



Volunteer Tips for International Wishes

A wish child has requested an international wish experience...now what? This guide will walk you through considerations during wish discovery, outline our expectations for you as it relates to this wish type, and answer commonly asked questions regarding international wishes.

Wish Discovery

If a child mentions an international wish experience, we ask you to remember the following during wish discovery.



Tell Us Why

Help us understand why this wish would mean everything to the child.

- Ask as many questions as possible to not only understand the child's vision, but to understand why this wish idea is important to them. The Wish Idea Brainstorm section on the Wish Child Form is where you can capture the who, what, when, where and why behind the child's wish.
- It is important that you make no promises – some international destinations may not be possible for us to consider, sometimes the child's medical condition doesn't allow for international travel, certain times of year may have already reached capacity, etc.
- Review the paperwork and confirm you are giving us enough information to fully understand the child's vision of their wish. Imagine you are a staff member; is there enough to know what the child is hoping to feel and experience during the wish?
 - Description that isn't super helpful: To go to Paris because they've always wanted to go to Europe.
 - Description that tells us exactly what we need: To go to Paris because they've taken four years of French and are considering majoring in French in college. They love the culture, the art, and the food that is associated with the French people.
- Consider asking the child to draw/illustrate the importance of this wish to them. The child could also write a letter or create a video detailing what they envision with this wish request.
- The wish should reflect the wish child's interests leading you to conclude that the expressed wish is the child's wish. If you feel that a child is being coached or that the child's wish is not their own, please share this with our staff via the paperwork or in an email following the wish discovery.





Let Us Plan the Wish

Let us worry about the “how”, we need you to uncover the why behind the wish.

- We count on you to provide the details of the child’s wish vision. We use those details to understand the most important aspects of the wish so that we can include elements that will add to the child’s excitement.
 - If the child states that they want to go to a tropical beach, write that down and let our staff have further conversations about what that looks like to the child. You should not be suggesting locations or beaches to the child and family.
- Do not make promises, no matter how small they may seem. No promises, speculation, or guesses - you do not know what could happen between when you leave, and we start planning!
- Don’t worry about understanding all the policies and guidelines, staff are the experts in this area.



Review Medical Considerations

Based on the child’s medical condition, international travel may not be appropriate.

- Our goal is to ensure the child and wish participants have access to high-quality healthcare at the wish destination in case of an emergency.
- Make-A-Wish policy requires that if a child has skilled nursing care at home, they will also need this on their wish. Because U.S. nursing licenses do not carry over outside of the U.S., children who require nursing care will not be allowed to travel internationally. Families can reach out to staff with any questions.
- If you are working on a rush wish, the chapter will have a conversation with the medical team as to the safety of traveling internationally as these wishes often require significant medical needs.
- If you walk into the family’s home and the child has an extensive amount of medical equipment, please let staff know so they can follow up with the medical team regarding travel safety and the appropriateness of an international wish.

What Do We Need From You?

Your role is critical to ensuring we understand why the child wants this wish and the details of the child’s vision.

Once the wish is determined and all medical and chapter approvals have been obtained, staff will work directly with the family to coordinate items such as:

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| • Wish dates | • Passports and Visas, should they be required |
| • Flights | • Emergency situations |
| • Preferences on tours/activities | • Questions while on the wish |

Volunteers may occasionally hear from a wish family while they are on their wish. We’d ask that you direct all questions, comments, or concerns to the chapter staff so we can advise the family based on their circumstances. Should the family share any pictures of their wish, please forward those to staff so we can enjoy them as well!





Frequently Asked Questions

Helpful things to remember when a child shares that they want an international wish.

Is there a minimum age for international travel?

For all international destinations, the wish child must be at least 7 years old at the time of departure.

Can a family choose to delay a wish until the child reaches the minimum age?

A family may place a wish on hold for no more than one year for a reason related to the child’s age, school calendars, parent’s schedules, etc.

Why is there a minimum age for international travel?

Minimum age guidelines help us ensure that wishes are as developmentally appropriate as possible for a child. These age guidelines were based on recommendations from our National Medical Advisory Council, using developmental milestones widely studied and accepted in the medical and psychology communities.

Does the age requirement apply to rush wishes?

Yes, the minimum age for international travel applies to all wish children, regardless of their wish status.

What is the length of stay for an international wish?

Length of stay in the destination country may differ based on a variety of factors including the length of travel time, time zone adjustments, medical needs, and family requests for shorter stays. The chart below reflects the minimum and maximum stays for different world regions. Please do not make any promises to wish families about the potential length of a travel wish and consult with chapter staff to understand length of stay guidance for your wish family.

REGION/LOCATION	MINIMUM STAY	MAXIMUM STAY
North America	5 nights	9 nights
Latin America	5 nights	9 nights
Europe	5 nights	9 nights
Africa	7 nights	9 nights
Asia	7 nights	9 nights
Oceania/South Pacific	7 nights	9 nights
Cruises (not including Disney Cruises)	5 nights	10 nights
International resorts (e.g., Atlantis, Sandals)	4 nights	6 nights

A wish family wants to extend their wish trip, is that possible?

Wish extensions are not permitted for celebrity or group wishes. Wish extensions for international travel may be granted on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the chapter based on current policies and guidelines.





Is there a list of countries that wish kids cannot travel to?

Yes, we utilize an internal list of countries to determine which countries are not safe for our wish children to travel to for security and medical reasons. Because that list is everchanging, we do not share it externally. Should you have questions about a particular country, please reach out to staff who can address any concerns.

What happens if a country changes and the child is no longer able to travel to that country?

If a country is no longer safe to travel to for security or medical reasons, staff will communicate directly with the family to determine next steps. Most often, this will require a second visit to understand an alternative wish idea that can be granted.

Can we facilitate bringing a family member or friend from a country that is not approved for travel to?

We can grant a wish to bring a family member/friend to the United States from a country that is not safe for the wish child to travel to.

The wish child would like to travel to multiple countries during their wish, is that possible?

All non-cruise international travel, inclusive of arrival, departure, and activities throughout the wish, are limited to a single country.

Can my wish child travel to a Disney theme park outside the United States?

No, Disney theme park wishes are limited to U.S. theme parks only. In addition, Disney Cruise Line® wishes must depart from and return to U.S. ports and are limited to 4- or 5-night sailings.

The family has questions about obtaining the necessary travel documents, who can help them navigate the passport/visa process?

Staff will have a conversation with the family regarding any potential documentation that is required for a particular destination. Should the family have questions or concerns about obtaining these requirements, staff can work with them to ensure obtaining the travel documents is not a burden on the family.

The family has questions regarding their medical needs during the wish and supplemental health care insurance, who can help answer their questions?

The family should reach out to chapter staff directly with any questions regarding supplemental insurance and/or medical needs during the wish.

If the family reaches out to me during the wish, what should I do?

If the family reaches out to share the amazing time they are having or sharing pictures, feel free to respond and share that with chapter staff. If the family is experiencing an issue or travel emergency, please have them contact chapter staff on our emergency line ASAP.

I have some additional questions, who should I reach out to?

Chapter staff remain your best contact for any questions you have regarding international wishes.

