

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ON SUMMER VACATION

Summer vacation should be fun! Whether you're on the road, visiting family, or just taking a day trip, here are some tips and tricks to make travel less overwhelming for your little ones.

Traveling can be challenging for children and adults with autism. The changes in routine, unpredictability, crowds, and new noises and sights can all make the experience difficult for children with ASD and their families (Cerdan Chiscano, 2021)

TRAVEL DAY TIPS

Strategy	Why	
<i>Make a visual schedule</i>	SP schedules support executive functioning by providing a step by step visual representation of the task (Benson et al., 2024)	
<i>Pack a sensory bag</i>	- A sensory kit can provide children with the vestibular, proprioceptive, or tactile input they're craving during long travel days - Be prepared to meet your child's sensory needs no matter where you are (rest stop, ect.)	What to include in your bag: - Small toys - Portable seat cushion for train/plane - Fidgets pop its - Bean bag - A weighted blanket/stuffie - Noise cancelling headphones 



DURING YOUR VACATION



Destination	Activity
Hotel	• Ask your child to carry their bags or push the hotel cart for ‘heavy work’ • Walk up and down the stairs instead of using the elevator for gross motor work for a better night sleep.
Beach	• Pack toys such as shovels (beneficial for pronation/supination) • Make sandcastles for a sensory experience • Request the child’s assistance while packing beach lunch/snack (this is a great executive function activity)
Camping	• Collect nature for tactile experience (leaves, rocks, shells) • Go on a color walk (“Look around and find something that’s green”) this activity targets visual attention, working memory, following directions)
Restaurants Check out our youtube for more information about OT on summer vacation: https://youtu.be/Fcicf9FEv50	• Incorporate ‘heavy work’ prior to your reservation. • This can enhance your child’s ability to remain seated for a longer period of time. • Pack entertainment for the table (pocket sized coloring books, small figurines)



References

Benson, J. D., Cartwright, A., Szucs, K. A., Smitsky, D., Chippich, E., & Roebuck, L. (2024, May 1). Effectiveness of video prompting versus picture prompting in...<https://research.aota.org/ajot/article/78/3/7803205030/25182/Effectiveness-of-Video-Prompting-Versus-Picture>

Cerdan Chiscano, M. (2021, July 5). Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and the family Inclusive Airport Design experience. International journal of environmental research and public health. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8297129/>