windows as a way to pass the time is a great way to build boredom tolerance.

1. Start a tradition of counting something on shorter car rides. "How many busses do you think we'll see on the way to school?"
2. For older preschoolers, you can start a contest between two different things you might see. For instance, how many green lights you get to drive through vs how many red lights you have to stop at. If the number of red lights is higher, the red lights win! At the end of your trip you can have a silly celebration for red lights winning. "Yay, the red lights won on the way to school! I wonder who will win on the way home from school this afternoon?" You can get months of mileage out simple "observation" games like this.
3. For kids less interested in contests, you can come up with a game where you both have to sing a certain song whenever you see certain things. For instance, you have to sing *Twinkle Twinkle* when you stop at a red light, *The Wheels of the Bus* whenever you see a bus etc. Four songs for four different things is a good number to keep preschoolers busy on a ride.
4. Or you can make up something silly you both do whenever you see a particular thing. When my son was a toddler, we had a long tradition of yelling "BUMP!" every time we went over a speed bump. Preschoolers are delighted by small things that are so ordinary to adults we don't even notice them anymore. If you can harness this wonder and delight during your short drives around town, your little one will soon forget to ask for your phone.

