

RESPIRE TIP



FAMILY VACATIONS AND RESORTS WHICH PROVIDE RESPIRE

This article looks at some different options for vacations at resorts or attractions which offer accommodations to the disabled community.

Vacation Resorts

For some families, a vacation means going to a resort in a warm location, with lots of beach time. Many resorts are not as able to support individuals with a special need, but some are willing to try.

Please note: It is important to talk to any resort to be sure they can accommodate your family's needs. A qualified travel agent is a good contact when planning this type of vacation.

Beaches Resorts – This is the family branch of the Sandals resorts. They have locations in Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos islands. Their packages include accommodation at the resort with many different activities. A nanny service is available at an additional charge. They do advertise one to one nannies for children with special needs. All Beaches Resorts are wheelchair accessible except for one. <http://www.beaches.com/accessibility-guide/>

Franklyn D. Resorts also offer family vacations at their resorts in Jamaica. Each family has their own vacation nanny included in the cost of their stay. They are also mobility accessible and offer 50% reductions year-round to families who have children with special needs. The 50% discount must be booked directly with the hotel by calling: 1-800-654-1337 or 1-876-973-4124. For more information, go to: <http://www.fdrholidays.com/rates/specials/>. Note: Please be sure to describe your family member's particular needs. The nannies they provide may not have the skills you require to help your family member.

Smugglers' Notch Resort (Vermont) has the Smugglers' Notch Adaptive Program (SNAP) which is dedicated to providing therapeutic recreation for children and adults of all abilities in a supportive environment. Experiences are tailored to meet the needs and goals of each individual. The ratio of counselor to program guest is based on the individual needs of each person. For more information, go to:

http://www.smuggs.com/pages/summer/kids/adaptive_programs.php.

Mersey River Chalets and Nature Retreat - Want something a little closer to home? Why not try this four season wilderness resort in Nova Scotia whose creators combine a love for the earth and a vision of a unique nature experience accessible to all people? Check out their accessibility features at: <http://www.merseyriverchalets.ns.ca/accessibility.html>.

Amusement Parks

Most amusement parks are wheelchair accessible. Do they offer more for your family?

Walt Disney World Resort (Florida) and Disney Land (California) have extensive accommodations available for persons with disabilities. They offer support for mobility issues, hearing needs and visual needs as well as accommodating things like service animals and offering special passes to remove long waits in line. Their services are listed at <https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/guest-services/guests-with-disabilities/> and <https://disneyland.disney.go.com/guest-services/guests-with-disabilities/>.

Canada's Wonderland (Vaughan, Ontario). If you are looking for a Canadian amusement park, Canada's Wonderland is a well-established vacation spot. They also offer wheelchair accessibility and special passes so you do not have to wait in line for a long time. The pass allows you to return to the ride at a specific time and you can walk right on to the ride. This pass is available for people with other special needs, for instance a person with autism who is not able to wait for long periods of time. Not all special needs are automatically entitled to these passes. It may be necessary to provide some documentation to explain why your family member needs this pass. For more information, go to:

<https://www.canadaswonderland.com/plan-a-visit/guests-with-disabilities>

If you are planning a trip to an amusement park, think about the following:

- Is there a reduced cost for admission for visitors with disabilities?
- Is documentation of the disability required?
- Does the park provide a pamphlet or booklet that is a guide to the park's accessibility?
- Can wheelchairs be rented at the park? Is there a fee? Are electric wheelchairs available?

- Which rides, shops and restaurants are accessible?
- Is there a special pass to avoid lines?
- Does the park provide personnel to aid in getting on and off rides?
- What types of emergency medical services are available in the park?
- What buildings / services in the park are available to take a break from the heat?
- What accommodations are made for service / guide dogs?

Things to bring:

- Documentation of disability
- Accessibility parking tag
- Park guidebook
- Special equipment needed
- Medications
- Emergency information: medical condition, allergies, medications, doctor contact
- Water
- Healthy energy snacks

Here are some pointers: <http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2011/05/10/how-to-enjoy-an-amusement-park-with-your-special-needs-child/>

Don't forget, respite is not always having someone else care for your family member. Families can enjoy time relaxing on a beach or traveling if the proper accommodations are in place. Research and plan your vacation so you can enjoy your time together.

Other Resources:

Some websites with good information:

<http://www.access-able.com>

<http://www.disabledtravelers.com>

<http://www.travelmuse.com/articles/special-needs/accessible-beaches>

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/06/06/32-vacation-destinations-for-individuals-with-disabilities-or-special-needs/>

<http://autismontheseas.com/>

This Respite Tip has been brought to you by the Nova Scotia Partnership on Respite, Family Health, and Well-Being. Information on the Respite Partnership and this and other Respite Tips can be found at: <http://disability.novascotia.ca/content/nova-scotia-respice-partnership>

Respite, WE deserve it!



The information contained in this Respite Tip article is not intended to be formal legal or financial advice. It has been gathered from a variety of sources and is provided as an introduction to the topic. It is not complete and should not be used in the place of professional advice or consultation.

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