

Let's go to a theme-park!

We are fortunate to live so close to some fantastic theme parks: Movie World, Sea World, Dreamworld and Wet'n'Wild. With some planning, these are fun filled experiences you can share with your child. Here are some ideas we hope will help.



Before the outing

Research the theme parks you are considering going to. There is information on each of the theme parks webpages that outline their disability services and facilities (see links below)

If you have unanswered questions, contact the theme park for further information to help plan your day.

Once you have decided to go to a theme park, you can prepare your child by:

- ❖ Reading stories or watching videos about going to a theme park
- ❖ Practicing and playing going to the theme park
- ❖ Using visual supports to prepare your child for what will happen (eg photos, videos, calendar) – you can use these both before and during the visit
- ❖ Developing a social story for your child about going to the theme park
- ❖ Helping them understand what they can ride they can go on and what they can't (whether due to size or other restrictions) before you go so they have realistic expectations

By understanding **what will happen** and **what is expected of them**, your child will feel less anxious or confused.

Theme parks are busy and active places full of sensory inputs. Be prepared with supports for your child's **sensory needs** – you may wish work with your early intervention specialist to develop a sensory profile for you child.

Plan for **challenging situations**:

- ❖ What are the signs your child is becoming upset?
- ❖ What can help prevent the situation from escalating?
- ❖ Is there somewhere quiet you can go to take a break?

During the outing

Use **visuals** to help your child understand what will be happening next. **Praise** your child, **encourage** positive behaviours and have a reward to motivate your child.

If your child does become distressed, **stay calm** yourself so you can help your child. You may find it helpful to have a family member or friend come along to help. If you can, leave before the situation becomes too overwhelming. It is best if you have small successes first.

**While being prepared will give you the best chance to succeed, things don't always go to plan.
Reflect on what worked and what didn't to help you plan for your next outing.**

For further information about theme-parks:

www.movieworld.com.au/plan-your-day/guests-with-a-disability.aspx

www.dreamworld.com.au/Visitor-Information/Guests-with-Disabilities.aspx

www.seaworld.com.au/plan-your-day/services-and-facilities.aspx

www.wetnwild.com.au/plan-your-day/special-services.aspx

If you would like more information about community inclusion, we have developed a series of factsheets and checklists for families and communities.

These can be found at:

<http://www.directory.byronearlyintervention.org.au/>



Shaping Outcomes

early childhood intervention service

> because we can