

Travel Prep Guide for Families with Sensory Needs

By Logan's Landing Project

Traveling with a child who has sensory sensitivities or autism can be both exciting and overwhelming. With thoughtful planning and the right tools, it can become a smoother, more enjoyable experience for everyone. This guide is designed to help you prepare with confidence—from planning and packing to navigating airports, road trips, and hotel stays.

Before You Go: Planning with Purpose

Research & Choose Autism-Friendly Destinations

- Look for destinations certified as autism-friendly (like certain theme parks, museums, or hotels).
- Read reviews or call ahead to ask about accommodations for sensory needs.
- Identify quiet areas, sensory-friendly activities, and supportive staff.

Involve Your Child (as much as possible)

- Use social stories, videos, or visual schedules to explain what to expect.
- Preview photos of the destination, airport, or hotel.
- Practice routines like airport security or sleeping in a new bed with pretend play.

Notify Service Providers

- Inform airlines, hotels, and attractions about your child's needs.
 - Request priority boarding, early check-in, or access to quiet areas.
 - Ask if they offer sensory bags, weighted blankets, or staff trained in autism awareness.
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What to Pack: Sensory-Friendly Travel Kit

Sensory Comfort Items

- Noise-canceling headphones or earplugs
- Sunglasses or a hat for light sensitivity

- Fidget toys or sensory tools (chewelry, stress balls, poppers)
- A favorite comfort item (blanket, stuffed animal, pillow)

Food & Snacks

- Familiar, preferred snacks (especially if picky eating is a concern)
- Spill-proof water bottle or cup
- Utensils your child is used to

Essentials & Extras

- Change of clothes (more than usual—sensory meltdowns happen)
 - Wet wipes, pull-ups, or toilet seat covers (if needed)
 - Medications or supplements
 - A printed travel plan or visual schedule
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Travel Day Tips

Airport & Flying

- Arrive early and ask about TSA Cares or pre-boarding options.
- Use a visual countdown timer or story for transitions.
- Have a small bag of new or favorite sensory toys ready.
- Keep your child's ID, medical info, and emergency contact card on hand.

Road Trips

- Plan frequent breaks in calm or safe places.
 - Create a travel playlist or audiobook that your child enjoys.
 - Use a travel lap desk for activities or snacks.
 - Block sun with car shades or allow your child to wear sunglasses.
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At the Hotel

- Request a quiet room away from elevators and noise.
 - Bring your child's bedding or favorite pillow to make the room feel familiar.
 - Use a white noise machine or app for better sleep.
 - Walk your child through the room layout and routines.
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Dining Out Tips

Eating out can be a challenge with sensory needs—but it's possible with some prep and flexibility.

Before You Go

- Check menus online in advance to avoid surprises.
- Call ahead to ask about quiet hours or slow times.
- Look for autism-friendly restaurants or those that allow mobile ordering.

Bring Your Own Tools

- Bring familiar utensils, straw cups, or small snacks to bridge waiting times.
- Noise-reducing headphones can help in loud environments.
- Bring a visual choice board or menu if your child uses one.

Keep It Simple

- Choose spots with fast service or outdoor seating if available.
- Let your child sit where they feel most comfortable—even if it's at the end of the booth or near the wall.
- If necessary, ask for your food to go and have a backup picnic plan.

Celebrate Small Wins

Even a short, successful restaurant trip is a win. Over time, these positive experiences build confidence—for both you and your child.

Final Thoughts

Every child is different, and you know yours best. Travel won't always go perfectly—but with preparation, patience, and a flexible mindset, it *can* be enjoyable and empowering.

From everyone at Logan's Landing:

You deserve to explore the world. We're here to help make it more accessible.