

# Traveling

## Vacation and Travel For Families with Special Needs Children:

Most families with children choose to vacation and travel during the summer months, and it may take some planning to have a successful vacation. Even more so for families with children who have special needs. There are many things to consider when planning a vacation: destination, transportation, hotel or other overnight arrangements, activities, adaptations, and general accessibility, to name a few.

### Tips for Air Travel:

- Contact the airline as early as possible for special assistance, or use a travel agent who is familiar with making special reservations.
- If possible, ask for a non-stop flight to avoid airport shuffle.
- If you use a car seat, make sure it is certified for air travel.
- Make sure to label all equipment with your name, address, and phone number.
- If your child's wheel chair is checked, remind the flight attendant before landing so she can make a radio inquiry to make sure the chair is delivered promptly.
- Make arrangements for special meals in advance. Do take along some of your child's favorite snacks and drinks.
- Take your child to the toilet or change her diaper before the flight.
- Invest in a Walkman or DVD player and a good set of barrettes to anchor the headset.
- Offer your child something to eat or drink during descent.

### Additional Travel Tips:

- Make advanced arrangements with car rental services.
- Before you leave home, get a disabled parking placard that can be used everywhere.
- Check with your hotel to be sure your room and facilities are handicap accessible.
- The following is a list of Web sites, which addresses those considerations. They contain information about vacation travel through articles, books, Internet links, and other resources.
- A wonderful Directory of Summer Camps for Children with Disabilities was compiled by the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). It contains disability-specific as well as general camp resources.
- The Global Access Disabled Travel Network is a Web site containing personal travel experiences, as well as information on travel books, specific destinations, tips on planning, hotels and resorts, etc.
- Travel with Kids offers information and links to cruise ship accessibility, tour operators and travel agents specializing in special needs, outdoor vacations for people with disabilities, and much more.
- The Parenting Special Needs Web site has a section on Accessible Summer Recreation. It includes accessible travel, camps for special children, recreation and sport, adaptive equipment, and also just for fun activities for children with special needs.

- The Enabled RVer hosts articles on topics related to RV travel, such as accessible RVs, the Handicapped Travel Club (HTC), travel guides, campgrounds and specific destinations, resources, and adaptive equipment.
- Access-Able Travel Source contains information on travel with disabilities, mature travel, disability magazines, access guides, wheelchair travel, scooter rental, accessible transportation, world destinations, lists of travel professionals, links, and tips for the traveler with disabilities.
- The Project ACTION Accessible Travelers' Database was created to assist tourists with disabilities to access mass transit systems while traveling to other cities. The database includes information on hotel/motel shuttles, accessible taxis, private bus/tour companies, van rentals, public transit operators, and national 800 numbers.
- The Disability Travel and Recreation Resources web site includes information and links on topics such as travel planning, destinations, transportation, air travel, children, and books.
- Emerging Horizons is a magazine, available online and in print, about accessible travel for people with mobility disabilities. It includes access information, resources, news and travel tips.
- The Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality (SATH) actively promotes awareness, respect, accessibility, and employment for persons with disabilities in the tourism industry. SATH contains disability-specific 'How To Travel' articles, as well as an extensive list of resources for the traveler with disabilities.
- Accessible Recreation on Federal Lands provides a listing of government resources that manage federal recreation sites in the United States. It also includes the Accessibility Data Management System (ADMS), an online resource containing accessibility information about many federal facilities.
- The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability web site contains a virtual library with an extensive list of resource directories, fact sheets, bibliographies, and monographs. Topics range from adaptive equipment, adapting activities in recreation programs, camping, hiking, fishing, scuba, and much more.

Although the sources listed above seem extensive, it is just the tip of the iceberg. Explore what will best fit you and your needs as a family

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