



FAMILY'S

wish journey guide

Welcome to our Make-A-Wish® family.



What Can I Expect as a Parent/Guardian?

You can be assured that your child will be the focus of his or her wish experience. We are thrilled to have been invited into your lives through the granting of this wish and, as much as we enjoy working with you to make your child's dream come true, you owe us nothing in return.

Now that your child has qualified for a wish, you can expect us to do the following:

- Make every effort to provide hope, strength and joy to your child through the granting of a wish.
- Include parents/guardians and siblings (under the age of 18 living in the home) in the wish and make all participants feel special.
- Make all of the arrangements for your child's wish to become a reality and cover wish-related expenses.
- Be available to answer your questions and address your concerns throughout the entire wish-granting process.

The decision to continue your relationship with Make-A-Wish® Michigan as a wish ambassador, volunteer or friend is yours to make once the wish is complete. We welcome your continued support, but it is not necessary to receive a wish.

What Will be Expected of Me?

- Maintain open communication with us. Feel free to share your preferred communication method with your volunteers. Please be responsive to attempts to reach you.
- Allow our trained volunteers to work with your child in determining his or her wish. The suggestions of parents and siblings may distract the wish child from choosing what will bring your child the most joy. Please empower your child to ask for wish ideas that are important to him/her.
- Assist us in completing the required paperwork by providing the necessary signatures and photocopies needed to expedite the wish and keep the planning on track.

- Welcome our wish-granting volunteers to assist our office and your family in bringing hope, strength and joy to your child through the power of a wish. We encourage all family members to meet the wish-granting volunteers during the wish discovery visit.
Note: At this time, due to COVID-19 wish discovery meetings are only being offered virtually.
- Allow us creative freedom while granting your child's wish. This means there will be some surprises during the course of the wish! We prefer not to share all the details of the wish with the child and/or family for this reason. We will provide you with the information necessary to request time off of work/school or to help us with the fulfillment of the wish.

Our greatest hope is that we are successful in providing a carefree, impactful and memorable experience for your family. However, if this is not the right time or situation for a wish let us know.

STEP 1: Explore Possible Wishes!



We encourage our kids to use their imagination and wish for what will bring him or her the most joy!



We regularly create experiences that are incredibly impactful for the child. In fact, the children and parents who have the most satisfying wish experiences are those who were encouraged to identify the one wish most important to the child, no matter how silly or insignificant it may appear to others.

Encourage your child to think very carefully about his or her wish! Wishes usually fall into five categories:

- **“I wish to have ...”** A special gift item like a computer, shopping spree adventure or play structure
- **“I wish to meet...”** A favorite celebrity, musician, movie star or sports hero
- **“I wish to be...”** A cowboy, celebrity, firefighter, doctor or princess
- **“I wish to give...”** A special gift to a high school group, to children in a hospital, etc.
- **“I wish to go...”** Travel to a special destination. Currently, travel wishes may only include local Michigan travel such as local beach staycation, Northern Michigan getaway, or anywhere within the state your child would like to visit!

We regularly grant wishes for pets, bedroom makeovers, shopping sprees, celebrity meetings, computers and much more. A wonderful, unique wish experience can be created based on the child's interest such as golf, cooking, favorite animal, love of the beach, etc. Our goal is to create an incredible wish for your child.

Due to current health guidance, we are unable to accept new wish requests for travel wishes or wishes involving large gatherings for the foreseeable future, this includes domestic travel, international travel, and cruises. Additionally, all celebrity wish experiences will be completed virtually. As we are unable to commit to certain wish types at this time, we ask that your child share two or more wish ideas at the time of your Wish Discovery Meeting.

- *Because we know that wishes provide immense hope and joy in uncertain times, we are excited for the many possibilities of wishes we are able to grant and are committed to providing an impactful wish for your child at a time when they need it most. Due to current health and safety concerns, we do not have a timeframe for when travel wishes will resume.*

A Note About Our Wish Schedule: Wishes are scheduled based on many factors, including children's health requirements and Make-A-Wish resources.

Are There Wishes Make-A-Wish Cannot Grant?

Make-A-Wish strives to grant wishes to as many eligible children as possible. Only one wish is granted per child. While we do not want to limit your child's imagination as he or she decides on their special wish, please keep in mind that Make-A-Wish does have standards and guidelines that must be followed.

Make-A-Wish cannot grant wishes for any of the following:

- Housing, or *structural* renovations to a house
- Weapons or firearms
- Money or financial assistance
- Medical assistance
- Transportation to treatment or airfare to a medical facility
- In-ground pools and Swim Spas (*Consider an above-ground pool or hot tub instead!*)
- Cars, vehicles, motorcycles or power boats (*However, wishes for jet skis, snowmobiles or all-terrain vehicles may be granted based on the age of the child and doctor approval.*)
- Wheelchair lifts for vehicle (*We can grant a wish for a wheelchair swing*)
- Service Dogs (*We can grant companion pets*)

Some Wishes Have Limitations

Make-A-Wish Michigan will do all we can to fulfill your child's wish. Our goal is to provide a wish for every eligible child in the state of Michigan and **there are currently more than 800 Michigan children eligible for a wish!**

Given the number of wishes we are committed to fulfilling each year and the increasing sophistication of the children's desires, making wishes come true can be costly. As a non-profit organization, we rely on the generous donations of supporters across Michigan. We pride ourselves on being good stewards of every donor dollar, and we make every effort to be resourceful when asking for donations or in-kind contributions.

There may be a longer waiting period for certain wishes, some date restrictions or there may be some limits on the activities that can be included in the wish. If your child's heartfelt wish is one of these requests, our staff will discuss the options with you.

What if My Child's Wish Choice is Not Possible?

We will make every effort to grant your child's first choice. However, we cannot guarantee we will be able to grant the requested wish for a variety of reasons, including ensuring the wish is medically safe for your child. We are unable to make any promises, including the use or purchase of specific brands or dates of travel. With this in mind, we will require your flexibility in certain circumstances such as potential travel dates. If the first wish is not possible, we will work with your child on another incredible wish choice.

Note: Because of COVID-19, we cannot predict when it will be safe to resume travel. Once travel wishes resume, we will prioritize wishes based on those wish children whose wishes were initially delayed in the spring of 2020 because of COVID-19.

Who Can Participate in the Wish?



- Local Shopping Wishes: Currently we are only offering shopping spree wishes online. When it is determined safe to resume in-person shopping spree wishes, immediate family members of the wish child are welcome to participate in the shopping wish. If there are very young siblings, it may be best if they join the shopping for a portion of the day. Teenage wish children sometimes like to bring a friend along on their shopping wish.

STEP 2: Complete the Make-A-Wish form

Enclosed is a form that will allow us the opportunity to understand more about your wish child's interests, your family's schedule and the wish ideas your child is exploring. **Please return this form as soon as possible so we can share this information with the volunteer representatives who will meet with your family virtually for your Wish Discovery Meeting.**



STEP 3: The Welcome Call

A member of our team will be reaching out soon to have a phone conversation with you to discuss your child's wish ideas, answer any questions you have and to explain more about our process and our wish schedule.



STEP 4: The Wish Discovery Meeting

Note: A Make-A-Wish wish-granting volunteer representative will contact you to set up a virtual meeting with your family. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are only conducting our wish discovery meetings virtually. During this meeting, they will assist you in exploring wish options, completing a Make-A-Wish paperwork packet and answering any remaining questions. If bilingual translation services are needed, please call our office right away so that we can make accommodations for the wish interview. **The wish child** will need to be present at this meeting to describe their wish in detail to our volunteers, to ask any remaining questions and to officially "make their wish" request. If your child is non-verbal, our volunteers can help your family discuss the best options for a wish. This special meeting with the child allows him or her to be empowered and begins the impactful process of wish granting!

Who Needs to be at the Virtual Meeting?

It is ideal to have both biological parents or legal guardians present for this meeting. In most cases, BOTH biological parents of the child must sign the paperwork to give permission for Make-A-Wish to grant your child a wish. If it is not possible to have both parents or guardians present at the meeting, we can arrange to get the necessary signatures later. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our required signatures, please do not hesitate to contact the Make-A-Wish office.



Items Needed

- **Photocopies of the Birth Certificates:** We will need copies/scans or photos of the birth certificates for the wish child and all children under 18 living in the home.
- **Photo:** We would love to have a photo of your child to share with the wish coordinator who will be planning your child's wish, and possibly community members who may be raising funds for the wish.

Please understand that the representatives who will be meeting with your family are volunteers. They are not Make-A-Wish staff and are not authorized to make any promises to your family regarding the wish, potential wish dates or details about the wish, etc.

STEP 4: Approval of the Wish

Before your child has his or her heart set on a particular wish, please understand that all wishes must go through an approval process, which can take some time. Make-A-Wish has guidelines and policies that must be followed. All wishes must be reasonable, attainable and medically appropriate for your child's age and medical condition. We cannot begin working on the wish itself until the paperwork, with both biological parents' /guardians' signatures, is received in our office and medical safety authorization from the physician is obtained. Once we have biological parent/guardian authorization and physician authorization, the planning process begins!



STEP 5: Scheduling the Wish

Once your child's wish has been authorized, your wish coordinator will work with you on the wish details to schedule the wish. We will work together in determining a time that works well for your family, your child's health circumstances and Make-A-Wish resources. **As stated above, Make-A-Wish is not currently granting or accepting any new travel wishes due to public and health concerns. We do not have a time frame when we will resume travel wishes. We will continue to monitor guidance from state, national and international public health and government organizations, keeping the best interest of the children and families we serve at the center of all policy decisions we make. During this time, we continue to grant other types of wishes, as circumstances allow.**

If, at any time, your child's medical condition changes please contact us right away. We will do everything we can to accommodate your child's wish request to ensure health safety within our parameters.

[What if My Child Becomes Ill and Cannot Participate?](#)

We understand that any child receiving a wish could become ill at any time. Wishes can be canceled, postponed and rescheduled if medically necessary.

Is My Family Responsible for Paying a Portion of My Child's Wish?

Your family will not need to pay for any general expenses in relation to your child's wish. Our intent is for your family to have an enjoyable, relaxing and carefree experience together! Since we are a non-profit organization, our staff and wish-granting volunteers will work hard to secure donations and the best price for the goods and services needed to fulfill your child's wish. To explore all options for keeping expenses reasonable, we do ask for your family's flexibility and understand that there may be limitations to what we can provide.

STEP 6: Wish Day Arrives!

The best part of a wish is creating exciting surprises for the wish child! Anticipation is created in a variety of ways – special secrets, little surprises, special recognition and treatment, unexpected gifts and the making of cherished memories.

Because surprise is such an important element in creating wish experiences, all wish details may not be shared with the child or disclosed to the family until the actual wish date or shortly before the experience.

Sit back and enjoy the anticipation! We are professional wish granters and have granted thousands of wishes that have brought hope, strength and joy to the children and families we serve.



HAVE FUN!

We hope your child enjoys exploring wish ideas! You can look forward to a welcome call within 3 weeks from a Make-A-Wish team member. From there, we will work to secure a team of trained wish-granting volunteers to meet with your family virtually for your child's Wish Discovery Meeting. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact us at 800-622-9474 or michigan.wish.org.