

## Family Boating

There's no better activity for the family to enjoy together than boating. Family boating is a great way to connect with each other, enjoy nature, and get a little exercise. Want some suggestions on how to enjoy your next family boating adventure? Well read on!

Start by planning your trip together. Get out a map and find a destination you can all agree on. Depending on your budget, your trip can be nearby or far away. There are lots and lots of places where family boating is not only encouraged, but it is embraced. Just be sure it's someplace you all want to go to.

When picking a destination, make sure there are facilities that can accommodate your boat. Some bodies of water will not allow boats over a specific size. Others don't have tie-up docks where you can leave your boat overnight which means you'll have to put the boat in and take the boat out every day you want to go on the water.

Family boating means being together as a family on the boat. But sometimes too much togetherness can be a bad thing. So wherever you choose to go, pick a place that has a variety of activities. If Dad wants to spend the day fishing but Mom hates the idea, maybe there's a spa nearby where she can pamper herself.

Involve your children in the planning process. Once you've found a place you all like, let the kids do the hard work - the research. Have them plan a route to get there, find the docking facilities, the boat ramps, campsites, etc. Make it like a scavenger hunt and they'll be just as excited about your family boating trip as you are!

When you're on board the boat, give everyone a job. Have a captain, a first mate, a cabin girl/boy, a galley cook, etc. Make sure everyone knows their duties and let them have fun with it. You may want to keep a book with all pertinent information in it so your "crew" can refer to it when they need to.

Also be sure that all family members know about boating safety. Maybe you could all take a boating safety class. This is very important because take precautions for safe boating is essential to a good time.

Family boating can be a wonderful, wonderful experience for everyone. Approach it with an open mind, a laid-back attitude, and a desire to have fun. If you have a boat, get it out and bring the family along for a great day you'll all

remember for a very long time!