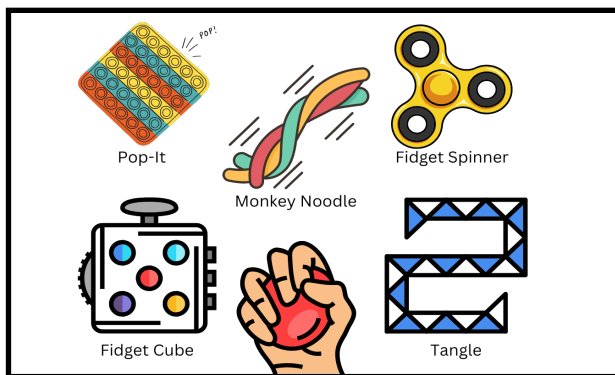


# Travel Resource Guide for Families: Prepare for Take Off!

While traveling to new destinations can be a fun and exciting experience, it can also be challenging for youth with autism. When preparing for travel, planning ahead and using simple neurodiversity-affirming strategies can help reduce the stress of navigating busy travel areas

### Plan Ahead and Practice Routines

- Autistic youth often do best with structure and routine. Prepare your child by discussing your travel plans two or three weeks in advance.
- Show your child pictures of the airport or train station. If possible, visit it in advance, take a virtual tour, or participate in an airport rehearsal program so you can practice the steps involved in air travel.
- Find out what accommodations the airport or train station offers. For example, some airports offer a priority check-in service and a quiet waiting room for individuals with autism.



- Create a social narrative explaining the steps of your upcoming trip. Include pictures and an explanation of new or different activities. Read the social narrative with your child daily leading up to the trip. The social narrative will help prepare your child in advance for the events and activities that will occur during your travel experience.
- Preview where you are going and think about places that might be challenging for someone with sensory differences. Make sure you bring preferred sensory items.

Consider traveling with a *My Emergency Care Plan*, *My Health Care Plan*, or *About My Autism* card to communicate effectively with airport staff about your child's autism.



To download these resources:  
[www.cds.udel.edu/healthcareaccess/my-care-plan/](http://www.cds.udel.edu/healthcareaccess/my-care-plan/)  
[cds.udel.edu/dnea/mockdriving](http://cds.udel.edu/dnea/mockdriving)



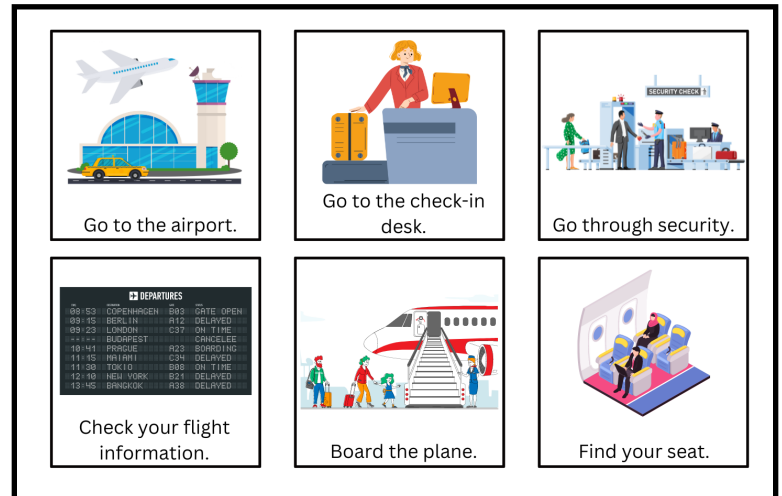
Additional resource guides at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/>.

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### Prepare for Departure

- Develop a visual task analysis that breaks down each step of your travel experience. The visual task analysis should have picture cards that show your child what is going to happen during your travel experience. Arrange these cards in sequential order to communicate the order of events that will occur on the date of your departure.
- Arrive at the airport or train station early so you have plenty of time to move through each step of travel. During this time, locate a quiet space that can serve as a “cool down” area if your child becomes overwhelmed or anxious.
- Think about your child’s interests and have their preferred toys, snacks, or other comforting objects available for travel.
- Consider assigning everyone in your family a “travel buddy” or travel companion, in the event that you are separated from each other. Passengers with autism traveling by air can be screened by TSA without being separated from a travel companion. Passengers with autism also have the right to be seated next to a travel companion on flights.



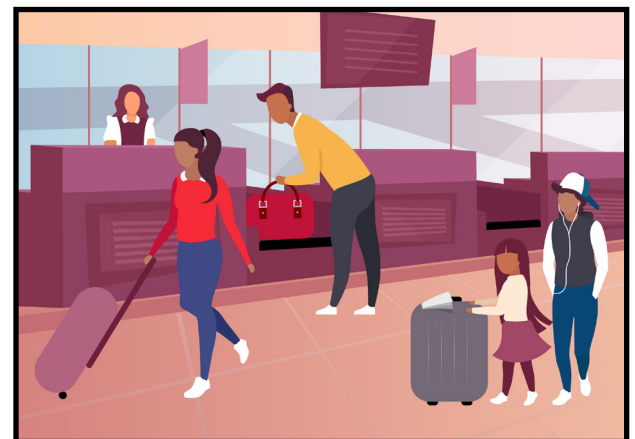
### Travel Tips Resources

Madison House Autism Foundation:  
*5 Air Travel Tips for Travelers with Autism Video.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdBiG477Bqs>

Wings for All Initiative:  
*Information on airport rehearsal programs*  
<https://thearc.org/our-initiatives/travel/>

TSA website includes rights when traveling with a child with disabilities  
<https://www.tsa.gov/travel/tsa-cares/disabilities-and-medical-conditions>

TSA Cares: *Screening Travelers on the Autism Spectrum Video*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhldTnJT4jE&t=5s>



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