

# Sensory & Emotional Regulation Travel Checklist



## BEFORE THE TRIP

### **Teach Emotional Regulation Skills**

- Practice calming tools (breathing, grounding, sensory aids)
- Role-play travel scenarios
- Build emotional language + coping scripts

### **Create Predictability**

- Use visual schedules or countdowns
- Show photos/videos of airports, hotels, transport
- Walk through “first... then...” sequences

### **Prepare Sensory Supports**

- Pack headphones, fidgets, comfort items
- Include regulation-friendly snacks + drinks
- Keep sensory supports in carry-on

### **Plan a Realistic Itinerary**

- Build in rest breaks and buffer time
- Schedule slow mornings/afternoons
- Avoid back-to-back overstimulation

### **Support Emotional Readiness**

- Talk about worries + feelings
- Validate emotions and build excitement
- Reduce stress in the days before departure

### **Set Roles & Backup Plans**

- Assign who carries sensory kits/gear
- Arrange priority boarding or quiet spaces
- Plan simple backup activities



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## DURING THE TRIP

### Stay Flexible

- Adjust plans based on your child's needs
- Be prepared to adjust the itinerary
- Celebrate small wins

### Encourage Autonomy

- Offer simple choices
- Use visual supports or AAC
- Check in regularly ("Need a break?")

### Prioritise Connection

- Prioritise shared joy & connection
- Let go of the idea of perfection
- Be prepared to drop activities if needed

### Use Sensory Breaks

- Take regular quiet/micro-breaks
- Use headphones, music, or comfort tools
- Add downtime between activities

### Co-Regulate in Tough Moments

- Use calm voice & steady pacing
- Join in calming activities
- Offer reassurance & predictability

### Create Familiar Routines

- Keep bedtime/morning rituals steady
- Use first/then language
- Bring familiar comfort items from home

## AFTER THE TRIP

### Allow Recovery Time

- Plan 1-2 decompression days
- Reintroduce routines slowly
- Keep expectations/demands light

### Reflect Together

- Talk about favourite & hard moments
- Review photos or souvenirs
- Incorporate lessons learned on next trip

### Celebrate & Update Strategies

- Highlight confidence & independence
- Adjust sensory kits/routines for next time
- Note what worked well

