



AIRPORT INSTRUCTION & READINESS

Airline Travel Checklist

Airline Baggage check



miami-airport.com/miaair.asp

1. Booking Your Tickets

- Book direct flights or flights without lengthy layovers, if possible.
- Choose a time of day when the individual is generally most relaxed, for example, the morning.
- When booking your flight, set preferred seating arrangements based on your individual needs (e.g., extra leg room; seats near front of the plane so exiting the plane is easier).

2. Preparing for Travel

- Call TSA Cares 72 or more hours ahead using the toll free helpline at 1-855-787-2227. Download TSA disability notification card (http://www.tsa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/disability_notification_cards.pdf). You may also consider requesting a letter from your doctor describing the individual's disability.
- Prepare proper identification. By law, adults (over 18 years) are required to carry a federal or state-issued photo ID. For individuals younger than 18 years, put an ID card in his/her pocket with a current photo, contact information, and a list of allergies or medical needs.
- Take safety precautions. Order a medical ID bracelet that can be attached to shoelaces or zipper pulls. Include the word "nonverbal" if applicable.
- Teach the individual with ASD about the trip in as many ways as possible, starting a few weeks before the travel date. A practice trip to the local airport may help. Ask about opportunities for simulated experiences such as "mock flights" or practice going through security. Download and read MIA's MIAair Social Narrative a few times beforehand and make sure to bring it with you on the day of travel.

- Make a list of potential triggers (e.g., long waits, separation from preferred toys or times, loud noises), and try to prepare the environment as much as possible. For example, if loud noises typically trigger a meltdown, purchase noise cancelling headphones or ear plugs and bring them with you on travel day.
- Download MIA Airport Official app. This may help you with flight status, gate/restaurant/restroom locations.

3. Packing Carry-On Luggage

- Bring photo identification, medical ID, emergency contact information, and disability notification.
- Carry a recent photo of the individual to show police in case the individual wanders away or gets lost.
- Bring travel documents, including tickets, emergency contact list, passports when necessary, luggage identification/claim tags, original bottles of all prescription medications, doctor's letter listing allergies or other special needs.
- Pack medication(s) and first aid items. Pack all liquids in 3.4 oz containers and place in a clear quart-size zip lock bag (only allowed one bag per traveler).
- Take a familiar or soothing item (e.g., stuffed animal, favorite book, toy figures) to reduce anxiety and increase feelings of security.
- Pack favorite foods and snacks. Bring more than you need in case there is a delay.
- Let the individual with ASD pack a rolling carry-on luggage that contains personal items to provide in-flight comfort and entertainment. For example, music, toys, books, games, and electronics and chargers. Label all electronics with name and contact information. Bring extra batteries!

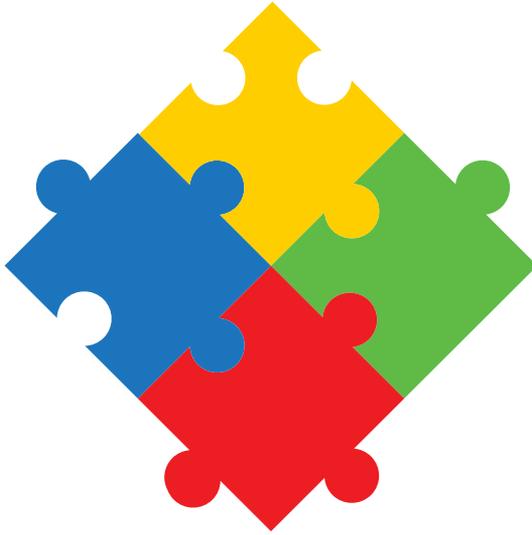
- Consider purchasing new, novel items for the wait in the airport and on the flight. Depending on the individual's age and/or attention span, you may choose to introduce a new item every hour or so to reduce boredom.
- Bring headphones for the individual to enjoy video games, movies, or music and not disturb other passengers. You may also consider purchasing noise-cancelling headphones or ear plugs.
- Pack hand sanitizer.
- Take or purchase gum or hard candy for cabin pressure changes.
- Bring a sweater, jacket, blanket, and/or pair of socks as it may get cold on the plane when in the air.
- Take an extra change of clothes for spills.
- If the individual uses an alternative and augmentative communication device (AAC) or system (e.g., PECS), make sure to take it with you. You may also consider creating visual supports (e.g., a "wait" cue card that can be displayed during times that require the individual to wait) to provide additional cues for expectations during travel day.

4. Travel Day

- Check into your flight at home. Remember to check flight status and traffic reports before leaving to the airport.
- Give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the airport early. Try not to rush as this will increase anxiety for parents and the individual with ASD. If you know the individual with ASD has a preferred routine, be sure to include it in the time allocated to get to the airport.
- At the airport, refer to MIAair's Social Narrative to remind the individual of the security process.

- Once you are ready to go through security, present the disability disclosure card and ask to go through handicap or first-class check in. This may help with the waiting process.
- At the scanner, let the individual with ASD place his/her personal items in the bin. If elopement is a concern, let security know that the individual will go through the scanner, but that they may need to hold him/her while a caregiver passes through the scanner. Let the individual gather his/her items from the bin.
- While in the airport, set aside breaks. Find an empty gate with no other passengers to relax and wait.
- Throughout the day, take as many opportunities to praise and/or reinforce the individual for on-task, appropriate behavior (e.g., "Good waiting!" "Nice job staying calm." "Thank you for holding my hand while we walk."). You may also consider using a formal system (e.g., sticker chart) that reinforces the individual for exhibiting desired behaviors. Watch UM-NSU CARD's online webinar on Creating and Implementing Token Economies at: <http://umnsucard.adobeconnect.com/p4fwtmn7se0/>
- Arrive at the departure gate early. Present the disability disclosure card to the agent and let him/her know that you are travelling with an individual with ASD so that he/she can advise the crew. Make a request for preferred seating and/or pre-boarding.
- Consider the needs of your family when planning boarding and de-boarding procedures. For example, rather than de-boarding the plane immediately, some people may prefer to sit and wait for everyone to leave in order to calmly gather the luggage and walk out the plane.

- On the plane, if necessary, you may disclose to the individuals around you that you are traveling with an individual with ASD. Also inform them of some behaviors they may expect from the individual with ASD during the flight (e.g., flapping, rocking, and/or vocal sounds, pacing, kicking the seat, closing the window shades).
- Remember to follow safety precautions. For example, at baggage claim, keep your family at a safe distance from the carousel to avoid injury. If traveling with another adult, have the adult walk with the individual with ASD or find a seat to sit and wait for the luggage.



A collaboration of Miami-Dade Aviation Department
and the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University
Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.



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