



Flying alone can be a great adventure for some kids, and a frightful nightmare for others. Parents and grandparents need to recognize the difference and act accordingly.

Flying alone isn't advisable for very young ones who haven't been away from parents for any length of time. Strange surroundings, loud noises, rushing through airports, and being thrust into a world of strangers can unnerve youngsters not ready for such an ordeal.

Airline employees are very considerate with kids who fly alone. They make sure every need is fulfilled and absolute safety assured. In addition to their airline training, many have young families and practical experience in handling other children during air travel.

Beyond the possible fears a young child may have about flying, there should be some basic physical requirements parents must consider. As a general rule, kids age six and older should be trained to travel with a SmartPhone.

They should be able to read signs, understand instructions, and at all times during the journey know how to seek help from airline employees. Before they leave home, kids should be packed with snacks, reading materials, toys and portable audio and/or video electronics.

Children flying alone always wear ID tags provided by the airline, and parents should be certain the tag information includes all necessary phone numbers. If regular medications are necessary, the tags should include specifics about dosages to be applied by flight and airport staff.

Practice makes perfect. Several weeks in advance, parents should acclimate the child to the upcoming adventure. Talk with enthusiasm about the fun of being way up in the sky. Show photos and video of typical passenger flights. Use your imagination and arrange furniture to create a passenger cabin set-up, and play realistic flying games.

When the child will be met at the destination airport by a grandparent or other familiar face, talk

about the anticipation of seeing that person again, and what activities are planned during the visit. Looking forward to an adventure may take some of the fear of leaving home and being alone on the journey.