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TRAVEL

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SECTION J

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Prepare for unexpected
when kids fly alone • J1

If you go

■ **Preparing:** For the younger set, the Madeline books by Ludwig Bemmelms refer to landmarks they'll recognize. More practically, try Fodor's "Around Paris With Kids" by Emily Emerson, 2003 (\$11) or "Take the Kids Paris & Disneyland Paris" by Helen Truskowski (Cagogan Guides, 2000, \$16.95). Web sites include www.webscapades.com/france/paris/paris-for-children.htm and www.eng.cityvox.com/sorties-enfants_paris/CityGuide.

■ **Where to stay:** Since hotel rooms in Paris tend to be small and expensive, a short-term apartment rental may be better. We used NY Habitat (www.nyhabitat-paris.com, 307 Seventh Ave., Suite 306, New York, NY 10001, telephone (212) 255-8018). For a nice two-bedroom apartment near the Eiffel Tower in summer, expect to pay from \$240 to \$400 per night, which covers everything except long distance.

■ **Cell phones:** Many U.S.-based cell phones using CDMA technology do not work in Europe (GSM system). If you need to rent phones, there are dozens of sites on the Internet. One of the least expensive was Phonerental USA (www.phonerentalusa.com, 3065 Rosecrans Place, Suite 107, San Diego, CA 92110, telephone (800) 335-3705). After a week, the rental was \$3 per day, incoming calls free, outgoing local calls \$1.10 per minute and international calls \$1.69 per minute. Shipping was \$25.

■ **To and from Charles de Gaulle airport:** There is a train, the Roissy-Rail B line that runs to the Gare du Nord, with intermediate stops. It costs around \$8 for adults, \$7 for children. Air France runs a bus service to either Porte Maillot or Gare Montparnasse (\$15 one way for adults, half price if younger than 12). With each one, you will need to get your luggage and your tired children to your hotel or apartment, which means metro or taxi. As an alternative, you can reserve a shuttle van. There are several services; we used Paris Airport Shuttle (www.paris-airport-shuttle.com). We paid \$21 per person for the convenience and were met as we exited security. After collecting our bags, we were treated to a brief tour of some major sites on our way to our apartment.

■ **Some sites for kids:** The Jardin d'Acclimation in the Bois du Boulogne can be reached by taking the Little Train from the Porte Maillot metro stop. It is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the summer. Entry plus train fare is 5 euros (\$6.20). Some rides require additional tickets. The Jardin des Enfants at Les Halles is open to children ages 7 to 12 and costs 50 cents for an hour. Older children not tuned to merry-go-rounds might enjoy La Villette (www.villette.com/us/mainprog.htm metro stop Porte de Pantin) where slaughterhouses have been replaced by parkland, the world's largest science museum, a music museum, puppet shows, a circus and more.

■ **Food:** With an apartment, you can browse the local shops and the supermarkets (supermarche). Most cafes serve coffee and croissants or bread and jam in the morning. Except for the starchiest places, most restaurants will be happy to see you with children and many have kids' menus. Our local place, le Kiosque, served a quarter roast chicken and fries for kids. Other great choice are the department stores (La Samaritaine 19, rue de la Monnaie, has sandwiches and pastas in the coffee shop for \$7.50-\$8.50; Galeries Lafayette Café on the 6th floor, 40 boulevard Haussmann, is a cafeteria serving sandwiches, full meals and great desserts with varying prices).

Making merry in Paris

Vacationing with kids easy with planned yet open trip

BY HENRY ROZYCKI
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PARIS
When I think of Paris, I don't think of museums, romance, food and fashion. To me, Paris means merry-go-rounds.

I wanted to give my children a taste of what traveling has meant to me. So, factoring in everyone's wishes and my sense that not moving from place to place would be less stressful, we settled on Paris.

The standard guidebooks had a great deal to say about how to spend a day at the Louvre and which three-star restaurant was hot, but devoted no more than a few paragraphs to visiting Paris

with children. Figuring out what to do with an 18-year-old son (Mike), a 15-year-old daughter (Sarah) and her best friend (Grace Flatin), and, especially, my 6-year-old daughter (Johanna) was challenging.

With some forethought and luck, and several accommodations, it became the most enjoyable of the half dozen visits I have made to Paris.

The first accommodation was upon arrival after an overnight transatlantic flight. Rather than deal with public transportation, I arranged for a car service to meet us at Charles de Gaulle airport. In

SEE PARIS, PAGE J2 ▶



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