

Flying your Team to Globals!

Advice for traveling with kids from a survey of flight attendants, frequent flyer parents, and TSA agents:

Selecting your flights:

Cost is probably the determining factor when selecting flights; however, keep the following in mind:

- If possible, it is always best to select a direct flight.
 - By selecting a direct flight, you will avoid worrying about missing your connection, and possibly having a surprise overnight in a city that is in no way related to where you live or where you are trying to go.
- If you must connect, allow 2 hours for domestic connections.
 - Two hours may seem like a lot until you account for all the other things that may happen (weather, delays, sick and/or hungry kids, having to walk from one side of the airport to the other, etc.)
 - It is better to have 2 hours of playing games with your kids than to miss your flight because you booked too tight of a connection.
 - Be aware that if you book through a site like Expedia, you may be switching carriers, which typically means you will be switching terminals.
- Consider the time of day:
 - Pick flights when your kids are going to be sleepy (early in the morning or late at night)
 - If your team is always awake, consider a flight around meal time as eating will give them something to do
- Regardless of the type of flight you select, TSA advises you try to arrive to the airport 2 hours before your flight time.

Luggage & Packing for your flight:

- When traveling with kids, check everything that you do not need for a day's journey:
 - This is especially true for elementary aged groups as the adults inevitably end up carrying their bags for them. Avoid back pain. Check some bags.
 - Parents with small children are usually allowed to board the plane early because it will take them much longer than the average passenger to get settled. Ask the gate agent if you feel your team needs extra time to board.
- In your carry-on bag, bring some essential items for the trip. Do not assume these items will be provided for you in flight.
 - Please bring your:
 - Source of warmth (blanket or jacket)
 - Headphones for each child
 - TV/entertainment system (many carriers offer personal device streaming, meaning that you can watch TV/movies, but you will need to bring a phone or tablet and connect to their service)
 - It is also best to download movies prior to boarding/taking off just in case the streaming service is inoperable on your flight
 - Portable chargers (it is not guaranteed that your plane will have outlets or that they will work)

- Food (you can take food through TSA, provided the food is not primarily a liquid)
 - Baby Formula, Breast Milk, and juice are permitted through TSA (with additional screening) if they are for an infant or toddler
 - There is snack food for sale on the plane, but it is “airplane food.” Save money and pack a lunch and some snacks.
- Ear plugs
- Colored plastic bags (yes, these are emergency barf bags)
- Water bottles (must be empty to get through TSA)
 - There are filling stations in most airports.
- Medication (like Tums, Tylenol, midol, etc.) & necessary dietary items like milk or formula
- Games/Activities for the kids (coloring books and card games pack well)
 - AVOID play dough, stickers, permanent markers, or anything else that could potentially cause a delay for the next flight
- Sanitizing Wipes & diapers (if necessary)
- Emergency clothes like pjs, clean underwear, and an extra set of clothes (in case of spills)
- TSA requires photo ID of the adult supervising the children
 - TSA does not require IDs for minors; however, some airlines do (as certain ages get discount prices, so check with your carrier).
 - Older looking children should expect to be questioned by TSA (prepare them for this)
- Most airlines allow you to bring 1 carry-on item (like a rollerboard or duffel bag) and 1 personal item (like a purse or a backpack) onboard the aircraft. Everything else must be checked. **Be sure you understand your airline’s luggage requirements before arriving at the airport.**
 - If the plane runs out of room in the overhead bin, your carry-on item will be checked.
 - Depending on the carrier, you may be able to get it on the jetbridge or at baggage claim at your final destination (be sure to ask where you can retrieve your bag if this is the case)
 - Do NOT check your keys, medications, valuables, electronics, or travel documents. Remove them and place them in your personal item if necessary.

Health & Safety on Airplanes

- The airplanes are cleaned nightly; however, between flights they are simply tidied (meaning trash is picked up)
 - Use a sanitizing wipe to clean off your tray table before using the tray as an eating surface
 - Avoid putting ANYTHING in the seatback pocket
 - Most “lost and found” items are found in the seatback pocket
 - Flight attendants and cleaners routinely find used tissues in the seatback pockets.
 - Always wear shoes, especially when going to the lavatory
- If a child (or adult) has a severe allergy (ex: peanuts), then inform the gate agent prior to boarding and the flight attendants once on board
 - The airline is unable to guarantee an allergen free environment; however, they will do their best to reduce the risk of exposure
- As the plane descends, people who fly infrequently are likely to experience pain/pressure in their ears

- Use ear plugs to alleviate the pressure
 - Yawning, swallowing, chewing, and holding your nose while you blow out also can help pop your ears
 - While gum is very helpful in relieving this pressure, do NOT give gum to kids unless they are responsible enough to throw it away rather than stick it somewhere
- Infrequent fliers are likely to have muffled hearing until their ears clear.
 - This is normal, and annoying. If your team performs shortly after landing, be aware that this could be an impediment.
- If you are sick with congestion, you need to ensure you are clear enough to fly (take decongestion medicine before flying if necessary)
 - If you are congested and choose to fly, be prepared for a very unpleasant experience
 - See a doctor before flying if you are incredibly congested
 - Very congested people can burst their eardrum in flight, which can result in permanent hearing loss
- Statistically, air travel is the safest mode of transportation. However, the biggest danger you may face during flight is turbulence.
 - Respect the seatbelt sign
 - Have your kids go to the bathroom before they board the plane
 - Wait to use the lavatory until the seatbelt sign is turned off
 - Avoid congregating in the aisle or galleys
 - Explain to your kids that they MUST wear their seatbelts. This is not negotiable

*****Before traveling, explain to your kids what a flight is like and what expectations you have for them. In my poll of flight attendants, frequent flyer parents, and TSA agents, this was the #1 thing you can do to help make your travel experience go smoothly. *****