

## Traveling With an Autistic Child

Daily life with an Autistic child can be a challenge to say the least. What should you do if you are traveling for vacation, or another purpose? Lets look at some things a parent can do when traveling with their Autistic child.

1. Plan ahead. If at all possible plan trips far in advance. This gives you time to talk with your child and get them used to the idea of traveling. You can explain to them where they will be going, and some of the things they will be doing while away.
2. Bring items from home that your Autistic child likes. Bring their favorite toys. Bring along their pillow and blanket they use each night. Try and keep as many items that are familiar to your child with you while traveling. This can help your child to relax in their new environment.
3. Bring all their necessary medications. You do not want to be away from home and not have their medicine. Get the prescriptions refilled before the trip to make sure you do not run out.
4. Try and keep a schedule while traveling. If possible keep some of the schedule you use while at home. Try to get up and go to bed at the same time each day. Autistic children needs their schedules to feel safe.
5. Do not overload your child. If your child has a lot of sensory issues do not over load them while traveling. If you see your child getting overwhelmed go back to your hotel for a break. Warn your child if the place you are going has loud noises, or bright lights if these are issues.
6. Do not force your child to do something they are not comfortable doing. For example do not make them go to a amusement park if they do not like loud noises and lots of people. Consider bringing a qualified person to watch your child while you visit the park. They could do an activity that your child would like instead.
7. Make sure your child has something with them that has your name, and phone number where you can be reached incase the child gets lost. If your child is verbal make sure they know how to tell someone they are lost. This can be very hard for an Autistic child. They have hard time dealing with people anyway.
8. If you have to travel for an emergency try to stay calm. If you are stressed about the trip your Autistic child will pick up on this and become stressed their selves.

9. Take lots of activities the child enjoys to keep them occupied while traveling. This could be hand held games, or a portable DVD player. This can help keep your child from becoming overly bored. It can also give them something to focus on if they start to feel uneasy.

10. Notify the place where you are staying that your child is Autistic. This is very important if your child likes to wander on their own. The staff at the hotel will know if they see the child and you are not with them to contact you right away.

Traveling with an Autistic child will take some extra planning, but it can be done. Just try and keep as much structure to the trip as possible. It will make the trip more enjoyable for you and your child.