

Criteria for Travel

Who are Our Travelers?

At Special Journeys we look forward to providing trips that explore new places in a safe and structured manner. Our travelers are individuals with intellectual, developmental, and/or physical disabilities. They are present to enjoy their trip and have a memorable vacation. We want our travelers to enjoy their experience and get as much as possible out of it. We are a true vacation experience provider; we are not a respite provider. When travelers are sent primarily for respite purposes, we reserve the right to send them home during the vacation, without refund. In order to ensure that the trips proceed smoothly and, in a manner where everyone has fun, it is essential that you agree to send travelers with us ONLY if they meet the following criteria:

Our Travelers Must:

1. Have appropriate social skills and be considerate of others on their vacation.
2. Be able to travel in a small group setting within the 1:4 traveler to Travel Companion ratio that we plan for the trips. Travelers who need a 1:1 staffing level must bring their own 1:1 dedicated caregiver. There is an additional fee required for the 1:1 caregiver.
3. Routinely sleep or rest through the night.
4. Be at least 19 years old.

Our Travelers Must Not:

1. Be medically or behaviorally inappropriate either for vacationing in general or for the specific vacation they are attending.
2. Engage in uncontrolled screaming or shouting that cannot be redirected within four prompts so that it does not significantly disrupt the other travelers' vacation.
3. Be violent to themselves or others or have aggressive or self-abusive behaviors that would be disruptive to others on the vacation.
4. Have inappropriate sexual behaviors or issues.
5. Have legal obligations or issues that are not disclosed to Special Journeys
6. Have issues with wandering that are not fully described in the Traveler Details. Travelers who may wander from the hotel must bring a 1:1 Travel Companion. There is an additional fee required for the 1:1 caregiver.
7. Have food allergies that affect them when they are in close proximity to or touch the food.

Limitations of Chaperoned Group Vacations:

Our Special Journeys Tour Leaders have led over 350 chaperoned vacations. Our experience has taught us that we can provide the best possible care for our travelers ONLY if we have complete, detailed, up-to-date information about them. We use this information as a guiding light showing us how to care for the traveler – not providing these details is like blowing out the candle on us.

Even with good information, we still have limitations that are inherent in guided group vacations:

- Our team cannot be in each hotel room on a 24x7 basis. Our Tour Leaders and Travel Companions need to sleep, care for other travelers, handle luggage, and perform many other tasks. Opening hotel doors in the middle of the night to check on folks both wakes up the travelers in the room and also keeps our team from being rested to care for the travelers the next day.
- When we go to places such as theme parks, stadiums, theaters, airports, and other large venues, there can be thousands of people all around our group. We can't always control everything in these locations.
- It is critical that the traveler's medications be packed correctly before we pick up the traveler. Our team is unable to identify whether pills will run out during the trip, whether certain medications were not packed, or whether certain medications were packed in separate locations that were not identified during our pickup process.
- We cannot realistically track a traveler's bowel movements while on trips.