



Things to consider:

- Given your background and that your children like sleeping outside and playing in the water, it's very reasonable to consider a multi-day raft trip as their first overnight camping experience.
- Rafts are more stable than canoes and a flip is extremely unlikely in Class II-III whitewater. That said, make sure to choose a river and water level you are familiar with. Since both you are comfortable with rowing a raft, it makes sense—assuming your kids are interested—to consider bringing a couple of inner tubes, an inflatable ducky, or stand-up paddle board along for the flat water sections.
- Consider looking for another couple with a child similar in age to go on the trip with you. Two rafts are safer than one and the kids can play together while in camp making it more enjoyable for everyone. If you can find another interested couple, consider taking a short day trip with them to see if the children get along and that both families travel at the same pace and have the same comfort and ability traveling with a child in their raft.
- Choose a river section with multiple opportunities where you can stop and let the children play (side hikes, rock to climb on, side streams with water slides, etc.), and where camp sites are reasonably close to one another.
- Choose a time in the summer where the water is warm enough for comfortable swimming while in camp or in the event an unexpected swim. Discuss and practice getting into the raft from the water. Consider playing rescue games with your children to ensure they know what to do if they end up swimming. Even though you don't expect to turn over, rig your raft so your gear will remain in place and dry should you accidentally flip. Ensure your child will not become entrapped in lines or gear should the raft turn over.
- Make sure everyone wears a properly adjusted life jacket while on the water or playing in eddys at camp (no horse collar jackets); the children's life jackets should have crotch straps. An adult should always be present when children are swimming in the water.
- As always, bring plenty of warm clothing (and hope you won't need it). Also bring a shade tarp and tent; tents help you keep track of kids during the night.
- Bring plenty of sunscreen or sunblock and apply it liberally and often; consider sunblock clothing. Rig a shade umbrella for each raft and have everyone wear a sun hat (consider a hat leash so you don't lose a hat to the wind). Make sure drinks and food are readily available throughout the day.
- Rafts are usually pretty big and are sort of like car camping in that you can bring lots of books and toys; both are important for young children.