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Travel Tips

Plan Ahead for Summer Visits

If you are planning for your grandchild's vacation visit, look for entertainment options for "special needs children." Children with autism do not like surprises and you can prepare them before they arrive for planned activities. Here are some suggestions:

- Call ahead to local amusement parks to see if you can get special needs passes for your family when you visit. You may need to provide a letter from school or medical sources to document that your request is valid. Typically, you will get priority in accessing the park. Send a brochure or photos of the park to your grandchildren several weeks in advance of your visit there so they will be more comfortable in that environment when you arrive.
- If you plan to travel together with public transportation like busses, trains or airplanes, it's a good idea to take very short excursions first so that they will be familiar with the sounds, vibrations and crowds before being challenged by a longer trip.
- Contact local parks and recreation centers or use a search engine like *Google* to learn about enrollment opportunities for special needs summer programs, camps and sports activities. You will likely find swimming classes and sports *Challenger* or *Spirit* teams that are appropriate.
- Make a list of household chores that grandchildren can assist in or accomplish alone and have rewards to give them when the tasks are complete. Make the jobs age and skill appropriate. They can help by setting the table, washing dishes, using the washing machine and dryer, folding clean laundry and putting it away, or helping you to find groceries when you shop. All of the above may challenge your patience but ultimately you will be giving them a jumpstart for gaining independent living skills.
- Prepare a private, quiet space in your home where your grandchild can go to

relax. Supply the area with some favorite activities.

- Additional tips and suggestions for outings with your grandchildren can be found on the GAN website

<https://ganinfo.org/resources/tips-suggestions/>

Flying with an Autistic Child

It's interesting to see the kinds of accommodations that are being made for children with autism when it comes to travel. If you are planning on traveling with your grandchild, there are some ways to make the trip as safe and enjoyable as possible.

You may be able to find a quiet room at the airport, designed to give children time to be away from all the auditory stressors before getting on the plane. This article - [Quiet Rooms for Autistic Children Popping Up at Airports](#) - identifies 3 airports in the U.S. that have done this in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and Atlanta. This past February, LAX hosted an Autism Flight Experience Day that "allows families to discover or rediscover the airport and flight experience in a safe, sensitive, and caring environment," You can check their page [Traveler Information for Persons with Disabilities](#) for information about upcoming flight experience events.

Check out this resource: [7 Tips for Flying with an Autistic Child](#)

Where to Go

[32 Vacation Destinations for Individuals with Special Needs](#) has some great ideas on where to go for your summer trip or even just going somewhere local that can feel like an adventure. Even visiting a museum can make you feel like you are traveling to other countries without actually going anywhere. [Pretend City](#) in Irvine CA touts itself as an autism friendly museum and the San Diego Children's Discover Museum has [Sensory Friendly Museum Mornings](#) on the first Sunday of each month!

In this [30 Best Autism-Friendly Vacation Ideas](#) article they feature some theme parks like Great America Theme Parks (Santa Clara CA) and Disneyland ([Services for Guests with Cognitive Disabilities](#)) both of which offer special passes that will help reduce the tension of waiting in long lines. Here is a list of [39 Theme Parks with Special Needs Passes!](#) Policies may have changed so contact the park in advance of your visit to clarify the conditions that currently apply.

How about a cruise?

[The Royal Caribbean](#) promotes themselves as being the first autism friendly cruise line - focused on providing a great experience for autistic passengers since February 2014. Services include priority check-in, boarding and departure, special dietary accommodations (including gluten-free and dairy-free), flexible grouping by ability for their Adventure Ocean program and more good stuff. There is also a program called [Autism on the Seas](#) that works in conjunction with Royal Caribbean Cruises to provide an even more personalized and customized cruise experience.

What's In My Carry-On Bag + traveling tips for Autism/Aspergers



Fun Summer Activities

Activity Ideas

[15 Backyard Games from iMom](#)

[70+ Tips and Tricks for Special Needs Road Trips](#)

[Camping Tips - 11 Ideas for Taking a Child with Autism Camping](#)

[82 Summer Activities For Families with Special Needs](#)



Community Socials

2017 Chapman Spring Social



[You Can Have Socials in Your Community, Too!](#)

This is the fourth year GAN has sponsored ***Socials for Adults with Autism (ages 16 & up) and Their Caregivers***. The transition/adult years are very difficult for individuals with autism, especially after the age of 22 when they are no longer supported by public education. If they have not developed opportunities for community integration before then, they and their caregivers typically become socially isolated. GAN began sponsoring events in a church with college students and faculty support. As our guest list increased, we moved events to 3 local university sites. Every community has different support opportunities and locations to sponsor events. We have developed a [Tool Kit here](#) to make planning easy. Contact GAN if you would like more information or suggestions.

Great Summer Movies

How To Dance in Ohio

In Columbus, Ohio, a group of teenagers and young adults on the autism spectrum prepare for an iconic American rite of passage -- a Spring Formal. They spend 12 weeks practicing their social skills in preparation for the dance at a local nightclub. Working with their psychologist, they take the challenges expressed in their respective therapy groups from one level to the next: picking dates, dresses, and, ultimately, a King and Queen of the Prom.



Life, Animated

A coming of age story about a boy and his family who overcame great challenges by turning Disney animated movies into a language to express love, loss, kinship and brotherhood.



Enjoy a safe, fun filled
summer with your
grandchildren!

E-Bay Donations

Donate to GAN's [Giving Works eBay Store](#)



Grandparents have lots of "stuff" like collectibles, unused gifts and household goods, clothing, vintage jewelry and things in good condition that our families "do not want."

Your "stuff" can benefit other grandparents and families affected by autism. The Grandparent Autism Network welcomes donated goods.

You can drop off tax deductible items at Jay's

Catering, 10581 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA - or send them C/O GAN at 23785 El Toro Road, #103, Lake Forest, CA 92630 (USPS flat rate boxes may lower mailing costs!)

Grandparent Autism Network

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**Networking together,
grandparents are a vital
resource for autism...
and each other!**