

Parent to Parent Newsletter

Surviving Summer Tips For Special Needs Families

While traveling with a child with special needs may require a little more planning and adjustment, it's just a different category of family vacation that, just like traveling with infants, toddlers and teens, can be both difficult and enjoyable. Here are ways to make the trip easier and fun for the entire family.

Planning: When traveling with a child with special needs, begin with ensuring the basics are covered.



Air Travel: When booking flights, select seating at the front of the plane, as well as a closer proximity to lavatories for easier on/off and in/out. If security screening is a concern, hand searches, as well as private screenings, may be requested for disabled passengers. If you have questions about traveling with special needs children, we recommend first contacting the airline with whom you intend to travel, rather than the airport for which you'll be departing.

According to www.mighty.com, Jet Blue has the highest satisfaction rating for families with special needs. If you are concerned about your child's experience/reaction regarding flying, check into Wings for Autism and Challenge Air. Both offer simulated and real flights to prepare you and your child for air travel.

Transportation: Rental care agencies are catering to families of all types, including those in need of modified cars and vans. Another popular option is traveling by shuttle bus. Shuttle busses are larger and

usually better equipped for handicapped passengers. Contact your hotel to see what options are available.

Hotels: All U.S. hotels are required to offer wheelchair rooms, where doors are wider to the room and bathroom, and grips are provided for tubs and toilets. However, not all international hotels may be so friendly. Contact them directly to be certain.

Insurance: Check with your insurance company to be sure your child is covered when traveling to different states and abroad, as well as a list of facilities that are covered in the destinations you are visiting—including cruise ships—in the event you must visit a doctor.

Purchasing travel insurance for a big-splurge trip may be something to consider, as well, in the event of illness or trouble arises pre-trip that makes your family have to cancel or reschedule.



Medications: Pack all medications in carry-on luggage in case checked bags are delayed or lost. Liquid medications is one of very few items (including baby formula, baby food and breast milk) which may be allowed in higher quantities, if declared beforehand and approved during the screening process. Bring a note from your doctor on the medication may come in handy, as would an extra prescription in case of one must be filled.



Where To Go: Major attractions across the U.S. work hard to appeal to families and meet ADA requirements. Some may even offer special mobility equipment and wheelchairs to assist families, and calling ahead will help determine if there are special restrictions or programs specifically for special needs families.

There have been many changes at the Disney Parks, however they do work with the families to make it a pleasurable experience.

Cruise ships offer newer and larger ships that work hard to accommodate guests with special needs. Royal Caribbean received the very first "Autism Friendly" certification by Autism on the Seas. Princes, Carnival and Norwegian are all offering special accommodations as well.

For City travel, check the Visitors & Convention Bureau's websites, which may include guides for people with disabilities.

*information provided by www.familyvacationcritic.com



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Washington State Parks offers passes that **reduce or waive** camping, moorage, watercraft launch fees and day use for limited income senior citizens, disabled veterans, foster parents and **people with disabilities**.

Qualified individuals may apply for more than one type of pass, although only one pass may be used at a

time. These passes are valid only at Washington state parks.

Disability Pass - No Charge

Good for 50% discount on nightly camping / moorage. Free watercraft launching, trailer dump and day use entry. Valid year-round. Available for one-year (short-term disability) or five-year (permanent disability) periods. Offered to Washington state residents who are legally blind, profoundly deaf, developmentally disabled, or who meet the disability definition used by the U.S. Social Security Administration.

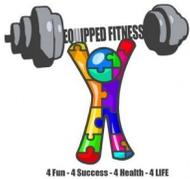
Note: a Permanent Disability Parking Permit, issued by the Washington State Department of Licensing, also entitles you to the 50% disability discount on camping and moorage and waives the trailer dump, boat launch and day use entry fee. Simply show placard, license plate, or issued wallet card along with matching ID directly to the park ranger.

How to Apply

Print and complete the appropriate application from the section above. If you have trouble printing the application, you may pick one up at your nearest state park or regional Washington State Parks headquarters. To have an application mailed to you, please call 360-902-8500, 360-902-8844, or the Washington Telecommunication Relay Service at 800-833-6388, or send an [email](#). Completed applications should be delivered to:

Washington State Parks 1111 Israel Road SW P.O. Box 42650 Olympia, WA 98504

Activities to Keep The Family Busy



Kids Zumba: Build 5
Equipped4Life Fitness offers a kids fitness program specifically designed for children with special needs.

(All capabilities welcome)

Call Patty Maddux **(360)331-6944**



Pacific Science Center
Autism Early Open: On the second Saturday of each month through December 2015, all families affected by ASD are invited to explore during a special free morning visit from 8-10am, before they open to the public. **June 13th (206)443-4629**



Sensory Friendly
Films at AMC Theaters, Cascade Mall Theater. Lights on low, volume is lowered, and the best part is that all children are accepted. If they need to get up and move around, if they can't keep still or if they make noises, it is okay.

(360)707-2727 10:00am
Saturday June 27 Inside Out
Saturday July 18 Minions



Special Swim for Special Kids Open swim dedicated to special needs children and their families. The whole family is welcome. Second Saturday of the month from 4:30-6:00pm. Come and play in the pool and connect with other families. **June 13th** Call to verify date and time. **(360)675-7665**



Military Families Swim for Free in Oak Harbor! Active-duty personnel, children and spouses are now free at John Vanderzicht Pool and Fidalgo Pool in Anacortes. The free entry is only for open swims, which include lap swimming. Military families must show their military identification.

DISCLAIMER

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