

Parenting in the vet truck

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Abstract

Managing and balancing young children and a busy veterinary practice can be difficult work. It can also be fulfilling and enjoyable work. According to a Pew Research Report on balancing work and family, 46% of American families feature two working parents who more often than not share equally the workload inside of the home.¹ Society does not tend to drive this trend, so one could expect this trend to continue to move in this direction. A veterinary career presents some unique challenges in our profession and this will discuss particular convenience tactics that relate specifically to a veterinarian operating out of a vehicle and managing children simultaneously.

Storage

When places for multiple kids are needed inside the vehicle you use for your veterinary practice, you have to get creative when it comes to storage of your items and tools needed for work. I would encourage you to explore options for a veterinary box that might stray from the traditional options on the market. I have found that all of your tools and items need to be stored in the bed once you cross over from 2 to 3 children in the back seat. There is no room for anything in the back seat that is not related to the children. I do have a box under my back seat for storage that is very helpful. I maintain that I prefer bed drawers because of the ability to also transport child-related items (bicycle, stroller, wagon, etc.) and those have served me well.

Nutrition

Much like our patients, nutrition is often a top priority when trying to manage children in the veterinary truck. My children function on high protein snack options better, and I have to plan ahead to make these amenities possible. I like to utilize plastic, divided trays with handles so that I can hand snacks and drinks back to the children with more ease.

Accoutrements

I utilize multiple accessories in the veterinary truck in order to balance my children during a veterinary call or work day easier. Some of these are simple, others are technologically advanced.

Technology

I utilize a smart watch and my smart phone to set up a monitor for when I need to step away from the truck for a short amount of time. It gives me a way to communicate with the older kids, but also monitor everything that is going on in the truck.

I utilize an AI (artificial intelligence) service to help me with lists, reminders, ordering, etc. because things do get hectic in the veterinary truck when kids are added to the mix. The artificial intelligence service I prefer is Amazon Alexa because it hooks into devices in my home and truck that I can utilize seamlessly.

Non-technology

I utilize a trash can full of books, markers and sleep masks that will help the kids be both entertained and comfortable in the vet truck. The trash can doubles as an emergency vomit container.

I utilize a pop-up tent that is marketed for sporting event spectators because it is easily packable and also very useful to keep the kids clean and contained inside a barn or out at a farm.

Almost all of the consumables on my truck are fair game for the children also. OB sleeves and gloves, syringes and syringe containers are very popular items for playing along with what they are also seeing you do during the day.

Conclusion

Balancing children and a busy veterinary career is not an easy task, but it can be made easier with a few pieces of advice from parents who have come before you in the profession. You're going to do great things, and your kids will have a front (or back, safety first) row view of it all!

References

1. Pew Research Center. Household Structure and Family Roles. <https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/family-relationships/household-structure-family-roles/>. Accessed February 1, 2023.

