

# POINTERS FOR FAMILIES WITH AUTISM PREARING TO TRAVEL BY AIR



Los Angeles World Airports  
**ADA PROGRAM**

Los Angeles World Airports and its airline partners have made a major commitment to see that families with autism wishing to travel by air can experience the adventure of flight without the stresses that so often keep them from flying.

There has been a major effort at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to train people who work with the public on stresses encountered by families with autism, and why they are hesitant to fly. LAX has partnered with LeRoy Haynes Center to provide

guidance and training. The Training has focused on understanding autism, signs to look for, and ways to assist families cope with issues they may encounter at the airport as they prepare for their flight.

Airport and airline partners have received training to assist you; as have airport police, and others who are ready to serve you and provide you with assistance if necessary.

## **POINTERS FOR FAMILIES WITH AUTISM PREARING TO TRAVEL BY AIR**

Lists helpful pointers to help you prepare for your flight adventure. This publication is the result of suggestions made by parents of students with autism at LeRoy Haynes, autism organizations, and online sources.

### **Families with Autism:**

- Start preparing your family member with autism for the flight at least two weeks

ahead of your departure date.

- If possible reserve a direct flight to your destinations.
- When making reservations try to get adjacent window and middle seats. This will prevent disruptions during the flight.
- Contact TSA Cares at least 3 days before your flight to arrange for special screening on arrival at the airport (1-855-787-2227).

Let the TSA representative know of sensitivities the person with autism has. This will make the process go smoother when you arrive at the airport.

- Notify the airline ticket agent at the airport that you are traveling with a person who has autism. The information will be noted into the passenger profile and will alert airline personnel and air crew that you may need special assistance.

- After consulting with parents LAWA started a voluntary self-identification program for family members with autism. If your airline participates in the

airport's  
Autism  
Self-  
Identific



ation Program, ask for self-identification stickers. This will help airport, airline and police better assist you in managing incidents that may occur in the airport.

See LAWA's ADA website for more information on the self-identification program and list of participating airlines.

- If the person with autism becomes unruly while waiting for a flight, ask airline personnel if there is a quiet area where you can go until the family member calms down. They will try to accommodate your request.



- If applicable due to the nature of the autism, you may want to board when the pre-boarding announcement is made. Ask the boarding agent at the gate counter if you may board when the pre-boarding announcement is made,
  
- Bring along a favorite toy or game to keep the person entertained.
  
- If you were unable to get adjacent seats, let the flight

attendant know. They will try to find another passenger to trade seats.

- If the family member is sensitive to sound, bring a headset to help drown out the noise.
  
- Printing boarding passes at home, before heading to the airport may avoid waiting in lines.

- Once aboard the plane, let the flight attendant know you are traveling with someone who has autism. Flight attendants are trained in working with families with autism during flights.

**REMEMBER:** *You don't have to manage alone when you travel by air. The airport /airline community and their partners are here to assist you.*