

TIPS FOR MAKING FLYING EASIER!

We cannot plan for every eventuality that may arise when flying but there are some tips that might help make that trip a bit easier. Implementing some of these can help reduce stress and anxiety for the whole family when preparing for that flight.

The key to success will always be to prepare and practice.

1

Introduce a visual countdown for your trip. Each morning reference this with your child so that they can see how many 'sleeps' until your trip.

2

Talk positively about your trip, try to reduce talking about any fears/anxiety's that you may have so that your child does not associate flying with negativity.

3

Videos made by Queen's University Belfast and available on the George Best Belfast City Airport website show all aspects of airport travel from leaving home to getting on an aircraft all from the perspective of a child. These will allow exposure to the entire process in a safe, controlled environment that can allow your child to understand what to expect.

4

The internet also has amazing videos out there that you can show your child about planes, airports, and flights – utilise these!

5

Speak to the airport from where you are flying. The majority have fantastic accessibility teams who are there to help you on the day. It is important that you do this in advance of your holiday.

6

George Best Belfast City Airport offer their try before you fly 'Autism in the Air' event that allows you to practice attending the airport prior to a flight *you don't need to be flying from GBBCA to avail of this service. *See 'Autism in the Air' flyer for additional information.

7

Visit an airport. Pop into the arrivals hall, buy a drink and expose your child to the atmosphere of a busy working airport.

8

Download favourite movies/tv shows/games to mobile devices that can be played without internet. Most streaming services allow shows to be downloaded to be viewed offline.

9

Make sure to have backup batteries in case of delays etc.

10

Purchase a 'special' object that your child will associate with their flight e.g., special rucksack, fidget toy. Talk this object up so that it becomes an object that is paired with the airport and flying. Access to this object will begin as you leave the house to travel to the airport.

11

Pack in your hand luggage items that might help your child relax such as ear defenders, blanket etc. These might be required as the aircraft departs so have them close at hand.

12

Have your child's favourite snacks in your hand luggage too – help them make the associate between air travel and their favourite things.

13

Provide praise! Provide your child with praise for all of the great strides that they are making in an otherwise unfamiliar, scary environment.

14

Give yourself plenty of time! This will help reduce stress and anxiety levels for everyone.



AUTISM
IN THE AIR
TRY BEFORE YOU FLY!