



Stay Calm Through The Chaos New Toyota Previa Can Get You Through The Family Travel Nightmare

26 June 2000

Are we nearly there yet?" "Can we have another CD on now?" "I'm not sitting next to Granny – she smells!"

Ah, the joys of family travel. Such an integral part of the British summer holiday it's a bit like rain. We should expect it, but we never prepare for it. Well, Toyota has the answer; don't have kids – have an MR2!

No, sorry. If you already have kids then get a new Previa. Toyota has commissioned some research into this parental nightmare and expert analysis suggests that children can behave if they are comfortable, amused and reassured that the grown-ups know where they are going.

The survey found several major points:

Territory. The car is an extension of the house and kids hate their siblings – and even parents in their room at home – so don't expect them to enjoy being forced to sit three abreast in the back of the car. Likewise with their stuff. Being able to leave your Pokémon cards somewhere your big brother won't touch them is absolutely vital.

Comfort. Kids sprawl all over seats in the house, so don't expect them to enjoy sitting still and bolt upright in the car either.

Vision. Pop videos, computer games and movies all play to children's love of visual stimulation, so no surprise they enjoy being able to see out of the car at the world outside.

Heat. They literally can't stay cool like adults (it's a biological thing), so when one is warm and wants some air, the other is likely to be cold and want some heat.

Music. It is possible that you will all enjoy the same sort of music, but unlikely unless you are the Family Von Trapp.

Games. Telling them you remember having great fun playing I-Spy for the whole of a three day journey to Cornwall in 1962 will not seem believable to a generation who can be Master of the Universe and wipe out thousands at the flick of a thumb and forefinger.

Maps. Mum and Dad arguing about which way to turn at the T-junction that was expected to be a roundabout is not only a bad example of being tolerant in the car, but not confidence inspiring either.

So how does the new Previa help? Well, not only does Previa have best in class interior space, the seven-seat version has seven individual, full size seats. Front, middle and rear are all just as comfortable and have just as much head and legroom. In fact, the middle and rears put most airline club class seats to shame. Being individual, separated seats means there is no need for shoving, elbows in the ribs or UN peacekeepers to monitor agreements over where to put feet. Each seat slides individually so even peripheral eye contact can be minimised. (Don't worry, they love each other really, it just won't show until they're more than 24 years old.)

Previas large windows and higher stance mean everyone cannot only see out, but also over hedges and fences, other cars and other lands.

Another aid to comfort is that airflow throughout the cabin is carefully controlled, with front, middle and rear rows having separate air conditioning overhead vents. The rear cabin also has a separate fan, meaning those that want a blast of cold air can have it without chilling the others. Lower, more natural seating positions are complemented by greater body rigidity cutting engine noise and vibration to a minimum.

In all, the Previa makes the little monsters so comfortable they will quickly fall asleep and become those little darlings again. For a while, at least.

Lack of in-car entertainment was an area highlighted by the research as a common cause of tension in the car. Fifty per cent of parents admit to neglecting to consider entertaining their children when in the car. Previa has a high quality, six-speaker radio/CD so if even if you don't like Britney Spears, at least it will sound good.

Integrated into the radio is a trip computer screen with functions like outside temperature and average speed and fuel consumption. You will be amazed just how fascinated with such data the internet generation can be, especially on long journeys as the driver is encouraged to keep the average speed up.

At night, individual roof mounted reading lights mean they can still see the Gameboy screen or read the latest Harry Potter. There is even a power point for electronic in-car games which helps reduce the demands for yet more batteries.

Eighteen different storage spaces, cup and bottle holders mean eating and drinking can break-up the monotony of the journey. They also allow the need for individual territory to extend to storage of coke cans and secret diaries. In the back, the outstanding luggage capacity of the full-sized 'boot' means Mum can probably bring the kitchen sink if she really has to.

Almost one third of parents confess to embarking on a journey without planning a route. One fifth of children complained that getting lost is their parents' worst habit. The new Previa has satellite navigation as standard on the CDX and an option on all other derivatives.

Voice prompts combined with moving graphics of every junction mean that Dad can sleep easy while Mum drives round the Paris ring road, safe in the knowledge that even if she does take a wrong turn, the calm, reassuring voice of the sat nav will put things back on course.

Of course it also means he can protect his macho Of-Course-I-Know-Where-I-Am attitude without asking Mum to read the A-Z or pretending he needs the loo so he can take a sneaky look at the map.

The sat nav's time to destination function also means that you can answer the inevitable "When will we get there?" question from the rear with previously undreamt of accuracy. A response of "Three hours and twenty four minutes," just commands respect.

Previa helps the driver stay calm too. The main instrument panel is placed high and centrally to reduce eye movement away from the road, reducing fatigue and helping to boost concentration. The new 2.4 litre VVT-i engine is quiet and refined and the front wheel drive chassis can be driven with all the ease and confidence of a saloon car. Previa sets fresh standards in the large MPV segment.

Toyota also recognises that safety is a key issue for families buying MPVs and, building on an outstanding record in European and worldwide crash tests, Previa has an array of safety features as standard. These include anti-lock braking (ABS) and electronic brake force distribution (EBD) which balance the braking forces between wheels in accordance with driving conditions. Airbags for driver and front passenger are fitted as standard.

Sliding doors on both sides – designed for maximum visibility and easy passenger access – aid safety in allowing entry and exit to the pavement whichever side you park. Previa even comes with pan-European breakdown assistance, so even if the worst happens, you don't have to worry about getting where you are going.

So, Previa answers most of the family travel worries, making the journey to and from holiday no longer something to dread. In fact, they might even enjoy it.

ENDS