



Summer Vacation Survival Tips

Kids who struggle with behavior or are sensitive to sensory inputs are often overwhelmed by sudden changes to their environment. This can make summer travel and vacations stressful.

The following tips will help your child and family not only survive summer vacations but also enjoy the experience.



1. Prepare Your Child for What to Expect

In advance of your road trip, work with your child to create a map that includes starting point, destination and stops along the way. Associate the time it will take to get from one place to another to hopefully avoid the “are we there yet” scenario or even worse, hours of whining and complaining. If you’re flying to your destination or are planning for an extended stay, let your child pick an activity or two at each destination.

Enjoy your trip!



Quiet Time



Healthy Snacks

2.

Avoid Screen Time

We believe too much screen time affects the ability of the brain to form healthy connections, leading to behavioral and developmental issues. It’s tempting to use screen time as a way to keep a child entertained during long trips. However, this can quickly result in meltdowns over the course of the vacation. Instead, replace it with car games like “I Spy,” license plate game, or round robin story telling. Audio books and travel art kits are also brain healthy ways to entertain children.

3.

Schedule Quiet Time

Kids are very intuitive and highly sensitive children can sense the moods of those around them. Staying relaxed and stress-free will go a long way to making your child feel at ease and able to enjoy the trip. Schedule a period of quiet time for the whole family each day of the vacation. Playing classical music during this time will promote relaxation and also encourages healthy brain connections.



Quiet Time



Healthy Snacks



Water All Day

You made it!

4.

Plan Healthy Meals & Snacks

Fast food contains artificial ingredients and preservatives that can cause hyperactivity, heightened anxiety and behavior meltdowns in sensitive children. Pack healthier alternatives like fresh fruit, trail mix, or raw vegetables in advance, so you can avoid these negative food triggers.

Gluten-free Trail Mix

Servings: 9

Prep Time: > 15 minutes

- 1 cup flaked unsweetened coconut
- 1 cup raisins or dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup raw almonds
- 1/2 cup raw pecans or walnuts
- 1/2 cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1/2 cup raw sunflower seeds

Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and toss to combine.

5.

Set Expectations with Host in Advance

If you’re planning to stay at the homes of extended family, decrease the chances that behavioral issues will turn into big problems by preparing both your hosts and child in advance. Be sure to mention common behaviors that may seem out of line or concerning. Designate a quiet place for time out, and advise your extended family of any special dietary restrictions. Let them know that you’re trying to help your child by eliminating certain foods so your host knows not to be offended if certain foods are rejected.



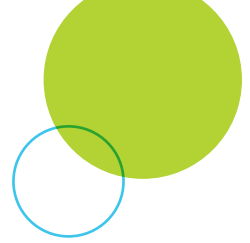
Quiet Time



Healthy Snacks



Water All Day



Travel Destination Ideas

Sensory and behavioral issues in childhood don't have to prevent safe and happy travel. The combination of these great tips and ideas will help you plan the perfect trip that will keep your child and family happy and stress-free.

	Details	Accommodate Dietary Needs	Easy to Navigate	Accommodate Sensory Needs	Budget Friendly	Planning Suggestions
Cruise	Many cruise lines are set up to support families with children who have special needs.	✓	✓	✓		Royal Caribbean offer services such as an onboard toy lending program and a printable social story for children with autism as well as expedited check-in and boarding. Some groups also organize special cruises designed for children with particular special needs, so you might even be able to connect with similar families while on vacation.
Theme Parks	Theme parks all around the world are working toward becoming more inclusive.	✓	✓	✓		Both Disney resorts, in Anaheim and Orlando, are designed to suit the needs of all families. For instance, if your child is unable to wait in lines, you can take advantage of the Disability Access Service program, which allows you to schedule your ride times and skip the long lines. To help minimize excess sensory input pack a sensory bag complete with headphones, chewelry and weighted blanket. Also, plan relaxation breaks throughout the trip.
Outdoor Adventure	The power of the great outdoors can be transformational for kids with special needs. A number of dude ranches and adventure resorts are equipped to welcome kids with extra needs.	✓		✓	✓	Ski resorts such as Smuggler's Notch in Vermont offer adaptive programs for kids with all levels of need. Out West, you can find adaptive horseback riding and whitewater rafting programs like the ones offered at Utah's Splore. For a more relaxed experience, plan a weekend of camping and short hikes allowing your child to reconnect with nature without the pressures and over stimulation of a more scheduled adventure.
Beach	The relaxed setting and sound of crashing waves can be very soothing to children who experience frequent meltdowns.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consider bringing a sun tent and large blanket and equip your child with sunglasses and a rashguard to reduce any unnecessary sensory triggers.
Staycation	Staying at a local hotel might not have seemed like a dream vacation before you had children. But, for kids, any hotel stay is exciting. If something goes wrong, you can easily head home early.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Your kids will probably be delighted with just a simple hotel room, but you can make the experience even more special by packing little surprises such as new pajamas, activity bags and tasty treats. Have dinner delivered to your room, go swimming in the hotel pool, and explore the lobby. You might be surprised how much adventure you can find in your own neighborhood.

Brain Balance Achievement Centers offer a personalized, drug-free program designed to improve focus, behavior, social skills, anxiety, and academic performance. The program takes an integrative approach to strengthening brain connectivity through sensory engagement, physical development, academics, and nutrition. Over the past decade, this unique and effective program has helped thousands of individuals nationwide to improve critical life skills and create a brighter path for their future.

Learn more about the research supporting our program and our results:
[BrainBalance.com](https://www.BrainBalance.com)

