

## How Young Is Too Young?: When to Take a Child to Walt Disney World

by Sara Varney, PassPorter Guest Contributor

By far, one of the most frequently asked questions on our message boards and of me personally is, "When should I take my child to Walt Disney World? How young is too young?"

My usual quick answer is, "There's no such thing as too young!" but in reality this is much too important a question for a quick answer.

There are a number of things to consider when figuring out that magic age for taking your child to see Mickey. I'll try to break down some of the most important factors for you so you can make a more informed decision. After all, you want to vacation to be magical for everyone, not just your young one!

The first and most important thing to consider are your expectations for this trip. Is this your first trip to Walt Disney World or are you old pros? Do you want to see as much as possible, knowing that this is a once in a lifetime trip, or do you just want to sit back and let the magic happen, knowing that you will be back to experience more as your child grows? Our son is two and has already visited Walt Disney World twice -- once at 19 months and once at 28 months. Both trips were wonderful and I wouldn't trade those memories for anything, but for the most part they are my memories, not his. If this is a once in a lifetime trip, I recommend waiting until your child is a little older so that they can experience more and will have more first-hand memories of the trip.

Another consideration is cost. And this is where taking a younger child becomes a benefit! Children under three do not require park admission. Not only that, but you can go during the less expensive times of year when older children are in school. This can equal HUGE savings on hotel rooms! Also, there is no charge for children under three at buffet meals. This includes such popular character meals as the Crystal Palace, where your toddler can dine with Pooh and friends, and Hollywood & Vine, which features JoJo, Goliath and the Little Einsteins at breakfast and lunch. Watching my son run into Stitch's arms while dining at Ohana is one of my favorite memories from his first trip. That moment may have been worth the cost of the trip alone!

Then you have to consider logistics. Traveling with a younger child requires STUFF -- strollers, car seats, sippy cups, diapers, snacks, etc. Your child may still be napping requiring a trip back to the hotel in the

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middle of the day. (Not such a bad idea for anyone actually...) Is it easier to travel with an older child? Maybe. But keep in mind that as they get older, the strollers may STILL be necessary; car seats become booster seats if you rent a car, and "other stuff" becomes iPods and Gameboys. Let's face it; traveling with kids requires a lot of stuff no matter what their ages!

Finally there is the "X" factor. And that is your child. You know him or her best! Be honest with yourself. Is your child a bit of a runaway? If she has a tendency to wander off at home, know that this tendency will be multiplied tenfold at Disney. Does he melt down mid-day without a nap? Take that into consideration. Is your child shy or timid? Some children are overwhelmed by all the sights and sounds at Disney. It can be a bit much at times, even for adults! There are kids for whom it would be better to wait until they are better able to process what is going on around them.

There is something magical about a toddler seeing Walt Disney World for the first time, because they "get it!" Everything is real. Mickey is the best friend that they've been seeing every day on "Mickey Mouse Clubhouse," Dumbo really flies and so does Tinker Bell. Exploring Disney with a toddler is a whole new way of seeing "The World." It's a slower pace that involves stopping to splash in every fountain, checking out every play area, stopping at every restroom you pass if potty training, and waving at every character you see. And while this can be difficult to adjust to for former commando tourists like me, the benefits are well worth it. You spot details you never would have seen before, find the fun in the most mundane parts of Disney, and rediscover the magic in a way a grown-up never could. So just like you're never too old to experience the magic, you're never too young either!

*About The Author:* Sara is the Editor of [PassPorter News](#) and Online Coordinator for PassPorter.com. She and her family are looking forward to their next trip together to Walt Disney World.

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