

Tips for traveling with kids:

- Kids will be more engaged and excited about a trip if you give them choices and involve them in the planning process. For example, you can give two or three options for them to pick an activity for the family to do together or to choose a restaurant. Bring child to library to research and learn about the destination.
- If you have a picky eater, research restaurant options ahead of time. You may also want to shop for food at your destination for familiar snacks.
- CONSULT WITH YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN. If your child has a medical need, ask for recommendations, tips, and determine what should be included in a special "travel pack" with items you may need in case of an emergency.
- As you pack, make a checklist of all essential items and double check it before you leave each stop of your journey. Pack essentials in carry-on in case baggage gets lost.
- PLAN for rests and breaks for you and your child.
- Allow for flexibility in your plan
- Social story. Create a social story describing your trip. Show pictures of you packing your suitcases, driving to the airport, checking your luggage, going through security, waiting at the gate, boarding the plane and so on.
- Comfort items from home may help your child acclimate to a different environment: a pillow, blanket, noise machine or favorite stuffed animal. Maintain as many routines as possible. Consistency = predictability = comfort = a feeling of safety.
- Limit screen time. Develop an age-appropriate media and screen time plan. The American Academy of Pediatrics has guidelines on the subject and commonsensemedia.org are both great informational resources for parents.
- Think about sensory needs. If child is sensitive to heat or bright lights, consider packing items to alleviate these discomforts, such as a mini fan, cooling towels, sunglasses, a hat, etc.
- Create a visual schedule/calendar
- If you worry about a child who may get lost in a crowd, pack a whistle and wristband or temporary tattoos with your phone number. Dress your child in bright colors. For an older/verbal child, discuss a meeting place in case you get separated. Discuss a safety plan with child. Help child determine which adults to go to in case they get lost.
<https://myfamilytravels.com/content/11177-10-tips-traveling-special-needs-kids>
<https://www.nytimes.com/guides/travel/travel-with-kids>