

## Safe Disney Travels with Kids: Travel Tips

by Jennifer Bright Reich, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Parenting is a challenge -- and that's on a good day, at home, where everything is familiar and safe.

Try taking the show on the road to Walt Disney World!

From the time my sons were infants, we took a lot of day trips and one family vacation each year. We've taken our sons to Walt Disney World three times. Of course the Walt Disney Company does everything it can to keep everyone happy -- and safe. But traveling anywhere presents challenges. Here are some safety tricks I use for my family.

☐ Dress kids alike. On trips, I always dress my kids in similar outfits. If one got lost, I could point to his brother and say, "He's dressed like that!" Also it makes my boys easier to keep track of because I don't have to struggle to remember what they're wearing. When their clothes match, it looks great in photos to boot!

☐ Choose bright colors. I also dress my kids in brightly-colored clothes, such as yellow or orange. It might sound surprising, but this truly does make them easier to spot in a crowd.

Take a photo first. First thing each day of our trip, I take a photo of my kids on my phone. That way, if one of my kids is lost, I would have a current photo that shows what he is wearing.

☐ Bring ID. I bought each of my sons a set of Who's Shoes ID tags for each of their shoes and sandals. The tags attach to kids' shoes with Velcro, and they have places inside to write your child's name, your contact info, and any special medical needs. I've always taught my kids to tell people "look at my shoes" if they got lost. You can buy Who's Shoes IDs at <http://www.mypreciouskid.com/ID-shoes-tags.html>.

☐ Teach kids who to ask for help. Whenever we prepared to go on a trip, I review with my sons who to approach for help if they ever got lost: a policeman or fireman, a person working in the park or store, or a mom with kids. When we get to a Disney park, I point out Cast Members and how you can identify them by their uniforms and their Disney nametags.

☐ Pack your travel bag. In my travel bag, which I take with me to the parks, I keep hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes, Table Toppers (when

my boys were smaller and eating finger foods), a few pieces of plastic silverware and straws (so I don't have to go back up to the counter to request one if I'm missing it -- and no I would never break the rules and give my kids a straw at Animal Kingdom or Animal Kingdom Lodge!), and Band-Aids.

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□ Keep a safety kit. I keep a small safety kit packed that I bring on all trips. It contains a smoke alarm and batteries, a carbon monoxide detector and batteries, a small screwdriver, a roll of painter's tape (blue tape that doesn't pull paint off walls, which is handy to secure loose objects, hold curtains closed, etc), a small plastic bathmat (a cheap one that I throw out before we go home), triangle-shaped plastic door stoppers to keep doors opened or closed, and a flashlight.

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□ Do a safety check of the room. When I first get into our hotel room, my husband and I scan the room for anything left behind. Especially dangerous are choking hazards, such as coins, pieces of balloons, and pieces of plastic or cellophane. When our boys were infants and toddlers, we were careful to get rid of those things before letting our kids "loose" in the room.

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□ Check that everything works. Before I unpack, I always check to make sure everything works in the room. I turn on the fan and lights, flush the toilet, and run the AC or heater. This is less a safety issue than a convenience! I don't want to have to repack all of our stuff if we discover later the toilet doesn't flush!

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□ Traveling with kids can be stressful, but with the prior proper planning it can be terrific!

*About The Author: About the author: Jennifer Bright Reich is the director of partnerships and marketing at Celebrations Press, publisher of Celebrations magazine and the Guide to the Magic book series, at <http://www.celebrationspress.com>. She is anxiously awaiting her family's next trip to Walt Disney World!*

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