



# “AK Fam’s 10 Essentials for Alaskan Family Fun”

By Erin Kirkland

## 1. Pack Appropriate Clothing.

Alaskan weather changes. A lot. Layer up the kids in non-cotton fabrics and fleece, and add a rain-coat, hat, and gloves to the backpack, just in case. Don’t forget the backpack.

**2. Do Your Homework.** Know where you are going, how you will get there, and what you will do. Hint: Alaska is a lot bigger than you think. Visit [AKontheGO.com](http://AKontheGO.com) for trip tips and age-appropriate activities. Take a map in the car and use it.

**3. Bring a Camera for the Kids.** Allow them to experiment with images and sights they think are interesting.

**4. Pack a Journal.** REI offers a great “Adventure Journal” for kids, free, that allows for creativity and guidance for any trip, anywhere. We love it. Don’t forget the crayons and a pencil or pen.

**5. Ask Questions.** Kid friendly? Ask specifically how tours and vendors will accommodate children. Car seats? Lifejackets? Menus? Ask again, and again, until you are satisfied. Then leave if you are not. Do not compromise on safety issues.



The author and her son enjoy a sunny day on Knik Glacier.

**6. Take a “Down Day.”** Visit a park, take a walk, hang out at the hotel pool. Too busy equals too tired; give everyone a break now and then.

**7. Stick to the Familiar.** Routines, that is. Bedtime, naps, mealtimes, if you can. You’ll find the day will go much easier if everyone is doing the familiar, at least some of the time.

**8. B&B’s for Kids?** Yes, inquire at a city’s visitor center for ideas. Be willing to drive a bit, but for a more peaceful locale, it’s sometimes worth it. Check out smaller hotels, too.

**9. Pack Food.** Everyday. Wherever you go, and add water. In Alaska, services can be few and far be-

tween along the roadways. Plan ahead.

**10. Observe Proper Wildlife Behavior.** Show the kids you respect wildlife by observing from a distance. Review rules for moose and bear sightings at [AKontheGO.com](http://AKontheGO.com).

*Erin Kirkland is a freelance family travel writer based in Anchorage. “AK Fam” is immersed daily in the wonders of the 49th state, and is eager to share her family’s experiences with readers on her web site, [AKontheGo.com](http://AKontheGo.com). Erin also co-hosts a weekly radio show on [KUDO AM 1080](http://KUDO AM 1080), talking about Alaskan family travel, and blogs for [KTUU Television’s web site](http://KTUU Television’s web site), [GoToAK.com](http://GoToAK.com). She can be reached at [e.kirkland0@gmail.com](mailto:e.kirkland0@gmail.com).*