

40 YEARS



WASHINGTON Parent™

FEBRUARY 2026

THE TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PARENTS IN DC, MD & VA

THE TENNESSEE SMOKIES HAVE IT ALL

**WINTER WEEKEND
GETAWAY**
CLOSE TO DMV

**CAMPS FOR
EVERY KID**

NAVIGATING SUMMER
OPTIONS FOR
NEURODIVERGENT LEARNERS

**A DAD'S
GUIDE**

TO KID-FRIENDLY
ADVENTURES ACROSS
WASHINGTON DC

**SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE**

WASHINGTON DC'S COMIC CON • MARCH 13-15

AWESOME CON

**WALTER E.
WASHINGTON
CONVENTION
CENTER**



**AWESOME
CON
JR!**

**WORKSHOPS • ARTS & CRAFTS
LIVE PERFORMANCES • SCIENCE DEMOS
CHARACTER MEET & GREETES • AND MORE!**



**BADGES ON SALE NOW AT
WWW.AWESOMECON.COM**

PLAYFUL CONNECTIONS PRESCHOOL

at TLC - The Treatment and Learning Centers



Playful Connections PRESCHOOL



Nurturing & Inclusive:

A child-centered preschool where neurodiversity is celebrated and every child's strengths are supported.



Small Groups, Big Support:

Low 1:5 ratio with expert teachers experienced in supporting communication, social, sensory, and motor development.



Play with Purpose:

A full-day, play-based program that builds kindergarten readiness through multisensory learning, with weekly support from speech, OT, and movement specialists.

- Nurturing & inclusive **child centered** program where neurodiversity is celebrated.
- Small group learning, **1:5 ratio**.
- **Multisensory approach** to develop kindergarten readiness skills through exploration, curiosity, creativity, & problem solving.
- Weekly groups led by a **speech-language pathologist, dance/movement therapist, & occupational therapist**.

About the Program

Playful Connections is a full-day, play-based preschool for children aged 4 years by September 1, 2026. Led by a highly qualified teacher & assistant teacher who have experience instructing neurodiverse children, Playful Connections is designed for preschoolers needing support in communication, social interaction, sensory processing, &/or motor skills.

Learn more!

We will hold periodic information sessions.
Contact us to sign up, or for more
information about Playful Connections.

Opening Fall of 2026

Register Now!

📍 1390 Piccard Dr, Suite 210
Rockville, MD 20850

📞 (301) 424-5201

✉️ PlayfulConnectionsPreschool@TTLc.org
🌐 www.ttlc.org

What's inside this issue:

3 THINGS

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

From meaningful museum visits to creative family outings and neighborhood adventures, the DC area is full of ways to connect, explore and make memories together. These three standout stories highlight experiences families won't want to miss.



20

EXPLORE DC THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Washington, DC, can feel overwhelming—but writer, photographer and DC dad Austin Graff proves it doesn't have to be. Through his father-daughter “ABC Adventures,” Graff breaks the city down neighborhood by neighborhood, uncovering kid-friendly parks, murals, markets and hidden gems that families can explore together. His thoughtful approach encourages parents to slow down, follow kids' curiosity and experience DC as a place of discovery rather than a checklist of attractions. With his new book, “111 Places for Kids in Washington, DC,” on the way, Graff's guide makes the city feel more approachable—and a lot more fun—for families.



10

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY TOGETHER AT THE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

February is an especially meaningful time for families to visit the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Designed as a journey through history, the museum offers powerful storytelling alongside interactive, kid-friendly exhibits that help children connect with African American history, culture and contributions. While the lower levels explore deeper historical topics, the upper galleries shine with music, sports, art and community stories kids love. With free timed-entry passes and thoughtful spaces for families of all ages, it's an outing that educates, inspires and sparks important conversations.



8

FAMILY-FRIENDLY VALENTINE'S DAY FUN ACROSS THE DMV

Valentine's Day isn't just for couples—the DMV is full of sweet, creative and cozy events the whole family can enjoy. From hands-on crafts and origami workshops to campfire storytelling, library programs and even a romantic-but-kid-friendly orchestral concert, families can celebrate love in all its forms. Whether your crew prefers cocoa and crafts or music and history, these Cupid-approved outings offer easy ways to spend quality time together without the pressure of fancy plans.



STAY CONNECTED.

Receive weekly updates in your inbox on the latest news, trends, and advice related to parenting, education, health and much more.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to stay connected and informed –



WashingtonParent.com/subscribe/

SCAN THIS CODE TO SUBSCRIBE.



PUBLISHER
Ronel Hentschel

EDITOR
David Arkin

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Brandi Calhoun

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Karen Kullgren
Vicky Mashaw
Karen Washburn

COVER, ADVERTISING
AND EDITORIAL DESIGN
Meredith Hancock

Washington Parent is published 12 times a year by Knollwood Publications, Inc. Washington Parent reserves the right to refuse advertisements and does not necessarily endorse its advertisers.

All contents of Washington Parent are protected under copyright. Reproduction of any content requires permission of the publisher.

We Want to Hear From You!

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
advertise@washingtonparent.com

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE
editor@washingtonparent.com

BILLING MATTERS
ar@washingtonparent.com

EVENTS
events@washingtonparent.com

GENERAL QUESTIONS
contactus@washingtonparent.com

FOLLOW US
facebook.com/washingtonparent
instagram.com/washingtonparent

5825 Highland Drive
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

WashingtonParent.com

COPYRIGHT 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



ON THE COVER

This month's cover was sponsored by Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority

START YOUR SUMMER CAMP &
FAMILY FITNESS FUN SEARCH

HERE



FREE AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!



WASHINGTON
Parent

kojam

CAMP 2026 & FAMILY FITNESS FAIRS

- Talk to camp staff in person
- Grab brochures and free giveaways
- Entertainment, activities, and more!

Tysons
CORNER CENTER®

FEB. 7, 2026

FAIR OAKS MALL

FEB 28, 2026

D DULLES
Town Center

FEB 14, 2026

springfieldtowncenter

FEB 21, 2026



Great Smoky Mountains National Park, sunrise

The Tennessee Smokies Have It All

By Bridget Deenihan

Touting "we have it all" when talking about a family-friendly vacation spot is a pretty bold statement. But the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee really do seem to have it all in terms of getting an official stamp of approval from parents, grandparents and kids—plus their tagalong friends, your bestie, cousins and whoever else is joining this year's Spring Break travel. This sought-after locale is definitely special because it's the best of both worlds: It's a serene setting, and it features countless kinds of fun around every corner. In short, it's precisely the kind of place where people can create wonderful memories that will last a lifetime.

If you've been to the area, you get it. But if you haven't, a little explaining is necessary. There are three separate-but-close-together towns nestled among the Great Smoky Mountains that boast a whole host of family-friendly attractions sure to please all for an easy getaway. Whether you're needing a quick trip for a couple of days or want to enjoy a whole week, rest assured there is plenty of opportunity for both nonstop action, rest and relaxation, or an enjoyable combination of both.

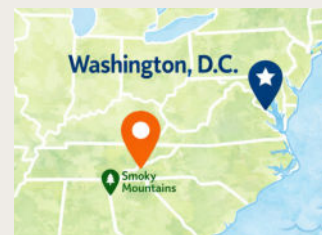
GETTING THERE

BY CAR

- 7.5-hour drive via I-81 South

BY AIR

- 1.5-hour direct flights between D.C. and Knoxville available on American Airlines, United and Allegiant.



Starting in March, Southwest is offering direct service to Knoxville from Baltimore. From Knoxville to the destination is only about 35 minutes, and rental cars or share ride services are available.

If a mountain cabin or rental home is your style, you're in luck. More of a hotel or condo family? You'll find no shortage of options. They even have numerous campgrounds throughout the area. Just pick your place to stay and plan your vacation your way. The nice thing about a trip to the Smokies is that you can completely customize it to your family's preferences. Plus, if you get there and things change, there is so much choice and variety; you can always mix things up at the last minute if necessary.

Now for the best part: the gorgeous views of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Even if you don't spend a day cruising around in the mountains, you'll most certainly get the benefit of some iconic vistas no matter where you land or where you look.

The towns of Pigeon Forge, Sevierville and Gatlinburg—all located in Sevier County, Tennessee—have literally hundreds of activities and attractions to offer, but here are just a few examples to give you a good idea of what's in store. These sweet little cities have everything from one-of-a-kind rides, mountain coasters and theme parks to museums, action-packed adventure experiences and even water parks. Of course, you can also enjoy the spas and shopping, plus unique dining spots and so much more.



Dollywood

Plenty of people who haven't yet spent time in Tennessee know Dollywood is "somewhere down there," but aren't quite sure where. If that sounds like you, you're not alone. So get ready to raise your expectations—Dolly Parton's spectacular theme park is right in the mix. First-time visitors will discover first-class coasters, thrilling rides, live entertainment, and delicious Southern cookin', all wrapped into a park experience designed for guests of every age. Rooted in warmth, tradition, and old-fashioned craftsmanship, Dollywood truly stands apart from any other park in the country. And if you've visited before but not recently, you'll be happily surprised by the same beloved atmosphere—now paired with exciting new rides, performances, and even more reasons to smile big and make memories together. New this year is NightFlight Expedition, adding yet another unforgettable adventure to the park.

Plan to spend at least a day or two enjoying Dollywood Theme Park. Pro tip: Book a stay at either Dollywood's Heartsong Lodge & Resort or Dollywood's DreamMore Resort & Spa to receive complimentary trolley service, package



delivery, parking, Time-Saver passes with valid park admission or season passes and daily golden hour participation. Get all the details at Dollywood.com.



Gatlinburg, TN

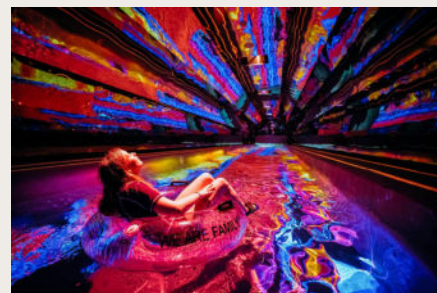
Gatlinburg is the gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains, offering a walkable mountain town where nature, scenic views, and handcrafted charm create an intimate and immersive experience. The Mountains Are Calling.

- Anakeesta
- Gatlinburg SkyPark
- Ober Mountain
- Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies

Pigeon Forge, TN

Pigeon Forge is the Smokies' entertainment capital—where world-class attractions, festivals, and family fun come together to create unforgettable shared experiences for every generation.

- Dollywood Theme Park
- The Island in Pigeon Forge
- Outdoor Gravity Park
- Titanic Museum



Sevierville, TN

Sevierville is the welcoming gateway and home base of the Smokies, offering space, value, shopping, and easy access to outdoor adventure, all rooted in authentic Appalachian pride.

- Rainforest Adventure Discovery Zoo
- Skyland Ranch
- Wilderness at the Smokies Water Park Resort
- Dig N' Zone Construction Theme Park



Sevier County, TN

Sevier County is home to the iconic destinations of Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, and Sevierville, a place that blends world-class outdoor adventure with family-friendly attractions and Appalachian heritage.

- Forbidden Caverns
- Smoky Mountain Ziplines
- Rafting in the Smokies

And there are hundreds of other attractions and activities offered in each of these one-of-a-kind destinations.

Curious about how you'll spend your upcoming vacation? Get inspired by the thousands of offerings that await at SmokiesFun.com.

Bridget lives in Nashville, TN with her husband and 10-year-old daughter. She can verify that being in Dolly's presence is like encountering an angel on Earth and that, after you take your people to the Smokies, the young'n's will for sure never stop talking about when you're going back next.

CUPID-APPROVED FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Seven fun ways for kids and their families to spend this Valentine's Day together in the DMV.

By Emily yHedrick

Every year, families look forward to Valentine's Day for its sweet treats, adorable aesthetic and emphasis on love. This Valentine's Day, the Capital Region will host a multitude of delightful opportunities to make the red-white-and-pink holiday extra special for the whole family, including cocoa, concerts, crafts and more.



LOVE IN THE AIR! ORIGAMI VALENTINE WREATH-MAKING

The Washington Printmakers Gallery will host a craft-making session a few days before Valentine's Day, led by talented origami instructor Naoko Kamioka. Participants will learn how to make origami heart wreaths that they can use for cute Valentine's Day decor. This workshop



is open to all ages and skill levels, and capacity is limited to six people, so make sure to get your tickets as soon as possible.

- **Location:** 1675 Wisconsin Ave., Washington, DC
- **Date:** 2-3:30 p.m. Feb. 8

NEVERMIND VALENTINE! A CELEBRATION OF SELF

If you aren't as wild about the "couples" side of Valentine's Day, you can still have fun thanks to this event at the Cleveland Park Neighborhood Library, meant for ages 13-19. This event gives participants an opportunity to celebrate self-love by creating edgy, quirky crafts, playing games and taking advantage of provided health resources.

- **Location:** 3310 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Date:** 6:15-7:30 p.m. Feb. 12

VALENTINE CREATION STATION

The Valentine Creation Station is the perfect opportunity for children to get creative the day before Valentine's Day. This event is for children 12 years old and younger and will take place at Benning (Dorothy I. Height) Neighborhood Library. Kids can make cool and artistic Valentine's Day cards for their loved ones.

- **Location:** 3935 Benning Road NE, Washington, DC
- **Date:** 3:30-5:30 p.m. Feb. 13



VALENTINE'S DAY CRAFT

The love we celebrate on Valentine's Day can also extend to our animals. As a part of its fun and educational Long Branch Kids Program, the Long Branch Nature Center will host a short arts and crafts session where kids can prepare for Valentine's Day by creating gifts for both their loved ones and the Nature Center's animals. This event is for ages 6-12.

- **Location:** 625 S Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, VA
- **Date:** 3:30-4:30 p.m. Feb. 8

ORIGAMI

Another opportunity to create beautiful Valentine's Day origami, this relaxing and artistic gathering at Reston Regional Library is specifically for adults and teens, so parents can spend some quality time with their older children. Participants can learn how to make basic origami hearts just in time for Valentine's Day, which is the day right after this event takes place.

- **Location:** 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston, VA
- **Date:** 4-5 p.m. Feb. 13

A VALENTINE'S DAY CAMPFIRE

Love can be heart-warming and timeless. This cozy hour-long fireside history lesson at Fort C.F. Smith takes visitors back to the Civil War. Families can enjoy s'mores and hot drinks as they learn about real love stories from the war, as well as how lovers stayed in touch with each other throughout the turmoil. The stories they will learn come from love letters that survived the war.



- **Location:** 2411 N 24th St., Arlington, VA
- **Date:** 1-2 p.m. Feb. 14

UNSHRINK MY HEART

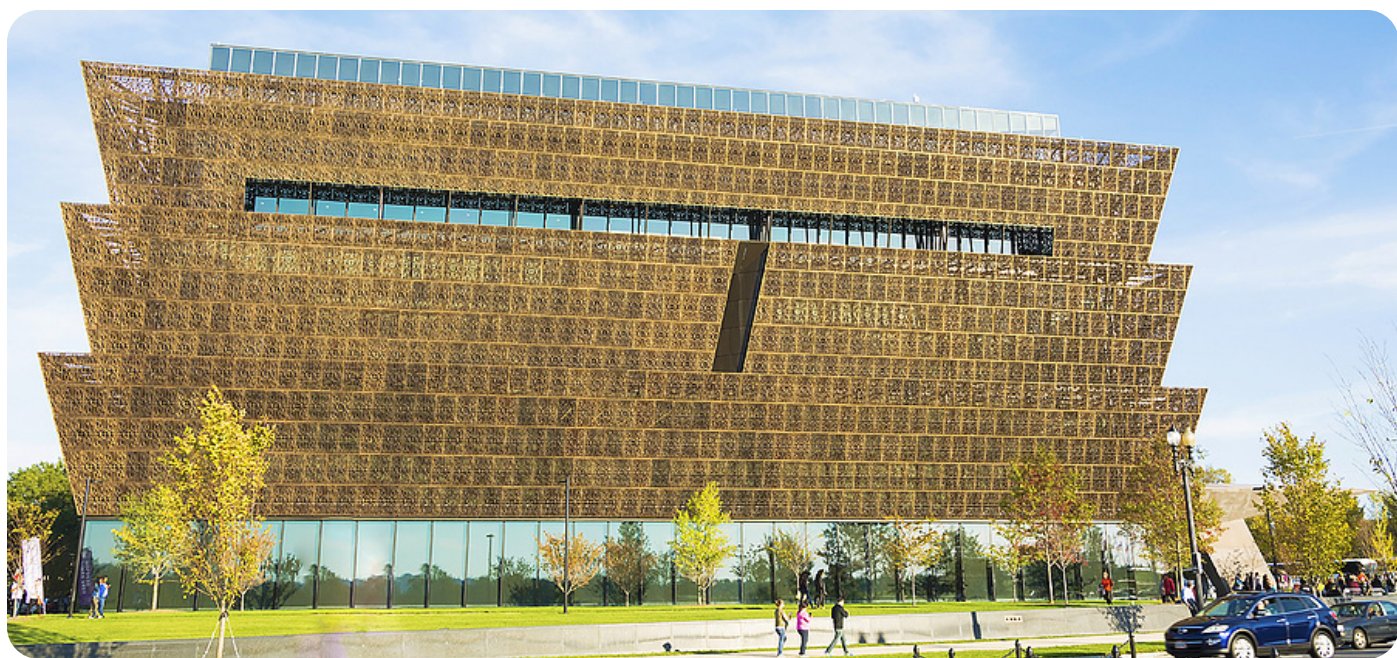
The Brentwood Art Exchange will host a special arts and crafts event meant for all ages. Families can get together and create beautiful little DIY Valentine's Day gifts, such as Shrinky Dink hearts, jewelry and more for someone special in their lives. While the event is free to attend, participants will need to book their tickets online ahead of time to reserve their spots.

- **Location:** 3901 Rhode Island Ave., Brentwood, MD
- **Date:** 1-3 p.m. Feb. 14

LOVE NOTES

One of the best ways to celebrate love is through music. This Valentine's Day, Capital One Hall will host Love Notes, an orchestral concert perfect for couples on a romantic date or families with kids who love music. Attendees will enjoy the romantic music of composers Ladmiraault, Strauss and Tchaikovsky, performed by pianist Thomas Pandolfi and the William & Mary Symphony Orchestra.

- **Location:** 7750 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons, VA
- **Date:** 7-10 p.m. Feb. 14



BIGSTOCK/RARRAPORRO

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY AND CULTURE THIS MONTH

Discover powerful stories, family-friendly exhibits and hands-on learning during Black History Month and beyond.

By Jenna Dolch

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE

There's no better place to honor and explore Black History Month with your family than the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC). Located on the National Mall, this landmark museum highlights the richness of African American history through storytelling, immersive exhibits and hands-on opportunities that help children connect with the past and understand its importance today.



BIGSTOCK/KELLER PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE



PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

While the museum is meaningful year-round, visiting in February adds deeper relevance, giving families an opportunity to celebrate resilience, creativity and contributions that have shaped the nation.

A POWERFUL JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

NMAAHC is intentionally designed as a walk through time. Families begin their journey three levels below ground, where the History Galleries trace African American experiences from the 1400s through the present. Exhibits explore the Middle

Passage, slavery, abolition, segregation and the civil rights movement, all presented through artifacts, personal stories and multimedia elements.

Parents often appreciate how the museum balances honesty with accessible storytelling. While these galleries cover heavy topics, the layout allows families to move at their own pace, pause when needed and discuss what they're seeing in age-appropriate ways.

KID-FRIENDLY EXPERIENCES ON THE UPPER LEVELS

After the deeper historical sections, the museum shifts into bright, energetic interactive exhibits that children love.

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY GALLERIES

These upper-level floors celebrate contributions in music, dance, literature, sports, fashion and film. Kids can see Muhammad Ali's boxing gloves, learn dance traditions and explore how African American artists shaped pop culture.

These exhibits explore family life, hometown traditions and stories of everyday heroes. Children can enjoy the visual displays, hands-on elements and multimedia stations that bring neighborhoods and communities to life.

CONTINUED...



The Explore More! area is especially engaging for kids, offering touch screens, puzzles, tools for investigating artifacts and other family-friendly learning experiences.

CAN FAMILIES BRING YOUNGER KIDS? ABSOLUTELY!

NMAAHC is designed to welcome all ages. While some material is emotional or sensitive, the museum provides:

- Clear signage for content that may be intense
- Rest areas and quiet spaces
- Stroller-friendly walkways
- Kid-friendly galleries on the upper floors

Many families break up their time by exploring heavy content first and letting children experience the lighter, interactive exhibits afterward.



DON'T MISS THE SWEET HOME CAFÉ

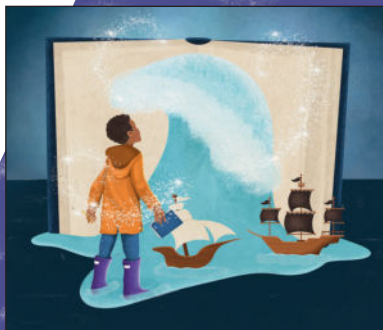
This award-winning restaurant celebrates the culinary history of African American communities. Visitors can try Southern classics, coastal dishes, Creole favorites and comfort foods that reflect the regions represented throughout the museum.

Families often stop here to regroup, talk about what they've seen and enjoy a meal that connects to the stories in the exhibits.

- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-3 p.m. (On days museum is open to public)
- Plan your visit
- **Address:** 1400 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** Noon-5:30 p.m. Monday; 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday
- **Phone:** (844) 750-3012
- **Admission:** Free; timed-entry passes required and available at [NMAAHC Tickets](#)

TIPS FOR VISITING DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

- February is a popular time to visit, so planning ahead makes the experience smoother.
- Timed-entry passes are required (free online).
- Arrive early to explore the lower-level History Galleries before they get crowded.
- Consider discussing exhibit topics with kids in advance, especially younger children.
- Schedule time for breaks — the museum is large, and many families spend several hours here.
- Check the events calendar for February programming, such as storytelling, family workshops and film screenings.

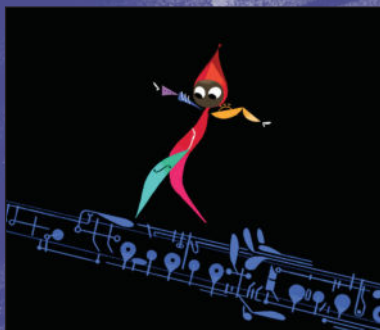


The Sea Beyond the Ocean

A boy named Scooter goes on a quest to find the author and missing ending of his favorite book series in this world premiere play written by **Doug Robinson** and directed by **KenYatta Rogers**.

Feb. 28–Mar. 15 | Family Theater

MOST ENJOYED BY AGES 9+



NSO Family Concert

Philharmonia Fantastique: The Making of an Orchestra

Follow a magical Sprite on a musical journey through the inner workings of an orchestra—all set to live music from the National Symphony Orchestra.

Mar. 29 | Concert Hall

MOST ENJOYED BY AGES 5+



Feeling creative? Visit **Moonshot Studio**

Explore your creativity through hands-on art-making.

FREE! Open (most) Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The REACH

Visit tkc.co/moonshot for hours and the latest activities.

MOST ENJOYED BY AGES 5+



Kennedy-Center.org

The ONLY OFFICIAL WEBSITE of the Kennedy Center
(202) 467-4600

Groups 20+ call (202) 416-8400

For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540

BANK OF AMERICA

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
The Dr. Gary Mather and Christina Co Mather Fund for Under-Resourced Youth

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!



**Weekly
Tours
Available!**



For bright students with language-based learning differences like dyslexia



INQUIRE



www.thesienaschool.org

CAMPUSES

Northern Virginia
Grades 3 - 12

Silver Spring
Grades 5 - 12

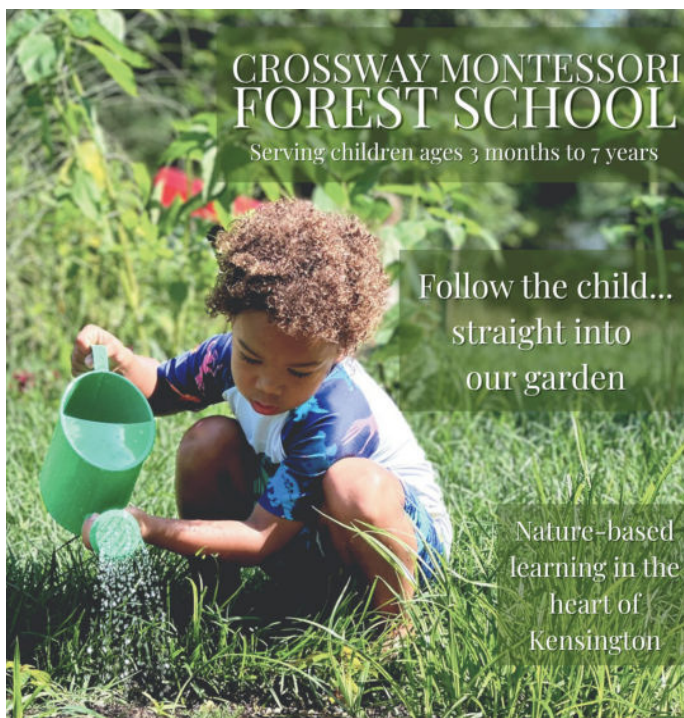
Silver Spring Satellite
Grades 3 - 4
NOW OPEN!

CROSSWAY MONTESSORI FOREST SCHOOL

Serving children ages 3 months to 7 years

Follow the child...
straight into
our garden

Nature-based
learning in the
heart of
Kensington



NOW ENROLLING
SCHEDULE A TOUR

(301) 929-2505
crosswayschool.org/admissions-info
[@crosswaymontessori](https://www.instagram.com/crosswaymontessori)



CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

Explore free and paid events for families to learn and celebrate Black History Month together.

By Amelia Keefer

February is Black History Month, which means lots of great events celebrating Black music, culture and excellence. This year is extra special because it marks the celebration of 100 years of Black history commemorations, which began with the week-long observance of Black History led by Dr. Carter G. Woodson back in 1926.

We've compiled a list of family-focused Black History Month events being held in the DMV area. Events range from musical performances, plays and crafts to educational workshops. You don't want to miss out on these!



WASHINGTON, DC

DISCOVER LOCAL STORIES AT THE ANACOSTIA COMMUNITY MUSEUM

- **When:** View calendar for specific event dates/times
- **Where:** 1901 Fort Place SE, Washington, DC
- **Cost:** Free

For a meaningful Black History Month visit, explore the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum in the historic Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, D.C. This Smithsonian museum focuses on the lived experiences, struggles and successes of urban communities—especially African American life and culture—through dynamic exhibitions, oral histories and thoughtful programs that put everyday voices at the center of history. While galleries may rotate with seasonal exhibitions and events, the museum's community-centered approach makes it an inspiring stop for families and history lovers seeking perspectives that enrich and deepen understanding of local and national stories.

CHEZ JOEY: A BOLD REIMAGINING OF RODGERS AND HART'S PAL JOEY

- **When:** Jan. 30-March 15
 - **Where:** Arena Stage, 1101 6th St. SW, Washington, DC
 - **Cost:** Tickets start at \$83
- Celebrate Black History Month by seeing a stage

performance of "Chez Joey" at the Kreeger Theater. It's a bold reimagining of John O'Hara's novel and the "Pal Joey" stories published in The New Yorker, which tells the story of a young, Black musician in 1940-something Chicago.

'IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT...' SCAVENGER HUNT

- **When:** Feb. 1-28, during open hours
 - **Where:** Benning (Dorothy I. Height) Neighborhood Library, 3935 Benning Road NE, Washington, DC
 - **Cost:** Free
- Search for all of the labels around the library highlighting the everyday objects that wouldn't exist if it weren't for African American inventors. It's a fun, educational activity to do during your library visit.

CRAFTER-NOON: BLACK HISTORY MONTH CRAFTS

- **When:** 4:30-5:30 p.m. Feb. 26
 - **Where:** Cleveland Park Library, 3310 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC
 - **Cost:** Free
- Enjoy an afternoon at the library with self-guided paper quilts and collage making crafts. Stick around for bingo games with prizes. Designed for kids 5-12 years old.

CONTINUED...

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MARYLAND

CELEBRATE BLACK INNOVATION!

- **When:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sundays, Jan. 19-Feb. 25
- **Where:** KID Museum, 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Bethesda, MD
- **Cost:** Tickets are \$15 each

During February, the KID Museum is honoring and celebrating Black inventors, past and present. Stop in on Sundays for hands-on activities and fun educational workshops, available with a General Admission ticket purchase.

MARYLAND YOUTH BALLET BLACK HISTORY MONTH CLASSES

- **When:** Feb. 8-27
- **Where:** Maryland Youth Ballet, 926 Ellsworth Drive, Silver Spring
- **Cost:** Free

The MYB is offering special themed dance classes to the public (ages 10+) during the month of February to celebrate Black History Month. Sign up to try out an Umfundalai class with Miriah Auth, or Femme Vogue with Aquarius Moon. Classes are free but donations are greatly appreciated.

"GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER & FRIENDS" WITH BRIGHT STAR TOURING THEATRE

- **When:** 10-11 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Feb. 10
- **Where:** Prince George's Publick Playhouse, 5445 Landover Road, Hyattsville
- **Cost:** \$8 Adult / \$6 Child

Bright Star Touring Theatre is putting on two performances of "George Washington Carver & Friends" at Prince George's Publick Playhouse. Your host, Black inventor and scientist George Washington Carver, will introduce kids to other great scientists, entrepreneurs and groundbreakers from Black History. Recommended for grades K-5.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH FAMILY DAY

- **When:** 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 14
- **Where:** Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park, 16501 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring
- **Cost:** Free

Attend a special family day celebration inside the Woodlawn Manor House. Enjoy traditional African music, learn about historical African American figures and listen to powerful stories. Recommended for families with kids ages 6 and up.

LIVING THE DREAM... SINGING THE DREAM

- **When:** 7 p.m. Feb. 15
- **Where:** Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$28.75

The whole family can enjoy a moving choral tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., performed by the Gospel choirs of Washington Performing Arts and the Choral Arts Chorus. Honor Dr. King's legacy through song, inspirational stories and special tributes by community leaders.

VIRGINIA

"A PERFECT FRENZY: A ROYAL GOVERNOR, HIS BLACK ALLIES, AND THE CRISIS THAT SPURRED THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"

- **When:** 6-7 p.m. Feb. 6
- **Where:** Virginia Museum of History & Culture, 428 N Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$28

Dive into a pivotal and often overlooked chapter of Revolutionary history with this special VA250 lecture at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. Journalist and historian Andrew Lawler recounts the dramatic story of Virginia's royal governor, Lord Dunmore, his promise of freedom to Black allies and the resulting conflict that helped propel the colonies toward independence. This illuminating talk sheds new light on how events in Virginia—not just in New England—shaped the drive for American freedom and stirred debates that still resonate today.

STILL WE RISE - A FREE BLACK HISTORY MONTH CONCERT

- **When:** 3-5 p.m. Feb. 8
- **Where:** The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria
- **Cost:** Free

Attend a free concert at the Alexandria History Museum celebrating African American music and culture, from the Civil War to present day. Enjoy traditional African American spirituals, poetry, dance, ring shouts, banjo tunes, stories and audience participation.

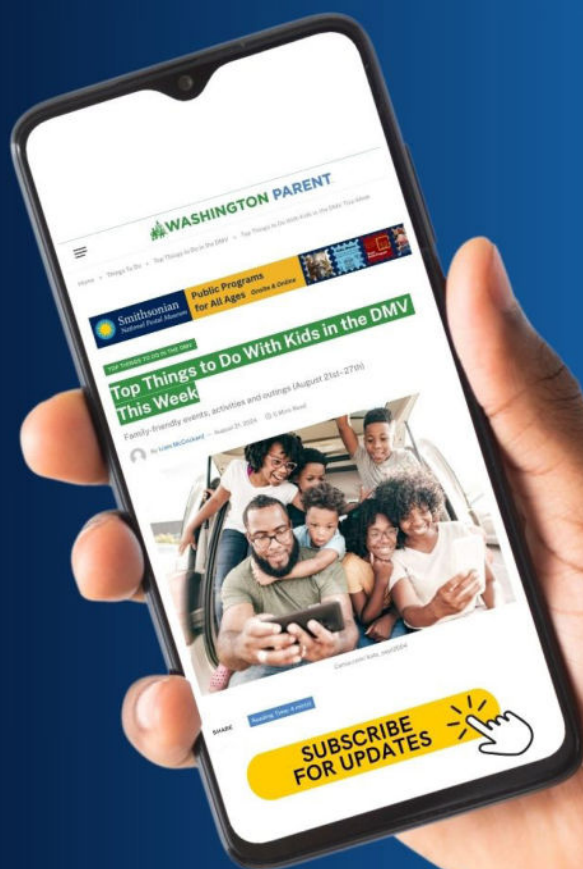
BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT THE MEETING HOUSE

- **When:** Noon-2 pm. Feb. 21
- **Where:** Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon
- **Cost:** Free, registration required

The Frying Pan Baptist Meetinghouse is opening its doors to the public for a few hours so that families can peruse educational signage about the Black history of the Meeting House and stories of the people from the community.

CHECK OUT FUN THINGS TO DO WITH KIDS IN THE DMV

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



40 YEARS WASHINGTON
Parent
washingtonparent.com



ROSEMOUNT CENTER

*Children and Families
Ready for the World*

**Early Childhood Education
for children birth - 5 years**

- Year round program with optional aftercare
- Dual language curriculum (English/Spanish)
- NAEYC accredited
- Recognized as “high quality” by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education



2000 Rosemount Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20010
202.265.9885

www.rosemountcenter.com



PHOTOS COURTESY BRYCE RESORT

A COZY FAMILY RETREAT

Snowy slopes, cozy cabins and year-round activities make Bryce Resort an easy winter escape in Virginia.

By Jenna Dolch

When winter arrives in the DMV, families don't have to travel far to find snow-covered fun and a true getaway feel. Tucked into Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, Bryce Resort offers an easy weekend escape with outdoor adventure and cozy accommodations.

Located about two hours from Washington, DC, Bryce Resort is known for its laid-back atmosphere, manageable slopes and year-round activities. In winter, it transforms into a snow-loving destination perfect for families, couples and multi-generational trips.

Whether you're planning your child's first ski experience or simply looking for a peaceful winter break close to home, Bryce Resort delivers a refreshing change of scenery without a long drive.

WHY BRYCE RESORT IS A GREAT WINTER GETAWAY

Bryce Resort is especially appealing in winter thanks to its small-resort feel and family-friendly approach. The slopes are less intimidating than larger ski destinations, making it ideal for beginners and younger skiers. Short lift lines and a relaxed pace help families spend more time enjoying the experience and less time waiting.

The resort's setting in the Shenandoah Valley adds to the charm, with scenic mountain views and a quieter atmosphere during winter months. It feels like a true escape — without feeling overwhelming.





WHAT BRYCE RESORT OFFERS IN WINTER

Bryce Resort's winter lineup includes activities for all ages and skill levels. Downhill skiing and snowboarding are the main attractions, with trails designed for beginners through intermediate riders. For families who want something less intense, snow tubing provides fast, exciting fun without lessons or equipment.

The resort also features a ski and snowboard school, making it a great place for kids (and adults) to learn. Off the slopes, guests can enjoy indoor dining, warming huts and cozy après-ski moments that round out the winter experience.

Convenient lodging options

One of Bryce Resort's biggest perks is the variety of nearby accommodations. Families can choose from condos, cabins and vacation rentals, many located just minutes from the slopes. Having space to spread out, cook meals and relax by a fireplace makes winter weekends especially comfortable.

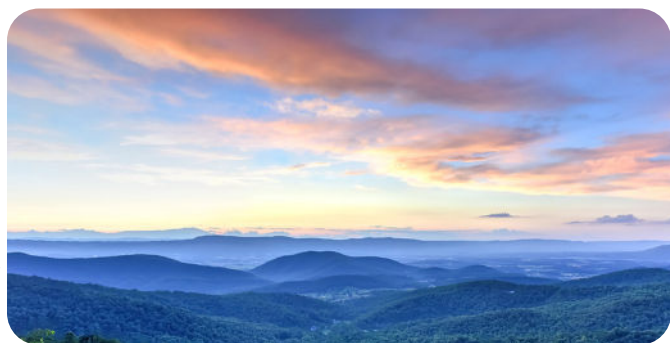
Staying nearby also means flexible schedules, perfect for families who want to ski in the morning, rest in the afternoon and head back out for evening fun.

Places to enjoy near Bryce Resort

If you're looking to explore beyond the slopes, the surrounding area offers several winter-friendly add-ons:

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

Winter hikes and scenic overlooks make Shenandoah National Park a beautiful nearby option. Snowy trails and quiet views offer a peaceful contrast to resort activities.



BIGSTOCK/DEMERZEL21

BASYE & MOUNT JACKSON

The nearby towns of Basye and Mount Jackson feature local dining spots, small shops and relaxed community vibes. Perfect for casual meals or exploring between ski sessions.

LOCAL WINERIES AND BREWERIES

Adults can enjoy a short drive to Shenandoah Valley wineries and breweries, many of which remain open year-round and offer cozy indoor tastings during winter months.



BIGSTOCK/GRANDBROTHERS

SHENANDOAH CAVERNS

A fascinating underground adventure that's perfect for families, Shenandoah Caverns offers spectacular limestone formations, walking paths through massive cavern rooms and memorable photo spots that kids and adults both enjoy. It's just a short drive from Bryce Resort and makes a great half-day activity on a winter weekend.

- **Address:** 261 Caverns Road, Shenandoah Caverns
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily
- **Phone:** (540) 477-3115



BIGSTOCK/KATSENLLENBOGEN

COOTER'S PLACE - LURAY

A quirky museum for fans of "The Dukes of Hazzard" and classic TV culture, Cooter's Place in Luray is a fun stop for families who love pop culture and nostalgia. Kids enjoy checking out the famous cars (including the General Lee), costumes and memorabilia, and adults get a kick out of the history behind the show.

- **Address:** 4768 US Highway 211 W, Luray
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday
- **Phone:** (540) 843-2515

THE BURN BARREL

A welcoming American diner, bar & grill just across from Bryce Resort's main entrance, The Burn Barrel is known for hearty, classic fare that appeals to all ages from burgers and tacos to sandwiches and daily specials. It's a local favorite for breakfast, lunch or dinner, and its relaxed vibe makes it ideal for families looking to grab a satisfying meal without leaving Basye.

- **Address:** 1618 Orkney Grade, Basye
- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday and Thursday; noon-10 p.m. Monday-Tuesday; 8 a.m.-midnight Friday-Saturday
- **Phone:** (540) 856-2801



PHOTOS COURTESY AUSTIN GRAFF

EXPLORE WASHINGTON, DC WITH THE GRAFFS

How one father-daughter duo finds kid-friendly adventures across Washington, DC.

By Maggie McIntyre

Austin Graff is a natural explorer, curious about the world, his country, and even his own city — Washington, DC. Over the past 14 years, he has chronicled his experiences with photographs, articles and most recently, on Instagram.

As he shares small adventures visiting little corners of Washington, DC, with his daughter, he has amassed a large following inspired by their curiosity.

In May 2026, his new book, “111 Places for Kids in Washington, DC” will be released, highlighting the hidden corners of Washington, DC, that families can discover together.

“There’s always new places to experience,” he says. “Even after intentionally exploring DC for almost 20 years, there are hundreds of places I have yet to visit in the DC area.”

A IS FOR ANACOSTIA

When Graff moved to DC almost 20 years ago after growing up in Kazan – the capital of Tatarstan, Russia’s most Muslim republic – he began cataloging his walks around the city on Instagram. The platform continued to grow as he taught his young daughter the alphabet by exploring DC’s neighborhoods. He called them their “ABC Adventures.”

Before every ABC adventure, Graff researches the neighborhood to understand its history and stories. He dives into community blogs, newspaper articles and social media posts, getting to know the community. Then, he goes out to wander its streets, shop in its stores and experience its culture firsthand.

His approach to sharing his discoveries online is simple: distill everything down into digestible highlights that anyone can connect with. Pairing his observations with photographs adds richness, inspiring a broader audience to embark on similar adventures.

As his daughter got older, she no longer needed help learning her ABC’s, but her sense of curiosity burned on. Graff was inspired by her constant questions and excitement to create living documents – what has become his new book – that chronicle their adventures and preserve their observations to offer guidance to the families of DC and beyond.

“Children are experiencing this world for the first time and that comes with an innocence that fosters curiosity,” he says. “In the same way, adults should visit places. Ask questions



of locals, buck assumptions and deeply listen to others.”

EXPLORE WITH YOUR FAMILY

After exploring so many parts of the city, Graff, of course, has favorites. River Terrace, along the Anacostia River, is at the top of his list. It’s separated from the bustle of the city, the neighborhood and offers green spaces with trails and parks to make for a relaxing afternoon.

In Mount Pleasant, you can visit the full-scale farmers market that feels like a community gathering full of music, food and friendly faces. You can also wander the neighborhood’s streets of Victorian houses and admire the murals that decorate alley walls. And for your little artists, Graff

recommends checking out [Studio Kusi](#) to try out a ceramics class.

Across the border in Maryland, the Hyattsville and Riverdale Park neighborhoods are also favorites. With plenty of little free libraries and ice cream shops to wander past, kids will have plenty to explore. And in Virginia, the parks and playgrounds shine. Graff recommends Fort Ward Park where families can see Civil War earthworks, hike on its trails, play on a playground and learn about the first Black one-room schoolhouse post-Civil War.

“My book coming out in March 2026 is really my daughter’s favorite 111 places within Washington, DC, after visiting every 136-plus DC neighborhoods and walking every street and alley with me,” shares Graff. You can check out [Graff’s Instagram](#) for

adventure ideas, or his [website](#) for more information about his upcoming book, neighborhood guides and more.

The eight DC wards might seem intimidating but with Graff’s guide, you can make a big city just a little bit smaller, exploring all the quirky and fun parts of the city that might have otherwise gone unnoticed.





BIGSTOCK/ BULGN

MARCH INTO NATIONAL LITERACY MONTH

Simple, everyday ways families can encourage reading at home—on March 2 and all year long.

By Washington Parent staff

What better day to celebrate Read Across America Day than on the March 2 birthday of the beloved Dr. Seuss? It's the perfect kickoff to March's National March into Literacy Month, both of which are dedicated to the promotion of reading and literacy.

Read Across America Day was first introduced by the National Education Association (NEA) in 1998. The NEA's goal for the celebration is to motivate kids to become lifelong readers, thereby improving student performance. Every year, schools, public libraries and other organizations celebrate this day by holding reading events for kids.

WAYS PARENTS CAN PROMOTE READING

There are many ways parents can promote a love of reading and encourage their kids to read not only during this celebration, but year-round.

- **Read to kids.** Begin reading to your child very early. The NEA suggests infancy is an excellent time to start. As your child grows, encourage their participation in reading the story with or to you. Although your child may not be ready to read, kids often memorize some of their favorite books or pages. Making your child an active participant will help develop their love for reading.
- **Visit the library.** Think of the library as a big free educational toy store. Help your child choose some books, but also encourage him or her to select some on their own. Your child can also take home audiobooks, video games, videos and music CDs.
- **Help your child build a collection.** One thing common among reading lovers is how much they enjoy having their own book collection. Help your children grow a personal library of their favorite series, author or genre. Then give them a special shelf to store and display the collection.
- **Play word games.** Look for board, computer or phone games that help kids develop their reading and spelling skills and vocabulary.
- **Sign up for Goodreads.** Through this Android and iOS app, kids can track both the books they've read and those they want to read. They can also check out what their friends are reading.
- **Subscribe your child to a magazine.** There's a host of kids' magazines on the market and something for every age group. It will give your child something to look forward to each month and build enthusiasm for reading.
- **Read in front of your kids.** Show kids that reading isn't just a school requirement, but rather a lifelong activity. Let them see you reading both to learn and for pleasure.
- **Form a kids' book club.** If your child is interested in it, this is a great way to build excitement for reading. You'll want to find kids who are all at about the same reading level. You'll need to decide where to hold the weekly or monthly meetings, which could be at your house, or perhaps your school or public library will provide you space. You might be able to advertise it through your child's school or public library, as well.
- **Set up a reading room or corner.** Find a quiet, distraction-free area in your home to designate as the reading area. It should have comfy seating, perhaps even a bean bag or two, pillows, blankets and good lighting.



EXPLORE • WONDER • GROW

We've Moved!

**New Outdoor Classroom &
Expanded Toddler Program**

Ages 2-6 years

1724 Chain Bridge Road • McLean, VA



703-356-5437 • www.brooksfieldschool.org

FUN THINGS TO DO WITH KIDS IN THE DMV

Did you know ...

You can list your kid-friendly events
FREE on washingtonparent.com?

HERE'S HOW TO CREATE AN EVENT:

- Go to WashingtonParent.com/calendar
- Click on blue ADD EVENT button
- Provide details of the event

LOOKING FOR THINGS TO DO WITH THE KIDDOS?

Go to WashingtonParent.com:

- View our **Calendar of Events**
- Sign up for our weekly
Top Things To Do This Weekend e-news
- Find our **Top Things to Do with Kids in the DMV This Week** featured events





BIGSTOCK/RI081

PLACES TO LEARN, BELONG AND THRIVE

**Private day schools that specialize in special education
or have support programs for neurodivergent students.**

By Emily Hedrick

The Katherine Thomas School in Rockville is a day school dedicated to serving students from preschool through 12th grade who learn and think differently, including those with language or learning disabilities, autism, intellectual disabilities and other health-related challenges. With a language-intensive, multi-sensory curriculum and a highly collaborative team of educators, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and social workers, KTS creates individualized learning experiences that build academic skills, social confidence and self-advocacy. From small class sizes and assistive technology to hands-on projects, expressive activities and structured transition planning for life after graduation, the school supports each student's unique path toward independence and success.

Schools with support programs for neurodivergent students

MARET SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private, College Preparatory
 - **Grade levels:** K-12
 - **Location:** 3000 Cathedral Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- Maret School, a small facility whose motto is "To Learn is to Live," is dedicated to encouraging students' curiosity and creativity and setting them up for success in a safe, inclusive and wellness-focused environment. The school provides lots of opportunities for students to explore their academic, athletic and artistic interests and learn valuable life skills.

IVYMOUNT SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private
 - **Grade levels:** K-age 21
 - **Location:** 11614 Seven Locks Road, Rockville, MD
- Ivymount School in Rockville is a nationally recognized non-public special education day school serving neurodiverse learners from early childhood through age 21. For more than six decades, Ivymount has combined evidence-based instruction with integrated therapeutic supports—like speech/language, occupational, physical and mental health services—to help students with autism and other complex learning needs build academic skills, communication, independence and self-advocacy. Beyond academics, the school's individualized programs include career exploration and transition-to-work training, community outreach offerings and professional development that extends its impact into homes, schools and organizations across the region.

OAKWOOD SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private
 - **Grade levels:** 1-8
 - **Location:** 7210 Braddock Road, Annandale, Virginia
- The goal of Oakwood School is to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for students with learning differences, such as ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. Oakwood tailors their programs to student's strengths and struggles so they can thrive academically, self-advocate and feel confident in themselves.

THE LAB SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON

- **Type of school:** Private
 - **Grade levels:** 1-12
 - **Location:** 4759 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC
- The Lab School of Washington is staffed with specialists equipped and dedicated to preparing students with learning differences for the future. The school teaches students how to use their differences to their advantage so they can thrive in higher education and career settings.

THE SIENA SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private
- **Grade levels:** 5-12
- **Locations:** 1300 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, MD, and 2705 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA

Siena is a community-orientated school that cares deeply about Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB). The school employs experiential learning, service learning and plenty of arts programs so students can have fulfilling, hands-on and in-person opportunities. Siena also provides tutoring and hosts summer programs.

Religiously-affiliated schools with neurodivergent/special education programs

HOLY REDEEMER SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private, Catholic
 - **Grade levels:** Pre-K-8
 - **Location:** 4902 Berwyn Road, College Park, MD
- Holy Redeemer School employs a well-rounded, faith-based curriculum that is made more inclusive and accommodating thanks to their devoted and flexible special education program. Students learn a variety of subjects, including the fine arts, and the staff are certified to give special needs students the instruction they need to thrive.

GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private, All-Boys, Catholic
 - **Grade levels:** 9-12
 - **Location:** 19 Eye St. NW, Washington, DC
- Gonzaga College High School is devoted to giving young Jesuit boys a well-rounded and global education in an environment that values social justice. Students receive a wide range of fun and fulfilling opportunities inside and outside the classroom, as well as both guidance and college counselling.

ST. ANSELM'S ABBEY SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private, All-Boys, Catholic
 - **Grade levels:** 6-12
 - **Location:** 4501 South Dakota Ave. NE, Washington, DC
- St. Anselm's is an academically rigorous school committed to preparing young boys for a successful higher education while fostering their spiritual development. Nearly half the students receive financial aid and there are plenty of opportunities for student athletes. Students also regularly take part in community service as part of their education.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

- **Type of school:** Private, Catholic
 - **Grade levels:** 9-12
 - **Location:** 2607 Military Road NW, Chevy Chase, Washington, DC
- St. John's College High School is an environment where students of all different backgrounds can embrace who they are, prepare for college and become successful, community-oriented leaders. The school teaches several Honors and AP classes, offers lots of extracurriculars and provides resources like peer tutoring and studies strategies.



THE ST·JAMES

SUMMER CAMPS

AWARDED BEST SUMMER CAMP IN THE DMV

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS • LUNCH INCLUDED
REGISTER TODAY & SAVE 20%



THESTJAMES.COM/SUMMER-CAMPS

**ROUND
HOUSE**
EDUCATION

THEATRE CAMPS GRADES K-12
in Silver Spring and Bethesda
SUMMER 2026



EXPRESS YOURSELF



301.585.1225

Explore sessions and register at
RoundHouseTheatre.org/Camp

Summer Camp
Ages 6-15
Jul 13-Aug 21, 2026

★ NATIONAL
★ CHILDREN'S
★ THEATRE



**Register
Today!**



BarrieCamp

June 15 - August 14

Ages 3.5 - 14

**Transportation &
Extended Day**

Open Houses

12 pm - 2 pm

Feb 8

**Summer Camp
At It's Finest!**

13500 Layhill Road,
Silver Spring, MD 20906
barrie.org/camp

40 YEARS WASHINGTON **Parent** **kojam**

CAMP 2026

& FAMILY FITNESS FAIRS

FREE AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!



- Talk to camp and fitness staff in person
- Grab brochures and free giveaways
- Entertainment, activities, and more!

Tysons
CORNER CENTER®

FEB. 7, 2026

FAIR OAKS MALL

FEB 28, 2026

D DULLES
Town Center

FEB 14, 2026

springfieldtowncenter

FEB 21, 2026

CAMPS & SUMMER PR

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Camp Shakespeare

Shakespeare Theatre Company invites students ages 6–18 to explore the works of William Shakespeare through hands-on theatre training. Two-week sessions are available for youth ages 6–11 and teens ages 12–18, with returning teens able to audition for a three-week intensive. Locations in Washington, DC, and McLean, Va.

Steve & Kate's Camp

Campers design their day by choosing activities in real time, including sewing, coding, maker crafts, sports and more. Families can purchase flexible day passes, with unused days automatically refunded at summer's end. Lunch, snacks and full-day care from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. are included. Ages 4–12. Locations in Washington, DC, Maryland and Alexandria, Va. 415-389-5437.



VIRGINIA

Acting for Young People Summer Acting Programs

Fun, fast-paced, award winning camp taught by professional teaching artists. Weekly camps include acting, voice, movement, on-camera, musical theater, improvisation and more! Specialized programs in musical theater, improv and devised theater are also offered. All weekly sessions conclude in a final performance. Presented in conjunction with Mason Community Arts Academy. Fairfax, Va. 703-554-4931.

Beginner Fencing Camp

Beginner Fencing Camp introduces students to the Olympic sport of fencing in a supportive, skill-building environment. Instruction emphasizes caring, inclusion and competence while helping campers build confidence, discipline and athletic ability. Sterling, Va. 240-424-0749.

Camp Griffin at Westminster School

Camp Griffin offers a summer filled with discovery and hands-on fun through a wide range of specialty programs, including

Adventure, STEAM, water activities, French, art and sports. Flexible scheduling with early and extended care is available. Camps are led by certified counselors, with military and sibling discounts offered. 3819 Gallows Road, Annandale, Va. 703-340-7268.

Congressional Camp

Set on a scenic 40-acre campus, Congressional Camp offers an unforgettable summer filled with outdoor adventures, creative arts, swimming, sports and hands-on exploration. Programs are designed to inspire curiosity and confidence in a joyful, supportive community. Falls Church, Va. 703-533-0931.

Natural Leaders Ultimate Explorer Day Program

Each day brings a new outdoor adventure as campers explore local woods and creeks through games, fishing, whittling and wilderness survival skills. Immersed in nature, children build confidence, resilience and a strong connection to the outdoors. Northern Virginia. 571-244-3793.



- Ages 4–14
- 10 Weeks of Programs
- Pool on Site
- 40-Acre Wooded Campus
- Lunch & Snacks Included

CONGRESSIONAL SCHOOL CONGRESSIONAL SUMMER CAMP

1,200 ACRES OF
**Choose-Your-Own
Adventure**

LEARN MORE
woodberry.org/woodberry-summer-camp

Reston LOOK Tysons
11940 Market St. DINE-IN CINEMAS 1667 Silver Hill Dr.
Reston, VA McLean, VA

presents

MOVIE PARTIES

- ★ Amazing Menu
- ★ Private Auditoriums
- ★ Great Movies
New & All-time Favorites
- ★ For Kids and Adults!

Contact: Craig O'Connor
coconnor@lookcinemas.com
www.LookCinemas.com

PROGRAMS GUIDE



The St. James

Voted Best Summer Camps in the DMV, The St. James offers Adventure, Sports and STEAM camps for ages 4–16. Programs feature top coaches, world-class facilities and transportation options. 6805 Industrial Road, Springfield, Va. 703-239-6846.

The Workhouse Arts Center

Summer, Spring & Day Camps
The Workhouse Arts Center offers summer, spring and day camps designed to spark creativity and support artistic growth for children and teens ages 6–16. Led by professional artists, camps provide a fun, enriching environment for young creators. 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, Va. 703-584-2900.

MARYLAND

AFF Summer Adventure Camp

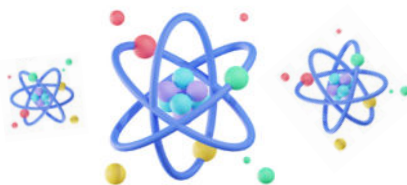
Give your child a screen-free summer where nature becomes the classroom. Summer Adventure Camps blend hands-on environmental learning with outdoor exploration, helping kids build confidence, curiosity and friendships through discovery, play and fun on a historic riverside campus. Accokeek, Md. 301-292-5665.

Barrie Camp

Barrie Camp focuses on nurturing each camper's strengths while creating an engaging and memorable summer experience. Since the 1950s, its self-contained 45-acre campus has provided an ideal setting for campers to explore with confidence and enjoy favorite activities alongside new and familiar friends. Silver Spring, Md. 301-576-2818.

Camp Woodend

Located on a 40-acre nature sanctuary, Camp Woodend offers day, travel, and overnight camps that combine outdoor adventure with nature and science education for students in kindergarten through high school. Camps are led by experienced environmental educators and maintain an 8:1 child-to-teacher ratio. Chevy Chase, Md. 301-652-9188.



NatPhil Summer String Institute

String students in grades 2–12 take part in an immersive music experience featuring private lessons, chamber music, and three levels of orchestra performance. Guided by National Philharmonic teaching artists and Montgomery County Public Schools educators, students explore music theory, technique and engaging enrichment activities. Bethesda, Md. 301-493-9283, ext. 4209.

Round House Theatre Summer Camp

Students of all ages and backgrounds experience the joy of creating and sharing theatre through programs that inspire creativity, stretch imaginations, and encourage artistic risk-taking. Camp locations include Bethesda and Silver Spring, Md. 301-585-1225.

Summer Musical Theatre with ATMT Academy

Summer Musical Theatre Camp for rising grades 1–6 is a two-week, full-day, in-person camp that culminates in a delightful ensemble performance! Glen Echo Park, Glen Echo, Md. Summer Musical Theatre Training Program for rising grade 7–12 provides students with a foundational and expanded understanding of technique in ballet, jazz, music and acting. Wintergreen Plaza, Rockville, Md.

CONTINUED...

Woodland Horse Center SUMMER CAMP

Do you have a "HORSE-CRAZY" kid?

WOODLAND'S Summer Camps are loaded with tons of great horseback riding lessons & activities. Expert instruction in a safe and fun-filled environment.

- PONY PALS CAMP is for kids age 5-7
- HORSEMANSHIP CAMP is for kids age 8-16

REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE ONLINE
CAMP HOURS 9-4 EXTENDED CARE AVAILABLE
SIGN UP SOON SPACES FILL FAST

COMING
SOON!

Intro
Lesson
available
Sundays @
1pm



WoodlandHorseCenterCamp@gmail.com 301-421-9156

camp woodend
BY NATURE FORWARD



GRADES
K-9

SUMMER DAY CAMPS

WOODEND NATURE SANCTUARY
CHEVY CHASE, MD

Day, Travel, Specialty & Overnight Camps

High-quality environmental
science education and
good old-fashioned camp fun!



See all camps and register now at
natureforward.org/campwoodend

CAMPS & SUMMER PROGRAMS GUIDE

Woodland Horse Center

Woodland Horse Center offers horseback riding summer camps for horse-loving kids ages 5–16. Pony Pals Summer Camp serves ages 5–7, while Horsemanship Summer Camp for ages 8–16 focuses on riding skills, horse care, and confidence-building. 16301 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 301-421-9156.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Camp Arena Stage

This full-day, multi-arts summer camp for ages 8–15 is hosted on the grounds of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School. Campers explore, discover and create with guidance from professional artists and educators while choosing their own schedules from classes in theater, dance, music, visual art, filmmaking and writing. Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School, 1524 35th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 202-600-4064.

National Children's Theatre Summer Camp

July 13–Aug. 21. Ages 6–15. Campers explore creative drama exercises, theatre games, art projects, and performance fundamentals through one- and two-week sessions, including *The Jungle Book* and *The Odyssey*. Full-day camp runs 9 a.m.–3 p.m., with aftercare until 5 p.m. Financial assistance available. Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, 201 4th St. SE, Washington, D.C.

The Theatre Lab

For more than three decades, The Theatre Lab has offered award-winning summer programs for youth and teens in the Washington area. Each summer, more than 550 young people participate in acting camps and theatre training institutes in a collaborative, creative environment. 900 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 202-824-0449.



SLEEPAWAY CAMP

Woodberry Summer Camp

Woodberry Summer Camp offers boys the opportunity to grow through athletic challenge, intellectual exploration and a supportive community across a 1,200-acre campus. Guided by faculty, students, and alumni, campers build character, confidence and lasting friendships. Woodberry Forest, Va. 540-672-3900.

Camp Accomplish

Camp Accomplish is an inclusive summer camp for children ages 5–18 with or without disabilities and chronic health conditions, along with siblings, friends and peers from the local community. Campers can choose from day and overnight options and enjoy activities such as horseback riding, swimming, arts and outdoor adventures in a safe, supportive environment. Melwood Recreation Center, 9035 Ironsides Road, Nanjemoy, Md. 20662.

Spring Musical Theatre Classes!

Grades K-12 | After School & Weekends
Glen Echo & Wintergreen Plaza (Rockville)

Sing! Dance! Act! (Grades K-1)	Pop/Rock Class (Grades 2-5)
Broadway Prep (Grades 2-3)	Mini Play (Grades 3-6)
Bridge to Broadway (Grades 4-5)	All That Jazz (Grades 4-7)
Build A Play (Grades K-2)	

ADVENTURE THEATRE & ATMTC ACADEMY
SEE THEATRE. BE THEATRE.

Experienced, Professional Staff

Includes Final Parent Sharing

LEARN MORE

www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org | 301-634-2270 | @adventure_theatre

SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY

CAMP SHAKESPEARE

JUN 22-AUG 15, 2026
Ages 6–18

REGISTER TODAY
ShakespeareTheatre.org
202.547.5688

STC

WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

2026 SUMMER, SPRING & DAY CAMPS

Registration is Open!

Amazing 2026 Camps & classes are Available (Ages 6 - 16) at **The Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, VA!!**

For more information visit:

- www.workhousearts.org
- camps@workhousearts.org
- (703) 584-2900

JOIN US THIS SUMMER!

SUMMER ADVENTURE CAMP

Hard Bargain Farm - July 6 to August 21

Give your child a summer of discovery, confidence, and connection—where nature is the classroom and adventure is the teacher.

- Children ages 4-13
- Bus options from Washington, DC
- Staffed by professional educators
- Extended care available
- Weekly day, mini overnight and full-week overnight options
- Build confidence, curiosity and teamwork

fergusonfoundation.org/2026SummerCamp

JOIN US FOR
"Their FAVORITE week of the Summer!"
NATURAL LEADERS' ULTIMATE EXPLORERS
 WEEK-LONG SUMMER ADVENTURES IN NATURE

Wilderness skills!
 Nature games & exploration!
 Joy, confidence & friendship!

JUN-AUG
 Ages 7-12+
MON-FRI
 9am-4pm

IN MARYLAND & VIRGINIA
 Bowie | Bethesda | Gaithersburg | Marriottsville
 Aldie | Centreville | Falls Church/Fairfax | Fredericksburg
 Lorton | Reston | Springfield | Stafford

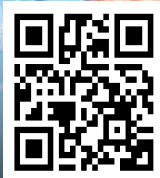
NATURALLEADERS.COM





STEVE & KATE'S CAMP

SUMMER SOLVED



Camp Griffin Summer Camp
 Experience... Explore... Create

REGISTER TODAY!
June 15 - August 21, 2026

Flexible Schedule **Field Trips** **Specialty Camps**





WestminsterSchool.com/CampGriffin
(703) 340-7268
3819 Gallows Road, Annandale, VA 22003



Scan Me!



USA FENCING

2025 WASHINGTON Parent PICKS
 SPORTS & RECREATION CAMPS
FINALIST

2025 WASHINGTON Parent PICKS
 FENCING
WINNER



Cardinal Fencing Academy Summer Camps and Weekly Classes
 Register Now: 240 424 0749
www.CardinalFencingAcademy.Com
 45980 Center Oak Plaza Suite 140 Sterling, VA

The Theatre Lab
 SCHOOL OF THE DRAMATIC ARTS

DRAMA CAMPS

Nationally Recognized Summer Arts Programs for Grades 1-12

REGISTER AT WWW.THEATRELAB.ORG

Summer Musical Theatre Camp
 Rising Grades 1-6 | Mon-Fri | 9am-4pm | Glen Echo

2026 Summer Sessions:
 Session 1: June 22-July 3, 2026
 Session 2: July 6-17, 2026
 Session 3: July 20-31, 2026
 Session 4: August 3-14, 2026
 Session 5: August 17-21, 2026

ADVENTURE THEATRE & ATMTC ACADEMY
 SEE THEATRE. BE THEATRE.

www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org | 301-634-2270 | @adventure_theatre



Final Musical Performance on the Stage

Experienced, Professional Staff



LEARN MORE



BIGSTOCK/RAWPIXEL.COM

IS YOUR NEURODIVERGENT KID READY FOR CAMP?

Expert advice to help parents of neurodivergent kids find supportive summer camp options.

By Maggie McIntyre



COURTESY JEN DRYER

Jen Dryer and family

Finding the right school for a child with special needs can be one of the most important (and tough) decisions a family makes.

For families with neurodivergent children, figuring out [summer camps](#) and childcare can feel extra overwhelming. Beyond just the availability and cost, parents need to know whether their child will genuinely be supported.

To help make sense of it all, we talked with [Jen Dryer](#), a local parent coach and co-founder of [Raising Orchid Kids](#), to break down summer camp options and what families need to know before enrolling.

UNDERSTANDING CAMP LANGUAGE

Camps often use terms like “inclusive,” “adaptive,” or “therapeutic recreation,” but what does this language actually mean? According to Dryer, these labels don’t always tell the full story.

“It really varies from camp to camp, so I always recommend parents reach out to the camp staff to ask who their target campers are,” she explains.

“Inclusive” typically means neurodivergent kids are part of a neurotypical setting. There might be one-on-one support and staff might provide extra assistance even if they aren’t deeply trained in working with neurodivergent kids. For example, [Bender JCC of greater Washington](#), [Camp Under the Stars](#), [Beauvoir](#) or [Bretton Woods](#) offer great inclusive camp options in the DC area.

“Adaptive” camps are generally built for children who need tailored physical or behavioral support and are often operated by therapy providers, rather than inclusive camp settings with neurotypical peers. [Camp Accomplish](#) is a great example in the DMV area.

“Therapeutic recreation” programs are even more specialized, using activities aligned with occupational, physical or speech therapy to support children who benefit from structured, goal-oriented care.

DECIDING IF A CAMP IS RIGHT FOR YOUR CHILD

To determine if a camp truly supports neurodiverse needs like ADHD, autism, anxiety or sensory processing differences, Dryer has a list of specific, practical questions she recommends parents ask.

- What adaptations are made for neurodivergent campers?
- What training do counselors actually receive?
- How does staff respond to meltdowns or dysregulation?
- What happens when a child becomes triggered?
- How does the camp proactively set kids up for success?

“Ideally, the camp staff should have solid experience working with kids with various diagnoses,” Dryer says. “They should also have protocols and clear plans for what to do when things go sideways and a camper becomes dysregulated.”

She adds that strong camps will often use detailed intake questionnaires where parents can explain their child’s specific needs.

PARENT-TO-PARENT ADVICE

When it comes time to make a decision about summer camp, Dryer emphasizes the importance of community and self-trust.

“Ask for references from other parents and find a community of parents with neurodivergent kids from whom you can ask for recommendations,” she says. “Know your child and their capacity, their limits and their interests, and find supportive camps that work within those parameters if possible.”

She suggests that the right fit isn’t about the label. It’s about whether your child feels supported and understood.

CHECK OUT FUN THINGS TO DO WITH KIDS IN THE DMV

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

WASHINGTON PARENT

Public Programs for All Ages

Top Things to Do With Kids in the DMV This Week

Family-friendly events, activities and outings (August 21st-27th)

SUBSCRIBE FOR UPDATES

WASHINGTON PARENT
washingtonparent.com



BIGSTOCK/ GORILLA

LACE UP AND LEARN

A guide to hockey camps and clinics to sharpen your players' on-ice skills around DC, Maryland and Virginia.

By Maggie McIntyre

Whether you have a seasoned hockey player in the family, or one just starting out, hockey skills clinics are a great way to sharpen skills and gain a competitive edge on the ice.

We've compiled a list of the top hockey camps and clinics in the DMV this year.



LAURA STAMM

Focused on power skating, this clinic is designed to improve on-ice speed and mobility. Players can expect to develop powerful strides, explosive acceleration and backward speed. These three- to five-day clinics are geared toward players with at least one season under their belt. There are clinics in Arlington, VA, and Laurel, MD, throughout the spring and summer, check their website for schedule specifics.

- **Dates:** Varies
- **Location:** MedStar Capitals Iceplex, 627 N. Glebe Road, Suite 800, Arlington, VA, or The Gardens Ice House, 13800 Old Gunpowder Road, Laurel, MD
- **Ages:** 7-adult

COLD RUSH

At the Ashburn Ice House, players can drop in all summer or join for a single day to work on targeted skills with the Cold Rush training program. Their schedule offers plenty of options for travel team-level skaters and is a great way to customize your training this summer.

- **Dates:** June 15-Aug. 14
- **Location:** 21595 Smith Switch Road, Ashburn, VA
- **Ages:** 9-18

DC HOCKEY

If you have a player who is still learning more basic hockey skills, the DC Hockey summer clinic is a way for them to get much more comfortable on the ice. They teach essential skills at the one-hour weekly session at the Rockville Ice Arena.

- **Dates:** Week of June 15-week of Aug. 3
- **Location:** 50 Southlawn Court, Rockville, MD
- **Ages:** 7-18

THE ST. JAMES HOCKEY CAMPS

This summer, St. James is offering the DMV 3's Hockey Camp for young players. The coaching staff includes players from top leagues such as the NCAA, AHL and NHL. Focused on skill development in an inspiring atmosphere, this camp has 13 hours of on-ice time to help unleash your players' potential.

- **Dates:** June 22-26
- **Location:** 6805 Industrial Road, Springfield, VA
- **Ages:** 6-16

PLANET HOCKEY

As a national skills training program, Planet Hockey is offering a one-week camp out of the MedStar Capitals Iceplex in Arlington this summer. Their camp highlights power skating, stickhandling, passing and scoring, and includes small games.

- **Dates:** July 20-24
- **Location:** 627 N Glebe Road Suite 800, Arlington, VA
- **Ages:** 6-16



**Get the Best Things to Do
With Kids, Parenting Tips,
Giveaways and More!**

40th WASHINGTON
Parent

SUBSCRIBE



BIGSTOCK/ GORILLA

OLYMPIC ADVENTURES AROUND THE DMV

A local guide to Olympic-inspired activities, winter sports experiences and seasonal adventures for kids and families around the DC metro.

By Jenna Dolch

The 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy are a great excuse to get kids excited about winter sports and active fun, even in and around Washington, DC, where snow and mountains aren't exactly in our backyard. While ice skating and hockey are winter classics, the DMV offers a variety of sporty and Olympic-esque activities that kids can try throughout the season. From ski-style training and indoor challenges to athletic clubs and special programs, there are plenty of ways to celebrate winter's energy and embrace the Olympic mindset right in the city.

From learning new physical skills to trying creative movement and sporty games indoors, this guide has winter-themed experiences and sports opportunities that go beyond just skating. These local organizations and seasonal activities help kids stay active, inspired and ready to cheer on Team USA during the 2026 Winter Games!

WINTER SKILLS AND TRAINING AT VOLO SPORTS DC

Help kids build athletic skills that translate to winter sports performance, from balance to agility, at this indoor multi-sports facility. Volo Sports DC offers classes and programs that focus on coordination, strength and movement fundamentals that benefit young athletes, whether they dream of skiing, snowboarding or even Olympic biathlon events. The welcoming space includes open play, youth clinics and ways for kids to get active on cold winter days indoors.

- **Address:** 1200 G St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday
- **Phone:** (202) 919-3955

ADAPTIVE, INCLUSIVE SPORTS WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS DC

Kids and teens can discover winter-sport enthusiasm through inclusive athletics with the Special Olympics District of Columbia. This organization provides year-round sports and fitness programs that celebrate ability, teamwork and skills development. While not strictly winter sports, many movement and athletic programs build strength, coordination and confidence in a fun, supportive setting that fits the Winter Games spirit.

- **Address:** 415 Michigan Ave. NE, Ground Level, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** Vary based on activity
- **Phone:** (202) 408-2640

WINTER SKATE AND LEARN AT THE WHARF ICE RINK

The Wharf Ice Rink brings Olympic-style winter fun to the waterfront with seasonal public skating and youth skill-building sessions. Kids can join Future Caps Learn to Play to build balance, movement and beginner skating confidence, a great starting point for young athletes inspired by the Winter Games. Families can enjoy the atmosphere, scenic views and a chance to explore skating beyond just laps around the rink.

- **Address:** 970 Wharf St. SW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 9-10 a.m. select dates
- **Phone:** (202) 688-3590

CROSS-TRAINING AND MOVEMENT AT PRINCE GEORGE'S SPORTS & LEARNING COMPLEX

Get active and try winter-style athletic drills indoors at one of the region's largest sports complexes. Prince George's Sports

& Learning Complex offers open gym spaces, track activities and youth programs that help kids work on endurance and athletic skills. Great cross-training for snow sports like cross-country skiing or ski jumping conditioning.

- **Address:** 8001 Sheriff Road, Landover, MD
- **Hours:** 6 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday; noon-6 p.m. Sunday
- **Phone:** (301) 583-2400

WASHINGTON FIGURE SKATING CLUB

The Washington Figure Skating Club is a longtime DMV hub for skaters who want to grow in the same disciplines you'll see under the spotlight at the Winter Olympics — from freestyle and ice dance to moves in the field, synchronized skating and theater on ice. Founded in 1938 and sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating in 1939, WFSC supports skaters across ages and ability levels through affiliated rinks, club sessions, and a strong community focused on excellence on the ice. With various rinks in Maryland and Virginia, the club is great resource for future Olympic contenders!

- **Address:** Cabin John Ice Rink (home rink), 10610 Westlake Drive, Rockville, MD
- **Hours:** Hours vary by training session
- **Phone:** (301) 765-8620

WASHINGTON CAPITALS

The Washington Capitals Youth Hockey program offers clinics designed to introduce young players to the sport and build skills in a fun, inclusive environment. Through hands-on instruction and certified coaching, kids learn fundamentals such as skating, stickhandling and teamwork, creating a foundation that mirrors the dedication and development seen in elite international play like Olympic hockey. As youth athletes progress through these grassroots clinics, they gain confidence and the basic skills that are part of the long journey from beginner to potential future Olympian.

- **Address:** 627 N. Glebe Road, Suite 850, Arlington, VA
- **Hours:** Hours vary on program
- **Phone:** (202) 266-2352



NAT PHIL HARMONIC
NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC
SUMMER STRING INSTITUTE

Feel the music this summer at NatPhil's Summer String Institute! String students in grades 2-12 dive into immersive and comprehensive music experiences with private lessons, chamber music, three levels of orchestra performance and more – all designed to spark creativity, musicality, and fun.

Session 1: July 20-24
Session 2: July 27-32

Location
6301 River Road Bethesda, MD 20817

Visit nationalphilharmonic.org/ssi/ for more information

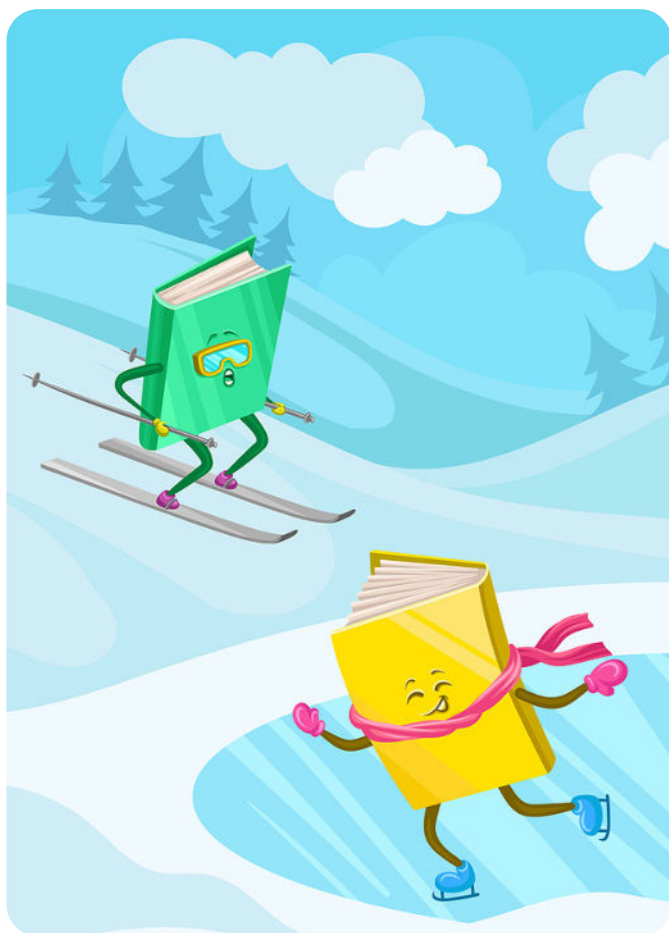
WHAT TO READ

Get ready for the 2026 Winter Olympics and Paralympics

Books about the games and glory of Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

By Mary Quattlebaum

When chill winds blow, what perks appetites and spirits more than a steaming bowl of soup? With these books, you can have your soup — and read it too! Those wishing to make their own are in luck. Easy-to-follow recipes are often included. As these tales testify, soup can link families and heritage, connect community and inspire your own chopping and stirring. But most delectably, it can soothe and nourish when served for supper on a winter evening.



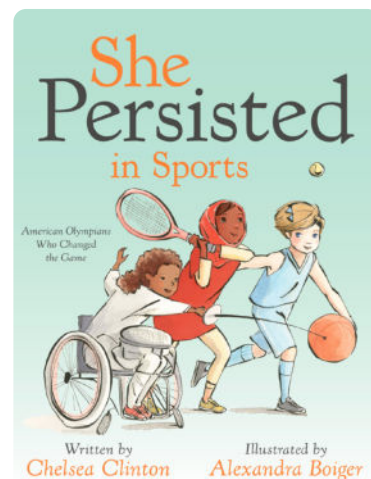
BIGSTOCK/HAPPY PICTURES

TOTS - AGE 7

"She Persisted in Sports"

By Chelsea Clinton
Illustrated by Alexander Boiger
Philomel, 2020, \$17.99

As author Chelsea Clinton states, "[I]t's not easy to be a girl athlete." Girls' sports often were—and still can be—marginalized, underfunded and underappreciated. This book's brief biographies of 12 American female Olympians highlight their skill, dedication and hard work. Golf maven Margaret Ives Abbott became the first American woman Olympic champion in 1900. Track star Wilma Rudolph overcame polio-related disabilities to become the first American woman to win three gold medals. As a child, figure skating medalist Kristi Yamaguchi had to wear a cast to correct her club foot, but she was still determined to skate. More recently, sisters Jocelyne and Monique Lamoreaux honed their hockey talents on the boys' team when they were young. And in 2018, with key goals, they helped the U.S. Women's Hockey Team achieve victory. The book ends by encouraging all young athletes and readers: "They persisted and so should you."



"Figure Skating"

By Laura Hamilton Waxman
Illustrated with color photos
Amicus, 2018, \$9.99

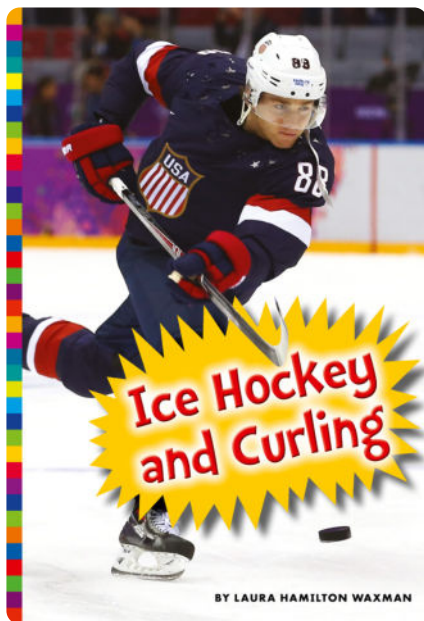
In this early chapter book, intriguing facts and dynamic photos help youngsters experience the Olympic sport of figure skating. Author Laura Hamilton Waxman explains that it was part of the first modern Winter Olympics in 1924. She describes the major categories—individual (women and men), pairs, ice dancing and team—and explains the judging process. All types test the skaters' skill, strength, stamina and grace, and they must jump, spin and perform fancy footwork. As they watch the 2026 Winter Olympics, the whole family will appreciate this easy-to-understand guide to requirements and judging.



"Ice Hockey and Curling"

By Laura Hamilton Waxman
Illustrated with color photos
Amicus, 2018, \$9.99

Thanks to indoor ice rinks, hockey has become one of the most popular winter sports for American kids. The book explains the difference between hockey and curling, mentioning that both have Olympic categories for men and women. Hockey is a high-action team sport, with players on skates hitting pucks with sticks on smooth, flat ice. In contrast, curling teams focus on precision. Players wear special shoes, not skates, and slide heavy granite stones across bumpy ice toward a target. Both sports promise edge-of-your-seat drama. Want to learn more? Check out the book's back matter for helpful websites and resources.

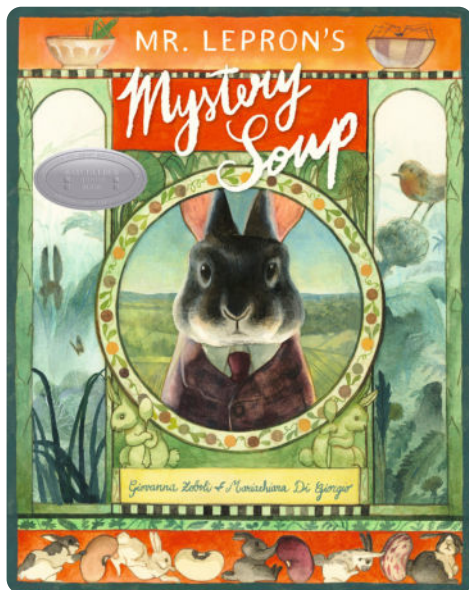


PRETEENS

"What Are the Winter Olympics?"

By Gail Herman
Penguin, 2021, \$5.99

Re-visit key moments in this fascinating history of the Winter Olympics! You never know what may happen—a star athlete might stumble or fall, a little-known contender could emerge a winner. There was the perfectly scored ice dancing of the British pair Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean in 1984. In 1988, the underdog Jamaican bobsled team won hearts and later inspired the Disney film "Cool Runnings." In short track speed skating in 1992, an upset shot Australian Steven Bradbury to the lead. And was the Czech Republic's Esther Ledecka able to garner double gold in two very different sports? Yes, in skiing and snowboarding in 2018, at her first Olympics!



"Brenna Huckaby: Paralympic Snowboarding Champ"

By Emma Carlson Berne
Capstone, 2021, \$31.32

As a child in relatively snow-less Louisiana, Brenna Huckaby was a highly ranked gymnast. Then at the age of 14, she received a devastating diagnosis. She had bone cancer, and her right leg above the knee had to be amputated. Following surgery, she began using a prosthetic leg, but soon realized gymnastics was no longer a good fit. She tried other sports and clicked with snowboarding. Huckaby credits her gymnastics training with her skill and delight in snowboarding. According to the book, the "snowboard reminded [her] of a moving balance beam," her favorite gymnastics event. She and her mother moved to snowy Utah, and she began para-snowboard training with the hope of competing in a future Paralympics. In 2018, she did just that, traveling to South Korea and winning gold in her two events. "It was official. Huckaby was now the best female para-snowboarder in the world!"

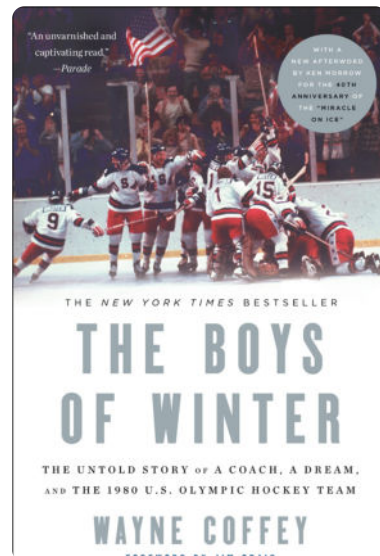


TEENS

"The Boys of Winter"

By Wayne Coffey
Crown, 2005, \$18

This sports classic was re-issued in 2020 for the 40th anniversary of what history has dubbed the "Miracle on Ice." Subtitled "The Untold Story of a Coach, a Dream, and the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team," this compelling nonfiction narrative can be enjoyed by teens and adults. It follows the American players and their coach as they prepare for and participate in the Lake Placid Olympics. And it chronicles their victory against the Soviet ice hockey team—a victory that amazed the world.



Mary Quattlebaum lives in Washington, DC, and is the author of 30 award-winning children's books, most recently "Queen Elizabeth II," an early reader biography. 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. For more information, visit maryquattlebaum.com.



ASK WASHINGTON PARENT: WHERE CAN I FIND PARENT SUPPORT NETWORKS?

**A list of social and educational resources to help build
community as a parent in the DMV**

By Maggie McIntyre

Ask Washington Parent is a new Washington Parent series that helps families explore the city and answer kids' curious questions along the way. From underground tunnels to zoo facts, we break it down so parents feel ready — and maybe even a little cool — explaining it. Does your curious kid have a question? Send it to us at contactus@washingtonparent.net and it might be featured in our next edition.

Parenting is hard, and you quickly learn why the old adage “It takes a village” is so popular. Sometimes, parents need support, whether it’s emotional, social or just needing a bit of “me” time.

We’ve assembled a list of support groups and resources that offer information and guidance for navigating parenthood for both moms and dads.

TREATMENT AND LEARNING CENTERS

The Treatment and Learning Centers (TLC) in Rockville, MD, is a trusted nonprofit that supports children and families across the DMV with educational, therapeutic and developmental services tailored to each child's needs. From speech-language and occupational therapy to educational evaluations, tutoring, early intervention and specialized summer programs, TLC's multidisciplinary approach helps kids build communication, learning and life skills in a caring, family-focused environment. Parents in the region turn to TLC not just for expert clinical support, but also for programs that strengthen confidence, promote progress and empower children with diverse abilities to thrive at home, school and in the community.

- **Cost:** Cost varies based on services
- **Location:** 9975 Medical Center Drive, Rockville, MD
- **Contact:** (301) 738-9691

PARENT ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAM

Parent Encouragement Program (PEP) is a nonprofit dedicated to helping parents in the Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia area raise confident, resilient and emotionally healthy children. Through affordable classes, support groups and online resources grounded in positive parenting principles, PEP equips caregivers with practical tools to navigate everyday challenges — from tantrums and school stress to building strong family relationships. Whether you're a new parent or navigating the tween and teen years, PEP offers judgment-free guidance and a supportive community that helps parents learn, grow and parent with greater confidence.

- **Cost:** Cost varies by service
- **Location:** 10100 Connecticut Ave., Kensington, MD
- **Contact:** (301) 929-8824

PACE

Serving parents in DC, Northern Virginia, Montgomery County and Prince George's County, PACE is an educational and emotional resource for first- and second-time moms. Their facilitators, who are both mental health professionals and parents, host weekly two-hour support groups sessions to discuss a variety of topics to help make parenthood a little smoother.

- **Cost:** \$375 for their eight-week first-time moms group and \$250 for their five-week second-time moms group
- **Location:** Sessions are held in a hybrid and virtual format based on parent and group leader needs
- **Contact:** hello@pacemoms.org

MONA

Mothers of North Arlington (MONA) offers fun events, playgroups, workshops and monthly gatherings for mothers at all stages of parenthood. They also offer an annual school fair where parents can learn more about education opportunities in their area.

- **Cost:** \$36 annual membership fee
- **Location:** Events held around North Arlington
- **Contact:** admin@monamoms.org

MAMA LOVE COLLECTIVE

This Maryland-based organization provides community and support for parents in all stages of raising their little ones. They offer programs for expecting mothers, parents of toddlers, fathers and even have groups for parents with neurodivergent children.

- **Cost:** Varies based on program length but \$400 is typical
- **Location:** Silver Spring, MD, and virtual
- **Contact:** Contact Form

MOMCO

For parents who are looking to build community around parenthood and faith, MomCo is an international organization that does just that. There are groups all over the DMV area, including Falls Church, McLean, Springfield and White Oak. Check out the MomCo website to find a group meeting near you or to start your own chapter. They also offer virtual options for busy parents that can't make in-person meetings.

- **Cost:** Varies by chapter
- **Location:** Meetings are held online and in-person throughout the DMV
- **Contact:** info@themomco.co

POSTPARTUM SUPPORT VIRGINIA

For new parents who are struggling with their mood or anxiety, Postpartum Support Virginia hosts support groups across the state to educate families about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and provide resources to help new and expectant mothers and their families work through these challenges. They have events in Fairfax County and Arlington, and also offer plenty of virtual options.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Location:** Arlington, Fairfax County and virtual
- **Contact:** info@postpartumva.org

FIT4MOM

If you're a mama looking for ways to stay active and build community in parenthood, Fit4Mom is a national organization with local chapters in the DMV. They offer workout classes specifically designed for prenatal and postnatal mothers including "Stroller Strides" and "Fit4Baby," which combine cardio, strength training and core work. You can find chapters in DC, Alexandria, Southwest NoVa, Fairfax County and Montgomery County. First classes are typically free.

- **Cost:** \$25 per class with membership-based discounts available
- **Location:** Throughout the DMV
- **Contact:** info@fit4mom.com

DADS ACHIEVING DISCIPLINE AND STRENGTH (DADS)

Dads who want to build community through fitness also have plenty of opportunities to do so. This program was made to connect fathers in the Alexandria area who want to feel stronger

CONTINUED...



and more energized for their families. They meet from 6-7 a.m. every Friday at Revolutionary Fitness.

- **Cost:** Included in gym membership for \$297 per month
- **Location:** 215 N. Payne St., Alexandria
- **Contact:** (571) 317-1456

WASHINGTON PARENT PICKS

Voted on by locals, for locals, these are the Washington Parent Picks of 2025 for family support in the region. Looking for something more specific? Visit the website and scroll through the various businesses who were dubbed the best of the best in the region.

WASHINGTON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS (WINNER)

Washington Psychological Wellness is a boutique-style mental health clinic serving families in the DMV with compassionate, evidence-based therapy and coaching services for all ages. From child and teen therapy to adult, couples and family counseling, their skilled team helps clients navigate life's challenges with personalized care in a warm, supportive environment. With convenient in-person locations in Gaithersburg and Rockville and secure telehealth options, Washington Psychological Wellness is a valuable resource for parents seeking emotional support, practical strategies and holistic wellness for their children and families.

- **Cost:** Cost varies by service
- **Location:** 1395 Piccard Drive, Suite 110, Rockville, MD; 845-F Quince Orchard Blvd., Gaithersburg, MD
- **Contact:** (301) 769-5878

PLAYFUL THERAPY CONNECTIONS (FINALIST)

Playful Therapy Connections is a neurodiversity-affirming mental health practice serving children, teens, adults and families in the DMV and beyond with a range of therapy, testing and support services. Using evidence-based approaches like

play therapy, sandtray, expressive arts and acceptance-focused techniques, they help clients express emotions, build social skills and strengthen family communication in ways that honor individual identity and strengths. With both virtual and in-person sessions available and specialized support for neurodivergent individuals and their caregivers, Playful Therapy Connections is a trusted resource for parents seeking compassionate, personalized support for their family's emotional well-being.

- **Cost:** Cost varies by service
- **Location:** 10 N Jefferson St., Suite 203, Frederick, MD
- **Contact:** (202) 750-1028

ARBIT COUNSELING LLC (FINALIST)

Arbit Counseling is a women-owned mental health practice rooted in the Washington, DC, and Virginia community that offers compassionate, evidence-based support for individuals, kids, teens, couples and families. Their team provides tailored services that include play therapy, trauma-informed care, reproductive and adult psychiatry, and family counseling, helping parents navigate everything from anxiety and behavior challenges to life transitions and relationship stressors.

- **Cost:** Cost varies by service
- **Location:** 4545 42nd St. NW, Suite 214, Washington, DC; 4405 East-West Highway, Suite 507, Bethesda, MD
- **Contact:** (240) 863-2618

FACEBOOK GROUPS

Social media can be a fantastic resource to connect with other parents and find information related to parenthood, schools, babysitting and more. Here is a list of trusted Facebook groups in the DMV that you can join to help build your parenting community.

WASHINGTON, DC

- **DC/DMV Parents and Families**
- **DC Area Moms and Families**
- **Metro DC Area Parents**
- **Dads in the DMV**
- **Washington DC Moms**

MARYLAND

- **Maryland Moms Club**
- **Prince George's County Parents, Child Care, Nanny and Babysitters Resource**
- **Bowie MD parents and guardians**
- **Bethesda-Rockville Moms**

VIRGINIA

- **Fairfax, VA Moms Community & Conversation**
- **West Springfield/Burke VA Parents**
- **West Springfield, VA Moms**
- **South Arlington (Virginia) Parents and Friends**
- **Single Parents in Northern Virginia and Moms Helping other Mothers**
- **NOVA Moms**

THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

"Cultivating each child's unique ability to flourish in mind, body and spirit."

- An Exceptional Montessori Education for Toddlers through Upper Elementary (Ages 2 - 12) on a beautiful 4-acre campus
- Enrichments: Art, Drama, Information Sciences, Library, Music, Outdoor Classroom, Physical Education, Science, Spanish
- Extended Day and Aftercare
- Bus transportation and Summer Camp available



www.mcleanmontessori.org

1711 Kirby Road, McLean, VA 22101
(703) 790-1049

Accredited by:



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY®
education that transforms lives
Accredited Member School

cognia™



START YOUR SUMMER CAMP & FAMILY FITNESS FUN SEARCH

HERE



FREE AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!



WASHINGTON
Parent

kojam

CAMP & FAMILY FITNESS FAIRS 2026

- Talk to camp staff in person
- Grab brochures and free giveaways
- Entertainment, activities, and more!

Tysons
CORNER CENTER
FEB. 7, 2026

DULLES
Town Center
FEB 14, 2026

FAIR OAKS MALL
FEB 28, 2026

springfieldtowncenter
FEB 21, 2026

HISTORICAL FLAVORS

A brief look at Black American history told through 10 food traditions.

By Sheeka Sanahori



BIGSTOCK/ND3000

Visit any region of the United States, and you'll find Black American cuisine with historic and multinational roots. Some dishes are so indelible to American culture that the contributions of African American chefs in their creation have largely been forgotten. Much of African American cuisine can trace its origins back to the U.S. south, as a majority of African-descended people begin their history in the United States in that area.

From there, one can see how Africans in America rely on the cooking traditions and ingredients from their homes in west and central Africa, mixed with ingredients and techniques used by Native Americans and European settlers. There are examples,

however, of individuals creating new dishes in isolation. Whether it's hot chicken in the south or bean pies in the north, the tastes of these fresh takes on African American cuisine have quickly caught on and spread throughout the country.

Starting from Texas, moving regionally across the South, and finally heading up to the Midwest, Stacker selected 10 food traditions that represent different moments in Black American history using the work of food historians, news reports, and museum resources.

From the rice and grits-based dishes of the Gullah Geechee on the East Coast to the melting pot of flavors in Louisiana's Creole cooking to the charcoal grilling traditions of the Midwest, one could travel across the United States and get unique flavor profiles at every turn.

BIGSTOCK/ FANFON



Menudo

Menudo may be known as a Mexican soup, but its creation isn't possible without the enslaved Africans who brought their dishes to Texas. The origins of menudo come from Zaire, where eating the innards of animals was an established tradition.

In the United States and Texas specifically, enslavers ate the choice pieces of meat. They gave the people they enslaved the less desirable cuts and animal intestines to eat. African Americans turned intestines and tripe into a delicious soup. Today, people often serve menudo for special occasions such as weddings, birthdays, and holidays in many Mexican American families.

BIGSTOCK/ BHOFACK2



Jambalaya

The Creole dish of jambalaya, a rice-based dish filled with various meats and vegetables prepared in a single pot, is made possible by the cooking influences of Native Americans, West Africans, Spanish, and French. The history of Louisiana as a territory from the mid-1600s to the early 1800s makes it possible to see how these influences came together.

Once European settlers arrived, present-day Louisiana was ruled and inhabited by the French and, later, the Spanish. Throughout its colonization, free and enslaved people who descended from West Africa lived in Louisiana.

Jambalaya's most noticeable relative is West African jollof rice. Both dishes rely heavily on tomatoes and rice and make use of whatever other ingredients the cook may have on hand to cook together in one pot. Creole culture in Louisiana goes beyond local cooking to include elements like language and music. Creole culture today often acknowledges one's roots in Louisiana and ancestry from West Africa.

BIGSTOCK/ IXEPOP



Gumbo

Gumbo, like jambalaya, also came out of the culinary mix of Native, West African, and European food traditions in Louisiana. People of African ancestry in the area introduced using West African okra, which is used to thicken the stew. The dish's name likely originated from a West African word for okra.

The Choctaw Nation, native to Louisiana, also contributed their use of sassafras leaves as a thickening agent for some types of gumbo. Finally, the use of a roux is a technique that comes from France.

Recipes for gumbo began appearing in Louisiana in the late 1800s, with recipes calling for one or two of the aforementioned thickening agents. By 1881, Abby Fisher published her book, "What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking" in San Francisco. The second-oldest known book of recipes to be written by an African American includes three recipes for gumbo.

BIGSTOCK/ BHOFACK2



Hot tamales

The Mexican tamale influenced African Americans in the Mississippi Delta to create their own spin on the meat-filled cornmeal dish. Although how and when the cultural exchange occurred is unconfirmed, some suspect African Americans were introduced to the dish in the early 20th century when Mexican migrant workers began to work in cotton fields alongside Black laborers. Others believe the cultural exchange occurred decades earlier during the U.S.-Mexican War.

The final theory is that Black Americans picked up tamale-making from Native Americans who originally lived in the region. Delta tamales are typically smaller than their Mexican

CONTINUED...

predecessor. They're often stuffed with beef instead of pork and steamed in a spiced brine. Once Delta-style tamales took off, love for the dish moved north as families migrated from Memphis to Chicago.



BIGSTOCK/BHOFAK2

Hoppin' John

Hoppin' John, a one-pot dish of pork, rice, and peas, hails from the Gullah Geechee community of southeastern coastal states like North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. Foodways author Jessica B. Harris ties the dish closely to the Senegalese dish, chiebou niebe, a rice-based dish made with beef instead of pork.

Although many people today associate the dish with black-eyed peas, Hoppin' John originally included reddish-brown field peas and Carolina gold rice. Enslaved Gullah Geechee, whose ancestors were from rice-producing countries such as Angola and Côte d'Ivoire, regularly cultivated rice on South Carolina and Georgia coastal plantations.

Karen Hess writes in her book, "The Carolina Rice Kitchen: The African Connection," that the earliest written recipe for Hoppin' John appears in 1847, in a cookbook written by a white woman from Charleston. However, she says the recipe for Hoppin' John originated with enslaved people cultivating rice in South Carolina long before that.

As Black Americans from the Lowcountry moved to different parts of the U.S. during the 20th century, families likely replaced field peas with more readily available black-eyed peas. Today, Hoppin' John and black-eyed peas remain a symbol of health and wealth, often eaten to ring in the new year.

Shrimp and grits

One has to head back to the South Carolina area to get to the origins of shrimp and grits. Grinding corn to get the gritty texture of grits known today began with the Muscogee Nation. They passed their traditions to white settlers and the Gullah



BIGSTOCK/BHOFAK2

Geechee community, who were enslaved on plantations along the coast.

The earliest depictions of dishes combining grits and shrimp come from the Gullah Geechee. By the early 20th century, cookbooks from the Charleston, South Carolina, area began sharing recipes for "breakfast shrimp" or "shrimp and hominy," similar to the shrimp and grits enjoyed today.



BIGSTOCK/EVREN_PHOTOS

Hot chicken

The fiery hot spices on the fried chicken commonly referred to as "Nashville hot chicken" comes from Prince's Hot Chicken, a restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee. According to the family, Thornton Prince's lover added extra heat to his fried chicken out of suspicion he'd been with another woman. Instead of doubling over from the spicy chicken, he loved the taste and eventually worked to perfect the recipe.

Prince opened his first hot chicken shack in Nashville in the 1930s, at the height of the Great Depression and Jim Crow laws dictating segregation across the South. His first chicken shack was on Jefferson Street, in the city's Black neighborhood near present-day Tennessee State University.

Many restaurants, including fast food chain KFC, have put their spin on the Nashville delicacy, but its roots remain with Prince's Hot Chicken and the historically Black neighborhoods of Nashville.

BIGSTOCK / IGORDUTINA



Macaroni and cheese

The macaroni and cheese dish Americans know and love today wouldn't be possible without the contributions of America's first master chef, James Hemings. Hemings was enslaved by America's third president, Thomas Jefferson.

In 1784, just one year after the Revolutionary War ended and eight years after Jefferson and others signed the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson brought Hemings to Paris to be trained in French cooking.

Black Americans who were enslaved wouldn't gain their freedom for another 79 years in the United States, yet in France, the laws were different. French law condoned slavery, but a person who was enslaved could petition the courts for freedom. However, there's no record of Hemings taking that option, and Hemings returned to the United States still enslaved.

In the 1790s, he began altering a French bechamel dish known as macaroni pie to suit the tastes of Americans. It was the beginning of America's love for macaroni and cheese. Hemings is also credited with creating ice cream, french fries, and whipped cream.



IMAGE GENERATED USING AI (DALL·E / OPENAI)

Rib tips

The labor-intensive art of barbecuing meant that by the 18th century, African Americans who were enslaved were the go-to pitmasters across the U.S. South. They often combined curing traditions from West Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans. After Emancipation, these skilled chefs were recruited across the country for their barbecue know-how.

In the 20th century, as meat processing became more sophisticated, butchers began cutting off the gristle at the tip of pork ribs to create a squared-off cut of meat. These so-called St. Louis-style ribs sold for a higher price and left a new unwanted piece of the meat: the rib tips.

Chicago pitmasters began buying these rib tips in bulk from Chicago slaughterhouses and innovating their charcoal grilling techniques to make them more tender and flavorful. By the 1950s and 1960s, rib tips became a staple in barbecue restaurants on the South Side of Chicago, such as Lems and Argia B's.



IMAGE GENERATED USING AI (DALL·E / OPENAI)

Bean pies

Forget apple pie—there's nothing more American than bean pie. This custard-based pie is made with mashed navy beans. It gained prevalence in the 1930s when Black American Muslims looked for a replacement for sweet potato pies. The Nation of Islam did this to create a cultural identity that was not rooted in slavery.

According to the Chicago Reader, Wallace Fard Muhammad gave the first bean pie recipe to Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad in Detroit. Members of the Nation of Islam have been known to sell the iconic bean pies across the country ever since, particularly in large cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Story editing by Carren Jao. Copy editing by Kristen Wegrzyn. Photo selection by Clarese Moller.



KEEP YOUR KIDS MOVING AROUND ARLINGTON

The best places for kids and families to play indoors this winter.

By Maggie McIntyre

Winter is in full swing, and when temperatures drop, families need fun ways to burn off energy without having to brave the cold. Luckily, Arlington has plenty of unique indoor play spaces, making it easy to keep your little ones entertained all season long. If you're looking for a quick afternoon adventure, this list highlights the best indoor play places in Arlington.



SCRAMBLE PARKOUR

Designed for kids of all ages, Scramble Parkour is an activity gym with obstacle courses and soft play areas. Big kids and teens can get their adrenaline pumping on two advanced courses, and younger kids might like to work on their physical skills on a smaller course. Infants and toddlers can also find safe, padded places to play that stimulate senses and develop motor skills. Scramble also has an indoor playground geared toward kids under 12 in Alexandria, VA.

- **Location:** 2900 S. Quincy St., Arlington
- **Hours:** 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Friday-Saturday; 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday
- **Contact:** (703) 665-1343

5 WITS

Want to try something completely new? 5 Wits offers unique, interactive, live-action adventures in immersive settings. Their high-tech adventures include a high fantasy, spy thriller and ancient Egyptian experiences, promising fun for all ages. Each adventure spans multiple rooms and environments and can result in multiple endings based on your group's performance, making repeat visits feel fresh.

- **Location:** 4238 Wilson Blvd., Unit 1273, Arlington
- **Hours:** Noon-7 p.m. Monday-Thursday; noon-8 p.m. Friday; noon-9 p.m. Saturday; noon-6 p.m. Sunday
- **Contact:** (703) 997-9694

IMMERSIVE GAMEBOX

Using augmented reality and other tech-driven effects, Immersive Gamebox is a one-of-a-kind gaming experience. You and your family can play group-based games that put you in the heart of the action. There are games for ages 3 and up, ranging in duration and difficulty.

- **Location:** 4238 Wilson Blvd., Unit 2233, Arlington
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday
- **Contact:** (888) 471-4126

JUNIOR PLAYLAND

For little ones under age 10, Junior Playland offers 3,500 square feet of candy-themed play space. They have daily open play and plenty of party packages, plus monthly membership options.

- **Location:** 4238 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1295, Arlington
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **Contact:** (703) 888-1972

ULTRAZONE

Enjoy the ultimate laser tag experience at Ultrazone with the most up-to-date laser tag equipment and a new arena design. They also offer arcade games and are a great location to host birthday parties. Each game of laser tag includes 15 minutes of playing time and 10-15 minutes of instruction to ensure safe, supervised fun.

- **Location:** 3447 Carlin Springs Road, Falls Church, VA
- **Hours:** noon-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday; noon-midnight Friday-Saturday; noon-8 p.m. Sunday
- **Contact:** (703) 382-8388

HYPER KIDZ

This winter wonderland-themed indoor playground has 17,000 square feet of fun attractions and age-focused play zones. The mini zone is designed for infants and toddlers, featuring soft play equipment. The kid zone is geared toward ages 2 to 7 with a multi-level play structure. Lastly, the big kid zone will keep kids up to age 13 engaged with slides, obstacles and plenty of interactive activities.

- **Location:** 7005 Manchester Blvd., Suite 10B, Franconia, VA
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Saturday; 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday
- **Contact:** (703) 936-2505

MULBERRY LANE

Mulberry Lane is a community hub where younger kids can explore and connect. You'll find open-play areas, immersive role-play zones, a toddler nook and engaging programs. Staff encourage safe and creative play, and both DMV-area locations are right next to a stunning array of restaurants for families to grab a bite to eat before or after playtime.

- **Location:** 2016 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria, VA
- **Hours:** 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday
- **Contact:** (703) 549-0201

Therapy for *You, Your Child, and Your Family*

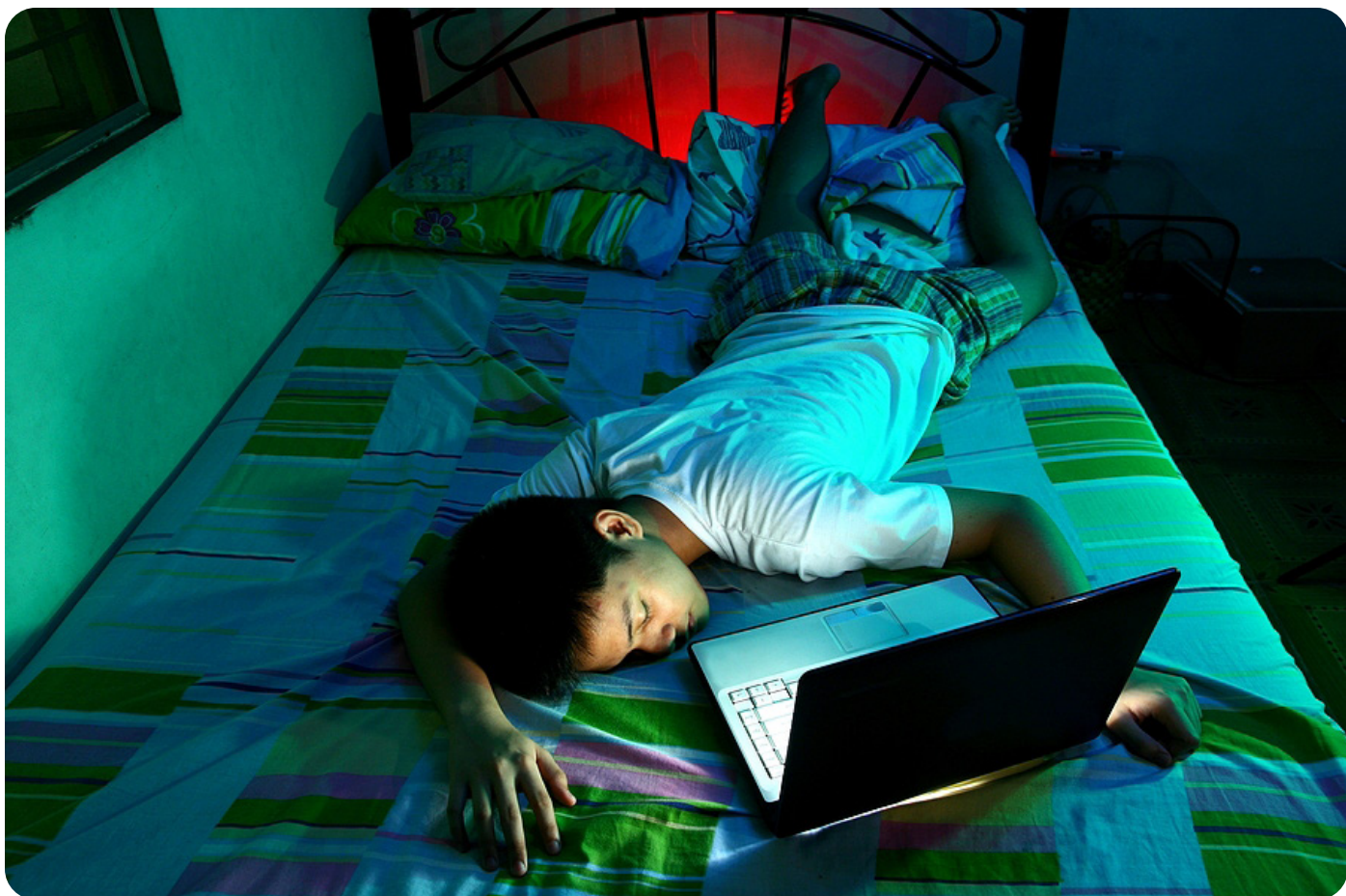
- Family Therapy
- Couples Therapy
- Individual Therapy for children, teens, and adults
- Parent Coaching

Jonah Green and Associates, LLC

3930 Knowles Avenue, Suite 200 & Suite 206
Kensington, MD 20895

301.466.9526 • jgathery.com





BIGSTOCK/ JUNPINZON

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO BETTER BEDTIMES

Learn how much sleep kids need at every age, why sleep matters and practical sleep hygiene tips to help children and teens rest better.

By Pascale Brady

If you've ever battled with your child over bedtime, you're not alone. From preschoolers who resist lights-out to teens glued to their phones, sleep struggles are common. But good sleep is essential for healthy growth, learning and emotional well-being, so working as a family on developing good sleep habits can go a long way toward helping your child.

How much sleep do kids need?

Sleep needs vary by age:

- **Preschoolers (ages 3-5):** 10-13 hours per night
- **School-age kids (6-13):** 9-11 hours
- **Teens (14+):** Ideally 8-10 hours

For younger kids in particular, bedtime routines are key. A 5-year-old might go to bed at 7 p.m. and wake up at 7 a.m. for a solid 12 hours of shut-eye. As kids grow, they need slightly less sleep, but consistency remains critical.

Why sleep is so important

Sleep fuels everything: cognitive development, emotional regulation and physical health.

When I talk to teens, I tell them that sleep improves focus, mood and even athletic and academic performance. I tell athletic kids that sleep will help them perform at their peak. I tell academically driven kids that sleep helps the brain process and retain information.

Common sleep saboteurs

The biggest culprit? Screens. Phones, tablets and TVs flood the brain with stimulation, making it hard to wind down. Even after putting the phone down, the brain needs 30-60 minutes to calm down. I recommend powering down devices at least an hour before bedtime and keeping phones out of the bedroom.

Caffeine can also negatively interfere with sleep, as can inconsistent schedules.

Doing homework or reading in bed can also disrupt sleep. The bed should be for sleeping. Mixing work and rest confuses the brain, making it harder to fall asleep.

Sleep hygiene tips for every age

Good sleep habits – often called “sleep hygiene” – set the stage for restful nights. Here are some tips:

- **Create a calming bedtime routine:** Bath, pajamas, brushing teeth and reading together signal the brain it's time to sleep.
- **Dim lights and keep the room cool and quiet:** Blackout shades and cozy bedding help create a sleep-friendly environment.
- **Avoid screens and caffeine before bed:** Ideally, no screens within an hour of bedtime and no caffeinated drinks after lunch.
- **Stick to consistent bed and wake times, even on weekends:** If you allow flexibility, keep it within an hour of the usual schedule.
- **Remove TVs and devices from bedrooms:** Out of sight, out of mind. Consider turning the face of clocks away from kids' line of sight so they don't stress over the time when they are trying to fall asleep.

For younger kids, routines are especially important. The brain loves patterns. Start practicing good sleep hygiene with little ones so bedtime battles will be easier when they are older.

Signs your child isn't getting enough sleep

Kids don't always say, “I didn't sleep well.” Instead, parents may need to look for clues:

- Daytime sleepiness or frequent naps
- Declining school performance
- Mood swings or irritability
- Falling asleep in class
- Long afternoon naps (more than an hour)

For teens in particular, persistent sleep issues with no

obvious reason can signal something deeper, such as depression. Difficulty sleeping can be a way of saying, “I'm not doing well.” If you suspect this, start a conversation and seek professional help.

When to seek help

If you've tried everything — consistent routines, screen limits, calming environments — and your child still struggles with sleep, talk to your pediatrician. Sometimes underlying issues such as sleep apnea or anxiety are at play. Snoring, pauses in breathing or restless sleep warrant a conversation with a doctor. Further investigation may be needed.

What about melatonin?

Melatonin can help in certain cases, but it's not a first-line solution. “If you've tried all the routines and nothing works, consider talking about melatonin with your pediatrician. Start with the lowest dose, use it as a short-term aid and taper off. The goal is to restore natural sleep patterns rather than rely on supplements long term.

Whether your child dreams of straight As or sports stardom, adequate rest is non-negotiable. Start early, set routines and make sleep a family priority. Every child is different. Yours may need a little more sleep or a little less, but regardless, consistency is key.

COURTESY OF PERMANENTE MEDICINE



Samuel Milbin, MD, is a board-certified pediatrician with the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group. He sees patients at the Kaiser Permanente Woodlawn Medical Center.

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 EMPLOYERS NETWORK

[LEARN MORE >](#)



BIGSTOCK/MONKEYBUSINESSIMAGES

PARENTING THROUGH CHAOS AFTER THE NEW BABY ARRIVES

From newborn exhaustion to everyday meltdowns, parenting can spiral fast. Here are practical ways to stay steady, calm and connected when family life feels overwhelming.

By Pascale Brady

The night before the new baby arrived, everything finally felt easy again. Their toddler was finally sleeping, work had resumed and daily routines—dinner, bath, bedtime—were becoming manageable.

Then the baby came home.

Suddenly no one slept. Meltdowns spiked, exhaustion rose and both parents found themselves stretched thin. *“Are we doing anything right anymore?”*

Life with children is rarely calm for long. Just when it feels predictable, something shifts—a new season, a school change, a family transition. The house that felt peaceful yesterday can feel like a circus today.

Chaos looks different in every home, but the question is the same: How do we keep parenting well when everything is spinning?

Below are some ideas to steady yourself when life becomes a swirl of noise, emotion and exhaustion.

1. Build the habit of self-care (yes, even in chaos)

When parents run on empty, everything becomes harder.

Kids sense our emotional state long before they understand our words. They look to us to borrow calm.

But when you're already overwhelmed, “Take a moment for yourself” can feel unrealistic. In those moments, even the idea of self-care can feel out of reach.

That's why self-care works best as a daily habit, not something saved for emergencies. It can be simple and brief:

- Calling a friend
- Taking a short walk
- Sitting quietly for a moment
- Listening to a brief meditation

These small practices create a baseline of steadiness and support more patient, grounded responses. And sometimes the only self-care possible is a deep breath. That counts too.

2. Not every moment is a teaching moment

Picture this: you're stuck in traffic. One child is melting down. Another is kicking your seat. Everyone is tired, hungry, and trapped.

This is not the moment to teach anything. Chaos is a poor learning environment. In these moments, your only job is to get through it as calmly as possible. Save the teaching for later, when everyone is more regulated.

One of the most powerful parenting tools is the courage to be imperfect. We all have moments when we react poorly or raise our voices. When that happens, name it, forgive yourself, and remember: there is always another chance to try again tomorrow.

3. Tag-team when you can

If two caregivers are present, make it a practice to tag-team. When one parent feels themselves reaching the end of their rope, switch roles.

This isn't weakness—it's wisdom. It prevents explosions, protects relationships, and shows children how teamwork works. Even families with solid routines benefit from tag-teaming during demanding seasons like holidays, travel, illness, and school breaks.

4. When children create the chaos, stay “outside the ring”

When kids argue, act out, or pull you toward a power struggle, it's easy to get swept in. It can feel urgent to fix behavior right away, but urgency often fuels conflict.

In those moments, picture your child in a boxing ring—not fighting you, but wrestling with life. If you climb in, the struggle becomes about you instead of the real issue.

Your job is to stay just outside the ropes—near enough to guide, far enough to stay calm. From there, you can guide without becoming part of the conflict. That place—firm, kind, and steady—is where effective parenting happens.

5. Keep perspective: Count what's going well

Chaos narrows our vision. We start to believe everything is falling apart. That we're failing. That the whole family is unraveling. But often the storm is only one part of the larger weather pattern. Try asking yourself:

- How many moments today went well?
- When did I stay calm?
- When did my child cooperate?

These questions widen your view and help you see the whole day, not just the hardest parts.

And then repeat the phrase parents have whispered for years: *this too shall pass*. Those long nights with a newborn, the travel meltdowns, the rocky early days of co-parenting—they feel endless, but they don't last forever.

A final word

If you're living through a season of chaos, nothing is wrong with you. You are doing the most important—and demanding—job you will ever do while being fully human.

Give yourself grace. Take small breaths. Step outside the ring when you can. And remember: your children don't need a perfect parent. They need a steady one. Steady comes in moments, not in perfection.

You can do this—and it won't always feel like this.



Pascale Brady, CPCC, PCC, MBA, is a Certified Parenting Educator who has been teaching parenting programs with the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP) since 2005. She currently serves as Vice President of PEP's Board. She is also The Challenge Coach, a certified life and business coach in private practice. For more information about PEP's parenting programs and resources, including PEP's free Family Resiliency Program, please visit PEP's website. See more from PEP on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Build your Parenting Toolbox with PEP

4-week online classes

February

Encouragement: Building a child's confidence from the inside out

March

Redefining Discipline:
Raising responsible, respectful kids

April

What Your Child's Behavior Means
and How to Respond



Register \$199
www.pepparent.org



pep
Educating parents.
Enriching families.



Storytime: Lisa Galioto for “Owen the Busy Groundhog”

Feb. 1. People’s Book is hosting a story reading of “Owen the Busy Groundhog,” a furry, fruit-lover who goes on a spring adventure. The book will be read by its author, Dr. Lisa Galioto, a renowned pediatrician.

■ **Location:** 7014-A Westmoreland Ave., Takoma Park, MD

Family Day: Tu B’shevat

Feb. 1. The Capital Jewish Museum in DC is throwing a birthday party for the trees. Families are invited to decorate a pot and plant seeds, create a seder-inspired DIY trail mix snack, contribute to a community art build and more.

■ **Location:** 575 3rd St. NW, Washington, DC

34th annual Chocolate Lovers Festival

Feb. 6-8. Fairfax City is celebrating the 34th annual Chocolate Lovers Festival. There will be a variety of family-friendly events.

■ **Location:** Fairfax, VA

Sonia De Los Santos live at the Kennedy Center

Feb. 7. Sonia De Los Santos performs bilingual songs infused with Latin American rhythms and North American folk traditions.

■ **Location:** 2700 F St. NW, Washington, DC

Play Date at NMNH: Backyard Bird Count!

Feb. 10. Celebrate birds at the National Museum of Natural History. Families are invited to observe, play and make art as they see birds inside and outside of the museum.

■ **Location:** 10th Street and Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC



COURTESY “FRECKLEFACE STRAWBERRY”

“Freckleface Strawberry” The Musical

Feb. 13. Based on Julianne Moore’s New York Times best-selling book, this family-friendly musical is about a young girl learning to embrace her freckles.

■ **Location:** 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, MD

“Havana Hop”

Feb. 14. Created by award-winning DC and IStage artist Paige Hernandez, this is a family-friendly tale of culture and originality about Yelia, who visits her grandmother in Cuba, learns about her multi-cultural heritage and combines salsa with hip-hop.

■ **Location:** 4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda, MD

NMAI Story Time

Feb. 7-28. The National Museum of the American Indian is hosting a family-friendly interactive story time from a Native author or illustrator, or one created in collaboration with the Indigenous community. Kids will have the chance to see objects from the museum's Teaching Collection, like photographs, textiles or natural materials. This event runs on each Saturday of February.

■ **Location:** 4th Street and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC



PHOTO BY MAIKE SHULZ

Omnium Circus

March 1. Providing an amazing performance for the whole family, Omnium Circus is a world-famous circus company that combines great thrills with inclusivity and accessibility.

■ **Location:** 513 13th St. NW, Washington, DC



COURTESY THE HERSHEY COMPANY

Hershey Super Sweet Adventure Grand Opening

March 6. Hershey Super Sweet Adventure, the interactive family-friendly experience created by Original X Productions in partnership with The Hershey Company, will officially open its first East Coast experience.

■ **Location:** Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Washington, DC

START YOUR SUMMER CAMP & FAMILY FITNESS FUN SEARCH

HERE



FREE AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

50 YEARS WASHINGTON Parent kojam CAMP 2026 & FAMILY FITNESS FAIRS

- Talk to camp staff in person
- Grab brochures and free giveaways
- Entertainment, activities, and more!

Tysons
CORNER CENTER
FEB. 7, 2026

FAIR OAKS MALL
FEB 28, 2026

Dulles
Town Center
FEB 14, 2026

springfieldtowncenter
FEB 21, 2026

Tysons Corner Center

Feb 7. This free event brings together camps and fitness programs, allowing families to meet camp teams and explore sports, arts, STEM, overnight programs and other fitness activities.

■ **Location:** 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons, VA

Dulles Town Center

Feb 14. This free event brings together camps and fitness programs, allowing families to meet camp teams and explore sports, arts, STEM, overnight programs and other fitness activities.

■ **Location:** 21100 Dulles Town Circle, Sterling, VA

Springfield Town Center

Feb 21. This free event brings together camps and fitness programs, allowing families to meet camp teams and explore sports, arts, STEM, overnight programs and other fitness activities.

■ **Location:** 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield, VA

Fair Oaks Mall

Feb 28. This free event brings together camps and fitness programs, allowing families to meet camp teams and explore sports, arts, STEM, overnight programs and other fitness activities.

■ **Location:** 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax, VA



IS 100% ADVERTISER-SUPPORTED.

THANK YOU

TO THE ADVERTISERS IN THIS ISSUE:

- [Adventure Theatre & ATMTC Academy](#)
- [Alice Ferguson Foundation](#)
- [Awesome Con](#)
- [Barrie Camp](#)
- [Brooksfield School](#)
- [Camp Griffin](#)
- [Camp Shakespeare](#)
- [Camp Woodend by Nature Forward](#)
- [Cardinal Fencing Academy](#)
- [Congressional Camp](#)
- [Crossway Montessori Forest School](#)
- [Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network](#)
- [Jonah Green and Associates](#)
- [Look Dine-In Cinema](#)
- [National Children's Theatre Summer Camp](#)
- [National Philharmonic Summer String Institute](#)
- [Natural Leaders](#)
- [Parent Encouragement Program \(PEP\)](#)
- [Rosemount Center](#)
- [Round House Theatre Summer Theatre Camps](#)
- [Smokies Fun - Head for the Mountains](#)
- [Steve & Kate's Camp](#)
- [The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#)
- [The Montessori School of McLean](#)
- [The Siena School](#)
- [The St. James](#)
- [The Theatre Lab School of the Dramatic Arts](#)
- [The Treatment and Learning Centers](#)
- [Virginia Space Flight Academy - Space Adventure Camp](#)
- [Woodberry Forest Summer Camps](#)
- [Woodland Horse Center](#)
- [Workhouse Arts Center](#)

Work with Washington Parent Picks



If you're looking for recommendations for the best in kids' activities, camps, education, family fun, health, mom's me time, food, child care and more in the DMV, look no further.



MONTESSORI EDUCATION...



...AN EXCITING APPROACH TO LEARNING!

Montessori Children:

- Learn at their own pace • Are encouraged to choose work and make decisions
- Develop to their greatest potential
- Learn spontaneously and creatively • Discover that learning is a joy that can last a lifetime



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

TOTH MONTESSORI

Navy Yard & Capitol Riverfront, DC
202-748-5930
Ages 3 mos.-6 yrs.
tothmontessori.org

MARYLAND

CROSSWAY MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Kensington, MD 20895
301-929-2505
Ages 3 mos.-6 yrs.
crossway-community.org

ROCK CREEK MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Silver Spring, MD 20902
(301) 942-9561
Ages 18 months- Kindergarten
www.rockcreekmontessori.com

ONENESS-FAMILY SCHOOL

Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-652-7751
Ages 2 yrs.-Grade 12
OnenessFamily.org

THE BETHESDA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Bethesda, MD 20814
301-986-1260,
Ages 2-6, Pre-K & K
bethesdamontessori.com

VIRGINIA

BROOKSFIELD SCHOOL

McLean, VA 22101
703-356-5437
Ages 2-6 yrs.
brooksfieldschool.org

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

McLean, VA 22101
703-790-1049
Ages 2-12 yrs.
mcleanmontessori.org

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Annandale & Falls Church, VA
703-992-0255
Ages 2-15 yrs.
msnv.org

SUNSET HILLS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Reston, VA 20191
703-476-7477 *
Ages 21-months through 4th grade
sunsethillsmontessori.com



See advertisement in this issue. EACH SCHOOL INDEPENDENTLY GOVERNED.

FUN THINGS

TO DO WITH KIDS IN THE DMV

Did you know ...

You can list your kid-friendly events
FREE on washingtonparent.com?

HERE'S HOW TO CREATE AN EVENT:

- Go to [DC Kids Events Calendar](#)
- Click on blue ADD EVENT button
- Provide details of the event

LOOKING FOR THINGS TO DO WITH THE KIDDOS?

Go to WashingtonParent.com:

- View our **Calendar of Events**
- Sign up for our weekly
Top Things To Do This Weekend e-news
- Find our [Top Things to Do with Kids in the DMV This Weekend](#) featured events

