

Checklist: Air Travel for Rare Caregivers



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Supporting someone with rare disease disability during air travel can be complex. With preparation and awareness, you can help ensure a smoother and safer journey.

Here are practical tips for carers, support workers, and family members:

1. Before You Travel

Plan: Contact the airline at least 72 hours before departure to request assistance and confirm medical or mobility needs.

Prepare documentation: Carry medical letters, clearance forms, and details of assistive devices (e.g. battery type, dimensions).

Pack smart: Include essential medications, comfort items, and emergency supplies in carry-on luggage.

Use airport resources: Download sensory maps, accessibility guides, and social stories from the airport's website.



2. At the Airport

Arrive early: Allow extra time for check-in, security screening, and boarding.

Request priority services: Ask for priority check-in, baggage drop, and boarding.

Use mobility and communication supports: Request wheelchairs, aisle chairs, communication boards, or quiet rooms if needed.

Advocate respectfully: Explain the traveller's needs clearly to staff and ask for reasonable adjustments wherever possible.



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3. During the Flight

Monitor comfort and safety: Help with seating, positioning, and using approved support devices.

Assist with communication: Support the use of AAC tools or sign language if needed.

Manage medical needs: Ensure access to medications, feeding equipment, or oxygen if required.



4. After Arrival

Coordinate disembarking: Request assistance from ground staff.

Retrieve mobility aids: Ensure wheelchairs or other equipment are returned promptly.

Support onward travel: Help with managing airline transfers, baggage collection and connecting to transport options.



5. Be Prepared to Advocate

Know your rights under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

If something goes wrong, document the issue and follow the Disability Air Travel Complaint Process.

Contact advocacy organisations for support if needed.



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*This resource is part of the nationally codesigned **Rare Disease Disability Toolkit** and is accurate at the time of publishing (February 2026). For more information, see the **Navigating Air Travel with Rare Disease Disability guide**. The information provided does not necessarily represent the views of Rare Voices Australia (RVA) or imply endorsement. RVA is not liable for any loss, damage, or consequences arising from the use or misuse of this resource.*

