

## Making a Roadtrip Countdown with Special Bags for car trips (\*can also be modified to use at home)



**Materials:** String, clothespins, countdown cards, bags, special items (the Dollar Store or dollar bins at Target are great for these items)

### **Before the car trip:**

- **Prepare materials!** Gather all items (listed above) and have them ready before you leave. Create your own cards specific to your trip (similar to picture on the left above) or use the template provided on the next page. Purchase the special items/activities (or gather some special ones you already have) and place them in the bags.
- **Consider a schedule!** Think about how often you want to give your child a bag. Will every hour be enough time for them to enjoy the bagged item until they get the next one? Are there natural stops (e.g., stopping for lunch) where giving a bag is convenient? Also think about how you will do the countdown. Will you use a timer or something else? Make sure you have enough bags (or a few extra just in case!) for your planned times.

### **During the trip:**

- **Set up the materials!** Put the string up in the car and place the cards on the string with the clothespins. Have the bags near you so you can open them when needed. Make sure both the string of cards and the bags are outside your child's reach 😊
- **Explain it!** Once you're in the car, tell your child when they'll get the bag with a special item. It's a good idea to have a 'starter bag' with items for them to have as soon as they get their seatbelt on.
- **Deliver the bag!** Give your child the bag of items when the timer goes off or when you get to a designated place on your trip. Throughout the trip, check on your child and if they are doing exactly what you expect them to do, tell them! "Great job staying in your seat!" "Way to keep your hands to yourself!" "I love riding in the car with you!"
- **Evaluate!** Was the timing between bags appropriate? If your child didn't play with the item for an entire hour and got a little squirmy, maybe shorten the time for giving the next bag.

\*Modification: Place the string of cards out of reach in your house. Set a timer and follow a schedule for when to deliver the bags throughout the day. Bagged items can include small things, a snack, or a card indicating a special activity. For example, if you plan to go to the trampoline park in the afternoon, place a picture of the trampoline park (Google images and print!) and have your child open that bag right before you leave. So, the timer would go off, they'd open the bag and see the picture, and then you'd provide the instruction, "Go get your shoes! It's time to go to the trampoline park!"

Idea adapted from The Dating Divas

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Print the cards below. For sturdier cards, print on cardstock or print/cut/laminate. Add a time or location (e.g., Nashville or McDonalds for car trips) if you'd like!

