



# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Santa Barbara Zoo and Other California Partners Commit to Accessible Travel Across the Golden State

*Launching in July, visitors can learn about family-friendly stops outlined in the 2022 Visit California Road Trips Guide, ranging from the Santa Barbara Zoo to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, to the new Sesame Place® San Diego*

**Santa Barbara, CA (July 15, 2022)** - The Santa Barbara Zoo, along with numerous other California-based attractions including Sesame Place® San Diego, Six Flags Magic Mountain, GRAMMY Museum®, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Concord, and Visit Visalia have been leaders in the accessible travel space, creating an [Autism-Friendly California Road Trip](#) that features attractions across the state that are Certified Autism Centers. This road trip will appear in the annual 2022 Visit California Road Trips Guide launching July 15, 2022.

"The Santa Barbara Zoo is a place where everyone and all families should be able to visit and explore with ease. We strive to create spaces where guests, staff, and volunteers have access to safe and inclusive experiences," shared JJ McLeod, Director of Education at the Santa Barbara Zoo. "We're honored to partner with such incredible attractions across the state to ensure that California is a place for everyone to feel supported during their adventures!"

In 2018, the Santa Barbara Zoo became the first zoo on the West Coast to be designated a [Certified Autism Center](#) by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). Since earning the certification, the Santa Barbara Zoo has made new connections and partnerships with organizations that support the autism community, and strives to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals to engage and participate fully.

The Autism-Friendly California Road Trip featured in the guide showcases a sensory-sensitive itinerary of six stops across the state where families can travel with confidence. Each of the included destinations are Certified Autism Centers and featured stops include:

- [\*\*Santa Barbara Zoo\*\*](#): The Santa Barbara Zoo has been a Certified Autism Center since 2018 and all programs are inclusive and moderated by fully trained staff. Sensory backpacks are available to rent while the zoo's map outlines designated quiet zones. A sensory sensitive pathway is also available when entering the Zoo, which offers a more calm alternative to the main courtyard. More information on accessibility at the Santa Barbara Zoo can be found [here](#).

- **[Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Concord](#)**: Open seasonally, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Concord is Northern California's biggest and most thrilling waterpark. This 30-acre family destination features more than 22 world-class water attractions, with everything from the 100-foot tall vertical drop slide, Break Point Plunge, to the longest lazy river in Northern California, The Kaanapali Kooler. Guests presenting an IBCCES Individual Accessibility Card (IAC) to Guest Relations at the park will receive any necessary accommodations to accommodate their family's needs. More information on accessibility at Six Flags Hurricane Harbor can be found [here](#).
- **[Six Flags Magic Mountain](#)**: Six Flags Magic Mountain is known as the undisputed "Thrill Capital of the World," featuring more world-class roller coasters than any other theme park on the planet. With over 100 rides, games, and adventures, plus one of the largest children's areas in Southern California, Six Flags Magic Mountain offers something for thrill-seekers of all ages. Six Flags offers sensory backpacks available at Guest Relations, which include items that might be helpful for those who are sensory sensitive, including noise canceling earmuffs, stress balls, and various fidget toys. More information on accessibility at Six Flags Magic Mountain can be found [here](#).
- **[GRAMMY Museum](#)**: For young music lovers, the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles offers interactive exhibits and displays that highlight the world of music. The GRAMMY Museum is the first destination to become a Certified Autism Center in Los Angeles County, as well as the first certified museum in California. On the second Saturday of every month, the GRAMMY Museum hosts Sensory Friendly Saturday, where families can enjoy the space with less crowding, quieter sound levels, lower lighting, and free admission. More information on accessibility at the GRAMMY Museum can be found [here](#).
- **[Sesame Place San Diego](#)**: The recently opened Sesame Place San Diego is a 17-acre theme park based entirely on the award-winning show, Sesame Street, and features 18 Sesame Street-themed rides and exciting water attractions, including a family-friendly rollercoaster and a 500,000-gallon wave pool – one of the largest in Southern California. Offerings at the park include designated quiet rooms and low sensory areas, a ride sensory guide that provides insights on how a child with sensory sensitivities might be impacted by the rides. More information on accessibility at Sesame Place San Diego can be found [here](#).
- **[Visit Visalia](#)**: Visit Visalia is California's first destination marketing organization to become a Certified Autism Center and is working to provide more Certified Autism hotels, family-friendly attractions and businesses across the destination. To help families prepare for a visit, Visalia has compiled [national park accessibility videos](#) and ["Social Stories"](#) with helpful accessibility tips for the destination. Families can also rent sensory backpacks from the Visit Visalia office with various sensory toys for children. More information on accessibility in Visalia can be found [here](#).

## **About Santa Barbara Zoo**

Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the Santa Barbara Zoo is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to nearly 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. It is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA cooperative programs for endangered species including Masai giraffe, California condor, Island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. The Santa Barbara Zoo is the region's top visitor attraction, attracting nearly 500,000 guests yearly, and has more than 13,000 members. Visit [www.sbzoo.org](http://www.sbzoo.org).

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