

# Seeing the World from a Different **Angle**

An informational travel resource guide for  
parents of school-age children with Autism



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# About this resource...

Traveling with a child with Autism can be daunting. For children with Autism, everyday tasks can be challenging! Changing a routine and trying something new can be completely overwhelming for the child and the family. However, that doesn't mean that traveling or vacations should be impossible.

This resource is intended to make this process easier. Here you will find helpful tips, resources, and additional considerations for various traveling scenarios. We hope you find this information useful for beginning your journey. Bon voyage! Enjoy the ride!



# Common Characteristics of Autism

## **Socialization**

- absence of seeking to share enjoyment and interests
- delayed peer interactions
- little interactions
- impaired use of non-verbal behaviors

## **Communication**

- delay in verbal language without non-verbal compensation
- expressive language impairment
- disturbance in the use of pragmatic language
- stereotyped or repetitive language

## **Restricted, Stereotyped, and Repetitive Patterns of Behavior**

- preoccupation with restricted interests or topics
- strict adherence to routines
- self-stimulatory behavior
- preoccupation with parts of items



# Characteristics of Autism That May Make Traveling Difficult

## **Expressive Language Impairments**

- Children may have difficulty telling others what they want or need. This may affect their ability to communicate with any strangers they encounter or in emergency situations.

## **Disturbance in Pragmatics**

- Children with Autism may have atypical social skills that would negatively impact interactions with others.

## **Absence of Seeking to Share Enjoyment & Interests**

- The child's inability to share interests with other members of the family may be disheartening.

## **Preoccupation with Restricted Interests**

- Children may miss out on new learning opportunities or chances to experience something different because of their restricted interests.

## **Strict Adherence to Routines**

- Children's difficulty with changing routines or adapting to new environments may cause strain as traveling sometimes requires abandoning the schedule they are used to.

## **Sensory Processing Difficulties**

- Children's difficulty dealing with overstimulation through sight, sound, smell, and touch may lead to problems in environments in which overstimulation cannot be avoided.



Here is a card you may pass out to others if your child is having a difficult time during your travels. It will help those around you understand why your child is acting the way they are and give them an opportunity to learn more about Autism.

## MY CHILD HAS AUTISM

I am sorry if my child's behavior is bothering you. Children with Autism are often easily overwhelmed or upset by the world around them. Behavior that might seem rude or inappropriate to you is my child's way of communicating how they feel. We simply ask for your patience and understanding. Please do not stare or judge us. We are doing the best we can.

For more information, please visit [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

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# Airports and FLights



# Airports and Flights

## Tips to Prepare BEFORE the Day of your Flight

- **PREPARE!** Up to several weeks ahead of time, show your child pictures/videos of the airport, airplane, security, destination, etc. This will help familiarize and expose your child with these sights so that when the day comes, it will not be quite as overwhelming.
- Consider your child's attention span and ability to sit still for extended periods of time. For some, it may be helpful to schedule several short flights so they are able to get up and walk around. For others, a direct flight will minimize stress associated with multiple transitions.
- Do a practice run at the airport. Some airlines are willing to schedule practice experiences (Southwest, Air Tran, American, and Continental). If this is not an option, taking your child to the airport and showing them different areas and things they may experience could help ease anxiety.
- Research the airport for designated play areas, observation decks, airport tours, and airport museums. Some airports even have sensory-enriching experiences that your child may enjoy.
- Sign up for either early or late boarding. If you think your child would do better boarding before everyone else but having to sit for a longer period of time, arrange pre-boarding. If they may have more difficulty with that option, requesting to board last will decrease their amount of time on the plane.
- Consider the seat that would be best for your child when booking. If you're worried that your child may kick the seat in front of them, try to find a seat without another passenger ahead of them. If they are afraid of heights or may get scared, avoid seating them near the window. If you worry that your child may try to run up and down the aisle, avoid seating them in an end seat. The front of the plane may be cooler, less noisy, and less stimulating than the back.
- Let the airline know that you will be traveling with a child with Autism. They may offer accommodations such as use of lines for people with disabilities.
- Print boarding passes at home if possible. This will help you avoid standing in another line.





# Airports and Flights

## Tips to Prepare ON the Day of your Flight

- Bring your child's preferred toys, activities, and snacks on the flight to keep them occupied. Be sure to include non-electronics for takeoff and landing.
- Bring gum or hard candy to help prevent ear popping or discomfort.
- Pack noise canceling headphones if your child is easily overstimulated by noise.
- If your child is on a special diet, bring snacks that they can eat. The airport may not provide these items. If you would like, you could contact the airport or airline to see what kind of food and snacks the airport has or the inflight services provide.
- Talk about key words that shouldn't be said on planes such as bomb, gun, terrorist, etc. However, if having this discussion would only encourage your child to use such words, avoid it altogether.
- For children with sensory problems that don't like to be barefooted, have them wear socks with shoes that are easy to get on and off for going through security. Most airports don't require children under the age of 12 to remove shoes.
- Take a picture of your child on your phone the day you fly in case they get separated from you in the airport. If your child is verbal, stress to them that if they get lost they can approach someone with a badge or wearing a uniform. If your child is nonverbal, have them wear something that includes your name, phone number, and a description of Autism.
- Encourage your child to use the bathroom before boarding. Inflight bathrooms are very tight, enclosed spaces that may make your child anxious or uncomfortable.
- Alert flight attendants and neighboring passengers that your child has Autism. You could either tell them about some things they may see happen or give them one of the cards provided at the beginning of this guide.



# Airports and Flights

## Available Resources

### Wings for Autism

- This is a program created for children with Autism, their families, and airport personnel. It allows the participants to rehearse airport and flight scenarios. Your child will have the opportunity to practice arriving at and navigating the airport, getting their boarding pass, completing security procedures, and boarding the plane. This experience is only available at certain times and in certain cities. Check the website for upcoming events: <http://www.thearc.org/wingsforautism>.

### Various Rehearsal Programs

- The following airports offer an airport rehearsal program:
  - Boston Logan International Airport
  - Seattle-Tacoma International Airport
  - Philadelphia International Airport
  - Minneapolis- St. Paul International Airport
  - New York: JFK International Airport
  - Newark International Airport
  - Detroit Metro Airport
  - Phoenix: Arizona Sky Harbor International Airport
  - Atlanta: Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport
  - Washington D.C. Dulles International Airport
  - Washington D.C. Ronald Reagan National Airport
  - Tulsa International Airport
  - Greensboro, North Carolina: Piedmont Triad International Airport
  - Manchester, New Hampshire Regional Airport



### The Noisy Airplane Ride by Mike Downs

- This children's book introduces children to the many sounds they may encounter on their flight. Reading this to your child may help these experiences to be less frightening on the day of the flight.



### TSA Cares

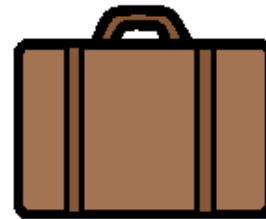
- This TSA Hotline is a great place to call in order to ask specific questions regarding your child or your local airport. They can help with alerting you to what accommodations they already have in place for children with Autism and any other ideas they may have to help your day go more smoothly. The number is 1-855-787-2227.

# I am Going on a Plane!!

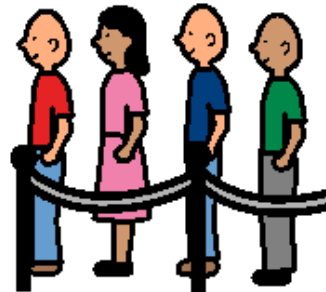
Soon, I will go on a plane! It's alright to be kind of scared.  
\_\_\_\_\_ will be getting on the plane with me.  
The plane will take me to \_\_\_\_\_



Before we leave, I will have to pack my suitcase.  
My \_\_\_\_\_ will help me pick out things to go in my suitcase.  
\_\_\_\_\_ will have suitcases, too!  
Then, we will put our suitcases in the car.



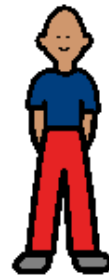
Then it will be time to ride to the airport!  
When we get there, we will have to wait in a line.  
When it's our turn, the nice people will put our suitcases behind the counter.  
I shouldn't worry! I will get it back very soon.



Then, we will wait in another line. When it's my turn, I will be asked to take off my shoes and to put my things in a bin.



The nice people might ask me to stand by myself in a weird looking machine. This may make me a little nervous, but I shouldn't feel scared. It won't take long and I'll be able to see my \_\_\_\_\_ the whole time.



When I step out of the machine, I'll put my shoes on and get my things.



Next, I will follow my \_\_\_\_\_ to the gate. This is where we will sit in comfy chairs and wait to get on the airplane. Other people might be sitting close to us. They are waiting for their plane too.



There might be loud noises or people talking on a loud speaker. I might not like this sound, but they are just trying to help.



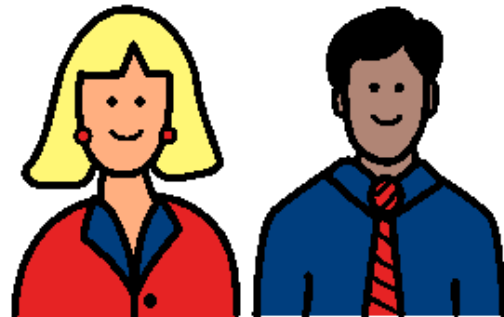
When the plane is ready, we will have to stand in another line.  
I don't need to worry. The people in the line will ride on the plane with me.



Then, we will walk through a long tunnel.  
This is how I get on the airplane.  
It's finally time to get on the plane!



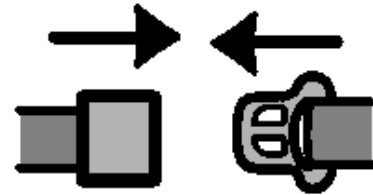
There might be a helper waiting at the door to say hi!  
They can help me the whole time I'm on the plane.



The plane might be small and noisy.  
The noises don't mean something is wrong.  
This just means that the plane is getting ready to fly!



I have to put on a seat belt just like in the car.  
This will make my \_\_\_\_\_  
happy because it will keep me safe.



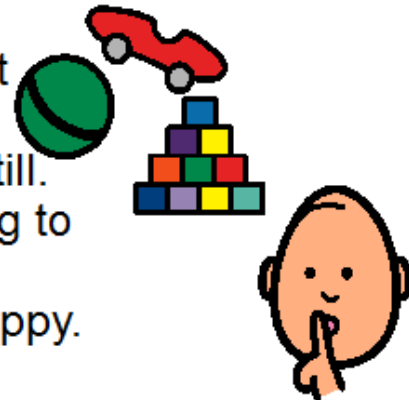
After everybody else sits down, the plane will be ready to go.  
The plane will start to go very fast and it might get loud.  
\_\_\_\_\_ will be right next to me so I don't need to worry!



When we start flying, my tummy and ears might feel funny.  
It will go away soon.



We might be flying for a long time.  
This is okay because \_\_\_\_\_ brought things for me to do and play with.  
I should do my best to stay quiet and still.  
The other people on the plane are trying to be quiet too.  
Doing the right thing will make them happy.



When we get to \_\_\_\_\_, the plane has to land.  
It will get bumpy and loud again, just like before.  
I should remember not to worry.



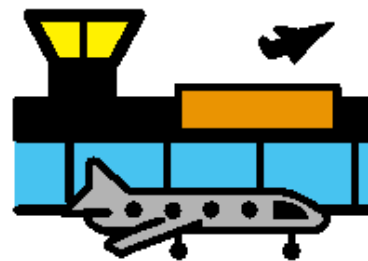
When the plane stops, everyone will get off.  
This might take a long time, but I should be patient.  
I will have to walk through a tunnel again to get to the airport.



I will walk with \_\_\_\_\_ to get our suitcases.  
There will be a lot of other people waiting for their suitcases, too!



After we get our suitcases, it will be time to leave the airport.  
I will see the airport again soon when it is time to go back home.  
Flying is fun!



# Water Safety





# Water Safety

## General and Pool Tips

- Go to a local pool. Here you can either practice swimming, getting used to being around water, and discuss rules for being safe around water.
- If your child cannot swim, find a flotation device such as a life jacket or arm floaties depending on their level of need. Have your child practice wearing the flotation device before your vacation begins so they can get used to it.
- Wandering is a common danger for children with autism, especially around water. Be very proactive about watching your child. It may be beneficial to consider setting up a system to ensure that an adult is watching your child at all times. For example, one caregiver's main focus should be to intently watch your child. Another caregiver can be in charge of watching other children or engaging in a leisure activity. These roles can switch after a predetermined amount of time.
- Children with Autism often find being underwater a soothing experience and may forget the need to resurface to breathe. Be sure to teach them the importance of only staying underwater for a short period of time and taking breaks to come up for air. If this is an issue with your child, be sure to stay within reach of them while in the water.
- Go at your child's own pace with the level of comfort around water. Your child may take longer to get used to being in and around the water than other children. If necessary, take small steps such as sitting close to the pool, then dipping your feet in, then sitting on a step in the pool, etc. Likewise, be sure that your child does not jump in and engage in higher level activities for which they may not be ready if they are inexperienced in a pool.
- If your child is nonverbal, you may want to consider a medical ID bracelet that states they have Autism with your contact information on it in case they wander away.



# Water Safety

- Consider one-on-one swimming lessons rather than the typical group setup. Your child will be less distracted by other learning swimmers this way.
- Find a picture of the pool at the hotel or resort you will be staying at so your child knows what to expect.
- Teach your child the difference between the shallow and deep ends of the pool. Be sure they know to stay in the shallow end and set up visual reminders if necessary.
- If possible, find water toys related to their special interest. For example, if they like dinosaurs, maybe bring some dinosaurs that will float in the water.

## Beach Tips

- Your child may be unaware of threats around the water such as riptides, increased depth, varying water temperatures, etc. Educate them about the possibility of these occurrences.
- If your child has sensory issues, try introducing them to a bucket of sand before going to the beach. This way they can touch it and dip their toes in at their own pace. Let your child listen to sounds they may hear on the beach such as seagulls, waves, and other people if you anticipate this being a problem.
- If you're going to the beach, try to go to a less crowded area and pay attention to the beach warning flags. Red and yellow flags typically indicate known dangerous conditions and it is not recommended that inexperienced swimmers enter the water. Try to stay near a lifeguard whenever possible.
- Choose less popular times for fun. Go to the beach early or late in the day or year to avoid crowds.



# Water Safety

## Available Resources

### Autism on the Seas

- These cruises are specifically designed for individuals with Autism and other special needs and their families. Cruise ship activities are modified to meet the needs of passengers. More information can be found on their website: <http://autismontheseas.com>.

### YMCA

- Swimming lessons for children with special needs are available at some YMCA locations. Visit the website for your local YMCA for a schedule of these events.

### Sunsational Swim School

- This organization offers modified swim lessons for children with special needs in 22 metro areas throughout the country. Such modifications include one-on-one instruction, the use of visual aids, etc. They will come to a pool near you, including hotel pools. The website is as follows: [http://www.sunsationalswimschool.com/areas\\_we\\_service.php](http://www.sunsationalswimschool.com/areas_we_service.php).

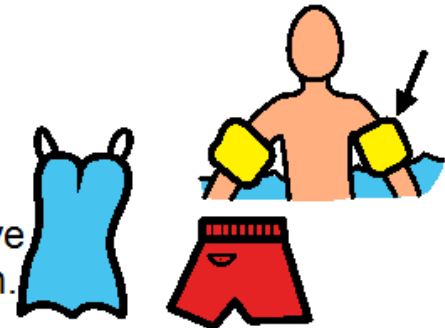


# I'm Going to the Pool!

Soon, I will go to the pool!  
I will have lots of fun playing  
in the water with \_\_\_\_\_.  
There might be other people at the pool, too!  
They want to have fun just like me.



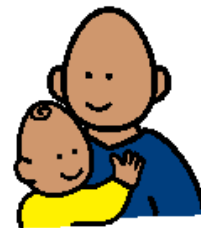
When I get ready for the pool,  
I will put on my swimsuit.  
My \_\_\_\_\_ might want me to wear  
something around my waist or on my  
arms to help keep me safe when I swim.  
They might feel funny, but \_\_\_\_\_ won't have  
to worry about me being safe if I wear them.



Then, I will be ready to go swimming!  
When I get to the pool, I need to stay  
close to a grown-up at all times.  
They will make sure that I'm safe.  
I should always walk by the pool  
because it might be slippery.



Before I go in the water, I should  
ask a grown-up to come with me.  
No one should swim alone.  
The water may feel nice when I step in  
and my hair might even get a little wet!



Other people might be playing  
in the water, too.  
If they splash me, I will not get upset.  
I will try to keep my face out of the  
water so I can breathe!  
This will make \_\_\_\_\_ happy when  
they know I am safe.



I will be sure not to go potty in the pool.  
That's yucky.  
Other people are swimming nearby and  
this would make them sad.  
If I need to go potty while I'm in the pool,  
I will tell a grown-up and they will take me.



When it's time to get out of the pool,  
I will be very wet.  
I will use a towel to dry off.  
It will be soft and warm.

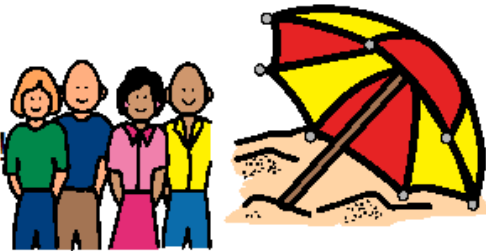


Then it will be time to say goodbye  
to the pool!  
I would like to visit another pool  
again soon!

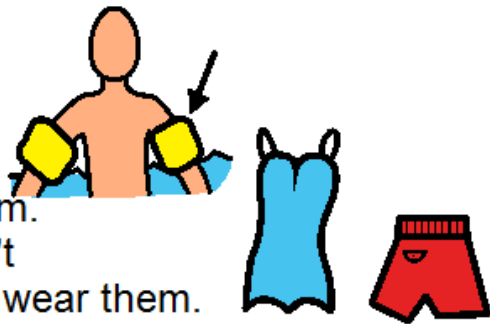


# I'm Going to the Beach/Lake!

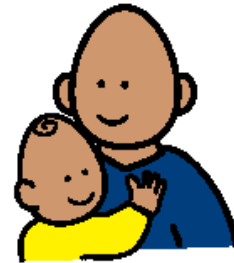
Soon, I am going to the \_\_\_\_\_!  
I will have lots of fun playing in the water with \_\_\_\_\_.  
There might be other people there, too!  
They want to have fun just like me.



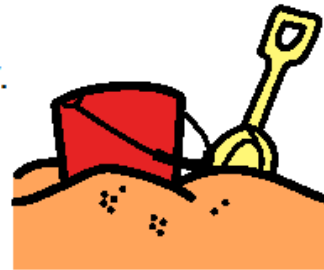
When I get ready for the water,  
I will put on my swimsuit.  
My \_\_\_\_\_ might want me to wear  
something around my waist or on my  
arms to help keep me safe when I swim.  
They might feel funny, but \_\_\_\_\_ won't  
have to worry about me being safe if I wear them.



Then, I will be ready to go swimming!  
When I get to the water, I need to stay  
close to a grown-up at all times.  
They will make sure that I'm safe.



There might be sand or dirt around the water.  
It might feel funny on my feet.  
It will be okay. I can wash it off in the water.



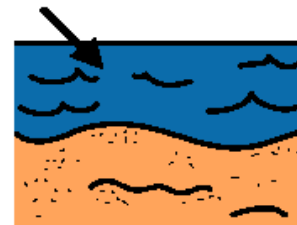
Before I go in the water, I should ask a grown-up to come with me.  
No one should swim alone.  
The water may feel nice when I step in and my hair might even get a little wet!



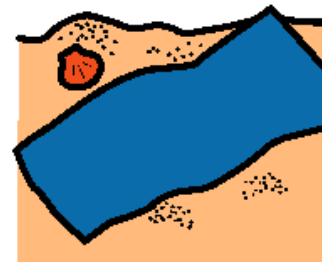
Other people might be playing in the water, too.  
If they splash me, I will not get upset.  
I will try to keep my face out of the water so I can breathe!  
This will make \_\_\_\_\_ happy when they know I am safe.



The water might move and push me around.  
These are waves.  
I need to be careful they don't push me over.



When it's time to get out of the pool,  
I will be very wet.  
I will use a towel to dry off.  
It will be soft and warm.  
The dirt and sand will stick to my feet again.  
\_\_\_\_\_ can help me wipe it off.



Then it will be time to say goodbye to the water!  
I would like to visit the water again soon!



# Road Trips





# Road Trips

## General Tips

- Visuals can be very important. Show pictures of things they may encounter along the way and places they will visit. You could also use visuals to make a schedule so your child will know what the day will bring.
- Consider splitting the road trip into multiple shorter days rather than one long day.
- Prepare your child for the long drive by taking a mini road trip ahead of time. This will also allow you an opportunity to figure out how to best occupy your child and determine how long they can ride in a car without a break.
- Anticipate regular stops to stretch out legs, use the restroom, and take a break from the monotony of the road. If opportunities for available rest stops will be limited along the route, you may need to plan these stops ahead of time.
- Give your child a map so they can see where they are, where they have been, and how far they have to go. Allow them to color the completed portion of the route.
- Think about behaviors that may be distracting to the driver and how to minimize them. If possible, have one caregiver sit in the backseat with the child if you anticipate this being a problem.
- Bring your own food, even if this means packing a cooler. Most rest stops have a picnic or lunch area where your family could eat lunch.
- If your child has a specialized diet, find out where the specialty grocery stores are along the route.
- Do your best to plan for snacks that will not cause a mess. If unavoidable, however, be sure to have disposable wipes for cleanup.



# Road Trips

## General Tips

- In case of emergencies, bring a recent picture of your child and a way to identify your child, such as a bracelet or badge.
- Bring a bag of sensory items if your child is easily overstimulated and you think this may help calm them.
- Avoid making rest stops while your child is sleeping. Take advantage of these times to gain a lot of ground.
- Have surprises for them along the way. Introduce small, new toy every couple of hours to keep them interested and excited. If introducing new toys would bring stress to your child, bring some of their favorite familiar toys from home to give them along the way.
- Bring a set of headphones for both you and your child. This can reduce sensory input to prevent overstimulation for your child and help you get a moment of peace.
- Take advantage of the fact that you are all confined to a small space for a long period of time. Do your best to use time in the car to talk to your child and practice social skills. Electronics can be a good option for a portion of the trip, but don't let them consume all of your child's time.
- If your child is sensitive to bright light, it may be beneficial to bring them a pair of sunglasses or to put a shade on their window.
- Consider engaging the child locks on your car if you think your child may play with the door handles or try to run away when stopped.



# Road Trips

## Available Resources

### Pinterest

- This website contains a wealth of ideas for games and activities to engage children with and without Autism during a road trip. And it's free!

### Sit or Squat

- This app can help locate nearby restrooms. Features include a map or list of close restrooms, reviews, ratings, pictures, hours, availability of changing tables and handicap accessibility.

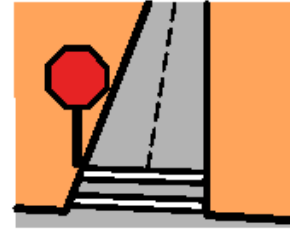
### Roadtrippers.com

- This website allows easy road trip planning. You are able to select your destination and route and explore available attractions, food, accommodations, points of interest, and more. There is also an app available.



# I'm Going on a Road Trip!

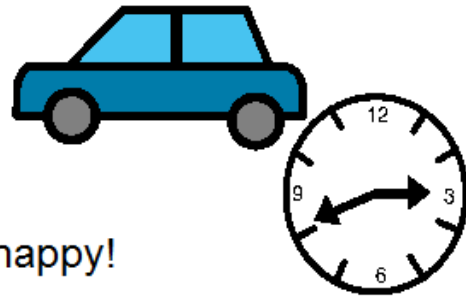
Soon, I will go on a road trip!  
We are driving to a place far away, all  
the way to \_\_\_\_\_!  
It will take a long time to get there.  
\_\_\_\_\_ will be coming with me.



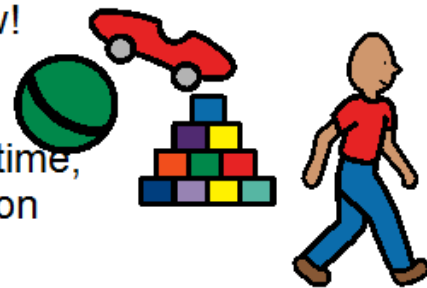
Before we leave, I will have to pack my suitcase.  
My \_\_\_\_\_ will help me pick out  
things to go in my suitcase.  
\_\_\_\_\_ will have suitcases, too!  
Then, we will put all our suitcases in the car!



Then it will be time to start our road trip!  
I will be riding in the car for a long time,  
so I should do my best to not get upset.  
I will use my inside voice and keep my  
hands and feet to myself.  
This will make \_\_\_\_\_ very happy!



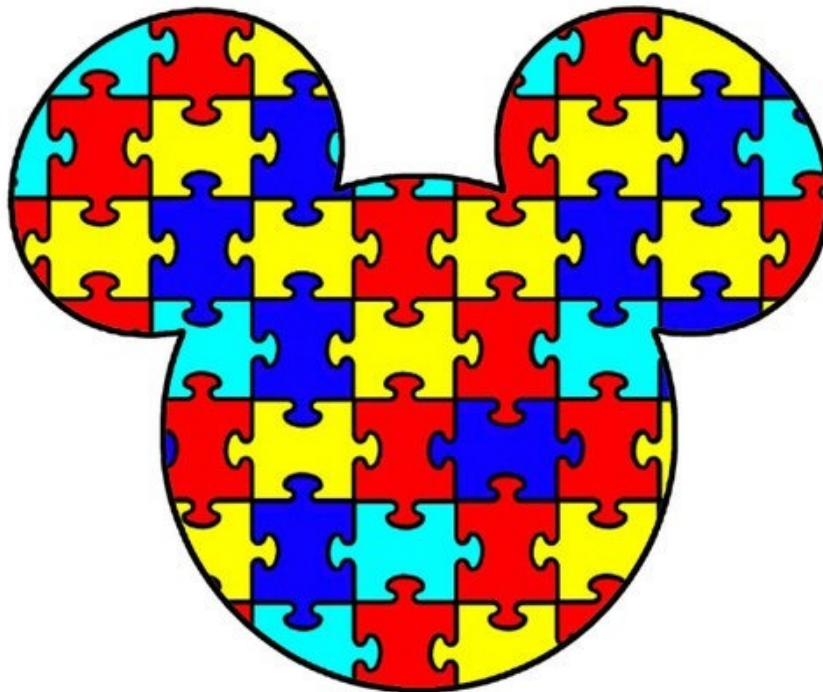
There will be lots to look at out the window!  
I can listen to music, play games,  
or ask \_\_\_\_\_ for other ideas.  
I might get tired of sitting down for a long time,  
but I will be able to stretch out my legs soon  
when we take a break.



When we finally get to \_\_\_\_\_,  
we will have lots of fun!  
When it is time to leave, we will do it all  
over again so that we can get home.



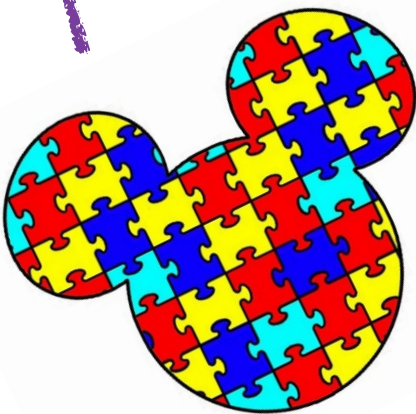
# Theme Parks



# Theme Parks

## General Tips for Planning Ahead

- **PREPARE PREPARE PREPARE!** Show your child pictures and videos of the things that they may encounter at the theme park you will be visiting. This could include rides, shows, restaurants, characters, and other important features.
- Create a visual schedule of the day so your child can know what to expect.
- Role-play possible situations that may occur at the theme park such as waiting in line, the unexpected shutting down of a ride, navigating large crowds, and what to do in case of separations.
- Take picture of your child to present to security and staff in case of separation.
- Get a note from your child's doctor stating their diagnosis. This may be required to obtain a pass that can help you avoid long lines. It may be beneficial to check with the specific theme park about their paperwork requirements.
- Try to plan to take your trip during less busy times of the year (not during the holidays, summer, or common breaks from school). This way, you can avoid larger crowds.
- Do your best to find websites and blogs not affiliated with the theme park that will give honest reviews about taking a child with special needs. They may give helpful suggestions for your specific theme park based on their experiences.
- **Don't over-plan!** You don't have to do everything in one day. Try to spend multiple shorter or less busy days in the park. If that's not possible, remember that you may not get to everything and that's okay. Having a stress free, enjoyable day is more important than crossing everything off of a checklist.

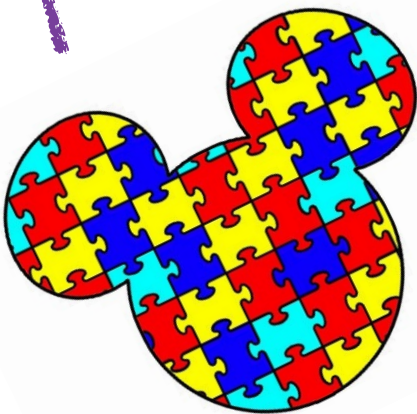


# Theme Parks

- Do your best to measure your child's height ahead of time so that you will know what they can and cannot ride. Please understand that the height you obtain may be different than the one that a staff member measures. Remember height restrictions are for your child's safety so their measurements are most accurate for their own ride.
- Some parks may want your child to wear a wristband in order to receive accommodations. If your child has sensory issues, this could obviously be an issue. Call ahead of time and see if there's a different way that they could identify your child.

## General Tips for the Day of...

- Bring ear protection! Noise canceling headphones may be preferred. Keep in mind that many attractions may not allow head gear of any kind so bring disposable ear plugs as well.
- Many theme parks provide accommodations to children with Autism including, but not limited to, passes that do not require them to wait in lines. Each theme park's accommodations will be different, but most require you to talk to a guest relations employee at the beginning of your day. Be sure to bring your child with you when obtaining this pass.
- If your child has diet restrictions, research available food options or pack your own meals to bring along. Disney parks have a list of places that offer special diet options available online and at guest relations.
- Choose a place on the map to meet in case of separation. Discuss the location to meet and what to do if they are separated. Either write the location down or circle the location on a map and place it in your child's pocket. Your child could also wear an identification bracelet with their diagnosis and your name and number so that you could be contacted.
- Pack an extra pair of clothes and shoes for your child, especially if they have sensory issues. Beware of wet rides or use a poncho. Wet clothes and shoes aren't fun for anyone.



# Theme Parks

## Additional Resources

### Morgan's Wonderland

- This is a theme park designed specifically for children with disabilities. It has attractions such as a music garden, sensory village, safe playground, and fishing. Every attraction is wheelchair accessible and accommodating to a child with special needs.

### Friendship Circle Website

- This website offers a list of amusement parks that offer accommodations for children with special needs. The website is as follows:  
<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/10/10/39-theme-parks-with-access-passes-for-special-needs/>

### A Resource for Guests with Cognitive Disabilities (including ASD)

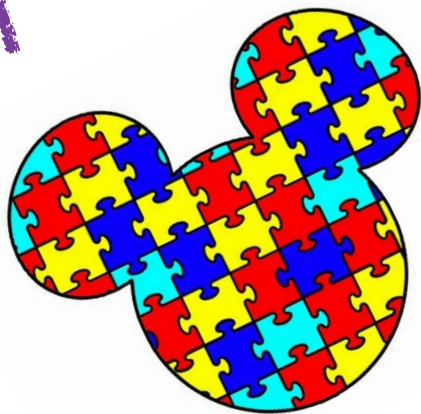
- These guides detail accommodations and tips specifically for The Disneyland Resort and The Walt Disney World Resort.

Disneyland:

[https://wdpromedia.disney.go.com/media/wdpro-assets/dlr/help/guest-services/cognitive-disabilities/dlr-cognitive-guide\\_2015\\_01-07.pdf](https://wdpromedia.disney.go.com/media/wdpro-assets/dlr/help/guest-services/cognitive-disabilities/dlr-cognitive-guide_2015_01-07.pdf)

Disney World:

[https://wdpromedia.disney.go.com/media/wdpro-assets/help/guest-services/cognitive-disabilities-services/wdw\\_cognitive\\_guide\\_rev.pdf](https://wdpromedia.disney.go.com/media/wdpro-assets/help/guest-services/cognitive-disabilities-services/wdw_cognitive_guide_rev.pdf)





# I'm Going to the Amusement Park!

Soon, I will be going to a very fun place called an amusement park! \_\_\_\_\_ will be coming with me. There will be lots of other people there, too. They want to have fun just like me.



The people might bump into me or stand close to me. I shouldn't be nervous though. Nothing bad will happen.



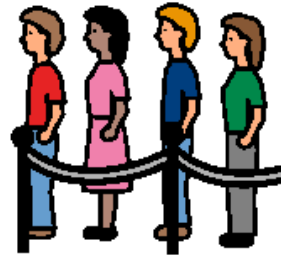
There will be a lot of rides that I can go on! Some might be fast and some might be slow. Some might even have water. I might get wet. It will be okay though. My clothes will dry.



To keep me safe, I might have to wear a seatbelt just like in the car.



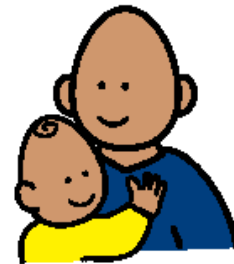
Before I can ride, I will have to wait in a line with everyone else that wants to ride. Some lines might take a long time. I will wait for my turn and not get upset. This make \_\_\_\_\_ happy.



With all of these people and rides, it might get very loud. I don't need to be upset though. If I don't like the loud noises, I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ and they will take me somewhere a little quieter. This will help me feel better.



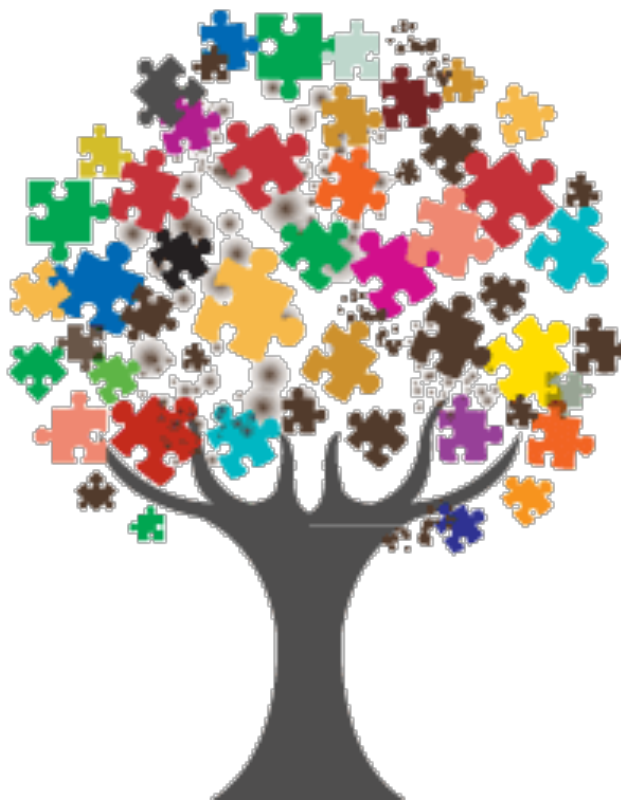
I should stay close to a grown-up at all times. It will make them happy if they know where I am. \_\_\_\_\_ will tell me what to do if I get lost.



When it's time to go, we will get in the car and drive away. Goodbye \_\_\_\_\_. I will see you next time!



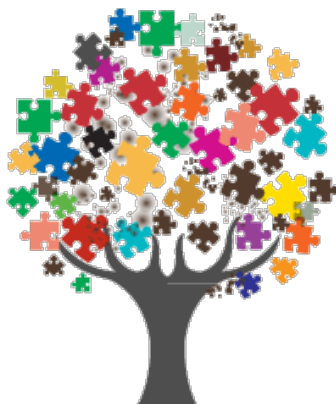
# The Great Outdoors



# The Great Outdoors

## General Tips

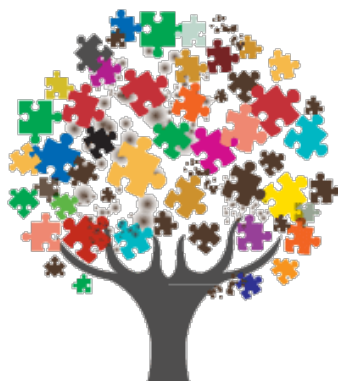
- **Choose your campsite carefully.** Consider proximity to restrooms, available electricity, amount of shade, and crowdedness of neighboring campsites. Be aware of outdoor temperatures and your child's ability to regulate their own body temperature. A tent will not protect from cold or provide relief from heat, so bring alternative methods.
- **Take note of any bodies of water in the area.** For more tips on being safe around water, refer to the water safety section of this guide.
- **Lock your tent at night with zip ties or a lock.** If locking it with zip ties, you will need to remember to hide scissors somewhere in the tent.
- **Be sure to bring simple, familiar foods on your trip.** If your child isn't used to eating food that can be easily prepared at a campsite, practice making and eating the meal ahead of time.
- **Talk in length about fire safety with your child before going camping.** Since a child with Autism may be drawn to fire, this is an important thing to consider.
- **Introduce your child to the idea of camping slowly.** "Camp" in the living room, then move on to the back yard, etc. Plan a hiking trip beforehand to expose them to things they may see when camping.
- **If your child is sensitive to noise, bring ear protection such as noise canceling headphones to block out unfamiliar animal and environmental noises.**
- **Have structure to your day.** Plan things to do to keep your child occupied and engaged.



# The Great Outdoors

## General Tips

- Your child may have difficulty identifying dangerous situations, so scope out your campsite for potential threats such as downhill slopes, cliffs, low hanging branches, etc.
- Try to bring an air mattress or something soft that more closely resembles a bed. However, some children may prefer the snugness of a sleeping bag. Have your child attempt to sleep in a sleeping bag ahead of time.
- If you don't think that a tent will be suitable for your child, look into campsites that offer cabins instead. Renting an RV or camper could be another good option since these offer more security and familiarity.



# The Great Outdoors

## Additional Resources

### Project Lifesaver

- This is a program that works with trained public safety agencies to be more efficient in search and rescue missions. A tracking device can be provided for your child to wear. If they are prone to wander off and you worry that they may get lost in the woods, this could be a good option to consider.

<http://www.projectlifesaver.org/?clid=C1bH8LmwycMCFfPm7Aodfz0ARw>

### KAMPN: Kids with Autism Making Progress in Nature

- This overnight summer camp, located in the mountains of North Carolina, is specially designed for children with Autism and their families. Several activities for children and opportunities for parents to connect with other parents are provided. It's FREE!

<http://kampn4autism.appstate.edu>

### Family Camping- North Carolina

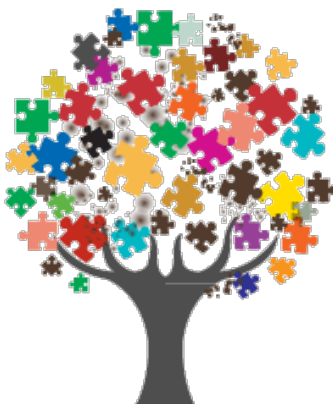
- Family Camping events provide an opportunity for families with children with ASD to camp overnight in cabins and participate in structured activities specially designed for children with Autism.

<http://autismsociety-nc.org/index.php/family-camping>

### Camp Yofi

- This is a highly specialized and structured camp for Jewish families of children with Autism. This five day camp provides one-on-one staff to camper ratios and a large number of activity options.

<http://ramahdarom.org/programs/camp-yofi/>



# I'm Going Camping!

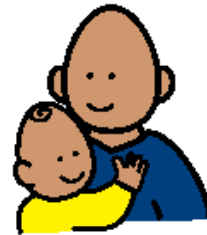
Soon, I will go on a camping trip!  
\_\_\_\_\_ will go with me!  
We will need to pack a lot of things.  
\_\_\_\_\_ would really like it if I helped.  
Once the car is packed, we will drive  
to the campsite.



When we get there, there will be a lot  
to do! I can help \_\_\_\_\_ set up our  
tent. This is where we will be sleeping!



There will be lots to explore around  
the campsite.  
I should not explore alone though!  
I need to make sure a grown-up is  
with me all the time!



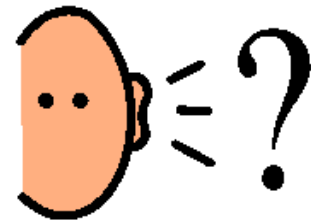
\_\_\_\_\_ will build a fire so that we can  
stay warm and cook our food.  
The fire will be very hot so I need to be  
careful and not get too close.  
We might even use the fire to help us  
cook our food.  
This isn't how we usually do it,  
but it works just the same.



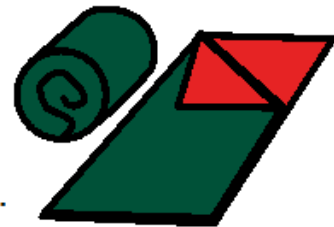
At night, it will be very dark outside. I should not be scared because \_\_\_\_\_ will be with me and I can use a flashlight to see.



I might hear things outside our tent. Maybe the leaves will blow. Maybe I'll even hear an animal walk by! I don't have to worry. I will be safe inside my tent.



There won't be a bed inside my tent. I will get to sleep on the ground! It will be comfortable because I will be inside a fluffy sleeping bag. \_\_\_\_\_ will be sleeping on the ground, too.



When it is time to go home, we will take the tent apart and put everything back in the car. Goodbye campsite! We will see you next time!





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# Additional Resources

Information for this resource was also gathered from the following websites:

"Parent Tips: Airports and Flying"

<http://www.pathfindersforautism.org/articles/view/parent-tips-airports-and-flying>

"15 Airports That Offer "Rehearsal Programs" for Individuals With Autism"

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2014/09/18/15-airports-that-offer-rehearsal-programs-for-individuals-with-autism/>

"Flying with autism: Airport program helps affected children"

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/flights/2013/04/17/flying-with-autism-airport-program-helps-affected-children/2088367/>

"Guide to Airport Security For Families With Autism"

<http://www.autisticglobetrotting.com/guide-to-get-through-airport-security-for-families-and-kids-with-autism.html>

"7 Tips for Flying with an Autistic Child"

<http://www.minitime.com/trip-tips/7-tips-for-flying-with-an-autistic-child-article>

"Going On An Airplane"

[http://www.abilitypath.org/tools-resources/abilitypath\\_socialstory\\_airplane\\_2011.pdf](http://www.abilitypath.org/tools-resources/abilitypath_socialstory_airplane_2011.pdf)

"Traveling Through the Airport"

<http://www.dublinairport.com/gns/at-the-airport/autism-asd.aspx>

"Children with Autism and Swimming"

<http://www.modernmom.com/f65bc6d4-3b3d-11e3-be8a-bc764e04a41e.html>

"Tips for Autistic Children at Walt Disney World"

[http://allears.net/pl/dis\\_aut2.htm](http://allears.net/pl/dis_aut2.htm)

"70+ Tips and Tricks for Special Needs Road Trips"

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/05/23/70-tips-and-tricks-for-special-needs-road-trips/>

"Behavior Trips on Our Camping Trip"

<http://www.autismepicenter.com/autism-blog/blog2.php/2010/07/18/behavior-trips-on-our-camping-trip>

"Camping w/ Autistic Children"

<http://www.survivalistboards.com/showthread.php?t=107224>

