

Accessible Travel

Traveling with a family member with special health care needs requires additional planning and preparation to minimize stress and challenges. It is important to remember that travel may require flexibility. Here are a few tips to help.

Air Travel

Some airports offer a “trial run” prior to the date of travel for families of individuals with special health care needs. This practice opportunity may include entering the airport, getting boarding passes, passing through security and boarding a plane. Contact your local airport to see if this service is offered.

Before booking your flights, check out the specific details that the airline offers for passengers with a disability or medical condition to ensure that your family's specific needs can be accommodated. Consider contacting the airline directly to get further details if needed. Once your flights are booked, it is recommended that you contact the airlines to make them aware of your specific needs so it can also be documented in the passenger documents, potentially have specific seats held in advance, and get information on having a gate agent meet you at the airline check-in desk if wheelchair assistance is needed.

Additionally, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) offers TSA Cares, a toll- free helpline designed to provide information about security procedures for travelers with disabilities. *Travelers are advised to call TSA Cares at 1-855-787-2227 at least 72 hours prior to departure* so TSA Cares can provide information and support, such as a Passenger Support Specialist or a TSA Customer Service Manager at the airport. More information about TSA Cares and procedures is available here: <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/special-procedures>. For more information or concerns about air travel accessibility, visit Aviation Consumer Protection at <http://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer>.

Additional air travel tips are available via the links below:

1. Mobility International USA tip sheet:
<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/airtraveltips>
2. The Department of Transportation has a rule defining the rights of passengers and the obligations of airlines under the Air Carrier Access Act:
<https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/passengers-disabilities>
3. Airports, Airplanes & Autism:
<https://www.autismontheseas.com/images/Articles/ARTICLE - Air Travel CARD.pdf>

Hotel Accommodations

In addition to making air travel arrangements, it is important to carefully select hotel and lodging establishments to ensure a comfortable stay. Besides noting your needs in the reservation when booking online, it is recommended that you speak directly with the hotel to make them fully aware of your needs for a specific room type and have them make notes in the reservation. ADA regulations require accessible reservation procedures to ensure:

To learn more about these and other programs supporting families of children with special health care needs, contact Indiana Family to Family
844-323-4636
inf2f.org

To learn more about these and other programs supporting families of children with special health care needs, contact Indiana Family to Family.
844-323-4636
fviindiana.org

1. Individuals with disabilities are able to make reservations during the same hours and in the same manners as those without.
2. Accessible and inaccessible features of the hotel and guest rooms are identified and described in enough detail to allow an individual with special needs to assess whether a hotel meets his/her needs.
3. Accessible guest rooms are held for use by individuals with disabilities until all other guest rooms of that type have been rented. These rooms are able to be reserved upon request and are blocked and removed from all reservation systems. Once reserved, they are held for the reserving customers.

For more information and resources regarding accessible lodging, visit:

1. ADA National Network: <https://adata.org/factsheet/accessible-lodging>
2. Mobility Advisor: <http://www.mobility-advisor.com/wheel-chair-accessible-hotel.html>

Other Travel Information

Before finalizing any travel plans, it is best to contact all vendors and attractions to ensure an enjoyable and accessible experience. Many amusement parks and attractions offer additional services and park guides to individuals with disabilities and additional health care needs. Be clear when detailing necessary accommodations and ask questions about accessibility and services offered.

For information about Indiana's Access Pass, Indiana State Parks Golden Hoosier Passport, or the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Access Pass, visit our Fact Sheet on Indiana Travel: <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html>

Additional Resources

1. National Aging and Disability Transportation Center promotes the availability and accessibility of transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. Visit <http://www.nadtc.org/> for more information.
2. Disability.gov offers a wealth of transportation resources highlighting all types of transit: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/>
3. The Independent Living Institute offers an extensive list of website links on a variety of accessible travel and leisure topics, including domestic and international destinations: <https://www.independentliving.org/about.html>
4. Research various travel destinations: <https://travelability.net/accessible-destinations/>

Many cities and states throughout the U.S. have been working on accessible and inclusive attractions, activities, and programs. When researching a possible travel destination, look online for the local Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) for more details. There are also many travel agents that specialize in helping research and create a vacation package tailored to meet your individual needs.

Programs and systems change often. It is important to ensure that you are using the most current information. This fact sheet was updated May 2023. Please check <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html> for the most recent edition.

This fact sheet was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$93,175 with 87% percent financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of INF2F and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.inf2f.org/).