



# FLIGHT READY TOOLKIT

A practical planning workbook for more predictable, accessible air travel.

**Every mind deserves the freedom to explore the world.**

**Accessibility shouldn't end when the airplane door closes.**

**Designed for disabled and neurodivergent travelers, families, caregivers, and support people. Use only the pages that are helpful to you. There is no single “right” way to travel.**

[everymindinflight.org](https://everymindinflight.org) • [info@everymindinflight.org](mailto:info@everymindinflight.org)

# How to Use This Toolkit

Air travel can involve noise, crowds, waiting, changes, unfamiliar spaces, close seating, security procedures, and events no one can fully predict. Planning cannot remove every barrier—but it can help identify needs, prepare supports, communicate clearly, and decide what to do if plans change.

**This toolkit centers the traveler. A traveler may complete it independently, with a support person, or with help from someone they trust.**

## Use this toolkit to:

- Think through sensory and accessibility needs before booking.
- Research airline, airport, and TSA support before travel day.
- Pack the supports that make travel more manageable.
- Create a plan for overload, delays, gate changes, or other disruptions.
- Record what worked so the next trip can be more predictable.

Every Mind in Flight provides general educational resources, not medical, legal, or airline-specific advice. Verify current requirements directly with your airline, airports, TSA, and other relevant organizations before travel.

Current resources: [everymindinflight.org/resources/](https://everymindinflight.org/resources/)

# 1. Before You Book

The “best” itinerary is personal. A lower fare is not always the best option if it creates extra connections, long waits, or a travel time that makes regulation harder.

## Things to consider

- Nonstop flight vs. connection
- Time of day that works best for my body/routine
- Expected airport crowds
- Seat location and proximity to restrooms/exits
- Length of flight
- Layover length and airport layout
- Transportation to/from the airport
- Airline accessibility services
- Departure and arrival airport accessibility resources
- Backup flights or alternative travel options

## What matters most when I choose a flight?

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## Things I want to ask the airline before booking:

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## 2. Know Before You Go

A little advance information can reduce surprises on travel day. Write down answers rather than relying on memory when things get busy.

**Airline accessibility contact / phone:**

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**Departure airport accessibility contact/resources:**

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**Arrival airport accessibility contact/resources:**

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**TSA Cares / Passenger Support Specialist request confirmation:**

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**Boarding or seating accommodation requested:**

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**Transportation plan to airport:**

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**Transportation plan from destination airport:**

**For an airline disability-related issue during travel, you can ask for the airline's Complaint Resolution Official (CRO). See [everymindinflight.org/resources/](https://everymindinflight.org/resources/) for current links.**

### 3. My Sensory & Accessibility Travel Plan

This page is about what works for you. You do not need to justify your needs or complete every section.

**Things that may be difficult for me during travel:**

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**Early signs that I may be becoming overwhelmed:**

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**Things that usually help me regulate or recover:**

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**Things that can make the situation worse:**

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**How I prefer people to communicate with me when I'm overwhelmed:**

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**If I use a support person, what I want them to do:**

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## 4. My Travel Needs Card

This optional card may help when speaking is difficult, processing takes longer, or you want a quick way to explain what helps.

| MY TRAVEL NEEDS                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I have an invisible disability and/or sensory accessibility need. I may need extra processing time, clear information, or another reasonable accessibility support. |
| <b>What helps me:</b><br><br>_____<br><br>_____                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Please avoid if possible:</b><br><br>_____<br><br>_____                                                                                                          |
| <b>My support person (if applicable):</b><br><br>_____                                                                                                              |

**The most helpful first step if I become overwhelmed is:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**If I cannot answer questions right away, please:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This card does not guarantee a specific accommodation. It is simply a communication tool.

## 5. Sensory & Support Packing Checklist

Pack for the traveler you actually are—not the traveler you think you are supposed to be.

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|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| ■ Primary hearing protection                | ■ Phone/tablet + charger                    |
| ■ Backup hearing protection                 | ■ Portable power bank                       |
| ■ Earbuds/headphones if useful              | ■ Familiar permitted snacks                 |
| ■ Sunglasses / hat / light-management tools | ■ Empty refillable water bottle             |
| ■ Comfort or regulation item                | ■ Medication/medical supplies as applicable |
| ■ Fidget or movement support                | ■ Change of clothes                         |
| ■ Communication device/card                 | ■ Something familiar for waiting time       |
| ■ Visual schedule / printed itinerary       | ■ Copies/screenshots of confirmations       |

**My must-have items that are not on this list:**

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Always check current TSA, airline, and destination rules for items, medications, liquids, batteries, food, and assistive devices.

## 6. My Flight Day Plan

Knowing the sequence can make an unfamiliar day feel more predictable. Add times, pictures, or details if useful.

| #  | Step                  | Done | My plan / notes |
|----|-----------------------|------|-----------------|
| 1  | Leave home            | ■    | _____           |
| 2  | Travel to airport     | ■    | _____           |
| 3  | Check in / bag drop   | ■    | _____           |
| 4  | Security              | ■    | _____           |
| 5  | Find gate             | ■    | _____           |
| 6  | Wait at gate          | ■    | _____           |
| 7  | Board airplane        | ■    | _____           |
| 8  | Get settled           | ■    | _____           |
| 9  | Takeoff               | ■    | _____           |
| 10 | During flight         | ■    | _____           |
| 11 | Landing               | ■    | _____           |
| 12 | Baggage / exit        | ■    | _____           |
| 13 | Travel to destination | ■    | _____           |

The part of travel day I want to prepare for most:

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## 7. If I Become Overwhelmed

Make this plan while things are calm. During overload, fewer decisions may be easier than trying to invent a plan in the moment.

### Possible early warning signs

- I get quieter or stop responding
- I talk faster, repeat myself, or have trouble processing
- I become restless or need movement
- Noise, light, touch, or proximity becomes harder to tolerate
- I need to leave the area
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### The first things that usually help:

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### Things people should NOT do when I am overwhelmed:

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### If possible, a better place for me to recover would be:

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### If I use a support person, who should communicate with staff?

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**Changing the plan is allowed. A backup plan is not failure—it is another option.**

## 8. Plan B: When Travel Changes

Air travel changes. A Plan B can reduce the number of decisions that have to be made under stress.

### Flight delayed

What we will try first:

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### Flight canceled

What we will try first:

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### Gate changed

What we will try first:

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### Seat changed

What we will try first:

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### Unexpected sensory trigger

What we will try first:

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### Long security line

What we will try first:

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### Missed connection

What we will try first:

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### Unable to continue travel

What we will try first:

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## 9. After the Flight

A short debrief can turn one travel experience into useful information for the next one.

**What worked well?**

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**What was harder than expected?**

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**Which supports helped most?**

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**What did we bring or plan that we did not need?**

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**What should we change next time?**

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**Something I am proud of from this trip:**

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# You don't have to travel the way everyone else does.

Preparation isn't about eliminating every unexpected moment. It's about understanding your needs, building supports around them, and giving yourself more options when plans change.

**Every mind deserves the freedom to explore the world.**

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Find current resources, share your experience, and learn more:

**[everymindinflight.org](https://everymindinflight.org)**  
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Every Mind in Flight is an independent accessibility initiative. This toolkit is provided for general educational purposes. Verify current airline, airport, TSA, government, medical, and travel requirements directly with the appropriate source.