

Happy Holidays



About Special Kids

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Meet one of ASK's Special Kids

As we go through the Holiday Season, About Special Kids (ASK) would like to share with you a short story of how ASK impacts the lives of Indiana's families of children with special needs.

When Paula was concerned about the transition and regression her daughter suffered in the special education classroom, she turned to ASK for help.

"My ASK parent liaison told me something quite simple, but remarkable. She said I needed to realize that as a parent of a child with special needs, I have the same rights as other parents and my child has the right to be treated the same as every other child. Sydney deserves to be included and be part of the community where she lives. It's crucial for a child to have that opportunity."



Sydney is in regular classes and thriving. "My daughter is doing awesome in school thanks to ASK!" Paula said, "Our special kids don't come with booklets. Your own research is so limited compared to what the ASK parent liaisons know. What ASK does is priceless. That parents can have access to all this information and help at no cost is amazing...it's huge!"

Holiday Closings

About Special Kids will be closed December 24th – January 2nd in observance of the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Regular office hours will resume Jan. 5, 2015

About Special Kids helps families like Paula's every day; we **help children with special needs live better lives by educating, empowering and connecting their families.**

As this year comes to a close we hope that you consider ASK for a year-end gift. A gift from you will allow us to help more families like Paula's and more importantly help more children like Sydney. Seeing these special children thrive is what we are all about.

Thank you for supporting and investing in Indiana's children with special needs!



Holidays & Kids with Food Allergies

Holiday events – school parties, family gatherings and pitch-ins – can cause added stress for parents of children with food allergies, especially life-threatening allergies. The following resource listing from Kids with Food Allergies may be helpful to those families, providing ideas and strategies for added vigilance in avoiding allergies during the holidays, while still allowing children with allergies

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<http://www.aboutspecialkids.org/Donate-Now.aspx>

Traveling for the Holidays – Making the Best of It for Your Child with Special Needs

by Holly Paauwe, parent and ASK staff Parent Liaison

Packing. Long car rides. Busy airports with security check points. Interaction with unfamiliar people. These are thoughts that can dampen the festive spirit of any holiday traveler. Add traveling with children to the mix, especially when any of those children have special needs, and suddenly, any parent may start to second-guess the wisdom of their holiday travel plans. In general, traveling to family holiday events causes disruption in routines and often puts children in unfamiliar surroundings. For children with special needs, who often rely heavily on routine and familiarity, these changes can create an especially challenging and stressful time for them and their families if not prepared.

While, as a general rule, traveling with children may not be for the faint-of-heart, with some preparation and planning, holiday travel can be a positive

to enjoy all the festive events and celebrations the season brings.

www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/resource/topic.php?topic=holidays

[Gift Buying Suggestions and Resources for Children with Special Needs](#)

www.aboutspecialkids.org/news.aspx?id=2149



experience for everyone, including children with special needs. As parents, we can take comfort in knowing that there are ways to reduce the negative effects of changes in routine and unfamiliar surroundings on our kids during the holidays, and the best resource for learning about them are other parents that have "lived and learned" and are willing to share their experience.

A quick internet search on various tips, tricks and lessons-learned for traveling with a child with special needs during the holidays leads to a number of simple, creative and practical suggestions that any parent may want to consider as they make their own plans. I have compiled a number of the best of them, but don't be afraid to do some of your own research too.

Tips, Tricks, Strategies for Holiday Travel with a Child with Special Needs

Prepare the child in advance, at least as much as possible.

- ~ Practice for the trip in advance of the actual travels.
- ~ Talk about the upcoming experience to help your child overcome their anxieties.
- ~ Act out or role-play anticipated events ahead of time, from taking off shoes at airport security, to all of the extra attention from family members.

Redirect anxious energy into constructive activity.

- ~ To take the edge off the potential anxiety of seeing a number of less familiar faces all at once, turn it into a fun and educational event by creating a special activity.
- ~ Create a small photo album featuring people who will be at the event, and help your child play "Family Bingo," checking off each person s/he greets or sees across the room.
- ~ Create a pictogram or some sort of visual schedule of your itinerary or agenda and help your child follow along and anticipate what comes next and to then utilize what they learned from the role-playing scenarios practiced in advance.

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