Parent Mission/Checklist Guide

Please explain the following info as your child ticks their mission book. This helps them to understand the sequence and routines in the flying process. The more they understand and predict what happens next, the safer and more in 'control' they will feel.

At the check-in desk

This is the first place to go at the airport. It is where you take your cases and bags so they can be put on the aircraft for you. It may be busy here and sometimes has a queue of people waiting for their turn. Talk about how noisy this part of the airport can be. You will get a boarding pass, which is a special ticket to get on the plane. Don't forget to them your passport.

The luggage scale – this looks like a supermarket conveyer belt at the tills. It has a special weighing scale underneath that detects how heavy your bags and cases are. You might see the weight number on top of the check-in desk. The check-in staff will put a sticker on your case. This sticker has your flight information on it and a special three letter code the airport you're flying to.

The conveyer belts pull the cases into the baggage sorting and scanning area next. While the baggage is sorted, you are going to security next. There will be lots of people like us getting ready to go on their holiday/special trip. It gets noisy because there are lots of flights taking off here today. They all need to check-in and go to security too.

At security

Security is always a busy and noisy part of the airport. This is good. This means the security staff are checking everyone and every bag that is going on a plane to make sure it is safe. The security staff will wear uniforms, so you know who they are, and they use special machines to check everything that goes on board a plane (in our bags and pockets etc.)

You will hear the 'CLATTER' of the trays where people put their bags and items, they want to take on the plane, like our phones and iPads. They look like Xray machines you see in hospitals, but they are scanning the inside of our bags to see what is inside. This is much quicker than looking in everyone's bags!

You might hear the metal detectors beeping too. This is a machine that uses special magnets to detect metal things that could be under our clothes. This is to make sure people are only taking safe things on board the plane. You might have to walk through a metal detector tunnel, one at a time, or sometimes the security staff use a special metal detector in their hand that they wave in front and all around you. They are very good at keeping everyone safe.

Departure Lounge

HUSTLE AND BUSTLE! This is a busy part of the airport too. Some airports have huge departure areas. They are usually filled with people looking in the different shops, buying perfume or toys or things to on the plane.

As well as shops, you will see cafes where people can buy food or snacks before they get on the plane. You will see big screens around the lounge where all the plane names and times are shown. We look at these to see when it is our turn to get on the plane and which gate we go to. That is where the plane will be waiting for us. Not everyone can see the screens, so often you will hear the airport staff announcing special messages to tell you when it is your turn.

Sometimes you will see people running to get there so they don't miss their plane.

You might be able to see the amazing planes taking off, landing, or waiting through big windows. Everybody loves to see the planes. It helps them to feel excited that it is their turn soon.

Getting on the plane

IT'S NEARLY TIME TO GO! Now it is our turn to get on our plane. There will be staff who check our boarding pass tickets to check we are getting on the right plane first. Then we will walk to our plane, sometimes through a tunnel and sometimes we might go outside to get on board.

When we get to the plane, there will be cabin crew waiting for us. They are very important people. They will be wearing their uniforms, so we know who they are. They can help us find our seats, look after us when we need something and take care of us, keeping us all safe onboard.

You will see rows of seats like on a bus or train and there is a special place to put our bags, above our seats in lockers. They have doors that open and shut so that the bags don't fall out when the plane is moving. You will hear them open and shut a lot at first, while people settle in their seats. They rattle a bit when the plane is moving too. This is okay and safe.

You will hear the noisy engine and pumps filling up the plane with fuel. The pilots will be checking the engines and setting the clever computers with the route to your destination. It is a bit like a sat nav in the car that tells the plane where to go and how high to fly. Isn't that amazing!

Your special seat

Your seat has lots of special features that make it safe and fun for your journey. It is your space, so get comfortable. Most importantly, it has a seatbelt, just like a car that opens and closes by lifting the belt buckle. This keeps you safe when you are sitting down, and plane is moving on the ground or flying. FASTEN UP!

In front of you in the seat pocket, you will see a safety car with instructions to follow if there was an emergency. This is just in case, like having fire practises at school. The cabin crew will show you what to do in a short while before you take off.

You have a special table that you can lower down so you can use it as a desk to colour and play on, or as table to eat your snacks.

Look up! You will see a light that you can turn on or off and a seatbelt sign that shows you when you need to fasten up. There is also a fan to keep you cool if you are getting too warm.

You will hear lots of 'BING, BONG' sounds. These are messages from the pilots or cabin crew checking that everybody is ready to set off. It is a very busy time. You might hear a special announcement (message) from the pilot saying "welcome". They will talk to you about the journey ahead. GET READY TO GO!

You might hear engine noises getting louder and quieter. This is the plane switching on the engines and checking everything is working well, just like starting a car. If you are lucky enough to sit near the window, you might see panels/flaps on the wings start to move. This is the pilot team who will be checking that the parts of the wings can do their job, getting longer or shorter or moving up and down.

The plane will start driving away from the airport next, getting ready to go to the runway. You might see the lights flicker on and off as the engines start and you might feel 'BUMP, BUMP, BUMP' as the plane rides over the cats' eyes on the runway. This is just like a car does on the roads.

While you are sitting in your seat, getting ready to fly, the pilots are talking on their clever radio to air traffic control. You might see the tower where they work, near the runway. They let the pilots know when it is your plane's turn to fly next. This is why you might wait on the runway for a few minutes. When air traffic control says 'GO', the pilots start the take-off.

Take off!

The plane will get very noisy for a few minutes because the engines are on full power. You will feel the plane driving really fast down the runway. Sometimes you will feel pushed back in your seat. This is safe and normal. The plane is so big and heavy, it needs a lot of engine power to make it go fast. When the pilots are ready, they will lift the nose of the plane up into the air and WHOOSH! You are flying! It is a funny feeling in your tummy at first.

If you look out of the window, you will see the plane is getting higher. It is still very noisy in the plane, so to make it quieter (especially for the people who live near the airport), the pilots will slow down a little and push the nose of the plane down a little too. The plane is still climbing higher, just a bit slower and quieter now. It might feel like the plane is dropping, but it isn't. You might feel your ears go 'POP'. This is because the air pressure changes when you get higher or lower. It is your clever ears getting used to the changing air. Sucking a sweet or lolly can help, as well as tasting delicious! Isn't air powerful and amazing!

You might see clouds out of the window!

Just like a car, the plane will need to turn left or right to fly to your destination (where you are going). The pilots have a steering wheel or joystick to point the wings of the plane. This feels like you are tipping up or down, but it is a gentle turn. This is just like birds when they fly.

You might hear a 'BING BONG' and see the seatbelt sign goes off. This means you can stand up or move around the plane now you are safely in the air. This is a good time to find the toilet.

Cruising through the sky

Once you are high up above the clouds, the plane is cruising along, just like a car when it drives along a long straight road. People on board might walk around and the friendly cabin crew will come round with a trolley where you can get drinks and snacks. On long journeys, they will bring hot meals too!

You will hear people chatting, watching their screens or listening to music on their headphones. You might hear announcements (messages) from the pilots telling you about the journey and what you might see on the way. People might open and close the bag lockers above the seats to get out their games, books or activities.

Now the plane is whizzing through the sky, it might wobble and shake a little. This is safe. Just like a car moves up and down on a bumpy road, the plane will wobble up and down in bumpy air! Did you now that air moves?

There is a special word that we use for moving air. It is called ‘turbulence’. It is always safe to fly in turbulence, it is just the air moving up and down on the wings. It can make people feel like they are wobbling and shaking. The pilots will put on the seatbelt sign if it is getting too wobbly to walk around, just to make sure everyone is sitting down. This is a good time to try some activities. The pilots are experts in flying through the smooth and bumpy air, so you don’t need to worry. It is safe.

After a while, it will be tidy up time for the cabin crew. This means it is nearly time to start the landing. The pilots will put the seatbelt sign on to make sure people are sitting down safely again. Your ears might feel a ‘POP’ as the plane is slowly gliding down little by little, and your tummy might feel funny too.

Landing

This is the fun part of the journey because it means you are nearly there. The engines will get quieter, and you might turn left or right to line the plane up to the runway you will land on.

If you look out of the window, you will see the plane is flying through the bumpy air in the clouds, ‘WOBBLE, WOBBLE’.

You might hear the baggage lockers rattle around above you too.

When you look out, you will see the land slowly getting closer and the engines getting a little quieter as you fly down gently. You might even hear the noisy wheels being lowered down, ready to drive on the runway when the plane lands.

Get ready…. BUMP!

The wheels land on the runway and the plane is slowing down quickly, just like pressing the brakes in a car. Planes have very powerful brakes, and the pilots will use the noisy engines to slow down too. It is fast and loud for a minute or two. This is okay. This is safe.

YOU DID IT! You landed on the ground. You will hear a special message from the cabin crew to say ‘welcome’ to your new destination. They will even tell you what time it is and what the weather is like there!

The pilots will be very busy driving the plane to the gate at the new airport. When you are there, the pilots will turn the engines off. It will be quieter. Now it is time to get your bags and go! It will take a few minutes for everyone to wait for their turn to get off. Grown-ups can find waiting tricky. You might need to show them how they stay in their seat until it is their turn to go.

As you go, don’t forget to say ‘thank you’ to the cabin crew who have been working so hard looking after you all on your journey. You might even see the pilots waving goodbye too.

What a great journey – you did it!

(Well done grown-ups… you did it too!)

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