

From Tears to Tunes: Yoto Makes Travel a Little Less Chaotic for Parents

According to new research, the average parent needs over two days to bounce back - but screen-free tools like Yoto are helping turn stress into storytime



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TORONTO, ON (June 26, 2025) – It officially takes parents two and a half days to recover from traveling with the family, according to new research.

From arguments to tears to moans, one in three parents say their family goes less than an hour before the peace is broken when traveling together – whether by car, plane or any other method of transportation.

That's according to a new survey conducted by Talker Research on behalf of Yoto, makers of screen-free children's audio players, which asked 2,000 parents of children under 12 to open up about the candid realities of traveling as a family.

When parents were asked how many days it takes them to recover from the stress of a typical family trip, the average response was 2.4 days until moms and dads feel fully like themselves again.

Faced with mid-journey meltdowns, some parents throw in the towel -- 26% admit to resorting to unlimited screen time, effectively turning the backseat into a digital resort.

But despite the allure of endless screens, many parents are actively trying to unplug. A strong 70% said having non-screen entertainment is important, with audio content, activity

books and family-led games topping their travel wish lists.

To avoid chaos, some parents go all in on creativity: nearly a third admit to bribing with candy (30%) or buying toys mid-trip (28%) to ward off disaster. Others make up songs (19%) or invent stories (16%) in real-time to keep their kids engaged.

And while plenty of families lean on tablets and snacks to survive the journey, many are embracing new tools designed to keep kids entertained without the burnout. Sixty-two percent of parents said they've used an audio player while traveling – a sign that soundscapes, music and storytelling are becoming modern-day sanity savers. Nearly half (43%) even use music as a calming tool.

The lengths parents must go to on vacation can take a real toll. So much so that one in 10 (11%) have even faked a bathroom break just to cry or take a deep breath alone. It's no surprise, then, that 71% of parents say they often feel like they need a whole other vacation to recover from their so-called break.

"Family travel might look picture-perfect on social media, but the reality is often far more intense " said Sarah Natchez Yoto's Managing Director North America "Parents are juggling meltdowns, mood swings and the pressure to make every moment magical – often coming back like they need a vacation to recover from their vacation. This research shows just how much creativity and resilience goes into keeping the peace and why tools that help kids stay engaged and encourage independent play can make all the difference."

Even the best-laid plans have their cracks. While 66% of parents say they head out with a detailed game plan, nearly half (49%) admit they don't have a designated "travel survival kit" – leaving them to improvise when things go off-script.

And the pressure to deliver the perfect trip is real: nearly two-thirds (64%) say they feel the weight of making every moment magical, even as 30% report that their child has meltdowns frequently while traveling.

That tension between expectations and reality may be why so many parents are looking beyond screens. While tablets and snack bags still have their place, tools like audio players are often being considered as a way to engage kids without overstimulation. Even with their best intentions, parents admit there's only so much planning they can do.

"At the end of the day, it's not about having a flawless itinerary – it's about making memories, even the messy ones," added Natchez. "Whether it's giggles in the backseat or cupcakes for breakfast at the airport, these imperfect moments are what stick with families long after the trip ends."

WAYS PARENTS KEEP THE PEACE

- Bribed them with candy or snacks (30%)
- Bought a toy (28%)
- Made up a game (27%)
- Carried them because they didn't want to walk (26%)
- Let them have screen time with no limits (26%)
- Promised them a treat or outing when they get home (26%)
- Fed them a treat as a meal (e.g. french fries for breakfast or cake for dinner) (25%)
- Made up a song (19%)
- Made up a story (16%)
- Faked a bathroom break to cry or breathe alone (11%)
- Let them wear pajamas or a costume in public (10%)

Survey methodology:

Talker Research surveyed 2,000 parents with children under 12; the survey was commissioned by Yoto and administered and conducted online by Talker Research between May 13 - 20. We are sourcing from a non-probability frame and the two main sources we use are:

- Traditional online access panels – where respondents opt-in to take part in online market research for an incentive
- Programmatic – where respondents are online and are given the option to take part in a survey to receive a virtual incentive usually related to the online activity they are engaging in

Those who did not fit the specified sample were terminated from the survey. As the survey is fielded, dynamic online sampling is used, adjusting targeting to achieve the quotas specified as part of the sampling plan.

Regardless of which sources a respondent came from, they were directed to an Online Survey, where the survey was conducted in English; a link to the questionnaire can be shared upon request. Respondents were awarded points for completing the survey. These points have a small cash- equivalent monetary value.

Cells are only reported on for analysis if they have a minimum of 80 respondents, and statistical significance is calculated at the 95% level. Data is not weighted, but quotas and other parameters are put in place to reach the desired sample.

Interviews are excluded from the final analysis if they failed quality-checking measures. This includes:

- Speeders: Respondents who complete the survey in a time that is quicker than one-third of the median length of interview are disqualified as speeders
- Open ends: All verbatim responses (full open-ended questions as well as other please specify options) are checked for inappropriate or irrelevant text
- Bots: Captcha is enabled on surveys, which allows the research team to identify and disqualify bots
- Duplicates: Survey software has “deduping” based on digital fingerprinting, which ensures nobody is allowed to take the survey more than once

It is worth noting that this survey was only available to individuals with internet access, and the results may not be generalizable to those without internet access.

About Yotoplay

Yoto is an interactive audio platform for kids. Yoto offers a catalogue of over 1,200 stories, songs, activities and more to inspire creative play and learning without a screen. The carefully connected audio players, Yoto Player (3rd Generation) and Yoto Mini, put kids safely in control. No cameras. No microphones. No ads.

Inspired by Montessori principles, Ben Drury and Filip Denker founded Yoto in 2017. Yoto Player was designed with renowned design agency, Pentagram, and launched in early 2020. Yoto Mini, the portable audio player, launched in late 2021. The new and improved third generation Yoto Player arrived in summer 2023.

Available worldwide, Yoto has won awards and accolades from critics, parents and children alike. TIME Magazine even named it one of the Best Inventions of 2020 and Yoto Mini won a prestigious D&AD Pencil in 2022. Yoto was named one of Bloomberg's Top Start Ups to watch, and was named the second fastest growing tech company by Deloitte in 2023.

Yoto's platform features both award-winning original content and audio that has been licensed or co-created with partners. These partners include PRH, Macmillan, Universal Music Group, Sony, Warner Music, Mattel, Pottermore Publishing, Roald Dahl Story Company, HarperCollins, Hachette, Bonnier and Scholastic.

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