

40 YEARS



AUGUST 2025

WASHINGTON ParentTM

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**WHAT'S
NEW
IN DC-AREA
SCHOOLS
THIS YEAR**

**TOP 10
BACK-TO-SCHOOL
QUESTIONS,
ANSWERED**

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL
SLEEP
TIPS
EVERY PARENT
SHOULD KNOW**

**BACK
— to —
SCHOOL**

FREE, FUN AND FASCINATING: THE BEST KID-FRIENDLY MUSEUMS IN D.C.





Smithsonian *National Postal Museum*

**Smithsonian's
Hidden Gem**

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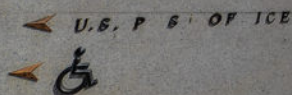
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5 THINGS

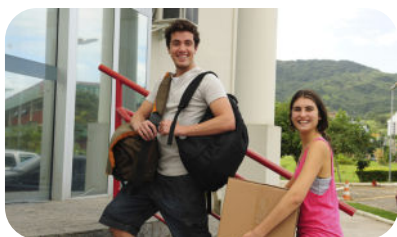
YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

Whether you're sending a student off to college, navigating back-to-school updates or planning your next family outing, this edition is packed with resources to help you feel prepared, inspired and in the know. From fun-filled museums to essential school policies, here are five stories you won't want to miss.



FREE, FUN AND FASCINATING: THE BEST KID-FRIENDLY MUSEUMS IN D.C.

Take advantage of D.C.'s world-class museums — without spending a dime. These six standout spots offer hands-on exhibits, outdoor gardens, storytelling, and more to keep kids engaged and curious.



15 ESSENTIALS MISSING FROM YOUR COLLEGE PACKING LIST

Think your student has everything? Think again. This list covers often-overlooked items — like medical info, rain gear and business attire — that can make a huge difference in navigating campus life smoothly.



WHAT'S NEW IN DC-AREA SCHOOLS THIS YEAR

Big policy changes are coming for public schools across the DMV. From cellphone bans and revised grading systems to school relocations and academic calendar updates, here's what families need to know.



TOP 10 BACK-TO-SCHOOL QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

From start dates and immunization requirements to how to find your kid's homeroom teacher, this Q&A guide walks you through the most common back-to-school concerns with clear, parent-friendly answers.



BREWERIES THAT WELCOME THE WHOLE FAMILY

Yes, it's possible to enjoy a cold beer and bring the kids too. These Maryland breweries and beer gardens offer family-friendly menus, games, and relaxed atmospheres perfect for all ages.



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FREE OPERA & FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES!

Porgy and Bess

Saturday, August 23 at Nationals Park

4:30 p.m. | Gates open for pre-opera fun

5:30 p.m. | Elephant & Piggie present *Slopera! A Bite-Sized Opera*

6:30 p.m. | *Porgy and Bess* begins

Join an evening of free, outdoor fun with Washington National Opera! Come early for tons of family-friendly activities, including a screening of *Slopera! A Bite-Sized Opera* by Mo Willems and Carlos Simon. Then, settle in for a broadcast of *Porgy and Bess* on the big screen!



Learn more at
tkc.co/OITO

Porgy and Bess contains mature themes. Parental discretion is advised.



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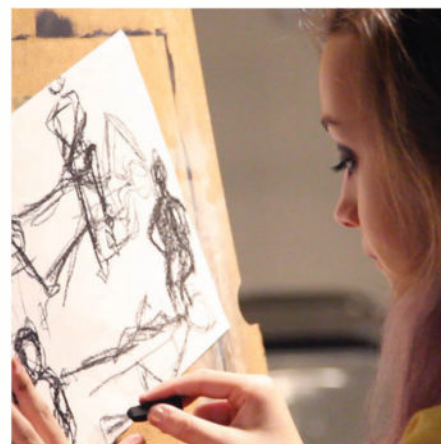
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KID-FRIENDLY DC MUSEUMS

Explore DC's best free museums for kids — from hands-on exhibits and interactive galleries to storytelling corners and outdoor sculpture gardens.

By Alli Paveglio

Often referred to as the “museum capital,” Washington, DC, offers the best collection of world-class museums with free admission. DC is home to a wide variety of kid-friendly museums offering unique experiences and sights to see. Free of charge, kids can be fully immersed in the best collection of museums in the country.

The best kid-friendly museums in DC offer interactive exhibitions, themed installations and unique collections of artifacts. Many also feature on-site dining options, helpful accommodations and free admission.

In this guide we've rounded up seven of the best kid-friendly museums in Washington, DC, that offer free admission. From the Smithsonian's interactive kid exhibitions to the National Gallery of Art's sculpture garden, DC's museums have something for kids of every age.

SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily
- **Phone:** (202) 633-2214
- **Location:** 6th Street and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC

Take your curiosity to new heights at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and explore the world's premier collection of air and space artifacts, stories and expertise. Free admission allows young learners to explore all the new galleries being renovated in a multi-year project the museum is undergoing. Five new galleries will open on July 28, 2025 including the "Boeing Milestones of Flight" showcase exhibition and "Futures in Space" exhibition. With a wide variety of interactive exhibits, planetarium shows and educational activities, there is no shortage of kid-friendly activities. Each gallery offers a great experience with different models to touch, levers to pull, interactive computer touch screen games and a giant X-wing Starfighter from "StarWars" to see.

- **Review Highlight:** "The interactive exhibits kept me engaged, making complex concepts feel exciting and accessible. Perfect for families, curious minds and anyone who has ever dreamed of touching the sky," says Hakan Akel, Google Reviews.

Know before you go:

- **Free admission,** but reservations are highly recommended and a pass is required. Tickets can be reserved online through their website.
- **Mars Cafe** on the basement level offers coffee, pastries and a selection of sandwiches available for purchase if you need a bite to eat.
- **Bathrooms and changing tables** are available on every level with a companion care bathroom located on the basement level.

Most recommended exhibits for kids

- **Destination Moon:** This expanded and updated gallery has two levels of exhibits exploring the origins of the race to the moon and what has happened since. Check out a lunar rover dune buggy or touch models of spacesuit gloves. Located on the second floor in gallery 206.
- **Exploring the planets:** A massive immersive exhibit in the middle of this gallery invites visitors to stand surrounded by video screens and "travel" to seven locations throughout the galaxy. You



COURTESY NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

can also see special artifacts used in the movie "StarTrek." Located on the second floor in gallery 205.

- **Nation of Speed:** Featuring iconic vehicles from Mario Andretti's Indy 500 winning race car to the Sharp DR 90 Nemesis, this exhibition paints a portrait of human ingenuity — the technology developed to propel people faster and faster — and explores how the pursuit of speed has shaped American culture and our national identity. In one display, kids can push a throttle or pedal for that thrill of watching a needle accelerate. Located on the second floor in gallery 203.

NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday-Monday
- **Phone:** (202) 272-2448
- **Location:** 401 F St. NW, Washington, DC

Since it was created in 1980 through an act of Congress, the National Building Museum has transformed the public's understanding of the impact of architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, construction, planning and design. Through exhibitions, educational programs and special events, they welcome visitors of all ages to experience stories about the built world and its power to shape our lives, our communities and our future.

The museum offers more than six different exhibitions including the Building Stories, Immersive Exploration and Mini Memories, a one-of-a-kind souvenir collection. Offering a variety of exhibitions, programs and events for kids to explore and learn. From storytimes and interactive graffiti walls, there are plenty of opportunities for kids to learn and build their own imaginative cities and buildings. Your ticket includes access to all of the National Building Museum's exhibitions between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Special programs may be sold separately; see the Museum's calendar for more event details

- **Review Highlight:** "Gorgeous, bright interior. A lot of activities oriented towards kids, as well as some fantastic immersive exhibits for casual enjoyers of architecture. Loved the virtual renderings of Frank Lloyd Wright's unrealized projects! Visited during their free community day, which they do once a month," shares Trish, Google Reviews.

Know before you go:

- **Complimentary admission**
- **Free Saturdays:** Free admission is offered on Saturdays through online reservations.
- **Museums for all:** The Museum offers free general admission to individuals and families presenting a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. One person per group needs to present the identifying information, and that will cover up to three additional individuals.
- **Blue Star Museums:** The museum offers free general admission to the nation's active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve. The 2025 Blue Star Museums program begins on Armed Forces Day, May 17, and ends on Labor Day, Sept. 1. To gain free general admission, one person per group needs to present the identifying information (military or dependent identification card), and that will cover up to five additional individuals.

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KID-FRIENDLY DC MUSEUMS

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- **SakuSaku Flakerie:** Guests can find a French bakery with a Japanese twist in the Museum's Great Hall. They offer their signature croissants, Kouign Amann, quiches and other delectable treats as well as coffee and a variety of beverages.

Most recommended exhibitions for kids

- **Brick City** celebrates iconic architecture from cities around the world through carefully recreated constructions made from LEGO® bricks by U.K.-based artist Warren Elsmore. Visitors can take a world tour discovering new destinations across all seven continents. Builders young and old can channel their creativity in an interactive area where they can build their own masterpieces out of LEGO® bricks. An expansive graffiti wall will provide a canvas to create pixelated art using the toy bricks, while building areas will prompt visitors of all ages to build imaginative cities of their own. Storytime is offered on select days and times, and is free. Storytime is packed full of reading, songs and activities designed to promote language and literacy skills. Themes vary weekly, but relate to current exhibitions at the museum. More information and dates can be found on their website.

PLANET WORD MUSEUM

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday, Wednesday–Friday; 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Saturday–Sunday
- **Phone:** (202) 931-3139
- **Location:** 925 13th St., Washington, DC

Planet Word Museum is the museum where language comes to life. An immersive experience located at the historic Franklin School in Washington, DC. Ideal for all ages, Planet Word is a voice-activated museum (the world's first!), and their interactive galleries and exhibits bring words and language to life in all sorts of fun ways.

With three different floors filled with amazing interactive galleries and exhibits there is no shortage of entertainment and learning opportunities. The third floor displays the early stages of words and languages through exhibits like First Words, which depicts how we learn our first language, and The Spoken World that showcases languages across the globe. The second floor offers a wide variety of unique exhibits to visit including The Library, where books come to life, and Unlock the Music, where you can showcase your

karaoke skills and learn how to create a hit song. Located on the first floor is an exhibit all about advertising and another one is a fully-equipped recording booth showcasing the power of words.

- **Review Highlight:** "Fantastic museum for both grandparents and grandchildren. Make sure to do an Escape Room with children 9 and up! We all loved it!! The kids enjoyed the Photo Booth and karaoke and it was so educational AND tons of fun," says Debbie O'Brien, Google Reviews.

Know before you go:

- **Admission is free:** Booking passes online ahead of time is highly recommended. A limited number of same-day timed passes will be available on-site each day on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Immigrant food restaurant:** The restaurant offers casual immigrant-inspired fare during museum hours and transitions to a higher gastronomic experience in the evening and a dinner menu created by award-winning chef Enrique Limardo. Located on the lower level.
- **Lockers and storage:** Please limit the number and size of the items you bring. A limited number of free storage lockers are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Most recommended exhibits for kids

- **Unlock the Music:** Be the star of the show! Choose an iconic song to sing karaoke-style and learn the techniques that help songwriters put together lyrics and create a hit. Located on the second floor.
- **Joking Around:** Who's the funniest person in your family? Find out in our humor gallery — and see who will be the first to laugh! Located on the second floor
- **Lexicon Lane:** Go on a word-sleuthing adventure and uncover hidden clues in Lexicon Lane, an immersive puzzle-solving experience like no other — great for team bonding or solo sleuthing! Located on the third floor.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25
 - **Phone:** (202) 633-1000
 - **Location:** 1300 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- The National Museum of American History is the only museum in the country dedicated to telling the full story of the United States and offers free admission. Devoted to the scientific, cultural, social, technological and political development of the United States, the museum traces the American experience from colonial times to the present. The Museum's collection contains more than three million historical objects — including the famed Star-Spangled Banner, Washington's Uniform and Dorothy's ruby red slippers — and documents that explore the evolution of the American identity. This museum has the largest collection of objects related to American history in the world so there is no shortage of collections to see, interactive exhibits to visit and programs to immerse yourself in. Offering special programs daily, kids can get fully-immersed in American History with activities like using a printing press. Ask a worker in the Welcome Center for more information. No tickets are required so you can experience America's history at your leisure.
- **Review Highlight:** "It is a good experience to spend time with



PHOTO BY BEN-GARVIN

your kids here. We learned many things from here, and my kid loves activities in Spark Lab and Wegmans. The building has three levels. Every level is amazing. All activities are free. No admission fee," shares Kanya Watt, Google Reviews.

Know before you go:

- **Lockers and storage:** The museum has a limited number of lockers available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Backpacks, water bottles and snacks:** They allow backpacks in the museum. Visitors are permitted to bring food and beverages in sealed containers inside a backpack or other bag. Food and beverages may not be consumed in the museum.
- **Child care:** You are welcome to nurse or bottle feed your child or pump anywhere you feel comfortable within the museum. They also offer a private lactation room, located on the second floor in the Welcome Center. Running water or diaper-changing facilities can be found in restrooms near the Welcome Center in the museum's east and west wings.

Most recommended exhibits for kids

- **Drapers Spark!Lab:** The Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation invites children between the ages of 6 and 12 to create, collaborate, explore, test, experiment and invent. Activities for children and families incorporate traditional science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) with art, museum and creativity. Located at 1 West Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Hall of Invention and Innovation, this exhibition is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday and closed on Monday and Tuesday.
- **Wegmans Wonderplace:** The first exhibition on the National Mall is designed for children up to age 6. This 1,700-square-foot interactive space provides the youngest historians with age-appropriate activities and experiences. Located at 1 West, this exhibition is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday and closed Monday and Tuesday.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25
- **Phone:** (202) 633-1000
- **Location:** 4th St. SW, Washington, DC

Free admission allows visitors insight into the world's most expansive collections of Native objects, photographs and media, covering the entire Western Hemisphere from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego. The museum's sweeping curvilinear architecture, its indigenous landscaping and its exhibitions, all designed in collaboration with tribes and communities, combine to give visitors from around the world the sense and spirit of Native America.

Offering a variety of live performances, demonstrations and exhibits, there are many ways to learn and immerse yourself in the world of Native America. No tickets are required so you are free to roam the many sights and experiences of the museum at your own pace. The museum offers kid friendly experiences with story times, imagiNATIONS activity center and workshops.

- **Review highlight:** "Had a great time with two toddlers at the



COURTESY SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

museum. Not crowded compared to other Smithsonian's and the staff were all so nice! Great kid center on the third floor for little ones. Kids loved fry bread from the cafeteria (yummy but not cheap). Next time I hope to see more exhibits but the ones we saw were very interesting," shares J C, Google Reviews.

Know before you go

- **Driving and parking:** The museum does not have parking. Metered public parking is available on surrounding streets and there are several commercial parking facilities convenient to the museum.
- **Mitsitam Cafe:** 11 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. Mitsitam offers a menu of Native-inspired foods. Under the leadership of executive chef Alexandra "Alex" Strong, stations reflect the bounties of the various regions throughout the Western Hemisphere, from the Four Corners to coastlines and woodlands
- **Espresso Bar:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. The Espresso Bar offers a variety of Native-inspired food options such as posole, chili, Hatch green chile corn muffins, wild rice salad and sandwiches. Pastries and desserts are also available.

Most recommended exhibits for kids

- **ImagiNATIONS Activity Center:** Recommended for ages 10 and younger, this center provides young visitors a lively space with a wide variety of learning experiences. Explore indigenous peoples' innovations and inventions that are part of daily life for millions worldwide. Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors, capacity is limited in the center.
- **Entry is available on a first-come, first-served basis.** During high visitation periods, additional entry procedures may apply.
- **DC | Children's Kapa Workshop with Page Chang:** Learn the art of Hawaiian kapa making with Kumu (teacher) Page Chang of Pūko'a Studios from Waimānalo, Hawaii. Visitors 18 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. First-come, first-served, capacity and supplies are limited. Event dates can be accessed through their website's calendar. This exhibition is located in the imagiNATIONS Activity Center, Level 3.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily, closed on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1
- **Phone:** (202) 842-6372
- **Location:** 4th-7th Street and Constitute Avenue, NW, Washington, DC

At the Nation's art museum, you can discover some of the most iconic and important works in the world in the heart of Washington, DC. The museum's extraordinary collection

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KID-FRIENDLY DC MUSEUMS

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COURTESY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



of artwork brings together centuries of masterpieces from around the world, including Italian Renaissance, 17th century Dutch, Impressionist and 20th century highlights. Temporary exhibitions span the world and the history of art, and free programs — including lectures, tours, concerts, films and family activities — are offered year-round.

With free admission, you can explore all three museum buildings and experience the extensive art collection. With a variety of audio tours, self-guided tours and interactive exhibitions and programs, there is no shortage of kid-friendly experiences. On any given week, you could attend an artist conversation or bring a sketchbook as you learn about featured artists and works.

■ **Review Highlight:** “A must-visit in DC! Stunning art collections, from Da Vinci to Van Gogh in a beautifully designed space. The free admission is a bonus, and the Sculpture Garden is a peaceful retreat. Plus, they offer a stroller free of charge for your little one and wheelchair, making it family-friendly. The security checks here are more friendly than other Museums. Highly recommend,” says Kanya Watt, Google Reviews.

Know before you go

- **Admission:** You don't need passes or tickets to enjoy our galleries, exhibitions or guided tours. Some events require free registration.
- **Transportation:** They recommend taking public transportation. The nearest Metro station is Archives-Navy Memorial Penn Quarter, a six-minute walk from the West Building. Metrobuses stop along Constitution Avenue NW. There's no parking garage on their campus, though they set aside a limited number of parking spaces for vehicles with disability parking permits or tags.
- **Dining:** The museum offers five unique dining experiences across their campus, from lattes in the Garden Café to homemade flatbreads in the Sculpture Garden's Pavilion Café. More information and menus can be found on their website.

Most recommended exhibits for kids

- **Kids West Building Tour:** Use your smartphone to explore a wide range of works through the voices of National Gallery of Art curators. Set your own pace by listening to as many stops as you like in the order you choose. Don't forget to bring your headphones.

- **Paint 'n' Play:** Paint a digital canvas in the West Building's East Garden Court and East Building Atrium.
- **Storytime:** The museum offers a variety of interactive story times and storytelling opportunities. More information and dates can be found on their website's event calendar.

NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m. daily, closed on Dec. 25
- **Phone:** (202) 633-5555
- **Location:** 2 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, DC

At the National Postal Museum, you can explore the surprising, fascinating world of mail and communication, just steps from Union Station in Washington, DC.

The museum's exhibits trace the history of the U.S. Postal Service and celebrate the art of stamp collecting, the innovation behind mail delivery, and the stories of those who've carried letters across the nation—from stagecoaches and railroads to airplanes and rockets.

Admission is free, and there's plenty for all ages to explore. Kids can design their own stamp, sort mail on a train car, or climb aboard a historic mail truck. Interactive exhibits, touchscreens, scavenger hunts and even a working pneumatic tube system make this museum as hands-on as it is educational.

- **Review Highlight:** “What a gem! The museum is great for all ages. We had 3 generations, including a toddler and this was interesting for all of us. The exhibits were interesting and the staff were helpful and friendly. This is an excellent destination if you're traveling with a baby because it has an excellent place for a nursing mother. Thank you, Smithsonian,” says Marianne Stambaugh, Google Reviews.

Know before you go

- **Admission:** No tickets or passes are required to visit. All exhibitions and permanent collections are free and open to the public.
- **Transportation:** The museum is conveniently located adjacent to Union Station, served by Metrorail (Red Line), Amtrak and numerous bus lines. Paid public parking is available nearby.
- **Dining:** There is no café on site, but Union Station, located directly across the street, offers a wide range of dining options and restrooms.

Most recommended exhibits for kids

- **Stamp Design Station:** Use digital tools to create your own postage stamp and email it to yourself.
- **Railway Post Office Car:** Step into a 1920s-era mail train and learn how clerks sorted mail on the go.
- **Owney the Dog Exhibit:** Learn the real-life story of Owney, the Postal Service's unofficial canine mascot, and see his preserved body along with tags from his many travels.



COURTESY NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM



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FAMILY FUN IN HISTORIC GEORGETOWN

Explore 10 kid-friendly spots that combine education, exploration and play in one of DC's most charming neighborhoods

By Jenna Dolch

Georgetown, one of Washington, DC's most charming and historic neighborhoods, offers plenty of engaging activities for families with children. From outdoor parks and historic sites to delicious treats and interactive museums, this guide covers the top 10 places to explore with your kids. We compiled this list from trusted local sources including GeorgetownDC.com, Mommy Poppins and family travel reviews to ensure a reliable, fun-packed experience for you and your family.



BIGSTOCK/TORHAN

1. GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK

Georgetown Waterfront Park is a spacious, scenic spot perfect for families looking to enjoy nature and river views. Kids love the splash fountains, open grassy areas, and the chance to watch boats cruise the Potomac River. The park has picnic tables and shaded areas, making it ideal for a family lunch or casual walk. It's an accessible and safe environment where children can run around freely while parents relax with beautiful cityscape views.

- **Address:** 3330 Water St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 6 a.m.–10 p.m. Daily
- **Phone:** (202) 895-6000
- **Website:** <https://nps.gov/places/georgetown-waterfront-park.htm>

2. GEORGETOWN HERITAGE WALKING TOURS

"Industry & Innovation: A Walking Tour of the C&O Canal" offers a journey back in time to explore key sites along the canal. Participants will learn how the canal influenced Georgetown's industrial growth and how the city shaped the canal's history. The tour includes insights into the daily life of canal boat workers, the engineering behind the lock system and a special opportunity to board the docked canal boat. Secure a spot today to experience this unique historical adventure.

- **Address:** 1057 Thomas Jefferson St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday
- **Phone:** (202) 480-9540
- **Website:** <https://georgetownheritage.org/boat-tours>

3. TUDOR PLACE HISTORIC HOUSE & GARDEN

Tudor Place is a beautiful historic mansion with expansive gardens, offering kids an engaging way to learn about American history. Families can participate in scavenger hunts and guided tours that bring the past to life. The gardens are perfect for leisurely walks and picnics, providing plenty of open space for children to explore safely. It's a great mix of education and outdoor fun.

- **Address:** 1644 31st St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; noon-4 p.m. Sunday; Closed Monday
- **Phone:** (202) 965-0400
- **Website:** <https://tudorplace.org/>

4. DUMBARTON OAKS GARDENS

This historic estate features stunning terraced gardens and wooded paths where kids can explore nature's beauty. Dumbarton Oaks offers peaceful walking trails and seasonal floral displays that fascinate children and adults alike. The calm environment is ideal for a relaxed family outing with opportunities to learn about horticulture and landscape design.

- **Address:** 31st and, R St NW, Washington, DC 20007
- **Hours:** 2-6 p.m. Tuesday, Saturday-Sunday; closed Wednesday-Friday and Monday
- **Phone:** (202) 339-6400
- **Website:** <https://doaks.org/visit/plan>

5. CRUMPS & WHISKERS CAT CAFÉ

Crumps & Whiskers is a cozy and interactive cat café where visitors can relax and enjoy drinks while spending time with adoptable rescue cats. Located in the heart of Georgetown, it offers a unique experience for kids and families who love animals. The café partners with local shelters to help cats find forever homes, making it both a fun and meaningful destination for young animal lovers. Reservations are recommended as space is limited.

- **Address:** 3109 M St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Friday; 9:40 a.m.-8:10 p.m. Saturday-Sunday; Closed Tuesdays
- **Phone:** (202) 333-2814
- **Website:** <https://crumpsandwhiskers.com/>

6. TUGOOHS TOY STORE

Tugoo Toys, located in the heart of Georgetown, is a favorite spot for families seeking eco-friendly and educational toys. Since 2007, the store has offered a carefully curated selection of classic wooden toys, puzzles, games and unique items not found elsewhere in DC. They also provide personalized shopping experiences with free local delivery. Tugoo Toys combines quality, sustainability and fun for kids of all ages.

- **Address:** 1440 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. daily
- **Phone:** (202) 338-9476
- **Website:** <https://tugoohtoy.com/>

7. BOOK HILL PARK

Book Hill Park is a peaceful green space near the Georgetown Library, perfect for families looking for a quiet spot to relax. While it doesn't have a playground, kids can enjoy the open grassy areas and parents can take in lovely views of Georgetown and the Potomac River. It's a great place for a calm break during a day of exploring with children.

- **Address:** Wisconsin Avenue NW and Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** Dawn to dusk, daily
- **Website:** <https://georgetowndc.com/neighborhood/book-hill/>

8. OLD STONE HOUSE

Visit the oldest unchanged building in DC, where kids can see how people lived in the 18th century. The site offers hands-on activities and seasonal events that engage children in history and storytelling. It's an educational and interactive experience suitable for school-age kids.

- **Address:** 3051 M. St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** noon-7 p.m. Friday and Monday; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday-Sunday; Closed Tuesday-Thursday
- **Phone:** (202) 895-6070
- **Website:** <https://nps.gov/rocr/planyourvisit/old-stone-house-visitor-center.htm>

9. MARTIN'S TAVERN

While primarily a historic restaurant, Martin's Tavern is family-friendly and perfect for a casual meal after exploring Georgetown. It offers a kid-friendly menu and a cozy atmosphere where children can experience a piece of DC's political history.

- **Address:** 1264 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-midnight Monday-Wednesday; 11 a.m.-1:30 a.m. Thursday; 11 a.m.-2:30 a.m. Friday; 9 a.m.-2:30 a.m. Saturday; 9:30 a.m.-1:30 a.m. Sunday
- **Phone:** (202) 333-7370
- **Website:** <https://martinstavern.com/>

10. GEORGETOWN PARK SHOPPING MALL

Georgetown Park is a mixed-use shopping mall and condominium complex located in the historic Georgetown district of Washington, DC, at 3222 M Street, NW. After an \$80 million renovation in 2014, it has become an important tourist attraction offering a variety of shops, kid-friendly dining options, and occasional family events. It's a great spot to take kids for a break from sightseeing, providing indoor entertainment and convenient facilities in a vibrant setting.

- **Address:** 3222 M St NW, Washington, DC 20007
- **Hours:** 5-10 p.m. daily
- **Phone:** (212) 652-2127
- **Website:** <https://georgetownpark.com/>

Georgetown is a vibrant and historic neighborhood filled with activities that delight children and parents alike. Whether you prefer outdoor adventures, educational sites or tasty treats, Georgetown offers diverse options to create lasting family memories. With these 10 kid-friendly spots, your visit to Georgetown, DC will be packed with fun, learning and exploration.



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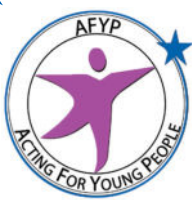
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FREE THINGS TO DO IN AUGUST

By Seth Hagler

Is your family on a budget this summer but still in the mood for fun? That's where this list of free events comes into play. Local families in DC, Maryland or Virginia, can find enjoyable, kid-friendly events and things to do for free this August.

DAYTIME SOLAR OBSERVING

The National Air and Space Museum invites future astronomers and space enthusiasts to safely observe the sun through a filtered telescope on Fridays and Saturdays. Staff will be there to guide and answer questions.

- **Location:** 6th Street and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC
- **When:** 12-3 p.m. Fri-Sat Aug. 1-30

MOVIES ON THE GREEN

Families are invited to bring blankets and lawn chairs to the Cabin John Village Green for an evening show of "Frozen 2."

- **Location:** 11325 Seven Locks Road, Montgomery County, MD
- **When:** 7-10 p.m. Aug. 1

BETHESDA OUTDOOR MOVIE

Catch a free outdoor showing of great movies like "Akeelah and the Bee" and "500 Days of Summer." Some chairs will be provided but guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs.

- **Location:** 4650 Willow Lane, Chevy Chase, MD
- **When:** 8:45 p.m. Aug. 1-8

AMERICAN LANDSCAPES IN WATERCOLOR FROM THE CORCORAN COLLECTION

Visit the National Gallery of Art and view 30 watercolor works dating as far back as the nation's early years, when watercolor was used for mapping and documenting the landscape. Features range from the ocean waters of New England to the Grand Canyon.

- **Location:** 4th Street and Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC
- **When:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Aug. 2-31

CARLYLE HOUSE FAMILY FUN DAY - PET FÊTE

The Carlyle House Magnolia Terrace is hosting Family Fun Day. Visit for story time and participate in the following crafts and activities.

- **Location:** 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA
- **When:** 12-3 p.m. Aug. 2

MAJIC WEDNESDAYS

The DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment is hosting a free concert series on Wednesday evenings at Sycamore and Oak in DC.

- **Location:** 1110 Oak Drive SE, Washington, DC
- **When:** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Aug. 6-13

SUMMER SERENADES

There are three Live from the Lawn concerts on Wednesdays in August. These are all family-friendly shows and guests are encouraged to bring a blanket. Upcoming shows include Cabo Verdean singer Elida Almeida and folk-pop group Juliet Lloyd Band.

- **Location:** 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda, MD
- **When:** 7:30 p.m. Aug. 6-20

PUPS IN THE PAVILION

Families are welcome to bring their furry friends to the Pavilion at Reston Town Square Park. The Pavilion will temporarily become a pop-up dog park with local vendors and pet-friendly giveaways.

- **Location:** 11900 Market St., Reston, VA
- **When:** 5-7:30 p.m. Aug. 6

MOVIES UNDER THE MOON

Catch "Mulan II" at Van Dyck Park in Fairfax. Families are encouraged to bring blankets or chairs, along with snacks.

- **Location:** 3720 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax, VA
- **When:** 8-10 p.m. Aug. 8

OPEN BARN AT OLD MARYLAND FARM

Old Maryland Farm is inviting you to meet their friendly livestock and horses. Attendance is free, no registration required.

- **Location:** 351 Watkins Park Drive, Kettering, MD
- **When:** 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Aug. 9

MOVIES IN THE PARK

Stead Park is hosting a movie night with "The Greatest Showman." Families can bring along a blanket for a viewing experience under the stars.

- **Location:** 1625 P St. NW, Washington, DC
- **When:** 8:30 p.m. Aug. 9

STAR FEST 2025

STAR Fest, which stands for Sing, Talk and Read, is a free family-friendly festival that celebrates early learning. There will be live music performances, imaginative play, family story time, soft play activities and more.

- **Location:** 901 G. St. NW, Washington, DC
- **When:** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Aug. 16

ACS KIDS ZONE IN DC

This free public event near the Children's Museum is intended for all ages, in an effort to make science fun and accessible. Learn about spices and scents, make long-lasting bubbles, take memorable photos and enjoy giveaways and prizes.

- **Location:** 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **When:** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Aug. 16



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FAMILY-FRIENDLY LABOR DAY ACTIVITIES IN DC

From jazz festivals and car shows to museums, magic shows and baseball games, here's how to make the most of Labor Day weekend with the whole family in the DC area.

By Alli Paveglio

A long weekend in the DC area is a great opportunity to enjoy family time. The best family-friendly experiences for Labor Day include everything from outdoor music festivals and car shows to a family meal after a live concert on the Capital lawn. DC offers some great options for your family to enjoy Labor Day weekend this year.

Before the weekend ends, go hear live music at DC JazzFest located in the heart of the nation's capital or see one of the most talked-about magic shows in the area. The whole family can enjoy Labor Day at the Gaithersburg's 87th Annual Labor Day Parade.

In this guide we've rounded up the best things for families to do for Labor Day this year. Whether it's an outdoor adventure or family meal, the DC area offers a great variety of activities to enjoy Labor Day weekend.

EXPERIENCE DC JAZZFEST

Blending heritage, history, culture and music, DC JazzFest is the place to be this Labor Day weekend in the heart of the nation's capital. Taking place Aug. 27–31, this beloved festival has been a cultural cornerstone in the DC community for more than two decades, celebrating all things jazz with performances from Grammy-winning legends and rising stars alike. The family-friendly event features lively shows across music venues in all four quadrants of the city.

The primary event — DC JazzFest at The Wharf — offers an animated urban experience at the Wharf and offers an exclusive location for a full festival experience. Tickets start at as little as \$25. Featuring a scenic outdoor stage, the Wharf is the festival's central hub. This year's unique theme features a tribute to Jazz icons such as Duke Ellington and John Coltrane, Women in Jazz and Global Jazz Fusion showcasing artists who blend jazz with world music. Special programs will be held including masterclasses and workshops led by top jazz musicians, youth and family events featuring interactive jazz performances for all ages and late-night jam sessions showcasing unscripted performances where musicians improvise together.

- **Date:** Aug. 27–31, 2025
- **Location:** 1001 7th St. SW, Washington DC
- **Phone:** (855) 332-7767

Know before you go

■ Admission & Tickets

You do not need a ticket to listen to performances from the Wharf Street promenade. To access the performances on District Pier or Transit Pier, Union Stage or Arena Stage, a ticket is required. Three ticket options are offered including general admission, VIP passes and multi-day passes. Tickets start from \$25 and can be purchased on their website.

■ Parking Info

Plan for lots of vehicular traffic and limited parking at The Wharf. Instead of driving, ride the Metro to Waterfront Station and walk one block to The Wharf, or ride Metro to L'Enfant Plaza and connect to The Wharf on the free Southwest Shuttle or consider taking Bikeshare.

If you can't avoid driving, plan to park in one of their three underground parking garages that are open around the clock. Or, utilize one of the nearby off-site parking garages (view PDF map), including Ace Parking at L'Enfant Plaza (420 10th St SW), L'Enfant East Parking Garage (840 D St SW), or the 1100 4th St SW Garage.

Music at DC JazzFest® at The Wharf starts at noon Aug. 30 and Aug. 31. The Wharf is open early and you are encouraged to arrive earlier and experience the shops, restaurants, local vendors and entertainment at The District Wharf, DC's premier waterfront destination. Be sure to include Arena Stage on the list just steps away with performances in the Kogod and Meet the Artist conversations in the Grand Lobby.

87TH ANNUAL GAITHERSBURG LABOR DAY PARADE

Celebrate the unofficial end of summer at Gaithersburg's 87th Annual Labor Day Parade for a festive, rain-or-shine tradition. Expect marching bands, dancers, antique cars, fire trucks, equestrian units, clowns, costumed characters and community groups parading down East Diamond and Russell Avenues.

Grab delicious bites from local vendors at Olde Towne Plaza and the fire station parking lot. With free shuttles, accessible parking and plenty of shaded viewing spots, it's a fun, family-friendly event you won't want to miss. Pack water and sunscreen, especially if you're planning to be out in the sun for the full parade.

- **Date:** 10 a.m. Sept. 1
- **Location:** Olde Towne Gaithersburg, 1 S. Summit Ave., Gaithersburg, MD
- **Phone:** (301) 258-6350

Know before you go

■ Admission & Tickets

Admission is free. Arrive early to snag a good viewing spot—Russell Avenue has great shaded areas for comfort. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating along the parade route.

■ Parking Info

Free shuttle service runs from Lakeforest Mall starting at 9 a.m.—take advantage to avoid parking hassles.

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA LABOR DAY CONCERT

The annual National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) Labor Day concert is a free, star-studded event held on the West Front lawn of the U.S. Capitol, continuing a tradition that spans over 130 years. Presented by Congress and the Secretary of the Interior, the NSO performs three signature Patriotic Concerts each summer — Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day — with the Labor Day performance marking the close of the holiday weekend.

The concert typically begins at 8 p.m., weather permitting, with guests welcomed to bring lawn chairs and picnic across the West Front terrace and lawn — just note that food is allowed but no alcohol or glass bottles are permitted. It's a brilliant, family-friendly finale to the holiday weekend: enjoy orchestral classics under the Capitol's grandeur, free to all, and set against the iconic skyline of the National Mall.

- **Date:** 8 p.m. Aug. 31
- **Phone:** (202) 416-8000
- **Location:** 2 E Capitol St., Washington, DC

CONTINUED ...

Know before you go

■ Admission & Tickets

Admission is free. Arrive early for the best lawn spots — space fills up quickly on the West Front. Pack a blanket or lawn chair to stay comfortable during the concert.

- Bring snacks or a picnic, but remember: no alcohol, glass bottles or large coolers are allowed.
- Security screening is required, so give yourself extra time to enter.

■ Parking Info

Public transportation is highly recommended. Parking is limited near the Capitol.

EXPERIENCE A CARSHOW

Car enthusiasts of all ages are welcome at the annual Labor Day car show produced by the City of Fairfax and the Clifton Lions Club. The family-friendly show is free of charge and showcases everything including antiques, classics, foreign, customs, street rods, muscle cars, trucks, motorcycles and more.

The mission of the show is to raise money for local charitable service organizations. It's an open event with vehicles of any type welcome to participate. Over 250 show cars from 24 different manufacturers participated in last year's event and over 5,000 spectators enjoyed all the sights, sounds and food.

- **Date:** 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Sept. 1

- **Location:** The show is held in the heart of Fairfax City along University Drive between Sager and Armstrong Streets and the adjacent parking lots, adjacent to Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive.

ENJOY A FAMILY MEAL

A long weekend is the perfect time to enjoy a family meal at one of DC's many great restaurants. Whether it's an excellent brunch at Founding Farmers or Ted's Bulletin or an affordable dinner at Joia, DC has plenty of options to make it a great Labor Day weekend.

Founding Farmers: From breakfast to brunch, lunch to dinner, their patios are open and ready to welcome you. Whether you're soaking up sunshine or sipping under the stars, they have the perfect outdoor spot for your next meal.



PHOTO ©RAWPIXEL.COM

- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 7 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday; 8:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Saturday; 8:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday
- **Location:** 1924 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 822-8783

Ted's Bulletin: Your local neighborhood spot with something for everyone where you can savor "The Every Day." Ted's features a diverse menu of reimagined American classics with all-day breakfast and satisfying portions in an inviting atmosphere. Enjoy made-from-scratch favorites like french toast, chicken and waffles, steaks, burgers and indulgent desserts.

- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 7 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday
- **Location:** 1005 First St. NE, Suite 3, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 793-6700

Joia: One of Washington Post's Food Critic's favorite spots right now is serving up a minimalist, affordable menu of delicious smash burgers, fries and purple ube soft-serve ice cream.

- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday; closed Monday
- **Location:** 3213 Mount Pleasant St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 999-8195

EXPERIENCE THE DC FESTIVAL OF MAGIC

The fifth annual Festival of Magic is bringing together the finest magicians from around the world for an electrifying showcase of mind-blowing illusions, jaw-dropping sleight of hand and side-splitting comedy. Whether you're a lifelong magic fan or a curious newcomer, the DC Festival of Magic promises a weekend of astonishment, laughter and pure entertainment for the whole family — all in the heart of the nation's capital.

A collaboration between the historic Capital Hilton and renowned mentalist and magician Brian Curry, this festival transforms Labor Day weekend into a celebration of wonder, illusion and unforgettable performances. Booking a stay in the heart of magic at the Capital Hilton will also provide luxury accommodations, exclusive festival perks and the convenience of being right where the magic happens.

- **Date:** Aug. 29-31
- **Location:** 1001 16th St. NW Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (800) 445-8667

Know before you go

■ Admission & Tickets

Scheduling for each performance can be found online along with individual ticket purchase. Once you arrive, follow signs to the show and you'll see the host standing outside the performance area. If you purchased tickets online, the name you used to buy the tickets will be on the host's guest list. Tickets are limited so early purchase is recommended.

■ Parking Info

Valet is available at the hotel. Parking garages and street parking are limited, but available.



The closest Metro Stations are McPherson Square Station (Orange, Silver Blue) and Farragut North (Red)

EXPLORE DC WITH AN OLD TOWN TROLLEY

Whether you're a local or just visiting, an Old Town Trolley Tour is the perfect way to visit all the Washington, DC, attractions and historic sites in one weekend. You can hop on and off at your leisure so you can experience the activities and sights that interest you and your family the most. Whether you're just breezing through or enjoying an extended stay, they've got several options to choose from to help you maximize your time in DC.

The finest, most highly-trained and knowledgeable guides will lead you and your family on an adventure like none other. Offering exclusive authorization to historic sites like the Arlington National Cemetery will make it an unique, unforgettable experience. Their easy-to-use interactive map will help you maximize your Washington, DC, Tour experience with helpful information on the best shopping, entertainment and restaurants in the area.

- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily
- **Location:** You may start your Old Town Trolley Tour at any of their convenient stops. Click on Map and Stops to see a list of their stops with information about the attractions and points of interest at each stop.
- **Phone:** (844) 356-2603

Know before you go

■ Admission & tickets

Old Town Trolley tours offer a variety of tour options with prices starting as low as \$19.50 for the Arlington National Cemetery Tour. Tickets can be purchased online through their website or at on-site sales depots.

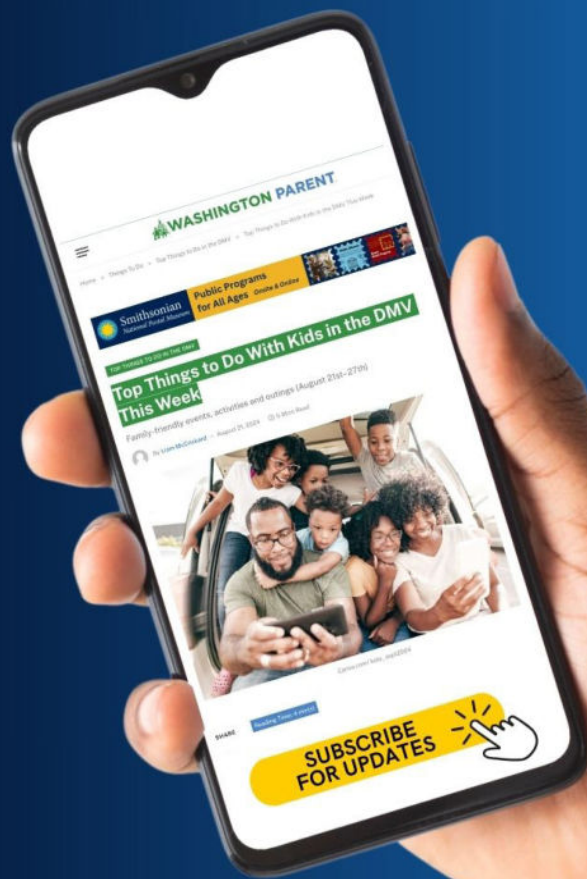
■ Tour route and times

In total, the day tour route is approximately one hour and 30 minutes long. Old Town Trolley Tours of DC operates the city's largest fleet of sightseeing vehicles and this allows them to pick up and drop off more frequently than any other trolley company. The frequency of the trolleys depends on the time of the year, as well as traffic and weather conditions.

You may start your Old Town Trolley Tour at any of their convenient stops. Click on Map and Stops to see a list of their stops with information about the attractions and points of interest at each stop.

CHECK OUT FUN THINGS TO DO WITH KIDS IN THE DMV

Family-friendly events,
activities and outings are
right at your fingertips!





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BUDGET-FRIENDLY VACATION IDEAS THAT DELIVER

Creative ways to make lasting family memories without breaking the bank — from free museum days and walking tours to scavenger hunts and beach trips

By Pam Molnar

A family vacation is meant to be a time to recharge, see new sights and make memories with those you love. It is not expected that you max out your credit card to do so. In the past few years, the cost of family vacations have gone up exponentially. Instead of cancelling your plans, why not look for more budget friendly options?

No matter where you are visiting this year, you can always find something fun that fits your budget. Not sure where to start? Take a look at some of these ideas.

ATTEND LOCAL FESTIVALS

Check out the community pages for the area you are planning to visit. Summertime community calendars are filled with farmer's markets, state and county fairs, car shows and food festivals, plus regional religious, folk and ethnic fests. Attending these events will give you a deeper dive into the culture of the city where you are vacationing than you would find by just visiting the tourist attractions.

SEEK OUT LOCAL ART AND MURALS

Every community has artists unique to their area. Nashville, for example, has dozens of murals that are great photo stops. Phoenix has public art displayed in the Roosevelt Row Arts District. In New York, you can explore the public art installations in Central Park. In Philadelphia, you can explore Old City on the first Friday of each month for a variety of artists on display. An easy Google search will help you find art districts and festivals in the area you are visiting.

MUSEUM FREE DAYS

There are many ways to tour museums for free. If you are visiting museums on your trip or those within your state, check out their websites for free days. Your local library card might also allow you to enter the museums for free. Another way to get free or reduced admissions is to look at your bank and credit card websites. Bank of America, for example, has specific free weekend offers to more than 225 museums across the U.S.

THE BEACH

If you are lucky enough to vacation near a beach (even if it's a little bit of a drive), this is a great inexpensive day trip. Parking is usually free or nominal. Find out if the beach rents umbrellas, chairs or sand toys. If not, a local Walmart in a beach town is a great source for those things. Look for cheap eats at nearby food trucks or bring a picnic. Consider taking your family holiday photo while you are there to save money this fall.

WALKING TOURS

Many cities offer tours given by local experts. Tours vary by location but may include self-guided tours, food tours, historic tours, ghost tours or nightlife tours. FreeToursByFoot.com offers tours in 18 North American cities, but a simple Google search of walking tours in the city you plan to visit will bring you a long list of options. It's a great way to see the city, get some exercise and people watch along the way.

SCAVENGER HUNTS

If you enjoy walking tours, be sure to look up scavenger hunts in the city you are visiting. Large groups might enjoy breaking up into smaller groups for a little friendly competition. ScavengerHunt.com has interactive hunts for over 200 cities in the U.S. and Europe. Players explore the city on foot by looking for clues, answering trivia questions, solving riddles and taking pictures.

HISTORIC SIGHTS

No matter where you vacation this year, you are bound to find some historic sites nearby. Research battlefields, forts, historic homes, cemeteries, churches, temples, gardens, hotels or memorials in the area you are visiting on places like TripAdvisor.com. The app Clio – Your Guide to History and Explore Here uses your location to guide you to local landmarks and historical sites.

RV CAMPING

They say that getting there is half the fun, but staying there might be even more fun. Look for unique places to camp through HarvestHosts.com. This membership plan offers dry camping at over 5,000 wineries, farms, golf courses, museums, attractions and breweries in the U.S. If you are planning a trip to a theme park, many offer their own RV parking with shuttles to the parks.

Pam Molnar is a freelance writer and mother of three. Some of their best vacation memories include free activities off the beaten path.

EIGHT MUST-USE TRAVEL APPS

1. **Roadtrippers** – This app is an easy way to plan your road trip and shares interesting stops and local restaurants along the way.
2. **GasBuddy** – You can save money on gas by finding the best price nearby. Sometimes, it's worth the extra few miles.
3. **Happy Cow** – If you are traveling with a vegan, this app will show you all the nearby vegan restaurant options.
4. **All Trails** – If you need a few minutes (or miles) for your family to run off some of the wiggles, check out All Trails for nearby hikes.
5. **Yelp** – If you want recommendations for the best hotel, restaurant or activity, you need to turn to Yelp.
6. **iExit** – This handy app will tell you what is available at the next exit – restaurants, gas or even stores.
7. **SpotHero** – Find the best parking spot in town and book in advance. Available in 300 U.S. cities.
8. **Flush** – If you are traveling with kids, you need to find a bathroom quickly. There's an app for that, too!



BIGSTOCK/PRAMOTE

ADVENTURE ABOVE THE BELTWAY

These are some of the best places to zipline, climb and conquer with the kids

By Elizabeth Hillman

Making unforgettable memories with your family can be done through unforgettable experiences, like zip-lining and rope-course adventures. Whether you're a seasoned zipping veteran or a newbie just like your kids, soaring through the air together will bring you closer on the ground.

SANDY SPRING ADVENTURE PARK

- **Where:** 16701 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring, MD
- **When:** Open daily in summer; timed tickets required
- **Cost:** \$47–\$54 depending on age
- **Phone:** (240) 623-2435
- **More Info:** <https://sandyspringadventurepark.org>

Sandy Spring Adventure Park is the largest aerial adventure park in the country, with 16 color-coded trails of ropes, bridges, ladders and zip lines suspended in the forest canopy. Courses range from beginner to expert, making it easy for both cautious climbers and fearless flyers to find their groove.

Kids as young as 6 can participate and everyone is fitted with a secure harness system and guided through a full safety orientation before takeoff. The self-paced setup means families can explore at their own speed — taking breaks, trying different levels and cheering each other on from the ground or the trees.

Twilight climbs add extra magic with string lights glowing overhead, and shaded picnic areas make it easy to refuel

between runs. It's an adventurous day out that turns into a memory-making highlight for kids and adults alike.

- **Know Before You Go:** Bring gloves (or buy them on-site), wear closed-toe shoes and arrive early to get the most out of your timed ticket. Weekend slots fill up fast, so booking ahead is ideal.

GO APE

- **Where:** 6129 Needwood Lake Drive, Rockville, MD
- **When:** 9 a.m.–6 p.m. daily in summer; hours typically vary by day
- **Cost:** \$39.95–\$64.95 depending on course and age
- **More Info:** <https://goape.com/location/maryland-rockville>

Tucked inside [Rock Creek Regional Park](#), Go Ape Rockville delivers a sky-high adventure that blends natural beauty with high-flying fun. Families can climb, swing and zip their way through a series of tree-top courses featuring rope ladders, wooden bridges, Tarzan swings and long zip lines that soar through the leafy canopy.

What sets Go Ape apart is its course variety. Younger kids can explore the Treetop Journey, a lower-to-the-ground option with beginner-friendly obstacles and zips, while tweens, teens and adults can tackle the more advanced Treetop Adventure — a longer, higher route that requires a bit more stamina and nerve. No matter the course, trained staff are stationed throughout to keep everyone safe and confident.

Families appreciate the park's mix of independence and support: you're free to move at your own pace, but help is never far away. It's a great option for groups with mixed ages or experience levels, and the shaded forest setting adds a calming, scenic backdrop to the adrenaline rush.

- **Know Before You Go:** Arrive 15 minutes early to check in and get harnessed up. Closed-toe shoes are required, and gloves (though optional) are highly recommended for better grip and comfort. Courses can take one to three hours depending on the type you choose, so plan accordingly — and bring water!



COURTESY TREE TREKKERS

TREE TREKKERS

- **Where:** 9560 Old National Pike, Frederick, MD
- **When:** Hours vary by day; open seasonally March–December
- **Cost:** \$59 for three-hour Timber Trek Adventure Experience; other options available
- **Phone:** (301) 888-8735
- **More Info:** <https://treetrekkersmd.com>

Spanning 30 wooded acres in Frederick, Tree Trekkers is a sprawling aerial adventure park that combines forest immersion with heart-pounding fun. With 16 trails, over 250 climbing elements and over 40 ziplines, this park has something for every family member — from cautious climbers to full-on thrill seekers.

What sets Tree Trekkers apart is its emphasis on inclusivity. There are eight difficulty levels in total, so kids as young as 4 can get in on the action with the Little-Foot Combo, which includes access to beginner-friendly courses and requires an adult companion. Older kids, teens and adults can take on the Timber Trek Adventure, a three-hour experience that includes a safety briefing and open access to all trails — letting families explore at their own pace.

Each course features its own blend of rope bridges, swinging logs, cargo nets, ladders and ziplines — all suspended in a beautiful natural forest setting. There's also a ground-level path through the trees for anyone who wants to cheer from below.

- **Know Before You Go:** Reservations are required and fill up quickly on weekends. Closed-toe shoes are mandatory, and gloves are highly recommended (you can bring your own or buy a pair on-site). The park has a weight limit of 30–250 pounds and waivers are required for all climbers.



COURTESY TREE TREKKERS

HARPERS FERRY ADVENTURE

- **Where:** 37410 Adventure Center Lane, Purcellville, VA
- **When:** 9 a.m.–5 p.m. daily in summer
- **Cost:** Pricing varies by activity; zipline tours start at \$59 per person
- **Phone:** (540) 668-9007
- **More Info:** <https://harpersferryadventurecenter.com>

For families craving an action-packed day trip (or even a full weekend getaway), Harpers Ferry Adventure Center is a one-stop destination for outdoor thrills. Just over an hour from DC, this sprawling Virginia hotspot has something for every level of adventurer — from first-time zipliners to seasoned climbers and paddlers.

The zipline tour is a crowd favorite, offering eight lines and a sky bridge that sweeps through the forest canopy, with sweeping views of the Shenandoah Valley and Potomac River below. The aerial ropes course lets kids and adults test their balance, strength and courage on suspended bridges, swinging elements and climbing features — perfect for bonding, cheering each other on and getting a little outside your comfort zone.

Add on whitewater rafting, kayaking or tubing, or take advantage of the on-site campgrounds to turn your adventure into an overnight experience. Many families opt to pair zipping and rafting into a full-day itinerary.

- **Know Before You Go:** Reservations are highly recommended, especially on weekends and holidays. Closed-toe shoes are required for all climbing and zip activities. Weight and age restrictions vary by activity, so check the website before booking. For longer stays, on-site cabins and campgrounds are available.

LURAY CAVERNS ADVENTURE PARK

- **Where:** 101 Cave Hill Road, Luray, VA
- **When:** Open daily; hours vary seasonally
- **Cost:** \$12 for participants over 48 inches; \$7 for those under 48 inches
- **Phone:** (540) 743-6551
- **More Info:** luraycaverns.com/explore/rope-adventure-park

If your family is planning a trip to the iconic Luray Caverns, don't miss the adventure park next door—it's the perfect above-ground companion to the wonders below. This outdoor ropes course offers age-friendly aerial challenges that give kids (and grown-ups) a chance to climb, balance and conquer their fears in a safe, supportive setting.

The Navigator Course, for climbers over 48 inches tall, features two tiers of obstacles at 12 and 24 feet high. Adventurers can test their skills on rope bridges, swinging platforms and balance beams. It's just the right mix of challenge and fun for elementary-aged kids and up.

Younger guests under 48 inches can explore the Sky Tyke Course, a mini ropes course raised just 3 feet off the ground. With the use of the continuous overhead tracking system just like the larger course, it's a great option for young kids who feel less comfortable in the air.

Since it's located on the same property as Luray Caverns, this ropes course makes for an easy add-on to a full day of family adventure. You can explore the underground caves, walk through the Car & Carriage Caravan Museum, and then head outside to climb, swing and scramble your way through the treetops.

- **Know Before You Go:** No reservations are needed, but hours vary by season, so check ahead. Closed-toe shoes are required, and lockers are available on-site.



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NATIONALS GAME TIPS FOR FAMILIES

Planning your kid's first (or 15th) Nationals game? This guide has everything parents need to know — from seating and snacks to stroller rules and post-game fun

By Jenna Dolch

Heading to a [Washington Nationals](#) game with your kid? You're in for a day packed with excitement, foam fingers, flying foul balls and a whole lot of cheering. Nationals Park offers families a memorable experience, whether it's your little one's first game or they've already got a mini jersey and glove in hand.

This guide covers everything parents need to know before taking their kid to the ballpark, from where to sit and what to bring, to insider tips on food, parking and pre-game fun. We've sourced the most up-to-date, reliable information from the team and locals so you can plan a smooth, stress-free outing for the whole family.

Know Before You Go

■ Game time and tickets

Start by checking the Nationals' official schedule to confirm the time, date and opponent. If you're going with kids, try for an earlier game or weekend day matchup—it's easier on nap schedules and bedtime routines.

■ Ticket tips

Buy your tickets early and look for seating near the family-friendly zones or shaded sections. Ticket resale sites like SeatGeek or

StubHub often have deals closer to game day, but the best spots for families go fast.

■ Bag policy

Only clear bags (no larger than 12 inches by 6 inches by 12 inches) and small clutch purses (5 inches by 7 inches) are allowed inside the park. Backpacks, large diaper bags and coolers are not permitted. Pack light and plan ahead.

■ Entry and security

Gates open 90 minutes before first pitch. Arriving early lets you avoid long lines, snap photos in front of the stadium and take advantage of pre-game activities.

Where to Sit

■ **Sections 129–131:** Near the family restroom, concessions and the Kids Zone

■ **Sections 228–230 (Upper Promenade):** Budget-friendly with shaded options and fewer stairs

■ **Scoreboard Pavilion:** Lawn-style area in the outfield with picnic tables and room to wiggle

■ **Bonus tips:** Bring seat cushions or a small stadium blanket for comfort, especially if you're sitting high up. And bring a glove; you just might catch a foul ball.

What to Bring (and What to Skip)

Pack the essentials:

- Sunscreen and hats
- Refillable water bottle (empty upon entry)
- Hand wipes and sanitizer
- A small clear bag for snacks or baby items
- Cashless payment method (the park is cashless)
- Skip these items:
- Outside food or drinks (except sealed baby bottles)
- Umbrellas
- Selfie sticks
- Large strollers or wagons
- **Bonus tip:** Portable, foldable strollers are allowed, but may need to be checked depending on seat location.

Kid-Friendly Food Options

Nationals Park does not disappoint when it comes to ballpark eats — even for picky eaters:

- **Dugout Dogs:** Classic hot dogs with smaller kid-sized versions (Section 122 and 128)
- **Dippin' Dots:** A fan favorite and easy win for post-inning rewards
- **Shake Shack:** Burgers, fries and shakes with outdoor seating nearby
- **Kids' meal deals:** Some stands offer kid combos with a hot dog, chips and drink — just ask
- **Bonus tips:** Many food stands are allergy-aware and list ingredients. Ask staff if you need gluten-free, nut-free or dairy-free options.

Pre-Game and In-Game Fun

Let kids burn off some energy before first pitch:

- **Kids Zone at Section 131:** Climbing structures, coloring stations and family-friendly games
- **Run the Bases:** On select Sundays, kids younger than 12 can run the bases after the game — first-come, first-served
- **Teddy and Friends:** The Presidents Race mascots roam before and during the game, perfect for selfies
- **First Game Certificate:** Ask a staff member or go to Guest Services to get a free "First Game" souvenir printout
- **Bonus tip:** Bring small activities like a coloring book or sticker sheet for younger kids who might lose interest before the 7th inning stretch.

Nearby Spots Worth a Stop

Before or after the game, check out these nearby family-friendly places:

- **Yards Park** (355 Water St. SE): Splash pad, boardwalk and green space perfect for little legs to explore
- **Canal Park** (200 M St. SE): More playground-style fun just blocks away
- **Ice Cream Jubilee** (301 Water St. SE): Grab a scoop on a hot day — kid-friendly flavors like Cookies & Cookie Dough
- **Home Run Hotel at The Bullpen:** Located right outside the park on Half Street, it's family-friendly with music, games and food trucks

Transportation and Parking

Metro is your MVP here:

- **Metro stop:** Take the Green Line to Navy Yard-Ballpark — it drops you off steps from the gates
- **Parking:** If driving, reserve a spot ahead through [Nationals.com](https://www.nationals.com) or ParkWhiz; garages fill quickly on weekends
- **Stroller access:** Metro stations and most garages are stroller-friendly, but expect some walking
- **Bonus tip:** If using Uber or Lyft, plan to get dropped off a block or two away to avoid post-game traffic.

After the Final Out

If your kids still have energy, linger for post-game music or catch a glimpse of the fireworks on special nights. You can also grab a bite at nearby kid-friendly restaurants like Wiseguy Pizza or TaKorean, both just steps away.

Make sure everyone has water and a bathroom break before heading out, it helps avoid meltdowns on the Metro or in the car line.

From the crack of the bat to the last round of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," a Nationals game is a home run outing for families. With thoughtful planning, a well-packed bag and a few fun extras, your trip to Nationals Park can be the highlight of your kid's summer.

Just remember: schedules, policies and promotions change throughout the season — check the Nationals' website or social media before game day to stay in the loop on tickets, hours and kid-friendly events.





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WEEKEND GETAWAYS FOR DC FAMILIES

Soak up the last days of summer with these quick and easy family getaways near DC — from beach towns and national parks to hands-on museums and historic cities.

By Alli Paveglio

A weekend getaway is the perfect way to wrap up the summer fun before school starts. DC's prime Mid-Atlantic location gives you and your family easy access to the best options for a last-minute weekend getaway before school is back in session. Top destinations around the DC area, including Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, offer the best weekend getaways for any last-minute plans.

From interactive museum exhibits to outdoor adventures at national parks, there's no shortage of great options for last-minute trips that are family-friendly. Before school starts, plan a family trip to one of these exciting places located around the DC area.

In this guide, we've rounded up five family-friendly places that are perfect for a last-minute trip before school starts, featuring exciting attractions, interesting sights to see and delicious dining options that will provide the whole family with an unforgettable experience — all not too far from DC.

EXPLORE THE CHARMING CITY OF BALTIMORE

About an hour or less outside DC is the affectionately nicknamed "Charm City" of Baltimore, Maryland, offering a wide variety of top attractions to visit, sights to see and bites to eat. Whether you're looking for a chill weekend exploring the Baltimore Museum of Art or visiting one of the country's best aquariums at the National Aquarium, Baltimore has something for every family member. If you have time, the iconic Oriole Park is nearby where you can sit back and enjoy a baseball game and go visit Babe Ruth's birthplace and museum.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RECOMMENDATIONS

National Aquarium: Iconic landmark offering marine-life exhibits, a dolphin show, shark tank and walk-through rainforest. Learn about animals from all over our blue planet — from the depths of the ocean to the canopy of the rainforest — and discover the connection they all share with water.

- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-6 p.m. daily
- **Location:** 501 E Pratt St, Baltimore, MD
- **Phone:** (410) 576-3800

Oriole Park: Located just a few blocks from the Inner Harbor, the stadium is one of the most famous in the league. Built in a retro style in the early 1990s, Oriole Park offers an authentic baseball game experience. The park features a well-kept field, abundant restaurants, pretzel and hot dog stands and beautiful views overlooking the city from the stands.

- **Location:** 333 W. Camden St., Baltimore, MD
- **Phone:** (410) 685-9800

Mindpub Cafe: Cozy cafe with vegetarian and gluten-free options offering breakfast, sandwiches and coffee.

- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; closed Monday; 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday-Friday
- **Location:** 554 E Fort Ave, Baltimore, MD
- **Phone:** (667) 354-1508
- **Review Highlight:** “The inner harbor was very nice. Lots of security to help you feel safe. Such a great atmosphere, lots of great restaurants and so much to do,” shares Matt Kunsman, Google Reviews.

VISIT SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

If your family loves the outdoors, this is the place to be. Offering scenic views and great options for hiking, horseback trail rides and rock climbing, a family adventure awaits. Located about 75 miles in Virginia and away from the bustle of DC, you can take in over 200,000 acres of protected lands filled with cascading waterfalls, fields of wildflowers and a variety of wildlife.

- **Hours:** Shenandoah National Park is always open, however, portions of Skyline Drive, the only public road through the Park, are periodically closed during inclement weather. Visitors may still enter the Park on foot to hike even when Skyline Drive is closed. Most facilities in Shenandoah begin opening in March and close by late November. More information on specific facilities hours can be found on their website.
- **Location:** Shenandoah National Park is located 75 miles west of Washington, DC. The park is accessible via four main entrances:
 - **Front Royal Entrance Station** - Most northern entrance (Mile 0.6), accessible via U.S. 340 (5 minutes from the town of Front Royal)
 - **Thornton Gap Entrance Station** - (Mile 31.5), accessible via U.S. 211 (15 minutes from downtown Luray)
 - **Swift Run Gap Entrance Station** - (Mile 65.7), accessible via U.S. 33
 - **Rockfish Gap Entrance Station** - Most southern entrance (Mile 105.4), accessible via I-64 and U.S. 250
- **Phone:** (540) 999-3500

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RECOMMENDATIONS

Skyland Pollock Dining Room: Serves wonderful regional specialties with farm-to-fork flavors and sumptuous views of the Shenandoah Valley. And considering the elevation of Skyland, it's only natural that Mile-High Blackberry Ice Cream Pie is a house specialty!

- **Hours:** 7:30-10 a.m.; noon-2:30 p.m.; 5-9 p.m.
- **Location:** 400 Skyland Upper Loop Mile 42, Luray, VA
- **Phone:** (877) 847-1919

Skyland Stables: There is no more genuine way to experience Shenandoah National Park than on horseback. Weather permitting, horseback and pony rides are available throughout the day, offering a chance to experience the park's beauty on a guided, one-hour ride. Departing from the stables, your journey takes you across Skyline Drive and into the heart of Shenandoah's natural wonders.

- **Hours:** Open May-Oct. 26; weather permitting, horseback and pony rides are available throughout the day.
- **Location:** Skyland Upper Loop, Luray, VA
- **Phone:** (877) 847-1919
- **Review Highlight:** “Absolutely breathtaking! The scenic drive is filled with stunning views, plenty of picture-perfect stops, and chances to spot wildlife — deer crossings were a bonus! There are great hikes along the way, including many short beginner friendly hikes and it's very pet friendly. A peaceful, beautiful escape into nature,” shares Martha Rodriguez, Google Reviews.

EXPLORE THE PLAYFUL CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Pennsylvania is the perfect place to explore for families with younger kids. Offering a great variety of playgrounds, kid-friendly museums and attractions for the whole family to explore and experience. From interactive museums where you can climb through a giant heart to Linvilla Orchards where you can take a hayride and pet some animals, there are plenty of options to choose from in the City of Brotherly Love. Located a few hours outside DC, a trip to Philadelphia is the perfect weekend getaway.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RECOMMENDATIONS

Franklin Institute: A Science museum and a center of science education and research that includes access to three floors of hands-on science exhibits and experiences.

- **Hours:** 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. daily
- **Location:** 222 N 20th St., Philadelphia, PA
- **Phone:** (215) 448-1200

Please Touch Museum: With two full floors of fun, engaging exhibits, children are empowered to pursue their curiosity and explore the wonder within their own imaginations. This museum is mostly aimed at children 7 years old and younger.

- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Wednesday-Monday
- **Location:** 4231 Ave of the Republic, Philadelphia, PA
- **Phone:** (215) 581-3181

CONTINUED ...

Linvilla Orchards: Fun for the whole family with exciting attractions, events and festivals all year-round. Including barnyard animals, playland playground and indoor minigolf. They do not have a general admission ticket. Timed tickets are available for hayrides and other activities.

- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily
- **Location:** 137 W. Knowlton Road, Media, PA
- **Phone:** (610) 876-7116

Sabrina's Cafe: A beloved, family-owned bruncherie, serving New American breakfast, brunch and lunch all day in the Philadelphia, Wynnewood and Collingswood areas.

- **Hours:** 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. daily
- **Location:** 227 N 34th St., Philadelphia, PA
- **Phone:** (215) 222-1022
- **Review Highlight:** "Took a spontaneous trip to Philly with my kid and went to see The Franklin Institute at the recommendation of a friend. My child had a wonderful time exploring and engaging the different exhibits," shares Jay P, Google Reviews.

ROAD TRIP TO COLONIAL BEACH

A year-round, family-friendly destination only 65-70 miles from DC or Richmond offering a lovely day trip away on the Potomac River. Visitors can enjoy a variety of water activities, including fishing, swimming, paddleboarding and kayaking. Special events are held all-year-round and on weekends, live music fills the air. Visitors can connect with nature and wildlife, learn regional history, shop for treasures or enjoy a thriving art scene

- **Hours:** Open 24/7. However, specific activities like fishing from the beach are restricted to certain hours, and some attractions or businesses within Colonial Beach may have their own unique operating hours
- **Location:** Town of Colonial Beach, 315 Douglas Ave., Colonial Beach, VA
- **Phone:** (804) 224-7181

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RECOMMENDATIONS

Colonial Beach Farmers Market: Find flowers, produce, eggs, chocolate treats and more.

- **Hours:** 8:30-11:30 a.m. Thursdays
- **Location:** 234 Colonial Ave., Colonial Beach, VA

Kayak at Colonial Beach Yacht Center: Colonial Beach Yacht Center is located on the Potomac River at the mouth of Monroe Bay, which is renowned for its protected harbor, deep water, easy access and beautiful sunsets. Come visit Colonial Beach and have the full experience by kayak. See the marine wildlife, birds and natural beaches. More information can be found on their website.

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday-Sunday
- **Location:** 1787 Castlewood Dr., Colonial Beach, VA
- **Phone:** (804) 224-7230

Raven's Point: Food is their purpose — and so is creating a space where people can slow down, connect and enjoy something real. They're a fast-casual eatery located near Town Hill and just a short walk from the Colonial Beach boardwalk. You'll find favorites like pulled pork BBQ, mac and cheese, tacos, soups, paninis, chili dogs, nachos, salads and bowls.

- **Hours:** Noon- 7 p.m. Monday; closed Tuesday-Thursday; noon-7 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon-6 p.m. Sunday
- **Location:** 322 Washington Ave., Colonial Beach, VA
- **Phone:** (804) 214-0411
- **Review Highlight:** "First time going to Colonial Beach. Nice Beach, small crowds. Nice selection of boardwalk restaurants," shares James M, Yelp Reviews.

FAMILY ADVENTURE IN ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

About an hour drive from DC is one of America's prettiest cities that also offers a great variety of kid-friendly activities and sights to see. America's sailing capital offers the best of summer before you head back to school with everything from vibrant outdoor festivals to waterfront activities and live performances. Explore local events, discover new attractions and make lasting memories while you soak up the last of the summer sun.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RECOMMENDATIONS

Pirate adventures on the Chesapeake: Children's pirate-themed cruises on the Annapolis Harbor featuring dress-up, water cannons, face-painting and more. Their pirate cruise promises real-life excitement and imaginative fun for kids, making it the perfect destination for family fun, unique birthday parties, and unforgettable field trips.

- **Hours:** 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Friday-Sunday
- **Location:** 311 Third St., Annapolis, MD
- **Phone:** (410) 263-0002

Annapolis Maritime Museum & Park: Unleash your inner explorer at the Annapolis Maritime Museum, where the Chesapeake Bay's rich tapestry comes alive! Climb aboard our historic skipjack, Wilma Lee, feel the Bay breeze and witness history come to life through immersive VR experiences.

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday; closed Monday
- **Location:** 723 Second Ave., Annapolis, MD
- **Phone:** (410) 295-0104

Chick and Ruth's Delly: Lively landmark diner for over 50 years in the heart of Annapolis, featuring greasy-spoon breakfasts, piled-high sandwiches and award winning crab cakes.

- **Hours:** 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 6:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday
- **Location:** 165 Main St., Annapolis, MD 21401
- **Phone:** (410) 269-6737
- **Review Highlight:** "Cute quaint little town with big offerings. A lot of history and things to do for all ages," shares Jada C, Yelp Reviews.



Back to School Guide

ANSWERS TO THE MOST COMMON BACK-TO-SCHOOL QUESTIONS

By Seth Hagler

While the kids in the Washington, DC area are enjoying summer break, parents have the important job of getting things ready for the upcoming school year. Back to school can be a daunting process, from purchasing new school supplies to getting familiarized with new school policies.

To help make the process smoother, we're answering 8 of the most important questions parents have for back to school.



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1. WHAT DAY DOES SCHOOL START?

The first day of school varies by county. Here is the first day of school for major counties in DC, Maryland and Virginia.

- **Alexandria City:** Monday, Aug. 18
- **Fairfax County:** Monday, Aug. 18
- **Prince William County:** Monday, Aug. 18
- **Loudoun County:** Thursday, Aug. 21
- **Arlington County:** Monday, Aug. 25
- **DC:** Monday, Aug. 25
- **Montgomery County:** Tuesday, Aug. 26
- **Prince George's County:** Tuesday, Aug. 26



2. ARE SCHOOL MEALS THE SAME?

Not necessarily. Many public schools are abiding by updated rules from the USDA, meaning school breakfast and lunches are targeting less sugar, sodium and fat content, as well as increases to fruits and veggies.



4. WHERE TO GET SCHOOL SUPPLIES?

Stores like Walmart, Target and Dollar Tree offer low prices for school supplies. They frequently align sales with the back-to-school season and are a great way to get deals on pencils, notebooks, binders and other important items. A key tip is to buy in bulk – this is often an easy way to save per-item costs. It's worth checking store websites rather than defaulting to Amazon.



3. WHAT IF MY CHILD NEEDS ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities are entitled to individual education plans (IEP) or Section 504 plans. You'll want to coordinate with the principal, counselor or administrator to ensure they have all of the required medical documentation.



5. WHAT IMMUNIZATIONS DOES MY CHILD NEED?

While the COVID-19 vaccine is not required in DC, Maryland or Virginia public schools, there are others that are still required for attending public school. For example, Montgomery County students who enter seventh grade in the 2025-26 school year, or are new to MCPS and in eighth through 12th grade, must provide documentation of their Tdap and MCV4 vaccinations (one dose each) before the first day of school. DC and Virginia public schools require the HPV vaccine for those entering seventh grade. You'll want to check with your respective county to know which immunizations you'll need to have proof of, unless you have an approved medical or religious exemption.



6. HOW DO I CHECK MY CHILD'S GRADES?

Not every school uses the same parent portal for grades and assignments. You'll want to check with your school's website to find out which one you'll need to familiarize yourself with, like SIS ParentVUE, Schoology, Canvas or other platforms.



7. HOW DO I FIND OUT IMPORTANT DATES LIKE PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES?

Stay up-to-date through the school website or parent portal. Each county has its own academic calendar, but simply downloading it via PDF might not be sufficient since schools might initiate changes to certain dates throughout the school year.



8. WHO IS MY CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER?

This is an important one for kindergarten through grade 8; homeroom prepares students for the rest of the school day. The homeroom teacher can provide general guidance and help with acclimating to the back-to-school routine. Students will hear the morning announcements during homeroom, so they will definitely want to have the teacher and room memorized.



Check your school's online calendar to find out if and when orientation is being held before the first day of school. During orientation, your kid is likely to receive welcome paperwork including where to go on the first day of school. You may also receive a letter in the mail. If not, you can always check on the parent portal. In the worst-case scenario, schools often leave signs inside the school that will guide your kid to the right room.



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POLICY SHIFTS COMING TO AREA SCHOOLS

From cellphone bans to grading changes, here's what families need to know before the first day of school in DC, Maryland and Virginia.

By Seth Hagler

The 2025-26 school year is approaching and that means upcoming changes will be taking effect in August, as early as day one. Even if your kid isn't switching to a new school and is simply moving up one grade within the same school, there may be new rules and regulations on the horizon.

Here are the pertinent changes beginning this fall for public schools in DC, Maryland and Virginia.

CELLPHONE POLICY

Starting fall 2025, DC public school students (Pre-K through grade 12) must have phones turned off and stored away during the school day. This district-wide policy is specifically targeting cell phone use which has contributed to declines in academic performance by serving as a means of distraction.

Your child probably shouldn't have been texting you during the school day regardless, but if they do during the upcoming school year, they're at risk of having it confiscated.

A NEW PARENT PORTAL

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education Division of Transportation (OSSE-DOT) recently rolled out a new digital tool for parents whose kids ride public school buses. Parents will be able to sign up and take advantage of this new feature for the upcoming school year.

Previously, parents had to get the transportation information through their child's school and the process of coordination was less intuitive. Now parents can easily set and update pick-up and drop-off details. There will also be the option to select OSSE transport, a \$400 stipend for self-transporting. You can make an account with the OSSE Parent Portal here.

SWING SPACE LOCATIONS

Seven DCPS elementary schools are being temporarily relocated for the 2025/26 school year. The affected elementary schools are Brent, Burroughs, JO Wilson, King, Malcolm X, Thomas and Tubman. Click here to view the temporary location addresses.



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REVISED GRADING AND REPORTING IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- Students grade 6-12 will now have their final grades calculated differently. They will now be based on the average of numeric grades from each marking period.
- Marking periods 2 and 4 will now feature districtwide summative assessments for specific subjects.
- Reassessment opportunities: Students will now have at least two reassessment opportunities in secondary courses. Certain assessments, like end-of-course, or final papers/essays do not apply.
- Teachers will not assign a grade lower than 50% provided the student shows evidence of making progress on the relevant standards being assessed, regardless of actual accuracy.
- Parents can sign up for ParentVUE to stay updated on their child's grades. For more info on the revisions, click here.

LOUDOUN COUNTY POLICY UPDATES

LCPS also has changes that will take effect with the 2025-26 school year:

- Homework and formative assessments will now be weighted at no more than 10% of a quarter grade.
- Students will only be able to retake a major summative assessment after they've submitted all other assignments and assessments, completed with reasonable effort.
- Updated definitions to key terms to ensure consistency for students, parents and staff.
- For more info, click here.

ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADJUSTS ACADEMIC CALENDAR

ACPS is extending the 2025-26 school calendar, making for a total of 180 instructional days. They are also implementing greater flexibility for weather-related closures. Additionally, the calendar policy has been updated so that it is easier to understand specific requirements, make-up days and other information.



BIGSTOCK/KOSTIANTYNVOITENKO

TOP-RATED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN DC

From bilingual programs to STEM and the arts, these top-rated elementary schools in the DC area offer strong academics, supportive communities and enriching opportunities for young learners.

By Jenna Dolch

Choosing the right elementary school is a critical decision for families in the DC area. This article highlights the top 10 rated elementary schools known for their academic excellence, supportive communities and enriching extracurricular programs. Our rankings are based on reliable sources including GreatSchools.org, Niche.com, and local education reports from the DC Public Schools system and surrounding counties. Whether you live in the city or suburbs, this guide will help you find a school that fits your family’s needs.

KEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Situated in the Forest Hills neighborhood, Key Elementary School is known for its strong academic performance and diverse student body. The school emphasizes a well-rounded education with a focus on both academics and social-emotional learning. Key Elementary has received high marks for its inclusive environment and dedicated staff.

- **Address:** 5001 Dana Place NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 729-3280
- **Website:** <https://keyschooldc.membershiptoolkit.com/>

JANNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Located in the friendly neighborhood of Cleveland Park, Janney Elementary is known for its rigorous academics and supportive learning environment. The school boasts a strong PTA and offers several after-school programs focused on science, technology and arts. Janney’s commitment to inclusive education makes it a top choice for families seeking diversity and high achievement.

- **Address:** 4130 Albemarle St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 282-0110
- **Website:** <https://janneyschool.org/>

OYSTER-ADAMS BILINGUAL SCHOOL

Oyster-Adams is a dual-language immersion school that provides students with a unique opportunity to become bilingual in Spanish and English. Its innovative curriculum and cultural programs prepare students for global citizenship. The school is praised for its academic rigor and family-friendly atmosphere with frequent community events.

- **Address:** 2801 Calvert St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 671-6130
- **Website:** <https://oysteradamsbilingual.org/>

STODDERT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Located in the Glover Park neighborhood, Stoddert Elementary School is known for its strong academic performance and active community involvement. The school offers a variety of programs aimed at enhancing student learning and development. Stoddert Elementary has received positive reviews for its dedicated staff and supportive environment.

- **Address:** 4001 Calvert St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 671-6030
- **Website:** <https://www.stoddert.org/>

LAFAYETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lafayette Elementary School has a strong reputation for fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment. It emphasizes personalized learning plans and encourages parental involvement. The school's arts program is particularly robust, providing students with many opportunities to explore music, drama, and visual arts.

- **Address:** 5701 Broad Branch Road NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 282-0116
- **Website:** <https://lafayettehsa.org/>

BRENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Brent Elementary, located on Capitol Hill, is celebrated for its academic success, arts integration and inclusive school culture. The school promotes a strong sense of community and offers an engaging, well-rounded curriculum with robust reading, math and creative programs. Brent also emphasizes social-emotional learning and family involvement, creating a nurturing environment where students thrive both academically and personally.

- **Address:** 301 North Carolina Ave. SE, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 698-3363
- **Website:** <https://www.brentelemetary.org/>

KING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

King Elementary is recognized for its strong emphasis on social-emotional learning alongside academics. The school provides a variety of programs to support student wellness and engagement. It also benefits from community partnerships that enhance student experiences with field trips and guest speakers.

- **Address:** 3400 Wheeler Road SE, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 939-4900
- **Website:** <https://profiles.dcps.dc.gov/King+Elementary+School>

MAURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Maury Elementary is a neighborhood school in the northeast quadrant of DC, known for its academic excellence and strong community ties. It consistently ranks highly in district assessments and offers a supportive, student-centered learning environment. With a STEM-focused approach, integrated arts, and a commitment to equity and inclusion, Maury attracts a diverse student body and prepares students for future success.

- **Address:** 1250 Constitution Ave. NE, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 698-3838
- **Website:** <https://www.mauryelementary.com/>

ROSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ross Elementary, located in Dupont Circle, is known for its close-knit community, strong academics and dedicated staff. The school uses inquiry-based learning and integrates the arts into the curriculum, encouraging creativity and critical thinking. With small class sizes and strong parent involvement, Ross offers a well-rounded, supportive environment for student growth.

- **Address:** 1730 R St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 673-7200
- **Website:** <https://rosselementary.org/>

SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Shepherd Elementary School is located in the Brightwood neighborhood of Washington, DC. This public school serves grades pre-K through grade five and is recognized for its commitment to academic achievement and a nurturing school culture. Shepherd focuses on fostering a collaborative environment where students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The school offers a variety of programs to support literacy, STEM and the arts, with a dedicated staff that encourages family engagement. Shepherd consistently earns positive reviews from parents and ranks well in district assessments.

- **Address:** 7800 14th St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 576-6140
- **Website:** <https://shepherd-elementary.org/>

Selecting the right elementary school sets the foundation for a child's educational journey and overall development. The DC area offers a diverse range of top-rated public and private elementary schools, each with unique strengths that cater to different family needs and learning styles. From strong academics and bilingual programs to enriching arts and STEM opportunities, these schools provide safe and nurturing environments where young learners can thrive. By considering factors such as curriculum quality, community involvement and extracurricular offerings, families can find the ideal school to support their child's growth and success.

Help Kids Sleep Better Before School Starts

By Keisha Sullivan, DO

COURTESY OF MID-ATLANTIC PERMANENTE MEDICAL GROUP



As summer winds down and the back-to-school season approaches, one of the most important yet often overlooked aspects of a successful

transition is sleep. After weeks of relaxed schedules and late nights, getting children back into a healthy sleep routine can be challenging.

Quality sleep is essential for academic performance, emotional regulation and overall well-being. But how much sleep does your child need? As a board-certified sleep medicine physician, I generally recommend:

- **4-12 months:** 12-16 hours
- **1-2 years:** 11-14 hours
- **3-5 years:** 10-13 hours
- **6-12 years:** 9-12 hours
- **13-18 years:** 8-10 hours

Here are practical tips to help your child ease into the school year well-rested and ready to learn.

1. **Start preparing for regular bedtime weeks before school starts;** don't wait until the night before school begins. Shift bedtime gradually. One way to do this is to advance bedtime by 15 minutes each night until the desired bedtime is reached. If your child has been staying awake until 10 p.m. this summer, but the school bedtime is 8:30 p.m., shift bedtime to 9:45 p.m. on day one, 9:30 p.m. on day two, etc., until you reach 8:30 p.m. If you can do this a few weeks before the school year begins, your child's body will smoothly adjust.
2. **Create a consistent sleep schedule.** Once the school year begins, establish a consistent sleep and wake schedule, even on weekends. Your child should wake up and go to sleep at about the same time each day. A regular sleep schedule helps regulate the body's internal clock.
3. **Avoid electronics 30-60 minutes prior to bedtime.** Take your child's electronics away about an hour before bedtime. Ideally, keep electronics out of the bedroom. Phones and tablets emit blue light, which can interfere with the production of melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep. Also, scrolling social media or texting with friends can cause unwanted stress close to bedtime.



BIGSTOCK/Vastrenska

4. **Encourage daily physical activity.** Make sure your child is active during the summer, whether participating in a sport or running around at camp. Daily physical activity promotes deep sleep at night.
5. **Remove your child's desk from the bedroom.** A bedroom should be a safe sanctuary, free from the anxiety that may be connected with homework and studying. Create a homework station in a living room, kitchen or other spot in your home.
6. **Limit naps to less than 30 minutes.** For school-age children, naps — if they take them at all — should be no more than 30 minutes (this does not apply to infants and toddlers, who can and should take longer naps). Longer naps can make it difficult to fall asleep at night.
7. **Create a relaxing bedtime routine.** Have your child avoid homework at least two hours before bedtime. Instead, try to quiet down with reading, a shower or bath, and cuddling.
8. **Avoid caffeine, including soda, iced tea and chocolate, close to bedtime.** In general, children should avoid caffeine as much as possible — and definitely close to bedtime. Caffeine can make children restless and anxious, keeping them awake at night.
9. **If you give your child sugary treats, do so as part of an after-school snack instead of after dinner.** Sugar too close to bedtime can lead to sugar spikes, making it difficult to fall asleep. (Of course, try to keep after-school snacks as healthy as possible!)
10. **Increase light exposure in the morning by opening the curtains or having your child go outside in the sunshine (while wearing sunscreen).** Natural light in the morning helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle.

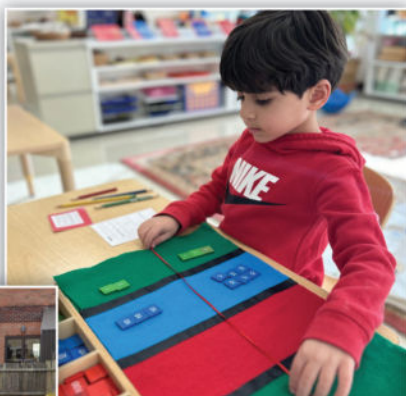
Trying as many of these tips as possible can help your child get back on track and off to a well-rested and successful school year!

Keisha Sullivan, DO, is a board-certified sleep medicine physician with the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group. She sees patients at the Kaiser Permanente Largo Medical Center. For more information, visit <https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/>.

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Add These Items to Your College Packing List

Packing for college means more than just clothes and snacks — here are the often-overlooked essentials that every student should bring.

By Pam Molnar

When my daughter went to college, we used every spare inch of the space in our SUV to carry her stuff. It seemed like she packed her whole wardrobe, enough cleaning supplies to maintain the White House and more snacks than I thought she could eat in a year. Even then, she discovered she needed a few more things — items that no one told us we should pack.

1. Your health insurance card: Yes, most campuses have a clinic on-site to diagnose strep throat, UTIs and other simple illnesses. However, prescriptions are dispensed off campus at the local Walgreens or CVS. My daughter found on more than one occasion that the on-campus clinic was often overflowing with sick students, requiring her to visit the off-campus urgent care.

- 2. Your family's medical history:** Mom isn't going to be with her college student when she visits a doctor at school. Your student will need to know your family's basic medical history so they don't have to call home while filling out the doctor's forms.
- 3. The ability to cook simple meals:** Most students are sick of the college cafeteria food by the second week and out of money for take-out items by the third week. Take advantage of the kitchen in the dorms by making simple pastas, egg dishes or comfort food from home.
- 4. Basic kitchen tools:** No one wants to use the dorm kitchen tools (who knows the last time they were washed). Instead, buy a cheap pot, colander, large spoon, crockpot, can opener and whatever other item you need to make your favorite dishes.
- 5. Family passwords:** My daughter texted me one night at 11 p.m. to ask for our cable company user name and password so she could watch "The Bachelor" on the ABC app. Many cable stations require proof that you are already paying for their service in order for you to watch the programs online.

- 6. Amazon Prime account:** Almost everything can be ordered through Amazon and shipped to you in two days, including food, school supplies, books, clothes and toiletries. Amazon Prime Student is available for free for the first six months and then upgrades to a full membership for 50% normal rate.
- 7. Rain gear:** It rains on almost every college campus at least some of the time. Don't overlook purchasing a large umbrella (big enough to cover you and your backpack), rain boots and a water proof jacket. No one wants to sit in a class in wet clothes.
- 8. Brita water bottle:** Disposable water bottles are surprisingly expensive in single purchases and hard to haul across campus in large cases. A Brita water bottle filters dorm room or water fountain water, saving you a ton of money and is easy on the environment.
- 9. Entertainment that is not electronic:** Give yourself a break from the technical world. Unwind with a coloring book or catch up on your favorite magazine. Playing card games or Frisbee is a great way to bond with new friends.
- 10. Checks:** Much to our surprise, you can't pay for everything on campus electronically or with cash. There were two instances during my daughter's freshman year that required me to overnight her blank checks. This may also be needed for direct deposit for on-campus jobs or to set up utilities in an off-campus apartment.
- 11. Simple tool box:** You will need a screwdriver to open the back of your calculator battery compartment. Zip ties and duct tape are great for quick fixes. Other simple tools might be a plunger for the suite bathroom or a mini air pump for blowing up balls or bike tires.
- 12. First aid kit:** Pack a simple bag of cold medicines, pain relievers, bandages and a thermometer. As any mother can tell you, everyone gets sick after the pharmacy has closed so it is best to stock up and be prepared.
- 13. Mini tupperware/Ziploc bags:** These are great for storing extra food from your big lunch, taking snacks with you in your backpack or packing wet items when traveling for a weekend trip.
- 14. Business attire:** Most college students think they can wait until their junior or senior year to pack a suit or conservative skirt. However, some class projects, formal events or inductions require nicer clothes than a hoodie and yoga pants.
- 15. Your own bank account:** If you didn't need one for your high school job, it's time to get one. Most on-campus jobs are paid via direct deposit. My daughter's account is linked to ours (one way) so we can transfer money to her as needed.

Pam Molnar is mother of three and a college packing pro. It never gets easier to say goodbye, but each year gets easier to pack.

Dorm List

Toiletries

- ☐ Toothbrush
- ☐ Toothpaste
- ☐ Floss
- ☐ Mouthwash
- ☐ Retainer
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Perfume
- ☐ Chapstick

Hair/Beauty

- ☐ Shampoo
- ☐ Conditioner
- ☐ Hairspray
- ☐ Brush
- ☐ Ponytail Holders
- ☐ Headbands
- ☐ Hair Dryer
- ☐ Straightener
- ☐ Hair Pins

Skin/Personal Care

- ☐ Moisturizer
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer
- ☐ Make Up Wipes
- ☐ Make Up
- ☐ Nail Polish Remover
- ☐ Cotton Balls
- ☐ Nail Clippers
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Razors

First Aid/Meds

- ☐ Band-Aids
- ☐ Neosporin
- ☐ Ibuprofen
- ☐ Anti Acids
- ☐ Meds
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Feminine Products

Bathroom/Laundry

- ☐ Towels – Body, Hand, Washcloths & Kitchen
- ☐ Toilet Paper
- ☐ Paper Towels
- ☐ Paper Towel Holder
- ☐ Clorox Wipes
- ☐ Laundry Detergent
- ☐ Dryer Sheets
- ☐ Stain Remover
- ☐ Laundry Basket
- ☐ Hangers
- ☐ Shower Caddy

Kitchen Basics

- ☐ Plastic Ware and Plates
- ☐ Rubberbands
- ☐ Storage Containers
- ☐ Can Opener
- ☐ Trash Can
- ☐ Trash Bags
- ☐ Dishwashing Soap

Electronics/Utilities

- ☐ Batteries (for remotes, calculator, etc.)
- ☐ Desk Lamp
- ☐ Extension Cords
- ☐ Surge Protector
- ☐ Light Bulb
- ☐ Fan
- ☐ Fridge
- ☐ Microwave
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Video Game System
- ☐ Speakers

Room Setup

- ☐ Mattress Cover
- ☐ Mattress Pad
- ☐ Comforter
- ☐ Pillows
- ☐ Sheets
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Mirror
- ☐ Hooks/Removable Hanging Tools
- ☐ Decorations for Walls
- ☐ Folding Chairs
- ☐ Doorstop

Extras/On-the-Go

- ☐ Duffle Bag for Overnights
- ☐ Drawstring Backpacks
- ☐ Safety Pins
- ☐ Glasses





FIND THE BEST YOUTH BASEBALL CLINICS AROUND DC

By Jenna Dolch

Looking for the perfect baseball clinic to help your kid learn, improve and have fun this season? We've narrowed the DC area's many options to the standouts below. From free sessions at Nationals Youth Baseball Academy to paid weeklong camps and one-on-one instruction, there's something for every budget and skill level. Each listing calls out ages, costs, key dates and insider tips so you can confidently choose the right fit for your young ballplayer.

YBA PLAY (NATIONALS YOUTH BASEBALL ACADEMY)

YBA PLAY provides free clinics for kids ages 6-12, summer sessions meet twice weekly from June through early August. Clinics for ages 5-8 run Mondays and Wednesdays, and ages 9-12 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Locations are spread across Wards 5-8. The program is free and includes equipment and uniforms. Be sure to check their website or call to confirm current season dates and sites.

- **Location:** Various locations across Washington DC
- **Ages:** 5-12
- **Cost:** Free
- **Phone:** (202) 640-7456
- **Website:** <https://www.nats4good.org/play/>

NATIONALS BASEBALL/SOFTBALL SUMMER CAMPS

These paid summer camps offer "World Series Experience" and "Presidential Experience" sessions for ages 5-13.

- **Flint Hill:** July 7-11 (Presidential)
- **Norwood School:** July 14-18 (Presidential)
- **RFK Fields:** July 21-25 (World Series)
- **St. Albans:** July 28-Aug. 1 (Presidential)

- **Flint Hill:** Aug. 4-8 (World Series)
- **Norwood School:** Aug. 11-15 (World Series)
- Expect drills, gear, stadium visits and player meet-and-greets.
- **Locations:** Various locations in the DMV
- **Ages:** 5-13
- **Cost:** \$550-\$650; plus processing fee
- **Phone:** (202) 715-6683
- **Website:** <https://washingtonnatscamps.leagueapps.com/camps>

DC DYNASTY BASEBALL

DC Dynasty Baseball is offering year-round private lessons, group training and seasonal camps.

- **Summer travel teams:** 6-week seasons starting in June. These are great for kids 7-16 seeking advanced training.
- **Summer camps:** DC Dynasty offers two summer baseball camps based on age: one for younger players (ages 7-12u) held at Guy Mason Field, and a more advanced indoor camp for older players (ages 13-16u) at their training facility.
- **Winter Camps:** DC Dynasty's 2025 Winter Baseball Camps are organized by age group and focus on skill development, athletic performance, and proper fundamentals. All sessions are held at DC Dynasty's indoor facility.
- **Ages 7-8u:** Rookie Skills Camp, Dec. 28, 2025-Feb. 15, 2026
- **Ages 9-10u:** Little League Skills Camp, Dec. 29, 2025-Jan. 16, 2026
- **Ages 10-14u:** Athletic Performance & Arm Care Camp, Nov. 16-Dec. 21
- **Ages 11-12u:** Little League Skills Development Camp, Dec. 28, 2025-Feb. 15, 2026; Dec. 29, 2025-Feb. 23, 2026
- **Ages 13-14u:** Middle School Advanced Skills Camp, Dec. 27, 2025-Feb. 14, 2026
- **High School:** Advanced Skills Camp, Dec. 27, 2025-Feb. 21, 2026; Dec. 28, 2025-Feb. 15, 2026

- **Private Lessons:** DC Dynasty offers private lessons and small group or team training for players ages 7–18. Sessions are held at their indoor facility and are available in 30-, 60-, or 90-minute formats.
- **Location:**
DC Dynasty Baseball,
15 Oglethorpe St. NW,
Washington DC
- **Ages:** 7-18
- **Cost:** Private lessons \$60-\$130/session; camps vary
- **Phone:** (202) 352-1873
- **Website:** <https://dcdynaszybaseball.org/camps-2>

SNYDER BASEBALL ACADEMY

Summer day camps are offered for ages 6-12 at NOVA Sportsplex.

- **Camp session dates are:**
July 7-11
July 14-18
July 21-25
July 28-Aug. 1
Aug. 4-8
Aug. 11-15
- Kids can enjoy skill stations, games and themed days like Snyderball Olympics.
- **Location:** 6966 Wellington Road, Building 2, Manassas, VA
- **Ages:** 6-12
- **Cost:** \$375
- **Phone:** (571) 358-8353
- **Website:** <https://snyderbaseball.com/summerdaycamp>

BULLDOG BASEBALL LEAGUE & CAMPS

Bulldog offers development leagues, a spring Power Hour for pre-K and kindergarten, and summer camps June 9-July 25 for ages 4-14. This camp is held at St. Albans School and other local fields. A full-service youth program with multiple levels.

- **Location:** 3403 Garfield St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Ages:** 4-14
- **Cost:** See site for rates
- **Phone:** (202) 557-4210
- **Website:** <https://bulldogbaseballdc.com/copy-of-spring-break-camp>

KNOW BEFORE YOU SIGN UP

- **Match age with skill level:** Free clinics are ideal for beginners; paid camps offer more structure and perks.
- **Watch dates:** Most programs book early, register weeks before start.
- **Bring gear:** Most require gloves, a bat and water; some provide loaner equipment.
- **Check coach ratio:** Smaller groups or private sessions ensure more attention and better learning.

Whether you're drawn to the free YBA PLAY clinics or comprehensive Snyder camps, DC-area baseball programs cater to every interest and budget. With dates spanning winter through summer and a variety of age ranges, there's something perfect for your young athlete.

Remember: schedules, fees and age groups can change. Always check each program's official site or social media before registering to get the latest information and secure your spot for a fun season on the diamond.

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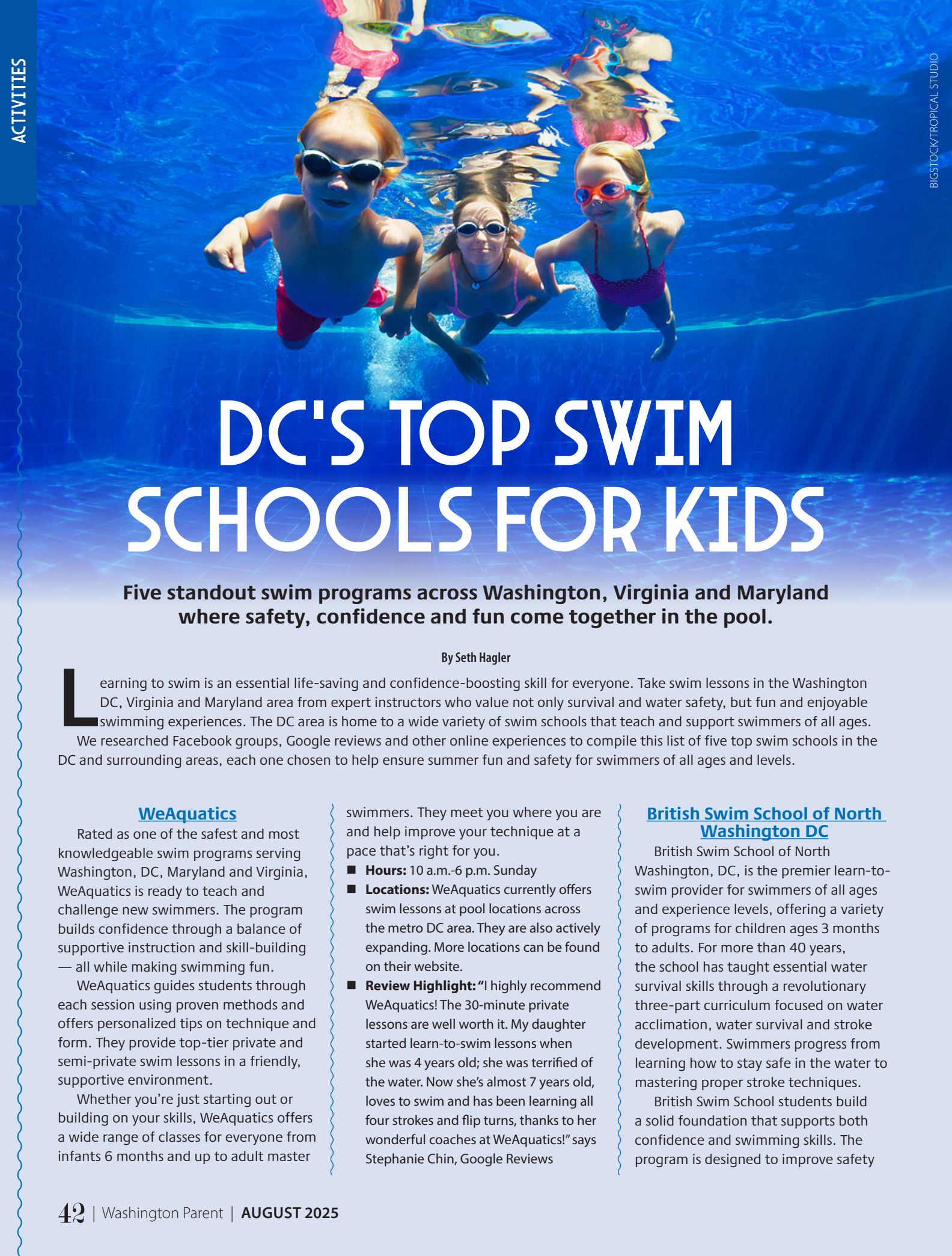
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DC'S TOP SWIM SCHOOLS FOR KIDS

Five standout swim programs across Washington, Virginia and Maryland where safety, confidence and fun come together in the pool.

By Seth Hagler

Learning to swim is an essential life-saving and confidence-boosting skill for everyone. Take swim lessons in the Washington DC, Virginia and Maryland area from expert instructors who value not only survival and water safety, but fun and enjoyable swimming experiences. The DC area is home to a wide variety of swim schools that teach and support swimmers of all ages.

We researched Facebook groups, Google reviews and other online experiences to compile this list of five top swim schools in the DC and surrounding areas, each one chosen to help ensure summer fun and safety for swimmers of all ages and levels.

WeAquatics

Rated as one of the safest and most knowledgeable swim programs serving Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia, WeAquatics is ready to teach and challenge new swimmers. The program builds confidence through a balance of supportive instruction and skill-building — all while making swimming fun.

WeAquatics guides students through each session using proven methods and offers personalized tips on technique and form. They provide top-tier private and semi-private swim lessons in a friendly, supportive environment.

Whether you're just starting out or building on your skills, WeAquatics offers a wide range of classes for everyone from infants 6 months and up to adult master

swimmers. They meet you where you are and help improve your technique at a pace that's right for you.

- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday
- **Locations:** WeAquatics currently offers swim lessons at pool locations across the metro DC area. They are also actively expanding. More locations can be found on their website.
- **Review Highlight:** "I highly recommend WeAquatics! The 30-minute private lessons are well worth it. My daughter started learn-to-swim lessons when she was 4 years old; she was terrified of the water. Now she's almost 7 years old, loves to swim and has been learning all four strokes and flip turns, thanks to her wonderful coaches at WeAquatics!" says Stephanie Chin, Google Reviews

British Swim School of North Washington DC

British Swim School of North Washington, DC, is the premier learn-to-swim provider for swimmers of all ages and experience levels, offering a variety of programs for children ages 3 months to adults. For more than 40 years, the school has taught essential water survival skills through a revolutionary three-part curriculum focused on water acclimation, water survival and stroke development. Swimmers progress from learning how to stay safe in the water to mastering proper stroke techniques.

British Swim School students build a solid foundation that supports both confidence and swimming skills. The program is designed to improve safety

at every step. Available year-round, this premier learn-to-swim program stands out for its survival-first approach and goal-oriented instruction delivered in a fun, confidence-building environment.

- **Hours:**
- **Office hours:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday; Closed Saturday and Sunday
- **Pool hours:** Closed Monday-Thursday; 3 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Friday; Closed Saturday; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday
- **Phone:** (202) 988-3825
- **Locations:** Edlavitch Jewish Community Center of Washington, DC, 1529 16th St. NW, Washington, DC; Onelife Fitness-Burke, 9250 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA; Onelife Fitness-Fairfax, 12300 Price Club Plaza, Fairfax, VA; Onelife Fitness-Falls Church, 1000 E Broad St., Falls Church, VA
- **Review highlight:** "My daughter has come so far since she started with British Swim School. She has this amazing bond with the instructors and owners. You can feel that they genuinely care and love the kids they teach," shares Andrea, Welcome to British Swim School of North Washington DC

SwimBox

Swimbox is a unique swim school with private 1:1 Swim Lessons, Adult Learn-to-Swim Lessons and Swim Workouts — this is not your 4-year-old's swim school! Their goal is to help you swim better, safer, faster and injury free. With a focus on communication and education, SwimBox's swim lessons are tailored to your abilities, your goals and your lifestyle. They work with competitive and master swimmers, adults learning how to swim, triathletes, open water swimmers and people in between. You'll learn faster and easier with their unmatched compassion, technology and expertise that they bring to each swim lesson.

Note that they do not work with children under the age of 7 unless they can make it across a 25 meter/yard pool on their own.

- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday and Monday; 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday; 6 a.m.-9:45 p.m. Wednesday; 6 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Thursday; 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Friday and Saturday
- **Phone:** (703) 904-6340
- **Location:** 5183B Langston Blvd., Arlington, VA
- **Review Highlight:** "I signed up for 10 sessions and it was a great learning experience. I had sessions with Dominic, Ryan and Wallis. The entire team was great. They were very knowledgeable, supportive and



PHOTO COURTESY BIG BLUE SWIM SCHOOL

motivational," shares Carl Cholutin, Google Reviews

Goldfish Swim School

Swimmers from Arlington, Washington, DC, and surrounding areas are welcome at Goldfish Swim School-Alexandria, where expert instructors are ready to teach your child how to swim, float and tread water successfully. Their top priority is to instill discipline, trust, athleticism and focus through dynamic lessons led with compassion and care.

Goldfish Swim School-Alexandria relies on empathy and incremental teaching methods to ensure every child has the confidence and support needed to thrive. The school welcomes aspiring swimmers between the ages of 4 months and 12, offering a proven curriculum that emphasizes step-by-step development, a warm 90-degree pool for shiver-free comfort, flexible scheduling, free make-up lessons, a positive learning environment and more.

- **Hours:** 8:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday; 9 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Friday; 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturday; 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday; 9 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Monday
- **Phone:** Alexandria, (703) 844-2818; Falls Church, (703) 215-4593; Silver Spring, (240) 621-1305
- **Locations:** 3155-B Duke St., Alexandria, VA; 7395 Lee Highway, Suite K, Falls Church, VA; 11800 Tech Road, Silver Spring, MD
- **Review Highlight:** "We love Goldfish Swim School. The instructors are professional and friendly. The staff is very helpful and knowledgeable. The school is always clean and well maintained. I'd recommend it to anyone who wants their child to learn how to swim and have a good time too!" says Candice C.,

Alexandria, VA | Goldfish Swim School testimonials.

Big Blue Swim School

Whether your child is an infant learning to flip over and float, or 10 years old and still struggling with dog paddling, swimming lessons are essential — and Big Blue can help.

Unlike other swim schools, Big Blue takes lessons seriously, recognizing how vital water safety and swimming skills are for every child. With stress-free facilities and time-saving flexibility through the Big Blue Swim School mobile app, learning to swim is easier and more convenient than ever.

Professional instructors complete extensive training to ensure your child gets the consistency and care they need. Free trial lessons are available so you and your child can dip your toes in before fully committing. Big Blue is proud to be the leading swim school in the area, offering programs for all ages with continuous, year-round weekly lessons — so your child can start or pause anytime.

- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday; 3:30-8 p.m. Tuesday; 3-8 p.m. Wednesday; 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday; 3:30-8 p.m. Friday; 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday
- **Phone:** (847) 221-6609
- **Locations:** Big Blue Swim School currently offers swim lessons at pool locations across the DMV area. Locations and information can be found on their website.
- **Review highlight:** "We loved the teachers and staff, who were always encouraging to our kids to help them improve. My son started out scared and timid and is now a confident swimmer. Can't thank Big Blue enough!" says Janet Cartwright-smith, Google reviews.

WHAT TO READ

BIGSTOCK/LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS INC.



Books About Dogs and Cats

By Mary Quattlebaum

The dog days of summer call for a dive into books about canine and feline friends. You might celebrate International Cat Day on Aug. 8 and National Dog Day on Aug. 26 with a special tale. With dogs or cats in more than 111.6 million households in the United States in 2025, according to “Forbes,” that’s a lot of party animals!

Having a hard time choosing between the two? You can read about both, thanks to lively nonfiction by Washington author Erica Perl.

Says Perl, “I was excited to write about ‘Truth or Lie: Dogs!’ and ‘Truth or Lie: Cats!’ because I love my pets and I know kids do, too.”

A self-professed “lifelong dog lover,” Perl currently shares a home with rambunctious Penny and easygoing Clover. When she’s writing, her pooches often sleep together in the same dog bed by her desk.

Perl’s playful, informative books spotlight domesticated and wild animals. Discovering intriguing facts required careful research. One surprise, she says, was learning that Norwegian Lundehunds have 24 toes rather than the 18 usual for canines. The dog book even includes a photo Perl took of wild dogs in Zambia in southern Africa.

Her beloved, now-deceased, Tova was a furry muse of sorts for the cat book.

Perl is the author of more than 40 award-winning children’s books, both fiction and nonfiction. In addition to dogs and cats, she has written about sharks, dinosaurs and presidents for her “Truth or Lie” series. The Q&A game-like format encourages kids to consider the facts being presented and to try to identify false statements.

“I was inspired to write this series,” Perl says, “because I think reading with a critical eye is really important in this age of mis- and dis-information.”

TOTS – AGE 7

“Truth or Lie: Dogs!”

By Erica Perl

Illustrated by Michael Slack

Random House, 2022, \$3.99

Kids (and adults) can expand their dog know-how by playing this dynamic true-or-false game. Presented with a series of four statements, youngsters must figure out which is incorrect. Along the way, they learn, for example, how dogs greet other dogs and that puppies are born with toenails. Lavishly illustrated with photos and colorful illustrations, the book celebrates humans’ stalwart companion for more than 11,000 years. Kitty lovers will enjoy the companion book, “Truth or Lie: Cats!”



“A Purr-fect Painting”

By Joan Waites

Schiffer, 2021, \$16.99

In her popular “Artists and Their Animals” series, Maryland author/illustrator Joan Waites introduces great artists through their pets. And as an added bonus, she illustrates that book in the style of that particular artist. In this story, Henri Matisse’s cat, La Puce, watches

as the French master paints another pet cat. La Puce wants to be in a painting, too! When Matisse falls ill and cannot paint, it is La Puce who inspires him to develop his bright, stylized cut-outs. As with all her books, Waites captures the unique personality of each animal through her vivid art and text. Little ones will relish her board books, the pup-centered “Finley Feels” and the forthcoming cat-tastic “Calm Down, Cocoa.”



PRETEENS

"Looking for True"

By Tricia Springstubb
Holiday House, 2023, \$18.99

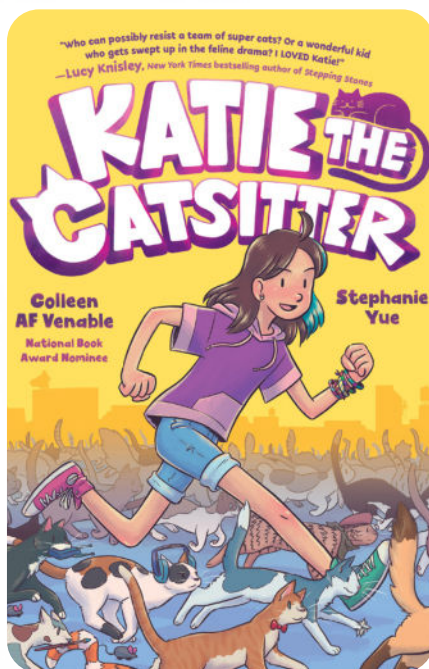
Tricia Springstubb is acclaimed for the grace and heart she brings to the challenging situations in her books. In this novel, she alternates chapters and point of view between tiny, opinionated Gladys and tall, quiet Jake. Gladys has a passion for words, Jake for trees. But though very different, these two share a fierce concern for a dog in their small, struggling town. They are sure she is being mistreated. How can they help, though, when neither is allowed a pet at home? Secrets and well-developed primary and secondary characters make this a compelling read.



"Katie the Catsitter"

By Colleen AF Venable
Illustrated by Stephanie Yue
Random House, 2021, \$14 paperback

Cat chaos! That's what occurs when Katie agrees to care for an eccentric neighbor's kitties — all 217 of them. And as if life weren't complicated enough, she stumbles upon a mystery. Does this neighbor have a secret identity, perhaps as the city's arch villain? Katie is determined to find out. As much fun as a cat cafe, this fast-paced graphic novel launched a popular series, which now includes three additional titles.

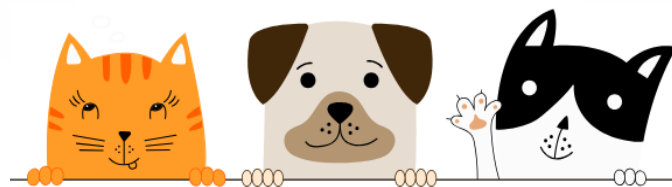
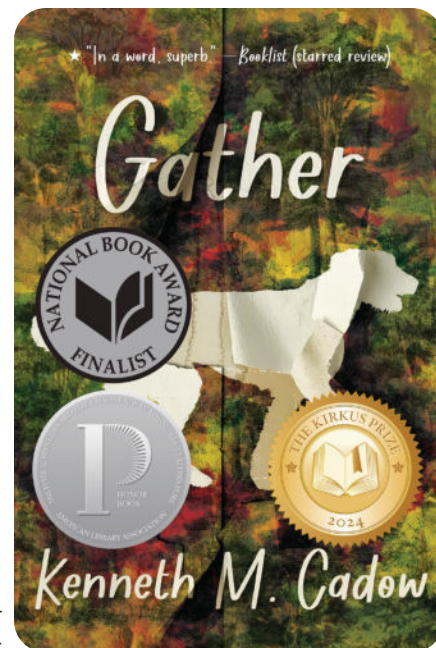


TEENS

"Gather"

By Kenneth M. Cadow
Candlewick, 2023, \$17.99

With his single mom in recovery from her opioid addiction, Ian does his best to keep his impoverished family together. Resourceful and capable, he earns some money by fixing things for kind neighbors in rural Vermont. And he finds support from an unlikely source: a large stray that wanders into the yard and stays. Ian's wry voice and his connection to his dog and the community will endear him to readers. Winner of a prestigious Printz Honor, this high-stakes debut novel is memorable, indeed.



CELEBRATING CATS AND DOGS

How might you honor your pet on International Cat Day (Aug. 8) or National Dog Day (Aug. 26)? Washington author Erica Perl suggests:

- Lots of pats and scratches of their favorite spots.
- Snuggling and reading aloud, especially a book that features their species.
- Writing a story or poem that stars your real or imaginary pet.
- Donating to your local animal rescue center, in your pet's name.

Mary Quattlebaum lives in Washington, DC, and is the author of 30 award-winning children's books, including the nonfiction chapter book "Hero Dogs." She teaches in the graduate program in writing for children at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, writes frequently for the Washington Post and is a popular school and conference speaker. Learn more at <https://maryquattlebaum.com>.

SIX KID-FRIENDLY SMOOTHIE SPOTS IN DC

These DC smoothie spots serve up fresh flavors, healthy ingredients and fun for the whole family.

By Jenna Dolch

Welcome to our refreshingly fun guide to the best family-friendly smoothie spots in DC! We've gathered six top-rated locations that offer tasty, wholesome options, ideal for families with young children. Drawing on reliable sources, including The Washington Post, Yelp, Foursquare and local reviews, we've handpicked spots with welcoming atmospheres, healthy menus and kid-approved flavors. Whether you're craving green blends, acai bowls or fruity classics, this list has something for every smoothie lover.



BIGSTOCK/GALITSKAYA

FRUITIVE

Fruitive is a plant-based cafe with two DC locations (CityCenter and Dupont Circle) offering “liquid meals” made from organic fruits, veggies and house-made almond milk. Stand-outs like Peaches and Greens sneak in leafy greens without tasting like spinach, while smoothie bowls offer extra texture and fun. With wholesome family-friendly vibes and casual seating, it’s perfect for a nutritious breakfast or snack.

- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Saturday; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday
- **Location:** 1094 Palmer Alley NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (877) 337-9833
- **Website:** <https://fruitive.com/>

RUSH BOWLS

Rush Bowls specializes in smoothie bowls packed with five servings of fruits and veggies and up to 40 g of protein. The U Street location offers a bright, casual vibe ideal for families, plus smoothies and bowls topped with granola, honey and fresh fruit.

- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **Location:** 1209 U St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (571) 683-4895
- **Website:** <https://rushbowls.com/washington-dc>

SOUTH BLOCK

South Block specializes in cold-pressed juices, acai bowls and smoothies with no added sugar or water, made daily in small batches. Try the rich Avocado Butter or a classic green blend like Super Green. With locations in Georgetown and Union Market, and with family-appeal seating, it’s a solid pick for kids who enjoy bold flavors.

- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **Location:** 3210 Grace St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (703) 465-8423
- **Website:** <https://southblock.com/>

JOE & THE JUICE

This Denmark-founded chain offers “shakes” framed as smoothies, including vegan options like the avocado-based Vegan Shake and protein-rich Re-Build Shake. With casual seating and coffee shop ambiance, it’s great for meet-ups, with smoothies paired alongside sandwiches and baked treats.

- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **Location:** 1500 K. St., Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (646) 741-8640
- **Website:** <https://joejuice.com/>

TOASTIQUE

Toastique serves gourmet toasts alongside cold-pressed juices and smoothies made with seasonal, ethically sourced ingredients. With Navy Yard and Wharf outposts, it’s a local favorite offering kid-friendly smoothie options and tasty snacks in welcoming cafes.

- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **Location:** 1331 4th St. SE, Unit 104, Washington, DC, plus additional outlets
- **Phone:** (202) 450-4119
- **Website:** <https://toastique.com/pages/navy-yard>

PURE GREEN

Pure Green is a juice and smoothie bar in Dupont Circle focusing on cold-pressed juices, acai bowls and smoothies made from superfood ingredients. Open daily from early morning to late evening, it’s a convenient stop for family-friendly nutrition with healthy add-ins like chia and spirulina.

- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **Location:** 1630 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 516-4407
- **Website:** <https://puregreenfranchise.com/washington-dc/dupont-circle/>

From colorful smoothie bowls to nutrient-packed green blends, these six DC spots offer healthy, delicious options parents and kids alike will enjoy. Whether you want a quick grab-and-go blend or a sit-down experience with wholesome snacks, these trusted, family-friendly picks have something for everyone. Grab your straws and sip away, your next tasty adventure awaits!



BIGSTOCK/KASTO

FAMILY-FRIENDLY FOOD FESTIVALS

Discover family-friendly foodie fun in August and September in the DMV area

By Jenna Dolch

Looking for tasty ways to spend late summer with kids? We've rounded up six family-friendly food festivals in August and September 2025 around Washington, DC, including regional favorites in Maryland and Virginia. Our info comes from parents-favorite guides like DC Moms, MommyPoppins and Visit Alexandria, ensuring reliable dates, times and details. In this article, you'll find lively festivals featuring everything from global bites to carnival eats, magic and live performances. Each listing includes highlights, reasons to go and all the essential information. Ready to feast and play? Let's dive in!

HOWARD COUNTY FAIR

Howard County Fairgrounds delivers classic fair food plus carnival rides, games, pony rides, pig races and more, all budget-friendly for families. Kids can eat cotton candy and sample funnel cakes, and parents can enjoy local fare, all in a lively, small-town fair atmosphere. With free admission for kids 12 and under, it's a cost-effective day out with endless fun.

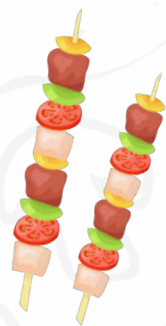
- **Date:** Aug. 2-9
- **Location:** 2210 Fairgrounds Road, West Friendship, MD
- **Hours:** Check website for times of events.
- **Contact:** (410) 442-1022
- **Website:** <https://howardcountyfairmd.com/>



SHIPGARTEN KIDS AND FAMILY FESTIVALS

Every Sunday in August, Shipgarten transforms into a family playground with themed entertainment and delicious food in a laid-back, outdoor beer garden setting. Located in McLean just minutes from Tysons Corner, Shipgarten is a casual open-air venue known for its rotating food stalls, kid- and dog-friendly atmosphere, and spacious outdoor seating. Each Sunday features a new kid-centric theme, like Smurfs & Wicked, Spider-Man & Frozen, or Renaissance Day. Activities include face-painting, moon bounces, arts and crafts, interactive photo booths and a petting zoo. Families can enjoy full menus from on-site restaurants offering burgers, brats, tacos and more while kids play. With shaded seating, parking nearby, and open green space, it's a convenient and fun way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

- **Date:** Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31
- **Location:** Shipgarten, 7581 Colshire Drive, McLean, VA
- **Hours:** Restaurant opens 11 a.m.; festival is 12-6 p.m.
- **Contact:** (703) 712-7481
- **Website:** <https://shipgarten.com/events/>



MONTGOMERY COUNTY AGRICULTURAL FAIR

Gaithersburg fairgrounds feature carnival rides, game booths and plenty of food, everything from corn dogs to fried Oreos. Families flock for Grandstand events like monster trucks, demolition derby and pig races, along with kids' activities. Admission is free for ages 11 and under, so it's great value. Whether your child's ready for thrill rides or sweet treats, there's something to please every appetite and age.

- **Date:** Aug. 8-16
- **Location:** 501 Perry Parkway, Gaithersburg, MD
- **Hours:** Check website for times of events.
- **Contact:** (301) 963-3247
- **Website:** <https://mcagfair.com/>



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY FAIR

The Prince William County fair includes mechanical bull rides, camel and pony rides, livestock shows and classic carnival food. The fair is ideal for families wanting a rural fair experience close to DC. Expect funnel cakes, corn dogs and fun fair rides. Discount days make it affordable, and the laid-back atmosphere is perfect for younger children. A true country-fair vibe with plenty of kid-appealing food.

- **Date:** Aug. 8-16
- **Location:** 10624 Dumfries Road, Manassas, VA
- **Hours:** Check website for time of events.
- **Contact:** (703) 368-0173
- **Website:** <https://www.princewilliamcountyfairgrounds.com/>

2025 AROUND THE WORLD CULTURAL FOOD FESTIVAL

Get ready to globe hop without leaving Alexandria! This free celebration offers kid-friendly moon bounces, live cultural performances, and arts and crafts, alongside food stalls representing global cuisines. With two beer gardens for parents and a food carnival vibe, this event blends fun, flavor and family time. It's stroller-friendly and pet-friendly, too, making it a win for everyone. It's a great chance for kids to experience new tastes and cultures in a relaxed outdoors setting.

- **Date:** Aug. 23
- **Location:** Oronoco Bay Park, 100 Madison St., Alexandria, VA
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
- **Contact:** (703) 889-0202
- **Website:** <https://aroundtheworldfestival.com/>

GREENBELT LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

Roosevelt Center in Greenbelt offers free carnival games, craft fair, musical performances and a corn-dog-filled fair-food lineup. Family-friendly contests include pie-eating and cornhole. With parades, live music and arts, kids are entertained all weekend. It's a community-oriented event with creative booths and tasty eats, and a strong local tradition that's easy and fun for families.

- **Date:** Aug. 29-Sept. 1
- **Location:** Historical Roosevelt Center, 101 Centerway Greenbelt, MD
- **Hours:** Check website for time of events.
- **Contact:** greenbeltlaborday@gmail.com
- **Website:** <https://greenbeltlaborday.com/>



These festivals offer tasty fun, entertainment and culture, all within reach for families this late summer. Be sure to check official sites before heading out, and enjoy the flavors of the season!



ADOBE STOCK/IONA

KID-FRIENDLY BREWERIES AND BEER GARDENS IN MARYLAND

By Seth Hagler

Whether you're catching up with friends or winding down after a long week, finding a spot that welcomes both adults and kids can feel like searching for a unicorn. But good news: Maryland is home to a growing number of breweries, beer gardens and restaurants that cater to the whole crew. We're talking kid menus, games, open spaces — and yes, great drinks for the grown-ups.

This list highlights some of the top-reviewed, family-friendly spots across the state, based on real feedback from parents and patrons. So skip the babysitter and bring the kids along — here are the best places to sip and snack together in Maryland.

YARD HOUSE

Yard House features over 100 American-style dishes and a grand selection of draft beer with 130 taps. The restaurant features a kid's menu, and they are a great choice for lunch, late night dinners and happy hour. Try the Dragon Fruit Cosmo or Jenn's Blackberry Rickey.

■ **Location:** 211 Rio Blvd., Gaithersburg

■ **Number:** (240) 683-8790

PINSTRIPES

Pinstripes is a standout establishment with its robust Italian-American menu complete with a kid's section, a full bar with happy hour and areas for bowling and bocce. The happy hour menu includes great handcrafted cocktail options in addition to the wine and draft beers.

■ **Location:**

11920 Grand Park Ave.,
North Bethesda

■ **Number:** (240) 630-3230

ALL SET RESTAURANT & BAR

Located in Silver Spring, All Set Restaurant & Bar serves American dishes specifically inspired by coastal New England. They pride themselves on being friendly and inviting – something reviewers are particularly pleased about. The menu includes a kid's section and there are numerous wines and spirits available, plus specialty cocktails like the Perfect Storm and the Lavender Hellcat.

■ **Location:**

8630 Fenton St., Plaza 5,
Silver Spring

■ **Number:** (301) 495-8800

THE HUNTER'S HOUND

Centered on Modern Irish Americana, The Hunter's Hound combines a bar and full-service restaurant. Happy hour and a kid's menu are also available to check out. Fans love the interior atmosphere.

■ **Location:**

5471 Wisconsin Ave., 206A,
Chevy Chase

■ **Number:** (301) 969-8281

SUMMER HOUSE SANTA MONICA

This popular destination has its unique Martini Hour, which includes some food specials, like the lobby cut tavern-style pizza. In addition to their kid's menu, The Cookie Bar is another feature at Summer House, where kids can enjoy a variety of sweet treats.

■ **Location:**

11825 Grand Park Ave.,
North Bethesda

■ **Phone:** (301) 881-2381

BURTONS GRILL & BAR

Burtons' happy hour features \$7 dishes, such as the General Tso chicken skewers or crab cake sliders. The service at this American restaurant is commended regularly, and it's a great option for families. Burtons has a rewards program you can sign up for, complete with their official smartphone app.

■ **Location:**

109 Commerce Square Place, Gaithersburg

■ **Phone:** (240) 798-2021

DAVE & BUSTER'S

Dave & Buster's is a go-to for families. Kids have numerous arcade games to enjoy, and the \$5 happy hour at the sports bar is available from 4-7 p.m. Monday through Friday. There are also regular weekly events like All-You-Can-Eat Wings and Half Price Games.

■ **Location:**

8661 Colesville Road, Suite E102,
Silver Spring

■ **Phone:** (301) 273-2700

OLIVE LOUNGE & GRILL

Anyone interested in Middle Eastern or Mediterranean cuisine should check out Olive Lounge & Grill. This relaxed, kid-friendly establishment is family-run and features an extensive menu. Enjoy happy hour at their full bar and complement your drink with some dips and pita – perhaps a rosemary vodka lemonade with baba ghanoush on the side.

■ **Location:** 7006 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park

■ **Phone:** (301) 270-5154



BIGSTOCK/STOKKETE

What to Buy When Inflation is High

Food prices have jumped nearly 24% since 2020 — but some healthy grocery staples are holding steady. Here's how to shop smart and eat well without overspending.

By Lauren Ward (for Hers)

Grocery prices have soared in recent years, from supply chain disruptions during the pandemic to avian flu outbreaks impacting egg prices today. From 2020 to 2024, food prices jumped nearly 24%. That means if you used to spend \$400 a month on groceries at the start of 2020, the same shopping cart would now cost nearly \$500.

While some issues like supply chain disruption may not be having as big of an impact as they were a few years ago, new economic uncertainties are popping up that could affect prices.

All of these large-scale news events can feel very personal when you're shopping at your local grocery store. And it can be even more challenging to steer away from cheaper, ultraprocessed foods and stick to clean groceries that help you meet your health goals.

Hers looked at annual price increases of whole food grocery items to help you identify which items you can save on and which ones you may want to consider swapping out for a less expensive alternative.

Key findings

- Eggs continue to hurt consumers' wallets.
- Tomatoes and lettuce experienced major price drops between April 2024 and April 2025.
- Beef and ham prices have spiked over the past year, while chicken is more stable.

25 healthy groceries ranked from lowest to highest price increases over the past year

- Tomatoes: -6.4%
- Lettuce: -6.4%
- Frozen vegetables: -3.7%
- Shelf stable fish and seafood: -1.7%
- Other fresh vegetables: -1.6%
- Citrus fruits: -0.7%
- Potatoes: -0.5%
- Canned vegetables: -0.2%
- Bananas: no change
- Pork chops: +0.6%
- Turkey: +0.7%
- Fresh and frozen fish and seafood: +1%
- Other fresh fruits: +1.3%
- Other dairy: +1.6%
- Cheese and fresh whole chicken: +2.1% (tied)
- Fresh and frozen chicken parts: +2.8%
- Bacon: +3.9%
- Ham: +4.7%
- Dried beans, peas, and lentils: +5.6%
- Fresh apples: +6.8%
- Uncooked beef steaks: +7%
- Eggs: +7%
- Uncooked beef roasts: +8.8%
- Uncooked ground beef: +10%

Affordable grocery store swaps

How can you battle inflation prices while sticking to your health goals? Swap out the priciest items on your shopping list with cheaper options that have a similar nutritional profile. Here are the groceries with some of the biggest price spikes over the past year, plus some alternatives to consider.

Egg prices continue to rise: Swap for other dairy proteins

Between March 2024 and March 2025, there was a 60% increase in the price of eggs, and another 7% between April 2024 and April 2025. As of May 2025, the national average cost for a dozen eggs was \$5.12.

Instead of whipping up an omelette every morning, consider Greek yogurt or cottage cheese as an alternative breakfast protein—at least for the time being. These dairy items only increased 2.7% and when you look at price per ounce, yogurt averages \$0.19 while eggs are \$0.21.

And when you opt for a low-fat Greek yogurt, you'll only get 1.9 grams of fat in half a cup compared to 5.3 grams in one egg. Protein content is comparable in both, with half a cup of each containing around 12 grams.

Beef cuts are costlier: Swap for chicken

Depending on the cut, beef prices have increased 7% to 10% (ground beef is the most expensive option). If you still want a meat fix but at a fraction of the price, incorporate more chicken into your meal planning. Prices only rose between 2.1% and 2.8% over the past year. A fresh whole chicken costs \$2.06 per pound, while ground beef jumped to \$5.80. Plus, you'll get a similar amount of protein in both choices.

Apples are the fruit with the biggest price hike: Swap for bananas

The cost of apples jumped 6.8%, so consider some other fruit options to cut back on your final grocery bill. Banana prices stayed the same and have a similar fiber content. For comparison, a pound

of Fuji apples costs \$1.41, while bananas average just \$0.64 per pound.

To truly maximize the nutritional content of your banana, dig in while it's still a little green. You'll enjoy higher fiber and lower sugar levels before it fully ripens.

Ham and bacon prices surge while pork chop prices remain moderate

Ham prices jumped 4.7% over the past year, averaging \$4.74 per pound. A budget-friendly swap would be pork chops, which increased in price by just 0.6%. The price is slightly lower at \$4.24 per pound, and both contain around 5 grams of protein per ounce.

Similarly, bacon prices increased nearly 4% and cost \$7 per pound. Ground turkey is a strong alternative to consider; it's a lean protein that has only risen 0.7% over the past year.

Focus on fresh salads over canned vegetables

Lettuce and tomato prices both decreased by 6.4%. On top of that, other fresh vegetables dropped by 1.6%. With romaine lettuce averaging \$2.92 per pound and tomatoes just \$1.79 per pound, it's easy to throw together a high-fiber salad that will keep you feeling full. Canned vegetables saw a slight drop as well, but the nutritional content tends to be lower due to the preservation process.

Choose fruits over a traditional charcuterie board

Classic charcuterie board ingredients are largely more expensive than they were a year ago. The cost of cheese increased 2.1%, and cheddar now averages \$5.74 per pound. The price of meats and crackers have remained steady, but garnishes like olives, pickles and relishes are up 3%.

Consider swapping out some of your pricier items for fresh fruit, perhaps alongside a dip or spread. Fresh fruit outside of apples, bananas, and citrus only increased 1.3%, and oranges are down 0.2%. Plus, you'll be adding more healthy fiber to your snack board instead of focusing solely on high-fat meats,

cheese, and carbs. Just remember to incorporate protein elsewhere. For a healthier protein in place of sausage, consider a side of chicken wings as an unprocessed, less expensive alternative.

Methodology

To identify how grocery prices have changed in the past year, Hers pulled 12-month price data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. Our list focuses on whole foods, including unprocessed meats and other proteins (like eggs and dried beans), vegetables, and fruit. We excluded canned fruit because of the potential for added sugar. We then ranked each item based on the change in price over a one-year period from April 2024 to April 2025, with the lowest price increases ranking best.

3 tips to manage your grocery budget without sacrificing quality food

Looking for more ways to rein in your grocery spending? Here are three tips that can stretch your budget even further.

- **Shop your kitchen first:** Here's a number that may shock you: The USDA estimates that Americans throw away around 30% of their food at home. Help prevent food (and money) waste by checking your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry before you head out to shop. Then build a meal plan around those items and fill in any gaps at the grocery store.
- **Check out weekly ads:** Most grocery stores offer weekly sales, especially on seasonal items. Prioritizing these items first can help you afford more fresh produce and price-reduced proteins.
- **Get outside your comfort zone:** Experiment with different ingredients from your usual rotation, like various meat cuts or cheaper fruits and vegetables you wouldn't normally pick up.

This story was produced by [Hers](#) and reviewed and distributed by [Stacker](#).



BIGSTOCK/STOKKETE

Where It's Pricier to Parent

Childcare, housing, food and medical costs have surged in many U.S. metro areas. Here's where costs are rising the fastest (and falling the most).

By Alli Pavaglio

Common costs associated with raising a child — such as childcare, additional food, medical costs, housing and more — can add up to tens of thousands of dollars per year. Understanding the costs associated with raising a child is essential to family well-being and the average projected annual cost of raising a small child has changed depending on the metro area. SmartAsset.com breaks down the cost of raising a child in major U.S. metros including the Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD metro area and the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC, metro area.

The Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD metro area ranked in the top 10 of places where the cost of raising a child grew most. Ranked at number two, the Maryland metro area experienced

one of the biggest increases in cost of raising a child with a 17.27% change since 2024.

The places where the cost of raising a child grew most vary. Factoring in the costs for childcare, additional housing, food, medical necessities and other expenses makes the total price tag add up much higher in some places. This article breaks down the cost of raising a child in major U.S. metros including the most and least expensive metro areas and where costs increased and decreased the most.

SmartAsset.com ranked 48 major U.S. metro areas based on the average estimated annual cost of raising a small child by using MIT's Living Wage Calculator data to compare the living costs of a household with two working adults and one child to that of a childless household with two working adults in 48 of the largest metro areas. The annual change in these costs was also evaluated. The cost of raising a child can change quickly, making it important for budding families to keep an eye on trends in their locale.

Top 10 Places Where the Cost of Raising a Child Grew Most

1) St. Louis, MO

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 22.45%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$24,317
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$19,858
- Cost of childcare: \$13,230
- Housing costs: \$2,770
- Food costs: \$1,989
- Medical costs: \$1,844
- Transportation costs: \$3,046
- Civic costs: \$573
- Other costs: \$863

2) Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 17.27%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$28,068
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$23,934
- Cost of childcare: \$14,120
- Housing costs: \$4,350
- Food costs: \$2,093
- Medical costs: \$3,426
- Transportation costs: \$2,815
- Civic costs: \$474
- Other costs: \$791

3) Indianapolis-Carmel-Greenwood, IN

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 15.27%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$26,947
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$23,378
- Cost of childcare: \$15,780
- Housing costs: \$2,300
- Food costs: \$1,777
- Medical costs: \$2,461
- Transportation costs: \$3,194
- Civic costs: \$573
- Other costs: \$863

4) Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 13.80%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$30,660
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$26,943
- Cost of childcare: \$17,971
- Housing costs: \$3,495
- Food costs: \$2,096

- Medical costs: \$2,677
- Transportation costs: \$2,852
- Civic costs: \$629
- Other costs: \$941

5) Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 12.50%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$28,598
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$25,421
- Cost of childcare: \$13,130
- Housing costs: \$5,471
- Food costs: \$1,816
- Medical costs: \$3,020
- Transportation costs: \$3,507
- Civic costs: \$657
- Other costs: \$998

6) Kansas City, MO

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 12.01%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$23,143
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$20,661
- Cost of childcare: \$12,714
- Housing costs: \$1,968
- Food costs: \$2,003
- Medical costs: \$1,879
- Transportation costs: \$3,142
- Civic costs: \$573
- Other costs: \$863

7) Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 11.91%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$34,448
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$30,781
- Cost of childcare: \$19,195
- Housing costs: \$4,571
- Food costs: \$2,215
- Medical costs: \$3,956
- Transportation costs: \$2,856
- Civic costs: \$657
- Other costs: \$998

8) Oklahoma City, OK

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 11.66%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$22,846

- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$20,460
- Cost of childcare: \$10,753
- Housing costs: \$2,613
- Food costs: \$1,879
- Medical costs: \$3,017
- Transportation costs: \$3,320
- Civic costs: \$474
- Other costs: \$791

9) Salt Lake City-Murray, UT

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 11.25%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$23,631
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$21,241
- Cost of childcare: \$10,484
- Housing costs: \$3,548
- Food costs: \$1,878
- Medical costs: \$2,988
- Transportation costs: \$3,078
- Civic costs: \$657
- Other costs: \$998

10) San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA

- One year change in cost of raising a child: 10.03%
- Total annual cost of raising a child in 2025: \$37,867
- Total annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$34,415
- Cost of childcare: \$20,966
- Housing costs: \$5,740
- Food costs: \$2,241
- Medical costs: \$3,835
- Transportation costs: \$3,431
- Civic costs: \$657
- Other costs: \$998

Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC: The DC metro area was listed at a rank of 13 under the cost of raising a child in the largest U.S. metro areas, dropping from third most expensive in last year's study. This metro area also fell under top 10 places where the cost of raising a child decreased the most, experiencing a 15% drop in Washington, DC.

Quick stats for DC metro area

- Annual cost of raising a child 2025: \$30,157
- Annual cost of raising a child 2024: \$35,554
- One year change: -15.18%



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DC Named a Top Metro for Working Moms

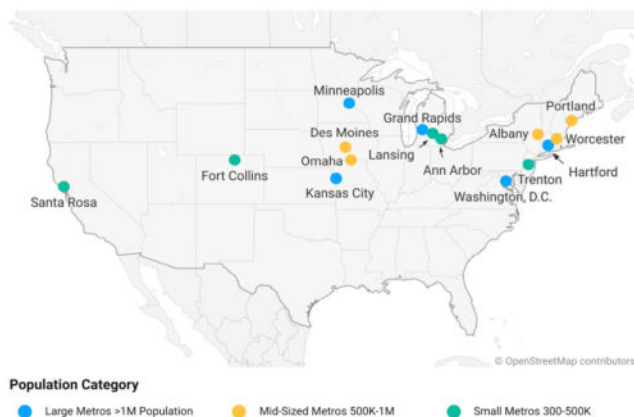
Juggling career, kids and daily life is no easy task — but these U.S. metro areas are making it a little easier for working moms to thrive.

By Andreea Neculae for CoworkingCafe

Balancing kids, a career, a semi-clean house and maybe a few minutes to drink a cup of coffee while it's still hot is no small feat. And yet, millions of women in the U.S. do just that every single day. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, 73.2% of mothers with children younger than 18 are in the workforce. That's not just a stat — it's a movement.

But, let's not sugarcoat it: Being a working mom in America can be tough. Between the rising cost of childcare, long commute

National Distribution of Best Large, Mid-Sized & Small Metros for Working Mothers



According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, 73.2% of mothers with children younger than 18 are in the workforce. That's not just a stat — it's a movement.

times and the ongoing juggle of “being everywhere at once,” it's clear that some places are more working-mom-friendly than others. So, which places are making life a little easier for moms trying to have it all (or at least most of it)?

To find the best metros for working moms, [CoworkingCafe](#) analyzed data across three key categories — work, education and childcare, and health and environment. Metrics included the share of employed moms; work-from-home and self-employment rates; commute times; income; and access to employer-based health care. We also looked at childcare availability and affordability; school quality; cost of living; and access to pediatricians and clean air.

MetroParent has listed the top five metros and why they ranked so high. To see a full list of the rankings split up by the metros into three population brackets — large, mid-sized and small — visit [Stacker](#).

CoworkingCafe

From Albany, New York, to Hartford, Connecticut, the Northeast is packed with metro areas that score high on metrics like childcare access, female employment and flexible work options. These metros often benefit from strong health care infrastructure, education systems and relatively compact geographies, which means shorter commutes and more time at home.

The Midwest also makes a strong showing with top metros like Minneapolis, Des Moines, Iowa, and Ann Arbor, Michigan. While the region may not always get the same attention as the coasts, it shines when it comes to affordability, community support and work-life balance.

Meanwhile, a few standout metros — like Santa Rosa, California, and Fort Collins, Colorado — show that the West is no slouch either, especially in the small metro category, where lifestyle quality and access to outdoor space can be big perks for families.

Working motherhood is the norm. Now cities are playing catch-up

Before diving into the rankings, here's a snapshot of what working motherhood looks like on a national scale.

Across the country, about 73% of moms with children younger than 18 are working. That rate has steadily increased from 68.3% in 2015, reflecting a gradual return to — and even surpassing — pre-pandemic employment levels.

Nearly 17% of them work from home, whether that's a fully remote setup or the occasional kitchen-table office. Looking at the broader picture for 2023, only 13.8% of the total working population works from home, whereas the rate is slightly higher — 15.3% — for the female working population. This suggests that women are more inclined toward remote work relative to the overall workforce.

At the same time, about 9% are self-employed, pointing to a growing interest in flexible, independent work options. This share has gradually climbed from 7.4% in 2015 to 8.7% in 2023. The biggest jump came during the pandemic, from 7.8% in 2019 to 8.8% in 2021 and it's held steady since — suggesting a lasting shift toward entrepreneurial or freelance paths.

Working moms log an average of 37.5 hours per week and their typical commute clocks in at just more than 25 minutes each way. Of course, on paper, those numbers might seem manageable. But, when you factor in everything else — including childcare, pickups, school projects, grocery runs and bedtime routines — they add up quickly.

And, then there's childcare. Access and affordability are two of the biggest hurdles working moms face. A metro area can have a strong job market, but if childcare is scarce or unaffordable, it can block moms from fully participating in the workforce.

When it comes to supporting working mothers, some regions stand out more than others. A quick glance at the national distribution map shows that the Northeast and Midwest are leading the way.

CONTINUED ...



**Hiring Help at Home?
Know the Law!**

In D.C., written contracts are required for nannies, cleaners, and attendants. Learn your legal responsibilities to support your family and your employee.

HAND IN HAND
THE DOMESTIC
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Where moms are finding the most support

1. Portland, Maine – 88.4 points

Portland tops the list among mid-sized metros thanks to a strong showing across work-related metrics and family support systems. With 79.2% of moms employed and nearly 20% working from home, moms here have access to both jobs and the flexibility to manage family life. Self-employment is also high with 14.4% of working moms running their own businesses—perfect for those looking for autonomy and flexible hours.

It's also worth noting that the average commute time is just 22.3 minutes and moms are working an average of 36.6 hours per week, thereby striking a nice balance between professional and personal life. And, when it comes to childcare, Portland offers a good number of centers (892 per 100,000 children) and keeps childcare costs manageable at \$11,444 annually—about 10.2% of a family's income, which is reasonable for the region.

Maine also offers a Family Medical Leave Act for employers with more than 15 employees, and Portland has built a reputation for progressive, family-friendly policies, including flexible workplace benefits. Combined with a strong education score, excellent air quality and top-tier pediatric access, it's no surprise Portland ranks #1 here.

2. Des Moines, Iowa – 86.5 points

Des Moines is a gem for working families in the Midwest, ranking second in this group. An impressive 80.5% of moms are employed and 18.2% of working moms work from home. That level of flexibility can make all the difference for busy parents. To top it off, the commute time is low (just 20.3 minutes) and working moms average 37.9 hours per week, so families can enjoy a little more time together.

Des Moines also shines in affordability: Childcare costs average just \$7,368 annually, making it the most affordable in this group at only 7% of median family income. What's more, the metro has 1,305 childcare centers per 100,000 kids — an exceptional number that shows how well it supports working parents. Not to be outdone, the city's education score is the best among mid-sized metros.

Even though Iowa doesn't mandate paid family leave, many large employers in Des Moines offer their own generous leave packages. Paired with its affordability and high number of schools and care centers, Des Moines is incredibly attractive for working families.

3. Minneapolis – 86.4 points

With 82% of mothers employed, the Twin Cities provide an excellent environment for families looking to balance work and home life. Moreover, with 37.8 hours worked per week by working moms, on average, it's clear that Minneapolis is a metro that supports women in the workforce by offering both flexibility and stability.

Another area where Minneapolis shines is in the number of moms working from home with 24.8% of them choosing a home office. Additionally, the metro's paid family leave policies are designed to offer relief to parents through eight weeks of paid parental leave available for those employed by larger businesses.

The region also boasts an impressive 748 childcare centers per 100,000 children, which makes finding quality care for kids easier. On top of this, the metro's reasonable cost of living helps families manage those childcare costs without financial strain. The strong education system — with more than 180 schools per 100,000 children — is another indicator that the metro values both career growth and child development, making it a great place for families.

4. Washington, DC – 80.3 points

Washington, DC, ranks second among top large metros for working moms, with 77.2% of mothers employed. On average, they work 38.9 hours per week, which speaks to the commitment of families here to maintaining strong careers while juggling parenting responsibilities. The capital makes it easier for moms that enjoy the perks of flex work, offering 6.9 coworking spaces per 100,000 people.

DC is also outstanding in terms of childcare availability with more than 1,000 childcare centers per 100,000 children. This makes it easier for working moms to find reliable and accessible care for their kids. Along the same lines, DC also stands out for its paid family leave by offering eight weeks of paid parental leave for eligible employees. Additionally, the capital's high density of pediatricians (590.7 per 100,000 children) means parents can be confident that their kids have access to quality health care.

DC also offers strong employment-based health insurance for working mothers with 74.4% of moms receiving it through their jobs. This gives families peace of mind, knowing they're covered for medical needs. Beyond health care and leave policies, the metro's high education ranking — with 100 schools per 100,000 children — ensures that children have access to quality education, which adds yet another layer of support for working parents.

5. Santa Rosa, California – 79.6 points

Santa Rosa leads the pack of best small metros for working moms. With 78% of moms employed, including 17.8% working from home and 9.4% self-employed — there's a good degree of flexibility for working parents. Moms here work about 35.4 hours per week with 22-minute commutes, which helps keep days manageable.

As you might expect, childcare isn't cheap — \$12,711 annually, or 10.4% of family income — but access is good, with 901 centers per 100,000 kids. On the upside, health care coverage is strong with 75% of moms insured through work. At the same time, California's Paid Family Leave program also gives up to eight weeks of partially paid time off, making it easier to take a break when a new baby arrives. Add in the area's high environmental health score and air quality and Santa Rosa becomes a great option for health-conscious families.

Curious on how working moms fare in your city? Explore the tables below to see rankings for large, mid-sized and small U.S. metro areas.

This story was produced by CoworkingCafe and reviewed and distributed by Stacker.

Top U.S. Small Metros for Working Mothers

Large Metros >1M Population Mid-Sized Metros 500K-1M Small Metros 300K-500K

Work													Education					Health and Environment			
Metro Area	Rank	Total Score	Work Score	Employment Among Mothers (%)	Remote Work Rate* (%)	Self-Employed* (%)	Average Worked Hours*	Average Commute Time*	Annual Median Income*	Employer-Based Health Insurance*	Cost of Living	Coworking Space Density per 100k Working-Age Residents	Education Score	Childcare Establishments Density per 100k Children	Annual Childcare Cost	Childcare Cost as a Share of Family Income	School Density per 100k Children	Schools Rank	Health and Environment Score	Pediatricians per 100k Children	Air Quality Index
Santa Rosa, CA	1	79.61	65.9	78.0%	17.8%	9.4%	35.4	22.3	\$60,000	75.0%	110.1	4.1	62.3	901	\$12,711	10.4%	201	40	48.8	112.5	18.0
Lansing, MI	2	74.35	63.6	78.8%	20.1%	6.5%	37.2	20.4	\$50,000	78.1%	92.8	2.3	62.8	889	\$9,326	9.9%	178	29	34.9	111.0	42.8
Fort Collins, CO	3	73.70	75.4	77.1%	29.0%	11.3%	36.0	21.8	\$55,000	69.1%	96.6	6.4	45.6	710	\$15,531	13.2%	141	8	32.0	119.8	56.0
Ann Arbor, MI	4	71.14	67.7	72.6%	22.3%	10.9%	36.9	23.1	\$56,120	76.8%	98.0	6.5	52.8	768	\$12,660	10.9%	159	29	33.3	111.0	45.7
Trenton, NJ	5	68.46	63.3	73.8%	23.7%	8.6%	38.2	24.1	\$61,000	69.0%	102.1	6.5	53.8	725	\$13,198	11.2%	131	1	38.2	123.2	47.4
Lincoln, NE	6	66.23	58.0	78.5%	14.8%	10.5%	36.8	18.0	\$42,000	69.2%	92.0	1.8	63.5	1,080	\$9,093	9.1%	137	21	22.7	84.0	41.8
Lubbock, TX	7	64.99	62.6	74.1%	14.7%	13.7%	35.6	14.8	\$40,000	66.6%	90.9	4.7	51.3	504	\$7,358	10.0%	172	38	34.0	85.3	21.7
Springfield, MO	8	62.87	52.3	74.4%	12.9%	8.0%	37.9	21.0	\$44,000	75.7%	89.3	1.9	56.8	680	\$7,968	9.6%	157	26	53.8	154.6	45.9
Springfield, MA	9	58.46	46.2	76.8%	6.7%	5.9%	34.4	22.5	\$42,000	60.7%	98.4	3.1	48.6	877	\$13,632	15.3%	176	5	86.7	221.0	42.9
York, PA	10	55.17	51.1	80.6%	12.5%	8.3%	37.4	27.3	\$44,000	74.7%	96.6	2.8	48.9	572	\$9,555	9.8%	106	9	50.0	147.4	46.6

*These metrics reflect data for employed mothers

Source: CoworkingCafe - Created with Datawrapper

CoworkingCafe

Top U.S. Large Metros for Working Mothers

Large Metros >1M Population Mid-Sized Metros 500K-1M Small Metros 300K-500K

Work														Education					Health and Environment				
				Employment Among Mothers (%)	Remote Work Rate* (%)	Self- Employed* (%)	Average Hours*	Average Commute Time*	Annual Median Income*	Employer- Based Health Insurance*	Cost of Living	Coworking Space Density per 100k Residents		Childcare Establishments Density per 100k Children	Annual Childcare Cost	Childcare Cost as a Share of Family Income	School Density per 100k Children			Health and Environ- ment Score	Pediatricians per 100k Children	Air Quality Index	
Metro Area	Rank	Total Score	Work Score										Education Score					Schools Rank					
Minneapolis, MN	1	86.38	63.0	82.0%	24.8%	8.5%	37.8	23.5	\$60,000	78.7%	104.5	4.4	65.5	748	\$12,068	9.9%	183	15	33.2		108.6	49.7	
Washington, D.C.	2	80.34	52.3	77.2%	26.2%	7.8%	38.9	32.0	\$70,000	74.4%	108.6	6.9	57.6	1,004	\$13,796	9.2%	100	10	91.1		590.7	51.7	
Kansas City, MO	3	68.82	51.8	76.5%	21.6%	6.1%	38.3	22.6	\$47,000	80.5%	93.3	3.8	60.8	714	\$7,949	7.7%	146	26	34.0		154.6	56.6	
Grand Rapids, MI	4	68.71	54.1	79.0%	14.5%	6.9%	36.3	19.8	\$45,000	79.5%	95.2	3.1	57.4	701	\$8,785	9.1%	159	29	32.8		111.0	50.7	
Hartford, CT	5	67.65	49.7	79.0%	17.6%	7.2%	37.3	24.4	\$56,000	74.9%	102.6	1.8	60.4	1,019	\$14,491	12.4%	152	3	41.5		154.1	45.9	
Columbus, OH	6	67.62	54.8	78.1%	20.7%	6.9%	37.6	23.0	\$52,000	74.5%	94.5	5.1	54.1	929	\$10,885	10.8%	130	18	35.6		144.2	52.5	
Denver, CO	7	66.28	59.4	76.3%	26.5%	9.4%	37.5	26.1	\$57,000	75.6%	105.5	8.3	49.1	673	\$15,250	11.8%	138	8	22.4		119.8	66.9	
Portland, OR	8	66.26	60.2	74.8%	25.0%	11.5%	36.0	23.8	\$52,000	77.1%	106.6	4.0	42.4	744	\$13,884	12.1%	128	24	40.7		108.7	39.2	
St. Louis, MO	9	66.10	52.1	81.8%	16.8%	6.4%	38.0	23.3	\$48,000	77.9%	96.3	4.2	57.5	817	\$9,671	9.4%	147	26	32.0		154.6	59.4	
Salt Lake City, UT	10	65.52	59.6	73.0%	22.7%	8.9%	34.9	21.7	\$41,000	79.4%	96.4	5.5	46.4	705	\$9,608	8.5%	111	37	27.2		81.8	53.5	

*These metrics reflect data for employed mothers

Source: CoworkingCafe - Created with Datawrapper

CoworkingCafe

Top U.S. Mid-Sized Metros for Working Mothers

Large Metros >1M Population Mid-Sized Metros 500K-1M Small Metros 300K-500K

Metro Area	Rank	Total Score	Work										Education					Health and Environment			
			Work Score	Employment Among Mothers (%)	Remote Work Rate* (%)	Self-Employed* (%)	Average Worked Hours*	Average Commute Time*	Annual Median Income*	Employer-Based Health Insurance*	Cost of Living	Coworking Space Density per 100k Residents	Education Score	Childcare Establishments Density per 100k Children	Annual Childcare Cost	Childcare Cost as a Share of Family Income	School Density per 100k Children	Schools Rank	Health and Environment Score	Pediatricians per 100k Children	Air Quality Index
Portland, ME	1	88.44	68.5	79.2%	19.6%	14.4%	36.6	22.3	\$53,000	73.5%	103.6	5.1	76.6	892	\$11,444	10.2%	180	7	60.6	132.5	42.7
Des Moines, IA	2	86.46	68.3	80.5%	18.2%	8.0%	37.9	20.3	\$52,000	78.9%	92.7	4.7	82.5	1,305	\$7,368	7.0%	129	16	41.3	85.0	44.8
Worcester, MA	3	76.75	61.0	77.9%	21.9%	7.3%	36.6	26.6	\$56,000	75.9%	102.0	2.1	54.8	742	\$14,519	12.8%	145	5	94.9	221.0	41.2
Omaha, NE	4	73.90	62.2	80.9%	16.4%	9.2%	38.3	20.9	\$48,000	73.6%	92.5	2.8	74.1	901	\$8,211	7.8%	153	21	37.5	84.0	49.1
Albany, NY	5	70.62	60.8	82.6%	12.9%	4.9%	37.7	23.1	\$57,000	77.2%	97.6	4.1	53.3	750	\$12,751	11.9%	127	6	74.3	164.1	40.3
Syracuse, NY	6	66.78	54.8	80.3%	11.6%	7.4%	37.4	21.3	\$50,000	68.4%	95.2	1.5	59.3	908	\$11,779	12.2%	139	6	75.2	164.1	39.2
New Haven, CT	7	63.57	57.5	80.8%	15.2%	10.3%	36.0	22.7	\$50,000	68.5%	103.5	1.4	51.6	1,011	\$15,787	15.1%	137	3	65.3	154.1	47.1
Bridgeport, CT	8	63.51	56.7	72.5%	20.6%	11.3%	37.5	30.6	\$60,000	67.4%	106.5	6.6	53.8	1,085	\$18,817	13.6%	117	3	64.3	154.1	48.3
Harrisburg, PA	9	63.14	58.9	76.5%	20.3%	5.6%	37.2	20.6	\$48,000	73.5%	96.5	1.6	49.3	566	\$10,128	10.4%	112	9	61.6	147.4	48.6
Boise City, ID	10	62.35	61.2	72.8%	22.0%	12.1%	35.6	22.1	\$40,000	75.0%	93.4	2.5	61.3	593	\$7,218	7.2%	140	33	22.4	46.9	50.7

*These metrics reflect data for employed mothers

Source: CoworkingCafe - Created with Datawrapper

CoworkingCafe



BIGSTOCK/ZURUETA

Let Them Be Bored

Why boredom is good for your kids — and how to help them through it without jumping in to save the day

What do you do when you hear your child say (or wail, or whine, or shriek), “I’m bored! There’s nothing to do.” Do you cringe, clench your teeth and brace yourself? Or maybe you start dancing like a circus monkey, trying to entertain and entice them into some new activity? Perhaps a screen is offered to quiet them?

We all want to avoid this uncomfortable yet normal human emotion. Boredom generates feelings of irritability, fatigue and lethargy. No wonder kids come to us looking for escape and solutions. In our adult-led, screen-based culture of childhood, tolerating boredom is not a skill most children practice regularly.

However, boredom can also pave the way to riches of creativity, self-empowerment and even joy. I think of it as a desert of discomfort that, once traversed, leads you to an oasis

of discovery. If we don’t allow kids the time and space to cross over the boredom territory, they might well become adults who always need someone or something else to entertain or motivate them.

With a few new thoughts, a smattering of new actions and a focus on the environment, parents can encourage kids to solve this problem themselves.

What to think

When your child comes to you whining and protesting, refuse to feel sorry for them and instead try on one of these thoughts:

- “My kid is resourceful and capable.”
- “Struggling is normal.”
- “Boredom is not urgent.”

By not rescuing your child from boredom, you are helping them explore their own preferences and interests. These experiences are building blocks of self-esteem, giving them a chance to impress themselves by solving their own problems.

What to do and say

Marjie Longshore, executive director of the Family Leadership Center, says she always greeted her kids' wails of boredom with a bright (and heartfelt), "Oh, I can't wait to see what you come up with!" And then she went about her business.

Patti Cancellier, certified parent educator with The Parent Encouragement Program, reminds us to avoid lectures about how much harder things were for us back in the day and how lucky they are to have so many more options.

Try the bathroom technique and suddenly be indisposed. Sometimes that little space in time can activate a child to go find something to do.

You could also offer, if appropriate, that they join you in what you are doing. Most of us do a terrible job making the adult world seem enticing and fun, but it really can be. Invite your 4-year-old to remove the tops of strawberries. A 7-year-old might enjoy getting their hands dirty in the garden or love the challenge of pushing a heavy wheelbarrow.

Environment

Sarah Hill is a school teacher with over 30 years of experience, and her daughter, Hannah, is six years into her own teaching career. They emphatically agree that kids are perfectly capable at school but the minute they see their parents, they become demanders of special services.

Armed with that knowledge, instead of using our energy entertaining them, Sarah and Hannah suggest we focus instead on creating a richly creative environment:

- Clear off a shelf or two to make room for Boredom Busters — a craft bin, toy closet or art supplies. Let them use scotch tape, donate that nice pair of scissors to the cause, give them fresh paper (not too much).
- Be ok with a mess. We spend our adult lives doing things swiftly, neatly and efficiently. But boredom gets busted slowly, messily and circuitously. Think of it as an investment in your child's brain development.
- Empty tables situated near natural light can work miracles for play. When screens were ruining the family life of some of my clients, I helped them declutter their basement toy closet and transform it into an exclusive toy "boutique." In their case, this meant artfully displaying a collection of Lego sets. We put a big card table near some natural light and left it empty. Unprompted, their son and a friend went "shopping" in the basement looking for something to do. They spent a happy two hours building a Lego rocket ship. It didn't end there. Without a suggestion or nudge from an adult, both kids now spend their free time happily constructing Legos. Industriousness, creativity and imagination are like muscles that need to be used and strengthened. Instead of boredom being an uninvited and unlikable visitor, think of it as a little beacon showing you that your child needs more time and space to practice thinking, experimenting and exploring the world around them.

Paige Trevor is a certified parent educator with the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP), a parent coach and professional organizer. Paige has a free Teens and Screens Resource and publishes a monthly newsletter on Parenting and Organizing.

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Trauma Treatment for Your Children

From play therapy to EMDR, trauma-informed treatment approaches can help children process painful experiences, rebuild trust and begin to heal.

By Lori Rothfeld, LMSW

Childhood trauma can result from acute or prolonged emotionally or physically threatening experiences, including abuse or neglect, accidents, illness, familial conflict, loss, violence and bullying, or discrimination. Traumatized children may feel overwhelmed, helpless or shocked and have difficulty processing their experiences. Signs of trauma include prolonged anger, sadness or fear; numbness; nightmares or flashbacks; irritability; and frequent upset.

Through treatment, children can carry traumatic memories less painfully. Any good therapy for trauma starts with a “trauma-informed therapist.” Trauma-informed practice principles include recognizing trauma and bearing witness to it; creating a safe space with structure and predictability; collaborating with children and their families; drawing on their client’s strength and resilience; and being sensitive to issues of culture, ethnicity, gender, class and identity.

Trauma-informed therapists use many approaches, including:

Play Therapy: Play therapy uses play and creative expression to assist children in processing experiences, including trauma. Play therapy is effective for young children and can be modified to work with older children. Caregiver involvement can enhance the healing process. Theraplay activities involving caregivers and children can help heal relationship ruptures.

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy uses psychoeducation, coping skills, gradual exposure to memories of the trauma, and cognitive processing techniques to help children manage their traumatic experiences. The involvement of caregivers can help children rebuild trust in adult relationships.

Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE): PE encourages children to describe their memories in as much detail as possible and reexperience painful emotions within the safe context of a therapy session. The goal is to recount the events in detail repeatedly to decrease the intense reactions to the initial trauma.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR): EMDR works with unprocessed adverse experiences and releases the emotions associated with them. The therapist will instruct individuals to engage in certain activities, such as repetitive eye movements or tapping on their arms with their hands, while revisiting the memory of a complex emotion.

Movement, music or art therapies: These forms of therapy can stand on their own or integrate with other treatments. Most trauma therapists agree that healing the “whole brain,” including through creative modalities, is essential for healing.

Family Therapy: Family therapy can be a valuable adjunct to any trauma therapy, as it can help children to feel more secure and develop more supportive and trusting relationships. Loved ones can bear witness to the trauma and further validate it. Carefully constructed family therapy can rebuild trust between children and caretakers who may have been the cause of or may not have protected them from trauma.

While the effects of trauma on children can be long-lasting and severe, with adequate support and trauma-informed treatment, children can develop coping skills, begin healing and ultimately reconnect with safe loved ones as they develop and grow.

Lori Rothfeld, LMSW, is a therapist who provides trauma-informed care at **Jonah Green and Associates, LLC (JGA)**. JGA therapists work with children, teens, families and adults in North Bethesda, Maryland, as well as clients in Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Washington, DC, and the surrounding areas.

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Eco-Friendly Tips for Pet Owners

By Sandi Schwartz

If you have a lovable, furry friend in your home, then you know it's like having another family member to care for. Pets bring so much joy and comfort to us, but raising a pet also requires a tremendous deal of work, and like humans, pets can have a large ecological footprint depending on the choices we make.

According to the [National Pet Owners Survey](#) conducted by the American Pet Products Association (APPA), 68% of U.S. households — or about 85 million families — own a pet. Between feeding, housing, grooming, playing and cleaning up after their mess, all of the plastic we use can surely add up! However, if we are mindful about choosing plastic-free options when caring for our pets, we can really make a difference to reduce our impact on the environment. No matter what type of pet you have, you can ditch the plastic waste by trying these tricks.

Food

Like our food, the major issue is all of that plastic packaging. You can cut down on plastic by purchasing in bulk or shopping at a store where you can choose pet food from a canister that you can carry home in your own cloth bag or glass or stainless steel container. Another option is to look for pet food packaged in a paper or compostable bag. It's especially important to avoid the individual serving pouches made out of plastic. These have become quite popular, and with people rarely recycling them, billions end up in landfills each year.

If you are up for a challenge, try making your own pet food at home to minimize packaging waste. You can buy grains, such as rice, in bulk and purchase vegetables without plastic bags. Meats, poultry and fish can also be purchased minus plastic wrapping. Either look for a store that uses paper for packaging or bring your own glass or stainless steel containers from home. You can find lots of pet food recipes online to guide you. In order to make sure you are providing your pet with the correct nutrition in their treats, please consult with your veterinarian.

Finally, how we serve our pets food can lead to plastic use. Typical pet bowls are plastic, but you can choose alternatives like stainless steel or ceramic bowls for both food and water. There are even bowls made out of bamboo or rice husks on the market now. If you need to transport your pet's food, try using a tiffin that contains multiple compartments and a carrying handle. If you prefer a plastic bowl, consider choosing used ones for your pets.

Waste

As pet owners, we can't escape the clean up involved. Unfortunately, this clean-up process typically requires a lot of plastic. Many pet owners average one or two plastic bags a day to dispose of pet waste, which means several hundred bags per year! This is an area where you can certainly make a huge impact by shifting to more eco-friendly options.

Choosing the safest option that is also best for the environment is a bit tricky, however. For dog waste, your best options are to use a composting pet waste toilet, flushing waste down your toilet, using a pet waste collection service, or taking it to a pet waste composting depot if you have one in your area. However, according to the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) (NRDC), "While some cities have water treatment plants that cleanse the water, not all programs are designed to screen out some of the things that are contained in dog or cat poop." Be sure to check with your local municipal waste office for more information. Additionally, NRDC warns pet owners to never flush cat waste down the toilet because it can contain parasites living in the feces that can end up in waterways and harm people and wildlife. Your best bet with cats is to dispose of litter in the garbage.

For transporting waste from your neighborhood walk to your home, paper bags are the top option, with 100% compostable or biodegradable bags as a close second. Just be careful which bags you buy because some do not break down in the landfill unless they have the right environmental conditions. You can also use a container with a lid and carrying handle made out of

something besides plastic. When back home, just flush it down the toilet. Although you will need to wash the container after each use, it eliminates the need for plastic bags.

Finally, if you have other pets like rabbits, hamsters or guinea pigs, the straw or sawdust along with the waste can go directly into your compost.

Playtime

When you think about pet toys, you probably envision something cute and squishy made out of plastic. This is what we want to avoid moving forward. Besides damaging our environment, these plastic pet toys can harm our pets since many of them contain toxic chemicals like BPA. Here are some ways you can still be playful with your pet without all the plastic:

- Purchase toys made out of natural materials like organic cotton, hemp, rope, natural rubber, canvas, wood, bamboo or wool.
- Make your own non-plastic pet toys, such as cutting strips of old T-shirts and braiding them into a small rope toy. Look for more ideas online.
- Use some basic items lying around the house as toys, such as a ball of foil in a cardboard box.

Finally, when you take your dog out for a walk to the park, be sure to use a non-plastic leash. You can now find dog collars and leashes made from hemp or recycled materials.

Rest Time

Cat and dog beds can also be dripping in plastic — from what they are made out of to their plastic wrap. Consider making your own snuggly spot for your pet by getting creative. One idea is to transform an old suitcase, worn out pillows and a bed sheet into a pet bed. You can also use a basket, crate, drawer from a broken piece of furniture or even an old wagon. One innovative entrepreneur is upcycling old tires by painting them bright colors to create adorable pet beds.

Grooming

We have to keep our pets looking clean and tidy, but let's try to do it without plastic materials with these simple tips:

- Choose grooming brushes made from wood with natural bristles.
- Opt for pet shampoos not sold in plastic containers or buy special pet shampoo bars.
- Avoid using those rollers for hair removal because they are made out of plastic that just gets tossed in the trash. Instead, try using a rubber glove. Dampen a rubber glove and run your hand over the surface of your furniture to attract the hair. The wet glove gently lifts fur and causes it to stick to it. All you have to do is rinse off the glove when it's covered and repeat as needed. Also, reduce the amount of hair your pet sheds by brushing regularly.

Sandi Schwartz is an award-winning author, freelance journalist and mother of two. She has written extensively about parenting, wellness and environmental issues. As the founder and director of the Ecohappiness Project, her mission is to inspire and educate families to build a natural habit to feel happier and calmer. She is the author of the book "Finding Ecohappiness: Fun Nature Activities to Help Your Kids Feel Happier and Calmer," and the children's book, "Sky's Search for Ecohappiness."

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WILD NATURE PLAY CLUB!

Aug. 2. Anacostia Community Museum is hosting museum activities and a hike at the George Washington Carver Nature Trail. The National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute is co-sponsoring.

■ **Location:** 1901 Fort Place SE, Washington, DC

COURTESY WOLF TRAP



"BACK TO THE FUTURE" IN CONCERT

Aug. 2. Filene Center is hosting the National Symphony Orchestra for a celebration of the beloved movie classic, "Back to the Future." Twenty minutes of brand-new music will be included, added by award-winning composer Alan Silvestri. In addition to the performance, the full feature film will also be projected on screens throughout the center.

■ **Location:** 1551 Trap Road, Vienna, VA

MUSICAL PETTING ZOO WITH BACH 2 ROCK

Aug. 5. The Kings Park Library is offering a fun chance to learn about musical instruments up close and encourage kids to get more interested in music. They'll be able to engage with numerous instruments, including guitar, drums, keyboard and more.

■ **Location:** 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke, VA

KID'S ART WORKSHOP: WATERCOLOR AND INK WITH GIRASOL O'NEILL

Aug. 5. Columbia Pike Branch Library is holding a free workshop with local artist Girasol O'Neill. It's a great opportunity for kids to explore watercolors and ink with provided supplies.

■ **Location:** 816 South Walter Reed Drive, Arlington, VA

PUPS IN THE PAVILION

Aug. 6. Families are welcome to bring their furry friends to the Pavilion at Reston Town Square Park. The Pavilion will temporarily become a pop-up dog park with local vendors and pet-friendly giveaways.

■ **Location:** 11900 Market St., Reston, VA



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HORSEBACK TRAIL RIDE

Aug. 7. Frying Pan Farm Park will be having a small group trail ride with a chance to learn about horse care. The trail includes wooded and fielded areas. No experience required!

■ **Location:** 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon, VA

TASTE THE RAINBOW: COOKING FOR KIDS

Aug. 7. School-age kids are invited to the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library. Participants will learn about different dishes and cooking skills.

■ **Location:** 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA

ENCHANTED FOREST 70TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



COURTESY CLARK'S ELIOAK FARM

Aug. 9-10. The Enchanted Forest opened on August 14, 1955. Clark's Elioak Farm - Petting Farm, Produce and Meat, Farming is celebrating the wonderful Storybook Park's years of entertaining the families of Maryland and beyond on this 70th anniversary. Adler Display (the company that created most of the Enchanted Forest buildings and characters in collaboration with the Harrison family) will join us. We will have a BOOK SIGNING for "The Enchanted Forest: Memories of Maryland's Storybook Park." Princesses will be visiting the farm. We will welcome Little Toot back to the farm with a ribbon-cutting at 11 AM on Saturday. Come see all your favorite attractions from the original Enchanted Forest in their new home at our farm.

■ **Location:** Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042

OPEN BARN AT OLD MARYLAND FARM

Aug. 9. Old Maryland Farm is inviting you to meet their friendly livestock and horses. Attendance is free, no registration required.

■ **Location:**
351 Watkins Park Drive, Kettering, MD

DIVINE HARMONY: SUMMER CAMP FOR MUSIC, ARTS & DRAMA

Aug. 11-15. The Potomac Presbyterian Church is hosting a week of fun and creativity for kids pre-K to fifth grade who love music, arts and drama. There will be a variety of things to do, including singing, painting and acting.

■ **Location:** 10301 River Road, Potomac, MD

WILD READING AT CLEARWATER NATURE CENTER

Aug. 13. The Clearwater Nature Center is inviting kids ages 2-12 to read and learn about animals. There will be creative crafts and exploration of nature guided by a park naturalist.

■ **Location:** 11401 Thrift Road, Clinton, MD

STAR FEST 2025

Aug. 16. STAR Fest, which stands for Sing, Talk and Read, is a free family-friendly festival that celebrates early learning. There will be live music performances, imaginative play, family story time, soft play activities and more.

■ **Location:** 901 G. St. NW, Washington, DC

JAMAICA FEST

Aug. 17. Celebrate Jamaican culture, food and music, presented by the Embassy of Jamaica in Washington, DC. There will be authentic cuisine, plenty of music and unique crafts to purchase.

■ **Location:**
1 Veterans Place,
Silver Spring, MD



COURTESY CARNIVAL NATION



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Aug. 23. Visit the Nationals Park for a free showing of Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." There will also be family-friendly activities including photo-ops, food vendors, performances, and more.

■ **Location:** 1500 South Capitol St. SE, Washington, DC

AFRICAN + CARIBBEAN MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL

Aug. 24. This family-friendly festival will feature live bands and international DJs for a variety of genres and sounds. There will be dance sessions, food trucks, face painting and souvenirs.

■ **Location:**
1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring, MD

GREENBELT LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

Aug. 29-31. This is the 70th annual Greenbelt Labor Day Festival. This multi-day festival will feature a parade, live performances, carnival games and rides and more.

■ **Location:** 101 Centerway, Greenbelt, MD

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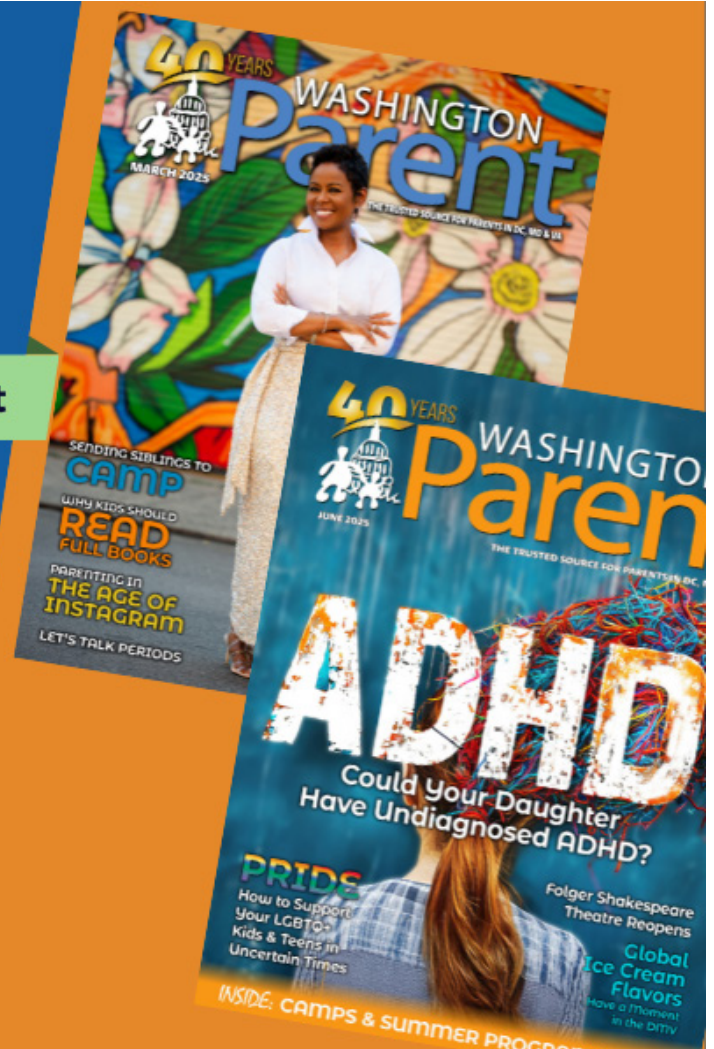
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