

Beaches® Resorts

AUTISM INITIATIVE FAQ'S

1. What does it mean that Beaches Resorts are autism-friendly?

Being autism-friendly means our Luxury Included® family resorts are equipped to better serve the fastest growing population of developmental disorders. As the resorts voted "World's Best," we want every family to be able to enjoy the award-winning Luxury Included® Caribbean Vacation that we offer in a safe, fun and comfortable manner, tailored to their specific needs.

2. When did Beaches Resorts receive its autism certification?

- In 2017, Beaches Resorts became the first resort company in the world to be designated Certified Autism Centers (CAC), further offering families inclusive activities and helping to ensure meaningful experiences for everyone.
- Two years later, in April 2019, Beaches Resorts set another industry standard by becoming the first resort company in the world to attain the Advanced Certified Autism Center (ACAC) designation from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES).
- Through the ACAC, a core focus and emphasis has been placed on the Kids Camps, Entertainment and Watersports operations, and at least 80 percent of our customer-facing team members have received the requisite knowledge skills, temperament and expertise to interact with families and children with special needs, specifically on the autism spectrum

3. What does it mean for Beaches Resorts to now be an Advanced Certified Autism Center (ACAC)?

- The ACAC designation is the next level of certification once an organization has achieved the CAC certification. It underscores that the organization has gone above and beyond to train its staff and provide substantial modifications for visitors with autism or similar sensory needs, and designations are granted by the IBCCES.
- Beaches is even further committed to serving individuals with autism and their families.
- Beaches is committed to on-going staff training to include 40 credit hours on autism sensitivity and awareness, bullying, early childhood identification, transition to adulthood, and more.
- Beaches is a resort with a high volume of staff from various areas who have successfully completed a rigorous autism awareness training program.
- Beaches is working closely with the leading autism experts from around the globe to ensure our programs are designed to accommodate individuals on the spectrum.
- Beaches is providing a Luxury Included® Vacation equipped with special autism-friendly products and services to enhance the guests' overall experience.
- Beaches participates in an annual onsite audit and review.
- Beaches provides substantial changes to protocols and physical spaces to accommodate various needs.

4. What does the ACAC certification mean for Beaches staff?

Receiving Level II certification in autism means that staff members are competent in autism and have received 40 credit hours of in-depth training through an internationally recognized 3rd party organization. Following training, each participant must complete an Autism Competency Exam and an approval process certifying that the staff member is competent in autism. Ongoing training is required every two years to stay up-to-date with the latest information regarding autism. This accreditation ensures all team members have the requisite knowledge, skills, temperament, and expertise to cater to all children.

5. What areas has Beaches staff been trained in?

This advanced 40-credit hours of training has afforded certification in the following areas:

- Communication
- Early Childhood Identification
- Emotional Awareness
- Social Skills
- Environment Awareness
- Motor Skills
- Transition to Adulthood
- Bullying

6. Who is your credentialing organization, IBCCES?

The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) was established in 2001 to meet the training credentialing needs of professionals who work with individuals with special needs and cognitive disorders. IBCCES has since expanded autism training and certification into over 40 different countries with training centers and members across the globe. The credentials are a testimony to an individual's commitment to ongoing professional development in the field of autism. More information can be found about the program at www.ibcces.org.

For more information on Beaches Autism-Friendly Resorts, visit: BEACHES.COM/AUTISM-FRIENDLYRESORTS

Contact us at 844-360-9380 US/CAN or SPECIALSERVICES@UVI.SANDALS.COM

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7. Can you accept individuals who are on different levels of the spectrum?

Yes. Staff members have achieved Level II autism certification training, understand that the spectrum is broad, and know that communication and sensory needs differ with everyone, whether they are high-functioning or low-functioning.

8. Can you accommodate special dietary needs and requests?

With up to 21 distinct 5-Star Global Gourmet™ restaurants per resort and a Culinary Concierge Desk that works directly with executive chefs, sous chefs and restaurant managers to ensure an exceptional and worry-free dining experience for your entire family, we realize that many individuals have special needs and are happy to meet them. Please let us know in advance and prior to your arrival through our pre-travel questionnaire so we may be best prepared to work in conjunction with our Culinary Concierge and assist you with any dietary needs.

9. Do you have autism resources on-site?

We are working with outside companies to add autism-friendly products and to enhance our sensory-friendly environments to ensure all guests can enjoy a Luxury Included® Vacation, including toys and sleeps aides.

10. Have steps been taken to ensure your resorts are sensory-friendly and safe for my child with ASD?

We are working with the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards to ensure each of our Beaches Resorts is friendly to everyone, including those with special needs. By being trained and certified, we have committed to better understanding our guests' needs, including those with autism and other special needs.

11. What appropriate programming do you offer for children on the autism spectrum?

Many individuals on the autism spectrum are drawn to water, and the Autism Spectrum Disorder Foundation (ASDF) highlights that swimming can help children on the spectrum improve speech, coordination and balance, social skills, self-esteem, cognitive processing, communication skills and oral motor skills.

In conjunction with a collaboration between the Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI®) and IBCCES, Beaches Resorts has also earned the ACAC for its watersports operations. The certification makes appropriate programming from autism-certified staff available for families looking to enjoy daily PADI-certified diving at the company's world-class dive operations, voted Top 10 in the world.

As part of Beaches Resorts proud sponsorship of *Sesame Street*®, Beaches Resorts introduced the arrival of Julia, a *Sesame Street*® Muppet on the autism spectrum in September 2017. Julia brought forth a new activity – Amazing Art with Julia, which highlights how people can express themselves through art.

12. Is one-on-one care available for my child?

All Beaches Resorts offer the services of an Advanced Certified Autism One-on-One Beaches Buddy, dedicated specifically to your child. You can request a Beaches Buddy to be with your child for your entire stay or just for a few hours in a sensory-friendly location of your choice. *For information on pricing or to speak with one of our Special Services Representatives, please contact 844-360-9380 (US/Canada) or email specialservices@uvi.sandals.com.*

13. Are private round trip airport transfers available if my family is interested in this service?

Yes. Within Jamaica, these can be arranged through [Island Routes Caribbean Adventures](#) for families who are seeking the privacy and comfort of their own transportation. In Turks & Caicos, arrangements are set up through Special Services. *Note: Services available at an additional cost.*

14. Can arrangements be made to avoid having to wait in line at the local airport, both at arrival and/or upon departure?

Yes. The Island Routes Fast Track Arrival & Departure Service is available for an additional fee. Upon arrival, a professional airport agent will welcome you and escort you through immigration, customs and security to make sure your arrival is quick and seamless! Upon departure, an airport agent will assist with check-in and security clearance and get you to your departure gate on time.

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