

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Family vacation on the horizon?

Updated cruise line policies for traveling with children from 3 months to 8 years old

DETROIT, MI (June 8, 2010) - A cruise vacation is a wonderful experience for travelers of all ages. If you will be traveling with infants or young children, take care to understand the children's policies before sailing. Some lines cater to children and families; others do not. And while a large number of cruise lines offer outstanding children's programs, many cruisers are unaware that most cruise lines have a minimum age for children to sail. Ages range from 3 months to 8 years, depending on the cruise line.

The experts at CruiseCompete offer the following information on the cruise lines children's policies and programs; be sure to verify this information with the cruise line before booking a cruise. (For those of you still eagerly anticipating the arrival of your bundle of joy, check out the cruise line policies for mothers-to-be At AllThingsCruise.com: <http://allthingscruise.com/cruise-research/niche-cruises/family-cruising/pregnancy-policies-by-cruise-line/>)

AMA Waterways: AMA Waterways cruises are primarily designed for the adult traveler. Children are allowed, however, there are no child-specific programs or child-minding facilities.

Minimum age to sail on AMA Waterways is 4 years.

Azamara Club Cruises: Azamara is primarily designed for the mature guest; so while the cruise line does welcome guests of all ages, no formal children's programs or facilities are onboard their ships.

Minimum age requirement to sail on Azamara is 6 months old, with the exception of Transatlantic and Transpacific cruises/cruise tours, as well as other select cruises/cruise tours, where the infant must be at least 12 months old.

Carnival Cruise Lines: Carnival's Youth Program, Camp Carnival, is designed for 2-11 year olds, but children younger than 2 can play with the toys during designated family play times (parents must be present!). There are babysitting services during limited hours for children younger than two at Camp Carnival; rates are \$6 for the first child and \$4 for each additional child.

Minimum age for sailing on Carnival is 6 months, with the exceptions of Transatlantic, Hawaii and South American cruises, which are 12 months.

Celebrity Cruises: Celebrity offers private, in-cabin babysitters. A child must be 12 months old to qualify for this service and no more than two children are allowed per babysitter. Parents should expect to make requests for services at least 24 hours in advance.

Minimum sailing age on Celebrity Cruises is 6 months, with the exception of Transatlantic, Transpacific, and select South American and other cruises, where the child must be at least 12 months old. Associated cruise tours are also subject to the 12 month minimum age requirement.

Costa Cruises: There are no organized activities for children under the age of three, but during the low season/off-peak times families can access the children's areas. Costa also provides a group baby-sitting service in their "Miniclub" (between 11:30pm-1:30am) so that parents may take part in cruise entertainment. Costa also provides, on request, cribs, high chairs, baby bath, bottle warmers and liquidized food.

Minimum age to sail on Costa is 6 months.

Crystal Cruises: Crystal does not have a formal program for children under the age of three, but babysitting services are available, and fees start at \$10 per hour. Arrangements can be made through the concierge; parents should expect to provide 24 hours notice and pay a nominal charge for babysitting services.

The minimum age to sail on Crystal Cruises is 6 months.

Cunard Line: On Cunard's ships, the Queen Mary 2 and the Queen Elizabeth 2, parents will find well-equipped nurseries and children's centers, featuring toys, games and activities. These children's areas are supervised by nannies and youth staff, but children must be one year old to participate without parents; children under one are welcome with parental supervision. Both ships offer a family pool area, and there is complimentary group child-sitting available in the evenings.

Minimum sailing age on Cunard is 6 months on Alaska, Canada/New England, Caribbean, Europe, Mexico, Trans-canal and Australia/New Zealand voyages. All other voyages, including Transatlantic and Transpacific itineraries, require an age of 12 months.

Disney Cruise Line: Already well-known for being a family-friendly line, this cruise line is also among the best for infant programs. Flounder's Reef Nursery accepts children from 3 months to 3 years; the counselor ratio is 1:4 for infants and 1:6 for toddlers. Amenities include: baby swings, walkers, books, toys, games, a television and DVD area. There is also a soft play area and separate nursery with cribs. Parents should expect to carry a pager (attendants do not change diapers) and pay \$6.00 per hour for the first child, and \$5.00 per hour for each additional child.

The minimum age to sail on Disney is 12 weeks old.

Holland America Line: Holland America Line does not provide children's programs or babysitting for children under three, but a limited number of high chairs, booster seats and cribs are available to cruisers at no charge. Parents should expect to reserve these items in advance, at the time of booking.

The minimum age to sail on Holland America Line is 6 months, 12 months on transoceanic voyages.

Norwegian Cruise Line: NCL offers youth programs and group babysitting for children ages 2-12, including a 'FreeStyle Play" period where all age groups play together. Group babysitting outside of the complimentary Kid's Crew program runs \$6 per child per hour, and \$4 per hour for additional siblings. NCL does not have programs in place for children under age two, and no private babysitting is available.

The minimum age to sail on NCL is 6 months.

Oceania Cruises: Oceania's cruises are designed for adults and do not provide care, entertainment, or supervision for children.

Oceania's minimum sailing age is 6 months.

P&O Cruises: P&O offers a children's program- The Reef- starting at age two. Splashers', for 2 - 4 year olds is a day program filled with activities and designed for young children. In the evening, parents can take advantage of the cruise line's supervised night nursery. Parents should be aware that this service is operated on a first-come, first-serve basis, and infants must be settled and sleeping before they leave.

Minimum age to sail on P&O Cruises is 12 months.

Royal Caribbean International: Royal Caribbean has a "Royal Babies/Royal Tots" program (6-18 months), developed by experts at Fisher-Price. These playgroups are 45-minute sessions (parents must accompany the child) that include activities like baby gymnastics and musical inspiration. On the newest ship, Oasis of the Seas, Royal Caribbean also provides a nursery, with child watch options day and night. Children are divided into two age groups within the nursery: Babies (6-17 months) up to and including 1 day less than 18 months, and Tots (18-36 months). Parents should expect to carry a phone, and the charge is \$8 per hour, per child. Each session must be a minimum of 1 hour and a maximum of 6 hours.

The minimum age to sail is 6 months on most itineraries, but is 12 months on all Transatlantic, Transpacific and Hawaii cruises. Some South American and other cruises are also 12 months, be sure to check age requirements for your specific cruise.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises: There are no formal programs for children under age 5 on their sailings, but the line does provide in-suite babysitting services, check with the concierge for fees.

The minimum age to sail on Regent Seven Seas Cruises is 6 months.

SeaDream Yacht Club: SeaDream does not provide activities/amenities specifically for children.

The minimum age to sail on a SeaDream is 12 months.

Silversea Cruises: This luxury cruise line's programs are designed for adults and they do not provide care, entertainment, or supervision for children. Silversea cannot accommodate infants under one year of age and reserves the right to limit the number of children under age three.

Minimum sailing age on Silversea is 1 year.

The Yachts of Seabourn: Tailored for the adult cruiser, there are no onboard facilities for kids, nor does Seabourn offer a supervised children's program.

Minimum sailing age is 1 year for trans-Atlantic cruises, and World cruises, and 6 months for all other sailings.

Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection: Uniworld's position is that most children - specifically those under 8- do not enjoy or appreciate the river cruise experience. There are no special arrangements, activities or accommodations for children on Uniworld river cruises and tour programs.

The minimum age to cruise on Uniworld is 4 years.

Viking River Cruises: Viking River does not maintain facilities or services for children due to the nature of their cruises.

Minimum age to cruise on Viking River is 8 years.

Windstar Cruises: Children, especially infants and toddlers, are not encouraged aboard

Windstar cruises, and travel for children under two is limited. Windstar does not provide facilities for children, and does not provide care, supervision, or entertainment of children.

Minimum age to cruise on Windstar is 2 years.

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About CruiseCompete

CruiseCompete.com was named one of the "25 Best Value Travel Sites" on the Internet by Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine and one of the 36 Web sites that consumers "should know" when planning a vacation, according to The Washington Post. For more information, visit www.CruiseCompete.com.