

Emirates completes more than 40 travel rehearsals for youth with autism globally

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 20 April, 2026



Dubai: Emirates has strengthened its commitment to inclusive travel by conducting more than 40 “Travel Rehearsals” for children and young adults with autism across the globe over the past year. These carefully designed sessions have already supported over 250 families, helping participants experience and practice the full airport journey in a calm, structured environment, reducing anxiety and building confidence ahead of real flights.

Since April 2025, Emirates’ Airport Services teams have delivered these rehearsals in major cities including Dubai, London, Paris, Sydney, Toronto, Delhi, and Barcelona, among many others. The initiative is backed by extensive staff training, with more than 35,000 Emirates employees equipped to assist autistic passengers and their families. Close coordination with airport authorities, security agencies, and autism support organizations ensures each rehearsal is safe, supportive,

and meaningful.

As the world's first autism-certified airline, Emirates recognizes that air travel can be overwhelming due to sensory triggers such as crowds, noise, and unfamiliar procedures. Research indicates that 78% of families with autistic members hesitate to travel for these reasons. Addressing this, Travel Rehearsals focus on predictability and familiarity—two key needs for neurodivergent individuals.

During these sessions, participants walk through each step of the airport process, including check-in, baggage drop, immigration, and security screening. They receive mock boarding passes, interact with airline and airport staff, and experience real terminal environments like shops and dining areas. In select locations, participants even get the opportunity to board an actual aircraft, making the experience more realistic and reassuring.

Through this initiative, Emirates is not only making travel more accessible but also empowering families to consider flying with greater confidence, transforming what can be a stressful journey into a manageable and positive experience.

Emirates has continued its commitment to making travel more accessible for all, by successfully arranging bespoke Emirates Travel Rehearsals across more than 40 cities globally over the past year. With more than 250 families positively impacted, Emirates Travel Rehearsals are designed to support children and young adults with autism, allowing them to practice the journey through the airport to prepare for real flights - easing travel anxiety and empowering them to fly with more confidence.



Since April 2025, Emirates' Airport Services teams have come together to arrange more than 40 of these travel rehearsals across airports like Accra, Athens, Bali, Bangalore, Barcelona, Bologna, Brussels, Cairo, Christchurch, Da Nang, Delhi, Dubai, Dublin, Durban, Düsseldorf, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Guangzhou, Hanoi, Harare, Hong Kong, Istanbul, London, Luanda, Madrid, Mauritius, Milan, Newcastle, Nice, Orlando, Oslo, Paris, Peshawar, Port Luis, Rome, Stansted, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, Trivandrum, Venice and Vienna.

More than 35,000 Emirates staff have been trained to support customers with autism and can help facilitate travel, and Travel Rehearsals. Emirates teams work very closely with airport authorities and partners to make sure each rehearsal is a supportive and successful experience for the families.

What is an Emirates Travel Rehearsal?

As the world's first autism certified airline, Emirates is aware that for many families, international air travel is a highly challenging experience, or something to be avoided completely due to the high level of sensory stimuli that is involved. A survey on [AutismTravel.com](https://www.autismtravel.com) revealed that 78% of families are hesitant to travel or visit new locations for these reasons. For many people with autism, planning and predictability is critical - and an airport represents a world of unknown processes and stimuli.

Emirates Travel Rehearsals are a purposeful community collaboration and learning exercise arranged by Emirates, with the support of international airport teams, Border Control and Security teams, and schools and centres for autism based all around the world. The travel rehearsals empower neurodivergent people to participate in a real-time journey through the airport, practicing the actions of checking in, dropping baggage, going through immigration and security, and experiencing the hustle and bustle of retail and dining areas. While familiarising themselves with the airport, participants are also issued mock boarding passes and given the chance to meet the many uniformed staff encountered along the way. In some airports, Emirates' teams managed to arrange access to real aircraft for the children and young adults.