

Too Little Sleep, Too Few Inflatable Air Mattress Beds

Contributed by RichardGalochkin
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As parents, we all know that children can pass through some challenging stages. They can be rude, misbehave, challenge our authority and frustrate us. While some of their behavior improves naturally with age and consistent, disciplined parenting can go a long way, we all suffer through their less than perfect moments. What never seems to change regardless of age, though, is that a tired child is a wholly unruly and frustrating pain in the rear.

One of my more illuminating experiences with just how unruly children can be came on our family's annual summer vacation. Little bit of clarification it will only continue to be an annual vacation after my kids mature a little bit. Until then, it's an experimental process ripe for canceling at anytime. Because, God help me, I'm in no hurry to repeat last summer's little adventure.

The economy being what it is, we lucked into the wonderful opportunity to use my friend's modest time-share at the beach. To further cut costs, my sister in law and her husband (Jennifer and George) tagged along. As much as I love my little sister's company and drinking scotch George, their presence made an already modest house particularly cramped and meant me sharing one bed with my wife and kids while Jennifer and George languished in comparative luxury in a bed of their own.

At this point it might cross your mind that two adults and two children in one bed can lead to some sleep deprived nights and you'd be right. My kids are restless sleepers and, as I discovered, extraordinarily adept kickers, none of which leant to a good night's sleep. Inevitably, moods were a little frayed in the morning except for Jennifer and George who had all the room they could want or need in their bed. Punishment for their comfort came in the form of a request that they baby sit our kids one evening while my wife and I got some quality time on the boardwalk and a quite dinner. It was a blissfully child-free few hours.

When we returned home later that night, we entered a war zone. It was almost as though an isolated tsunami tore through only our time share, leaving the rest of the neighborhood unscathed. My wife and I stood wide-eyed in the doorway taking in the damage our son and daughter had managed to do in our absence. The appropriate emotion was horror until Jennifer rounded the corner with my kicking and screaming son, Nick, under her arm and leveled a look of pure hate at my wife and I. We stared back in dismay for a moment before bursting out in uncontrollable laughter. I should note that Jennifer failed to see the humor and didn't join us.

I'd say the mood lightened a bit during our last few days at the beach but that wouldn't be entirely accurate. What little calm we managed to find was more a result of something akin to battle fatigue than any lessening of tensions. We were simply too tired, too run down and too numb to the inevitable tantrums tired children are given to. As for Jennifer and

George, they spent as much time away from the house as they could; a smart tactic my wife and I bitterly envied them for. We all coped in our own way, but there was still the trip home to endure.

Primed from yet another night of bad sleep, tempers were hot before we even finished packing the car. The 3 hour drive would have been spent in moody silence were it not for one limit-testing attack by our kids after another. By the time my wife and I arrived home, we'd all seen enough of each other. We each went to our separate corners and bedtime came early that night. After a night of good sleep in our own beds (ok, I slept on the couch but it's a very comfortable couch and I could stretch out all I wanted) the next morning found us all back to normal and a bit wiser for the whole experience.

We hadn't learned anything new on our little get away, we'd simply reinforced lessons we already knew (my way of saying we should have known better). Simply put, tired, poorly rested children evil. Add in tired parents and you've got a recipe for disaster on your hands. The good news is that Jennifer has put the experience behind her and even offered to watch the kids for us again. But, only if we promise to ensure they have a good night's sleep before hand.

The question has come up about joining up for another trip next summer, but Jennifer and George are being conspicuously non-committal. I think I can woo them, though, by promising to adequately prepare this time around. How? By making allowances for good sleep, bringing along a couple air mattress beds for the kids and planning to rotate out rug-rat duties on a regular basis so no one person finds themselves too heavily taxed at any one time. I'm sure it'll work out just fine. At least, that's the story I'm trying to sell to my sister, and I'm stickin' to it.

About the Author:

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