Packing List for Mild Weather Car Camping
always check weather forecast before camping with your family

Camping and outdoor gear – We keep a large rubbermaid bin full of these items stored in our garage so that it is ready to go when we are
sunscreen
bug repellant
matches
water bottles – one for each family member
headlamps for everyone in your family or flashlights if not headlamps
spare batteries for headlamps or flashlights
lantern (if you have one or feel you need one particularly for cooking or setting up in the dark)
paper towels or shop towels
baby wipes (to remove marshmallows or mud)
toilet paper (in case campsite is out or toilet is absent)
trash bags/ziplock bags – I like to keep a gallon ziplock full of other ziplock sizes and several trash bags
remember to hang trash high in a tree or lock it into your car so that animals do not spread it all over your campsite
do not EVER have food in your tent (everything from bugs to bears will join you in your tent for a snack)
pocket knife for adult use – for kids ONLY after they have completed a knife safety course!
tent – I recommend a 6 man tent for a family of 4 – you can rent tents from REI if you prefer
rain fly (If you are buying a tent, be sure your rain fly goes ALL the way down to the ground)
footprint or tarp for under your tent to keep the tent dry and prevent holes caused by burs and rocks
stakes
rubber mallet to drive stakes in on hard ground (optional)
sleeping bags – one for each member of the family
pillows for each person
sleeping pads for each person (I recommend Thermarest brand)
extra blankets if cold or sleeping bags are not low temperature rated
towels in case of rain, mud or water play
Chairs – either folding camp chairs or crazy creek style chairs
camp table (optional – if more than picnic table not enough)
table cloth (optional)
camera/batteries/memory card (optional)
nets to collect fish or bugs to look at – always carefully release what you catch
magnifying glass (for kids to look at bugs/leaves/etc up close
hammock (optional)
rope (for miscellaneous uses)
tarp (to cover cooking or seating area in case of rain – use with rope listed above)
binoculars (kids usually enjoy using binoculars, so bring an inexpensive pair for kids if possible)
Wildlife Identification books if you have them
leave electronics and toys at home to maximize outdoor fun and learning while you are camping – limit adult screen time as much as possible as well

cooking gear
grill or camp stove (only 2-3 families per group need one if camping with others)
fuel for stove and lantern (if needed)
water (if camping in sites without water or if camp area has flooded recently)
skillet/pot/griddle if needed for your meal
cups/plates/bowls/utensils – one for each person in your family
cooking knife for adult use – appropriate for what you plan to cook
hot dog/marshmallow skewers for cooking over fire
any other items required for the meals you plan to make
coffee pot (optional) french press or instant work well camping

personal items
lights to see kids at night (REI and Academy sell lights to tie onto kids that have replaceable batteries to use instead of glow sticks which are an environmental hazard)
toiletries for each person
face towel or bandana for drying faces or hands or for tying back hair in wind (optional but I find useful)

Clothing
raincoats/fleece/coats if needed for weather – remember it will be colder at night and the weather can change unexpectedly
sturdy shoes – 2 pairs in case one gets wet – I do not recommend wearing flip flops while camping
water shoes – if camping area has water to get into – again, avoid flip flops on uneven ground
weather appropriate clothing for each person in your family for each day you will be out of your house
swimsuits (optional)
sweaters (if needed for weather especially at night)
extra clothing – clothes almost always get wet or muddy while camping – always bring extras
Hats – for sun or cold as needed

First aid kit and personal first aid items – be sure you take with you when hiking any distance
any medications that any member of your family takes regularly
motrin (including dose type for the current ages of your children)
liquid benadryl (works fastest in the event of an emergency allergic reaction)
benadryl or cortisone cream for rashes or insect bites
antiseptic or alcohol wipes/spray for cuts
band-aids in various sizes including knee size and butterfly style
antibiotic type cream such as polysporin
tweezers
small scissors
first aid tape
gauze pads
ace bandage wrap
latex gloves
first aid booklet with first aid procedures and directions including section on bites and stings
moleskin or 2nd skin for blisters while hiking
instant ice pack (optional)
poison ivy wash if you are particularly sensitive to the plant
not all of these items need to be in a kit that you hike with, but the basic first aid and allergy items do.

Food
Snacks – hungry campers are grumpy campers – you may be surprised by how much kids eat when they spend all day outside
all items needed for the meals you plan to make while camping
meals while camping can range from simple (hot dogs and s’mores) to complex (pizza baked over the fire)
there are many camping cookbooks on the market, or you can make food (such as chili) at home, carry it in a cooler, and simply heat it up at your campsite