

40 YEARS



WASHINGTON Parent™

APRIL 2026

THE TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PARENTS IN DC, MD & VA

GET OUTDOORS
THIS

Spring



COOLEST DMV
MURALS

EARTH DAY
EVENTS

"THE AMERICAN
STORY" EXHIBIT

INSIDE: SUMMER CAMPS & PROGRAMS GUIDE



Smithsonian National Postal Museum

Smithsonian's Hidden Gem

Family Friendly. Fun. Educational. Unique.

- Vintage Planes, Stagecoaches & Trucks
- Interactive Journeys & Hands-On Activities
- Free Collectible Stamps



Next door to Union Station
2 Massachusetts Ave. NE
(Metro Red Line)
postalmuseum.si.edu

The Trump Kennedy Center



PERFORMANCES *for* YOUNG AUDIENCES



Concerts for Young Audiences

Christylez Bacon and Friends

Joined by friends from various world music traditions, Grammy Award®-nominated **Christylez Bacon** will inspire and expand the imagination to what is possible in music.

May 2 | 11 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. Family Theater

MOST ENJOYED BY AGES 5+



Performances for Young Audiences

Doodle POP

All ages will delight in this playful show's stunning interactive projections, live whiteboard drawings, and abundance of theatrical imagination.

May 16 & 17 | Family Theater

MOST ENJOYED BY AGES 5+



Bluey's Big Play

Bluey's Big Play is a theatrical adaptation of the Emmy Award®-winning children's television series. Join the Heelers in their first live theatre show made just for you!

Bluey's Big Play is presented by BBC Studios and Andrew Kay in association with Windmill Theatre Co.

June 24-July 5 | Eisenhower Theater

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES



Kennedy-Center.org

The ONLY OFFICIAL WEBSITE of the Trump 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

The **DRUTZ FAMILY**
Fund for Musical Theater

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

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

Is your child ready
for **preschool** —
but needs **a little
more support?**

New! Playful Connections Preschool

A full-day preschool
designed for children
who learn differently.

- Small **1:5 ratio**
- Led by **educators & therapists**
- **Nurturing, inclusive,**
play-based environment

Virtual Open House:
RSVP for link

PlayfulConnectionsPreschool
@TTLC.org

Questions? Contact TLC:
(301) 424-5201

1390 Piccard Dr, Suite 210
Rockville, MD 20850
www.ttlc.org



The Treatment and
Learning Centers

TLC

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

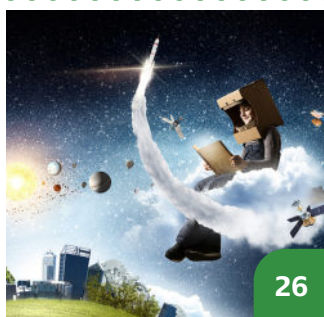
3 THINGS

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

This month's issue is full of great ideas, things to do and fun family experiences you won't want to miss. Spring is officially here and you'll find several ways to get outdoors in our calendar and throughout the pages, but these are the top 3 things you definitely won't want to miss this issue!

'Round the natural world with books

Earth Day is the perfect excuse to hand your kids something worth reading. From a prize-winning picture book about townspeople walking their trees through city streets to a teen nonfiction deep-dive into wildfire, climate change and Indigenous land practices, this curated list spans every age group. Whether you're shopping for a toddler or a teen, DC author and children's book expert Mary Quattlebaum has the titles that will make young readers fall in love with the natural world — just in time for April 22.

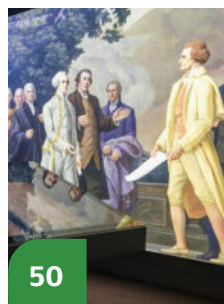


Exploring murals of the DMV

You don't need a museum ticket to experience world-class art in the DC metro area — you just need to know where to look. This guide takes families through the region's most vibrant and storied murals, from street art in DC proper to colorful community installations across Maryland and Virginia. It's an ideal outing for curious kids and adults alike, pairing outdoor exploration with a genuine look at the artists and neighborhoods that make the DMV's public art scene one of the most compelling in the country.

Visiting 'The American Story' with kids: What to know

The National Archives just unveiled its biggest exhibit redesign in a generation, and it's genuinely unlike anything else on the National Mall. "The American Story" uses AI to let visitors search more than 2 million historic records and chart their own path through history — perfect for kids who like to explore at their own pace. Add in rare originals like George Washington's annotated Constitution, a Discovery Center built specifically for younger learners and easy access to nearby Mall favorites, and you've got a full family day worth planning around. Best of all: general admission is free.



WashingtonParent.com/subscribe/

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 —

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 photo is by
Austin K. Graff

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™



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.brookfieldschool.org



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://twitter.com/crosswaymontessori)



EDUCATION

Where creativity starts

From toddler clay classes to teen portfolio programs and photography, discover the best art studios and classes for kids across DC, Maryland and Virginia.



BY MARIAM LOMIDZE

Whether your child is a tiny finger-painter who still needs help holding a brush or a high-schooler building a serious college portfolio, the DMV is overflowing with incredible art programs that go way beyond what happens in a classroom. Here's our breakdown of the best art classes in the capital region, organized from your littlest creators all the way up to your biggest.

IN THIS SECTION

- **Art Classes in the DMV** **6**
- **Highest rated high schools in Prince William County, VA** **10**
- **Baseball clinics** **12**
- **Why parents aren't reading to kids** **14**



Toddlers & 2s

Abakadoodle – Twoosy Doodlers

This class is said to be one of the most beloved first art experiences for tiny kids in the DC area, and for good reason. The Twoosy Doodlers parent-and-child class is designed as a recommended first art class experience, helping toddlers develop sensory, fine motor and gross motor skills while learning about color, texture and more through engaging new materials. It's messy, it's joyful and it's a great excuse to spend some one-on-one creative time with your little one.

- **Address:** 1831 Varnum St. NE, Washington, DC (classes are taught at schools and community sites throughout the DMV, so locations vary by session)
- **Contact:** (301) 674-9558
- **Hours:** Class times vary by location

Capitol Hill Arts Workshop (CHAW)

CHAW has fostered a safe and nurturing environment for people of all ages and artistic abilities to build community while discovering the arts, and that includes music and movement classes specifically designed for babies and toddlers. The building houses an art gallery, black box theatre, full ceramics studio with wheels and a kiln, open darkroom and digital studio for photography, a large art studio, and a dance studio, so even at the youngest ages, your child is stepping into a real, working creative community.

- **Address:** 545 7th St. SE, Washington, DC
- **Contact:** (202) 547-6839
- **Hours:** 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday

Preschool & early elementary

Abakadoodle – Mini Doodlers

Once your little artist ages out of Twoosy Doodlers, they graduate into the Mini Doodlers program (ages 3-5), where they get to fly solo (no parent required). General art classes explore a variety of mediums and themes, with specialty options focusing on drawing, canvas and art using found and recycled objects. Art camps and holiday break camps round out the calendar perfectly for busy families.

- **Address:** 1831 Varnum St. NE, Washington, DC (classes are taught at schools and community sites throughout the DMV, so locations vary by session)
- **Contact:** (301) 674-9558
- **Hours:** Class times vary by location

Touch Pottery Studio

Never too early to get your hands in some clay! Touch Pottery offers group and individual classes for kids from 3 years old to teenagers and adults every day, and with the help of instructors, young artists design the shape, size and decoration of their pottery themselves. Small sessions accommodate up to eight participants, ensuring personalized attention and a fun experience for everyone. After a two-hour lesson, pieces

are fired and ready for pickup in two to three weeks, which is honestly half the magic.

- **Address:** 5601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Contact:** (202) 643-7494
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Elementary school

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture

This historic national park is home to 13 resident groups, numerous art studios and galleries, and a restored 1921 Dentzel Carousel, with over 100 instructors teaching hundreds of classes in visual and performing arts, including ceramics, painting, photography, glass, music, dance, theater and more. For kids and teens, Glen Echo offers camps in visual arts, music, theater and nature and aquatic life, presented all summer long as well as during several spring break and winter break sessions. The setting alone, a former amusement park turned national arts hub, makes it feel like a field trip every time you go.

- **Address:** 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo
- **Contact:** (301) 634-2226
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday



PHOTO COURTESY GLEN ECHO PARK



PHOTO COURTESY GLEN ECHO PARK

Young Masters Art Studio at Compass Art Center

Young Masters Art Studio offers a skill-based, realistic art curriculum for children ages 5 to 13. Unlike drop-in studios where kids just make whatever they want, YMAS uses a structured curriculum that actually teaches technique, think classical drawing fundamentals, color theory and fine arts principles. The campus includes working professional artists in adjacent

CONTINUED...

studios, which gives kids a real sense of what a creative life actually looks like.

- **Address:** 10335 Kensington Parkway, Kensington
- **Contact:** (973) 634-0526
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, Noon-6 p.m. Saturday, Noon-3 p.m. Sunday

Amazing Glaze

For a more flexible, drop-in creative experience, Amazing Glaze is one of the DMV's most popular paint-your-own pottery studios, great for a special afternoon out with your elementary schooler. They offer pottery painting, mosaics, glass fusing and canvas painting for kids and adults, and everything is lead-free and non-toxic. Perfect for a birthday party, a rainy Saturday or just a "let's make something" kind of day.

- **Address:** 1340 Smith Ave., Baltimore; 5 Bel Air South Parkway, Suite 107, Bel Air
- **Contact:** (410) 532-3144; (410) 569-9502
- **Hours:** Hours vary by location

CHAW After School Youth Arts Program

CHAW's After School Youth Arts Program for kindergarten through grade five is an opportunity for each child to tap into their inner artist and create community with their peers, with classes in visual arts, ceramics, dance, music, theater and photography. CHAW also houses the only community darkroom in Washington, DC, so if your elementary schooler has a thing for cameras, this is the place.

- **Address:** 45 7th St. SE, Washington, DC
- **Contact:** (202) 547-6839
- **Hours:** 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday

Middle school & high school

Stone Branch Art Program at Compass Art Center

For the serious teen artist, or even one who's just ready for something more challenging, Stone Branch is one of the most exciting programs in the DMV. Stone Branch is dedicated to expanding the artistic vision and reach of teen and adult students, providing a nurturing, inclusive environment where students build skills and make connections in a real working art studio. It's an exceptional resource for middle and high school artists ages 12-18 at any skill level, whether your teen is just starting out or building a serious college portfolio. Semester-long courses include portfolio development in observational drawing, figure drawing and concept and composition, all taught by working professional artists.

- **Address:** 10335 Kensington Parkway, Kensington
- **Contact:** (973) 634-0526
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, Noon-6 p.m. Saturday, Noon-3 p.m. Sunday



BISTOCK/MONKEYBUSINESSIMAGES

Capitol Hill Arts Workshop – Grades 6-12

CHAW offers visual arts, dance, music, theater, ceramics and photography classes for kids in grades K-12, plus half- and full-day art camps offered in the summer. For middle and high schoolers specifically, the ceramics studio and photography darkroom are standout offerings, and because CHAW draws students from all over the district, it's a genuinely diverse creative community that older kids tend to love.

- **Address:** 545 7th St. SE, Washington, DC
- **Contact:** (202) 547-6839
- **Hours:** 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday

The Art League School

The Art League School welcomes students of all ages and abilities, with a full selection of day, evening and weekend courses in all fine arts and many skilled crafts. League instructors are professional artists, and the school offers youth classes for ages 5 through teens year-round. For older teens especially, the ability to take classes alongside adult artists in a real fine arts environment is a step up from most school-based programs, and a meaningful one if college art programs are on the horizon.

- **Address:** 105 N. Union St., Alexandria
- **Contact:** (703) 683-2323
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Emma's Art Studio

Emma's Art Studio is a new creative space that opened in downtown Bethesda in January 2026, founded by artist and educator Emma Stevenson Cowan. The studio offers fine arts-based programs for children, teens and adults, including classes, camps, private lessons and art parties, rooted in the belief that everyone is capable of meaningful artistic expression, with programs that balance classical art training with a modern, exploratory approach. Summer 2026 camp dates are already posted and filling up fast, so if you want in on this one, don't wait.

- **Address:** 4931 Cordell Ave., Suite 2A, Bethesda
- **Contact:** (301) 755-0177
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday

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.



springfieldtowncenter

BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Shop. Sip. Savor. Dance.
Blossom. Repeat.

**SATURDAY APRIL 11
11 AM TO 5 PM**

- Local vendors
- Food Trucks
- Live music
- Kids Activities
- Performances
- FREE!



www.kojamevents.com

Prince William Co. high schools you should know about

BIGSTOCK/LIGHTPOET

From standout academics to championship athletics and specialty programs, these Prince William County high schools are earning top marks from students, parents and statewide rankings.

BY JENNA DOLCH

These 10 high schools consistently rank among the top options for families in Prince William County.

Here are 10 of the highest-rated high schools in Prince William County, Virginia.

1. Osbourn Park High School Manassas, VA

Osbourn Park High School consistently ranks among the top schools in Prince William County thanks to strong academic programs and college readiness scores. Students can choose from numerous Advanced Placement courses and participate in a wide variety of clubs, arts programs and athletics.

The school has built a reputation for helping students prepare for college while also encouraging involvement in leadership and extracurricular activities.

What makes it stand out

- Large selection of AP and advanced coursework
- Competitive sports teams and extracurricular clubs
- Strong academic reputation in the district

2. Patriot High School Nokesville, VA

Patriot High School is known for strong academic performance and a supportive school community. The campus offers advanced coursework along with career-focused programs that help students explore future paths.

Students can also participate in a wide range of athletics, leadership programs and clubs that contribute to an active school culture.

What makes it stand out

- High graduation and college readiness rates
- Variety of extracurricular activities
- Supportive campus environment

3. Battlefield High School Haymarket, VA

Battlefield High School is one of the most recognized high schools in western Prince William County. The school combines strong academic programs with highly competitive athletics and active student organizations.

Many students enroll in Advanced Placement classes while also participating in sports, performing arts and academic clubs.

What makes it stand out

- High academic achievement
- Strong athletics and school spirit
- Large selection of extracurricular activities

4. Charles J. Colgan Sr. High School Manassas, VA

Colgan High School is one of the newer high schools in the district and features modern facilities along with strong academic programs. The school emphasizes college readiness and STEM opportunities.

Students can explore a variety of clubs, sports teams and arts programs while preparing for college or career pathways.

What makes it stand out

- Modern campus and learning facilities
- Strong focus on STEM education
- Wide range of clubs and extracurriculars

5. Gainesville High School Gainesville, VA

Gainesville High School has quickly built a strong reputation for both academics and athletics. The school offers numerous advanced courses and has become well known for competitive sports teams and active student life.

Families appreciate the balance between academic opportunities and extracurricular involvement.

What makes it stand out

- Growing academic reputation
- Championship-level athletics
- Strong student community

6. Brentsville District High School Nokesville, VA

Brentsville District High School offers a slightly smaller school environment while still providing strong academic opportunities. Students can enroll in Advanced Placement classes and participate in athletics and leadership programs.

The school's size often creates a close-knit community where students receive more personalized support.

What makes it stand out

- Strong academic performance
- Smaller, community-focused campus
- Competitive sports programs

7. Forest Park High School Woodbridge, VA

Forest Park High School provides a wide range of opportunities for students interested in academics, arts and athletics. The school maintains strong accreditation ratings and offers several advanced coursework options.

Students also benefit from active clubs, performing arts programs and sports teams.

What makes it stand out

- Strong arts and extracurricular programs
- Variety of AP and advanced classes
- Active student involvement

8. Woodbridge High School Woodbridge, VA

Woodbridge High School is one of the county's longest-established high schools and continues to serve thousands of students each year. The campus offers a diverse selection of academic pathways, clubs and athletic programs.

Students have opportunities to explore leadership, community service and college preparation.

What makes it stand out

- Long-standing community reputation
- Wide range of extracurricular activities
- Diverse academic programs

9. Hylton High School Woodbridge, VA

C.D. Hylton High School is recognized for its strong performing arts programs and competitive athletics. Students can participate in band, theater, leadership programs and numerous clubs.

The school also offers academic programs designed to help students prepare for college and future careers.

What makes it stand out

- Award-winning arts programs
- Strong athletics and student clubs
- College preparation programs

10. Freedom High School Woodbridge, VA

Freedom High School offers a diverse student experience with a wide variety of academic programs, extracurricular activities and sports teams. The school focuses on preparing students for both college and career pathways.

Students can explore leadership opportunities and participate in numerous clubs and athletics.

What makes it stand out

- Diverse academic programs
- Strong extracurricular opportunities
- Active school community



PHOTO COURTESY THE ST. JAMES

DMV baseball clinics every parent should know about.

BY MAGGIE MCINTYRE

If you have a young baseball player in the family looking to sharpen their skills, the DMV has a variety of clinics to get them to the top of their game this season. Our list narrows the options to a handful of standout programs that offer consistent training, accessible locations and development-minded coaching.

DC Dynasty Baseball

- **Ages:** 7-18
- **Location:** 15 Oglethorpe St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Cost:** Private lessons \$60-\$130; group training varies
- **Phone:** (202) 352-1873 DC Dynasty is one of the DMV's most established player-development programs. They have year-round clinics, private lessons and even small-group training. While they also run camps and travel teams, their ongoing training sessions are what set them apart for families seeking consistent, structured development.

What they offer

- Fundamental skill development (hitting, pitching, fielding, baserunning)
- Age-specific training, ensuring players learn at an appropriate pace
- Indoor facility access, allowing uninterrupted training regardless of weather

- Flexible scheduling with 30, 60 and 90-minute lesson options
- **Best for:** Players ready to advance beyond beginner level, families seeking consistent weekly training and athletes preparing for travel or school teams.

Northern Virginia Girls Softball Association - 2025 Washington Parent Pick Winner

- **Ages:** 5-18
- **Cost:** Varies by season and program
- **Location:** Multiple locations around Fairfax County, VA
- **Contact:** nvgsasoftball@yahoo.com

NVGSA is a community-focused fastpitch softball league serving girls ages 5-18 in Fairfax County and surrounding areas. Players of all experience levels are welcome to join spring and fall seasons, with structured divisions that keep age groups tight so girls can compete at appropriate levels. Beyond recreational play, competitive travel and select programs are available to support development toward higher levels of the game.

What they offer

- House league divisions from Coach Pitch (6U/8U) through Senior (18U)
- Optional "rec+" and travel/Firebirds Fastpitch teams for higher competition
- Seasonal spring and fall play with practices and games tailored by age/skill
- **Best for:** Girls aged 5-18 looking for organized softball with options from beginner to competitive play.

YBA PLAY (Nationals Youth Baseball Academy)

- **Ages:** 5-12
- **Cost:** Free
- **Location:** Multiple sites across DC Wards 5-8
- **Contact:** (202) 640-7456

YBA PLAY is one of the most accessible and community-centered baseball programs in the DMV. It is designed to remove barriers to entry, so the program offers completely free clinics. They include equipment, uniforms and coaching. Sessions run twice weekly, and are typically from June through early August. Younger players (5-8) meet Mondays and Wednesdays and older players (9-12) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

What they offer

- Zero cost, high-quality instruction backed by the Washington Nationals Youth Baseball Academy
- Focus on fundamentals, teamwork and confidence building
- Multiple neighborhood locations, reducing travel time for busy families
- **Best for:** New players, families seeking low-pressure clinics and kids who benefit from structured but fun instruction.

The St. James - 2025 Washington Parent Pick finalist

- **Ages:** Varies by clinic, typically 8-18
- **Cost:** Starts around \$35 per session
- **Location:** 6805 Industrial Road, Springfield, VA
- **Contact:** 703-239-6870

The St. James is a premier sports complex offering seasonal baseball and softball clinics. They have winter training for Little League, middle school and high school athletes. Washington Parent readers also voted it as a finalist for the best baseball programs in the DMV.

What they offer

- Professional-level facility with turf fields, cages and advanced training technology
- Weekly winter clinics focusing on hitting, fielding, throwing and agility
- Beginner and intermediate options so it's accessible for a wide range of players
- **Best for:** Families in Northern Virginia seeking structured, high-quality weekly training.



PHOTO COURTESY THE ST. JAMES



PHOTO COURTESY THE ST. JAMES

Replay Baseball

- **Ages:** All ages (varies by program)
- **Cost:** Cost varies by program
- **Location:** 42920 Piccadilly Plaza, Ashburn, VA
- **Contact:** 571-918-0410

Replay Baseball is a 38,000-square-foot indoor training facility offering clinics, cage rentals and private instruction. They run travel teams and events, but their ongoing training programs are a strong option for families seeking regular, weather-proof baseball development.

What they offer

- Batting cages, pitching machines and HitTrax technology for data-driven training
- Professional coaching staff with personalized development plans
- Membership options for families wanting frequent practice opportunities
- **Best for:** Players who thrive with technology-enhanced training and families in Loudoun County seeking year-round indoor options

Bethesda Big Train - 2025 Washington Parent Pick finalist

- **Ages:** 5-12
- **Cost:** \$200-\$420
- **Location:** Shirley Povich Field, Rockville, MD
- **Phone:** 301-365-1076

Bethesda Big Train is a highly regarded summer collegiate baseball team playing wooden-bat baseball in the Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League, bringing affordable family entertainment to the DC-area summer calendar. Beyond great baseball, the organization supports youth field improvements and community outreach while offering youth volunteer opportunities and seasonal camps for younger players.

What they offer

- Competitive summer baseball featuring top college talent
- Ticket plans and community events at Shirley Povich Field
- Youth camps and volunteer roles for players and teens
- **Best for:** Families and fans of baseball, as well as youth players wanting summer camp experiences and baseball lovers seeking high-level, fun games.



Why reading to kids is important

A growing number of parents are reading to their young children less often, and literacy experts warn the decline may be widening readiness gaps before kindergarten even begins.

BY JESSIKA HARKAY FOR THE 74

Jeana Wallace never enjoyed reading as a child. The books she read in school didn't interest her and "constant deadlines made it even harder to connect with the stories," she said. Reading was a chore, something to rush through for a test or school assignment.

So when Wallace became a mother in 2019, she didn't read to her son at home often — about once or twice a week, "maybe not even that," said Wallace, who lives with her family in Frankfort, Kentucky.

That changed around the time her son was three and she was working at a local adult education center where she helped develop a family literacy program. There, she learned about research on how reading to young children daily can improve school readiness, develop language and listening skills and promote social-emotional growth. Now her family reads "three or four books every single night," she said.

The payoff has been clear: Her son, Levi, has an impressive vocabulary for a soon-to-be six-year-old, can speak in complete sentences and most importantly "his confidence is boosting tremendously."

"His life is going to be so much easier because he loves to read," Wallace said. "I didn't want him to grow up hating to read [like I did]. ... I always struggled with comprehension and remembering what I read, and so it's challenging when you don't love doing it."

Wallace's initial resistance toward reading may be the new norm among parents, The 74 reports. Earlier this year, HarperCollins UK released a report showing a steep decline in the number of caregivers who read to their young children.

For many new parents, a dislike of reading stems from their own classroom experiences in the early 2000s that emphasized reading as a skill for testing. Many are also unfamiliar with

... Less than half, around 41%, of children between the ages of 0 to 4 were read to every day or nearly every day ...

– THE 2025 HARPERCOLLINS SURVEY

the importance of reading to young children or may instead undervalue reading because of a dependence on online educational programs that have limited benefits for learning.

For children not getting the benefits of being read to at home, the opportunity gap has widened, with those young students entering school unprepared compared to those who have been read to.

“The gap really begins very, very early on. I think we underestimate how large a gap we’re already seeing in kindergarten,” said Susan Neuman, professor of childhood and literacy education at New York University, adding she recently visited a New York City kindergarten classroom and saw some children who only knew two letters compared to others who were prepared to read phrases.

A 2019 Ohio State University study found that a five-year-old child who is read to daily would be exposed to nearly 300,000 more words than one who isn’t read to regularly.

The 2025 HarperCollins survey found that less than half, around 41%, of children between the ages of 0 to 4 were read to every day or nearly every day; a decline of nine percentage points from 2019 and 15 percentage points in 2012.

The survey found that about a third of parents read to their babies and toddlers weekly. Around 20% of parents said they “rarely” or “never” read to their child between the ages of 0 and 2 and 8% of parents said they “rarely” or “never” read to their child between the ages of 3 and 4.

It’s something that doesn’t surprise early literacy experts in the United States, who suspect similar trends across the country, believing the decline in early literacy reading is likely even higher than reported.

“Frankly, parents ... will often lie because they know it’s important to read, so they’ll exaggerate the amount of time they’re reading,” Neuman said. “I think the bottom line is reading is declining big time, not just for parents reading to children, but for all segments of our society.”

But, some of the youngest parents, those born between 1997 and 2012 — also known as Gen-Z — are more likely than past generations to view reading as a school or work activity rather than fun or beneficial, according to the HarperCollins survey and early literacy experts.

For many young adults, their experience in the classroom, especially during the peak of the No Child Left Behind Act, which mandated annual standardized testing in the early 2000s, took the pleasure out of reading and instead instilled a shift toward

“skill and drill,” practices, said Theresa Bouley, an education professor at Eastern Connecticut State University.

“We went from fourth grade and sixth grade testing to every year — third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth,” Bouley said. “At that time we started using less books, more programs, more skill and drill and the purpose of reading only became

learning different aspects of reading, like phonics or things like that, and not actually for purpose or pleasure or even having time to apply the skills they’re learning to actually read.”

An entire population of students may have lost the value of reading, and combined with being the first generation of digital natives, the United States’ youngest adults are among those who are now seeing some of the largest declines in literacy skills.

And it’s likely they’re passing their habits down to their children, which can have crucial repercussions on the youngest emerging students’ social-emotional health, cognitive development and future literacy skills.

“Children are not seeing their caregivers actually reading books and that sends a really strong message. ... As a 3-year-old boy, [they] want to do what dad’s doing,” Bouley said. “I think it’s equally important ... [for a] child’s understanding of the purpose and joy of reading to see their parent reading.”

In Wallace’s case, she was able to make up for some lost time.

For other families, however, there isn’t a lot of opportunity to close the gap once a child enters school.



Jeana Wallace reading a book to her son, Levi, during bedtime.

PHOTO CREDIT: STACKER

CONTINUED...

"Having a positive association with books, without the pressure of assessments or skill tests, allows young children to understand the value and fun of reading. It builds connections."

— CAROL ANNE ST. GEORGE, LITERACY PROFESSOR, THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

"There's an assumption nowadays that when kids get to kindergarten, they need to know their letters and their numbers and this is highly predictive of whether or not they'll be successful at the end of kindergarten and at the end of third grade," Neuman said. "Teachers have a very short time to work on these kinds of things, and when children are that far behind, ... I don't see realistically that a teacher will be able to give the intensive support that children will need in order to catch up."

Why does reading to our youngest children matter?

Early literacy researchers believe there's a common misconception that reading to a child when they're babies or young toddlers is useless because the child doesn't understand what's going on.

The activity, however, "is a lot more than just reading and reading books," Bouley said.

Reading aloud creates a foundation for literacy, she said.

Studies have shown it helps children develop communication and fine motor skills and also promotes oral language skills, which are a strong predictor of future success in school.

Books also open up a world of vocabulary that isn't used in day-to-day language when parents speak to their children, Rebecca Parlakian, senior programs director at [Zero to Three](#), an early childhood nonprofit, said.

"Shared reading does predict child vocabulary prior to school entry, and vocabulary predicts later emerging literacy skills. We also find that the quantity or frequency of parent-child book reading predicted children's receptive vocabulary, which is the words they understand, their reading comprehension skills and their desire to read," said Parlakian.

A study [released in August](#) found that reading aloud to a child at 8 months old was linked to language skills at 12 and 16 months, "so even infants being exposed to ongoing rich language made a difference," Parlakian added.

And while "language and vocabulary are the primary benefits," books also support "social-emotional skills because children are being exposed to the feelings and motivations of characters other than themselves," Parlakian said.

'Skill and drill'

Reading aloud is also beneficial for children to develop a positive association with the activity.

"There's a lot of warm fuzziness and social emotional development that goes on. So now in kindergarten, if the teacher whips out a book, I remember my dad read me that

book," Bouley said.

Having a positive association with books, without the pressure of assessments or skill tests, allows young children to understand the value and fun of reading. "It builds connections," said Carol Anne St. George, a literacy professor at the University of Rochester. "People talk about text to text, text to world ... and those are the kinds of things that help children cognitively think and classify their world around them."

But, it's becoming a lost art.

Instead, reading in schools has become performance-based activity or test preparation.

"Whether it's parents at home and also teachers in schools, we're seeing so few books, and so few opportunities for children to read — really read," Bouley said.

There's a pressure in the United States to "press reading very, very early," Neuman added.

"If we look globally at other cultures where children are more successful, [like Finland](#), ... they don't start formally reading with children with the expectation they should read by third grade. They recognize that play is really important in these early years, that talk and oral language is extremely important, and they focus on other things," Neuman said. "But, we're in a race."

That "race" has contributed to changes in curriculum and a pullback on activities like read-alouds in the classroom, which Bouley, Neuman and St. George said they've all seen.

"I don't see that time really devoted and yet that's so critical," Neuman said. "The language that they're getting through that storybook and experience is really imperative. I don't see it as much. I see a lot of skill and drill."

Among some researchers, there's a belief that the shift happened around 2002 as the United States shifted toward an annual testing model.

"We became inundated with assessments and preparation," Bouley said. "So first graders, second graders, they're constantly getting these assessments that definitely take the purpose away from reading for enjoyment to reading as skill."

Timed reading fluency assessments, for example, "just shows kids that you can't go back and read accurately," and "all that matters is how many words you can read in one minute," Bouley added.

"So children get these messages about all that matters with reading and none of it has to do with comprehending a book and enjoying a book," Bouley said. "It got much worse, or even started after No Child Left Behind, and then it's just become worse and worse."

Many of those former students are now parents, like Wallace, who may struggle with passing on literacy skills because of their own experiences in the classroom.

From one technology-raised generation to the next

Reading for pleasure in the United States has declined by more than 40% between 2003 and 2023, according to a 2025 study from the University of Florida and University College London.

The same study said it's unclear whether levels of reading with children has changed over time, but it did find only 2% of its participants read with children "on the average day," despite 21% of the study's sample having a child under nine years old.

Declining literacy levels also go hand-in-hand with the rise of the internet and accessibility to portable devices.

"This is a generation where we really begin to see a drop in reading for pleasure because they were part of that initial wave and flood of digital media that was totally unregulated. We had no research on the impact," said Parlakian.

Those patterns from the first generation of digital natives are now being mirrored to another generation of children.

A study released earlier this year from the PNC Foundation reported that about 35% of parents said some of the biggest challenges in reading to children are that the child prefers screen time or won't sit still long enough. "When we introduce screen time very young, and we don't manage the amount of time children are spending on screens, ... it can be difficult for children to transition from such an exciting medium to a medium like a book that may initially feel not as exciting," Parlakian said.

While some parents may argue their young children may not have to read as much with physical books because they're instead benefiting from educational programs on tablets or phones, early literacy experts said there's a difference between the two activities, both social-emotionally and academically.

A lack of reading time with a parent possibly means losing bonding time. With a tablet, a parent can hand it off and walk away, Bouley said, but when it comes to reading a book, it demands a parent's full presence.

Skills-wise, until around the ages of 5 and 6, children have a "really hard time and are incredibly inefficient at transferring learning that happens on a screen to real life," and vice versa, Parlakian said.

Reading also requires stamina — and educational programs on tablets or other devices, instead offer instant gratification, Neuman added.

"A good storybook often takes a bit of time to develop. ... There's literary language that children are learning, ... and games are very colloquial, they're very short-term and they're bits of information that don't connect," she said. "Children aren't developing comprehension, ... even when they begin to learn the print, what we're seeing is they don't know the meaning of the print, and that's a big problem."

Adopting early reading practices for the Wallace family means comprehension hasn't been a problem for 5-year-old Levi, who points out the words he knows in his children's Bible, or in his other favorites like "Little Blue Truck" or "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?"

"He can read almost a whole page by himself. He gets really excited and he has to go around and show his dad or we've got to FaceTime and show his mamaw," Wallace said. "He wants everybody to see he knows how to read."

This story was produced by The 74 and reviewed and distributed by Stacker.

CHECK OUT ALL THINGS FOR NEW & EXPECTING PARENTS

All the things you need to know
as new & expecting parents are
right at your fingertips!



40 YEARS WASHINGTON
Parent

washingtonparent.com

PARENTING

Gen Z's online identity

For millennials and Gen X, the internet was once a place to build a personal brand using real names and polished profiles. Gen Z, however, is redefining online identity by rejecting permanence and visibility in favor of privacy, flexibility and aesthetic control.

BY TREVOR MAHONEY FOR ANYWHO

Across various platforms, Gen Z has begun to treat names, handles, and even email addresses as design choices rather than fixed identifiers. AnyWho has gathered data from leading sources including McKinsey, The Atlantic, The Guardian, and more in order to highlight how Gen Z has shifted the concept of digital identity.

CONTINUED...

IN THIS SECTION

- **5 ways Gen Z is defining themselves differently online in 2026** 18
- **The link between artificial food dyes and ADHD, explained** 20
- **The Daily Standoff: Navigating Power Struggles with Preschoolers** 22
- **The Dr. Is In: When spring brings sneezes** 24
- **What to Read: 'Round the Natural World with Books** 26





1. The return to anonymity: Pseudonyms and username privacy

Whereas older generations leaned into recognizability, Gen Z is moving in the opposite direction. Pseudonyms, abstract usernames, and handles that have no obvious link to a real name are increasingly common, even on platforms that once encouraged real name usage. This is less about hiding and more about controlling exposure. Education data gathered by Fluid Focus, a firm focused on helping people reduce screentime, now estimates that members of Gen Z will spend 25 years of their life glued to their phones.

Growing up in an era rife with data breaches, doxing and algorithmic surveillance, Gen Z sees anonymity as a form of digital literacy. Privacy itself has become a kind of personal branding, signaling awareness, boundaries and autonomy rather than secrecy.

2. Lowercase everything: The anti-capitalization movement

From usernames to display names to bios, another emerging trend is Gen Z's preference for lowercase text. The reasons are both aesthetic and ideological. Lowercase reads as casual, unpolished and emotionally neutral. A report by [The Guardian](#) in early 2025 posits that a calm and friendly tone resonates more with Gen Z, as opposed to the loud and assertive feelings that capital letters can often convey.

3. Aesthetic username construction: Dots, underscores and visual flow

Gen Z usernames are often designed less for readability and more for visual rhythm. Dots, underscores, repeated letters, and more can all turn handles into graphic elements rather than simple identifiers like a first and last name. This reflects that a username isn't just your name but is rather a part of the visual texture of many social media platforms. Influenced heavily by TikTok aesthetics and design-first platforms, many members of

Gen Z treat naming as a form of micro-branding.

4. Email address simplicity: The “How did you get that?” phenomenon

If millennials accepted that their name plus numbers was the price of adulthood, Gen Z took a different approach. Younger users are increasingly securing uncomplicated email addresses (firstname.lastname@gmail.com, for example), not for the simplicity but instead for the appeal of being asked how they managed to secure such a scarce email address. Gen Z sees email not as a formal means of identification but as infrastructure. Simplicity can convey control, longevity, and freedom from the cluttered naming conventions that older users normalized.

5. Multiple account strategy: The death of the “finsta”

Millennials were the first to popularize the idea of “finsta” or “fake Instagram” during the mid-2010s, creating secondary accounts where they essentially posted more private thoughts and photos to only select followers. Gen Z has moved away from this. Instead, many of them maintain multiple parallel accounts that are themed, such as having one for close friends, one for aesthetics, one for public discovery, and more. Their online activity is less split into “real” and “fake” and is instead more modular.

The future of Gen Z social media

Gen Z is redefining how people are perceived online. Where previous generations sought visibility, permanence and recognition, Gen Z places more emphasis on control, adaptability and emotional resonance. For this generation, names are no longer fixed anchors but rather tools that express an intentional design. As platforms, workspaces and digital systems continue to evolve, the second youngest generation's approach offers a clear signal: The future of online activity won't be louder or more polished. Instead, it will be quieter and more intentional, at least until Gen Alpha populates social media and upends the trends again.

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

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



Food dyes and your kid's health

Artificial dyes don't cause ADHD, but studies suggest they can worsen hyperactivity for some. Here's what the science says and what the FDA has (and hasn't) done.

BY KATHERINE MARTINELLI FOR UNDERSTOOD

Artificial food dyes like Red 40 are used in countless products — and have long been the subject of debate. For decades, regulators believed that artificial dyes were safe to eat in small amounts. But more and more, research shows they pose health and behavioral risks, especially for kids with ADHD.

On April 22, 2025, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will phase out eight petroleum-based dyes, according to an [FDA press release](#).

- Blue Nos. 1 and 2
- Citrus Red No. 2
- Green No. 3
- Orange B
- Red No. 40
- Yellow Nos. 5 and 6

Kennedy has [repeatedly linked](#) exposure to these dyes to ADHD and cancer.

Red Dye 40 and other synthetic food dyes do not cause ADHD. ADHD is caused in part by differences in how the [brain develops and functions](#). Genetics also plays a key role.

Researchers have looked into environmental causes, too. They've found that some environmental factors, like early exposure to lead or mercury, may increase the risk of ADHD, [according to a 2023 meta-analysis in Prevention Science](#). But these factors don't cause the condition.

In a December 2025 update, the FDA said it's working to change a rule that currently allows companies to use Citrus Red No. 2 and Orange B. But it hasn't actually banned the other dyes yet.

Instead, health officials are urging major food companies to switch to natural dyes on their own. As of August 2025, 22 companies have agreed to [remove petroleum-based dyes from their products](#) by the end of 2027. Still, it could take years for these changes to trickle down to store shelves.

The FDA banned an artificial food dye for the first time in January 2025, when it said food companies [could no longer use Red No. 3](#). Studies in lab rats found the dye increased the rate of cancer. Lawmakers in at least 25 states have already proposed artificial food dye bans.

But what does the science say about food dyes and ADHD? With all the attention on food dyes, you may be worried about coloring in snacks, cereals, and drinks. [Understood](#) explains what the science says about food dyes and ADHD.



PHOTO CREDIT: STACKER

What is Red 40?

FD&C Red No. 40 — also known as Red 40, Red Dye 40, or Allura Red — is one of the most well-known food colorings in the United States. It gives many products a bright color that kids tend to love. Common products like fruit punch, red candy, cereal, and cotton candy contain Red 40.

Red 40 is one of a handful of artificial dyes made from petroleum, a naturally occurring substance that is used to make gasoline and plastic. But consuming food dye isn't the same as drinking gasoline.

Scientists create artificial dyes in a lab. They use chemical reactions to turn petroleum and other compounds into colorful dyes.

Artificial dyes can be replaced with natural alternatives. These may get their color from plants, like beets or cherries.

Risks of artificial dyes

The debate around artificial food dyes like Red 40 has been going on for decades. One big concern is how these dyes might affect kids' behavior.

In Europe, foods with synthetic dyes must have a clearly visible label that reads: "May have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children."

Research backs this up. Studies have found a link between these food dyes and behavior issues in kids and young adults. The dyes especially affect hyperactivity, but they also have an impact on focus.

Generally, the effect is temporary. But for many kids, these dyes are a regular part of their diet, and so are typically in their system.

Not every child reacts the same way, though. Some kids seem sensitive to dyes, and others don't. Kids with ADHD might be more likely to be affected, but they aren't the only ones. There are potential risks for people of all ages.

Researchers have suggested possible links between artificial dyes and health problems, based largely on studies using mice. These health issues include:

- Allergies
- Asthma
- Heart problems
- Cancer
- Obesity
- DNA damage
- Colon inflammation

Some people argue that further research is needed. Others say it's not worth exposing people to these dyes, given the potential risks.

What to do about food dyes in your child's diet

According to the United States Department of Agriculture Branded Foods Database, over 38,000 food products contain Red 40. So it can be hard to avoid. Food dyes are most often found in processed and ultraprocessed foods. These types of food typically aren't the healthiest choices to begin with.

So what should parents do? Should you cut out food dyes completely?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) acknowledges that artificial food dyes can worsen ADHD symptoms. They point to studies reporting decreased ADHD symptoms in kids who have cut dyes from their diet.
- Talk to your child's doctor or a dietitian before making major dietary changes. They can help you decide whether your child might benefit from removing synthetic dyes from their diet.
- Start by tracking behaviors. If you think your child may be sensitive to artificial dyes, keep a food and behavior journal for a week or two. Note when your child eats foods with artificial dyes and any changes in behavior afterwards. This data can help guide conversations with your child's care team.
- Read ingredient labels. Artificial dyes are usually listed by name on food packaging. They tend to show up in colorful snack foods, sugary drinks, and frozen desserts. They're even in some vitamins and medications.
- Look for dye-free alternatives. More companies are putting natural sources of color in their snacks and treats. They often use beet juice, turmeric, or spirulina. Natural food dyes add color, not flavor.

Food dyes like Red 40 don't cause ADHD. But they may make things harder for some kids, especially those with behavioral issues or hyperactivity. These dyes don't cause symptoms in everyone, but it's clear that some kids are more sensitive than others.

If you're concerned, talk to your child's health care provider. You can also work with a registered dietitian if you need help evaluating or changing your child's diet.

Summary

Artificial food dyes like Red 40 are used in many snacks, drinks, and cereals that kids love. While some experts say these dyes are safe, others worry they may cause health problems and make behavior issues worse — especially for kids with ADHD.

In April 2025, U.S. health officials announced plans to phase out eight petroleum-based dyes, including Red 40. They're encouraging companies to switch to natural options. This follows earlier action banning Red No. 3 after it was linked to cancer in lab rats. Many states have also already started banning artificial dyes on their own.

Red 40 does not cause ADHD, but it may make symptoms like hyperactivity or trouble focusing worse for some children. Research shows that synthetic dyes can affect behavior in kids, though not every child is sensitive to them.

There are also concerns about possible health risks like allergies, asthma, and potentially even cancer. With Red 40 found in tens of thousands of products, it can be hard to avoid. But reading labels and looking for dye-free foods can help.

If you're concerned, talk to your child's health care provider. And consider tracking food and behavior to see if making changes could help.

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



BIGSTOCK/TROPICAL-STUDIO

The Daily Standoff: Navigating Power Struggles with Preschoolers

Experts explain why ages 3-5 are wired for independence—and how parents can reduce conflict while building cooperation and emotional regulation.

BY LYNNE TICKNOR

Determination. Strength. Independence. Self-sufficiency. These are the very qualities we hope our children will grow into—until they show up loudly, repeatedly and inconveniently at age 3.

Preschoolers are built to push back. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, between the ages of 3-5 is a critical window for developing independence, decision-making skills and self-confidence. During this stage, children are figuring out who they are and what they can control—and saying “no” is one of their favorite tools. That behavior isn’t defiance; it’s developmentally appropriate exploration of autonomy.

Brain science backs this up. Harvard’s Center on the

Developing Child explains that young children are shaped by their environment and are still developing executive function skills like impulse control, emotional regulation and flexible thinking. When kids feel powerless, rushed or overwhelmed, their brains shift into survival mode—making cooperation far less likely.

Many parents respond by tightening control, but research shows this often backfires. The American Psychological Association reports that overly controlling or punitive parenting increases stress and emotional reactivity while reducing long-term cooperation. In other words, trying to control your child almost always leads to your child losing control over their strong emotions.

Organizations such as ZERO TO THREE emphasize that young children cooperate best when they feel respected and included in everyday decisions. Similarly, the American Psychological Association highlights that consistent routines, clear expectations, and positive interactions help children feel secure—and children who feel secure are far more likely to cooperate.

So, when adult authority collides with a child's growing need for independence, power struggles can feel inevitable—but they aren't. As parenting expert Dr. Jane Nelsen says, "I've never seen a child drunk on power without an adult drunk on power within close proximity." Power struggles take two. The most effective way to avoid one is to refuse to pick up the rope at all.

Here are a few tips to try.

- **Take a beat.** When a power struggle starts, step to the side—without fighting and without giving in. If you ask your preschooler to help set the table and she screams, "NO!" resist the urge to argue. Instead, try: "When the table is set, I'll serve dinner. Would you like help getting out plates or can you do it yourself?"
- **Connect.** Developing a strong attachment with your child and offering calm, limited choices preserves your authority while supporting your child's need for autonomy. ZERO TO THREE explains that children are more cooperative when they feel a sense of control within safe limits.
- **Act.** Talk less and respond with action. Decide what you will do—firmly and kindly—in response to your child's behavior. In the example above, dinner is served once the table is set. No lectures. No threats. No bribes. Just follow through. The American Academy of Pediatrics encourages clear expectations and consistent follow-through rather than excessive verbal correction, which can overwhelm young children and escalate conflict.
- **Use non-verbal cues.** Young children process visuals more easily than words. Two fingers over the lips can signal "quiet." A blank Post-it® on the TV can remind kids to pick up toys before screen time. Less talking often leads to more cooperation.
- **Use humor.** Preschoolers love to laugh. Turning a power struggle into play builds connection and lowers stress. Put socks on your hands to pick up toys or use a toy shovel to gather Legos®. According to the Child Mind Institute, playful parenting helps regulate emotions by reducing tension and increasing a child's sense of safety.
- **Offer choices—but keep them simple.** Preschoolers want a say in their lives, just like adults. Offer choices you can live with: "Would you like peas or carrots?" or "Do you want to walk under the umbrella or ride in the car?" Limited, age-appropriate choices increase cooperation without undermining parental authority.

- **Use one word.** When parents talk too much, kids tune out. Instead of a lecture, try a one-word reminder: "Shoes." "Plate." Save your voice for meaningful connection. The American Psychological Association points out that calm and concise communication is far more effective than repeated verbal corrections, and it helps children regulate their own emotions.
- **Acknowledge and repair.** If you feel yourself sliding into a win/lose battle, pause and name it: "We got off on the wrong foot. Let's try again." One parent I worked with calls this a "reboot." It works. The National Association for the Education of Young Children emphasizes that repairing interactions teaches emotional regulation and resilience—skills children need long after the moment has passed.

It takes two for a power struggle to happen. When parents stay calm and emotionally regulated, children are more likely to settle and cooperate. Adult self-control directly supports children's developing self-control.

When you feel yourself heading into a tug-of-war with your child, remember: don't pick up the rope.



Lynne Ticknor is a certified parent educator and Director of Education at Parent Encouragement Program (PEP). For information about PEP's online programs for parents and organizations, see pepparent.org.

Build your Parenting Toolbox with PEP

April 2026

4-week online classes
Live Webinars

Online Master Class

\$199 | 4 weeks

What Your Child's Behavior Means and How to Respond

Live Webinars | \$25 | 8 - 9 pm ET

April 16

From Self-Critical to Self-Confident: Raising "I Can" Kids

April 28

Getting Kids to Help With Chores



www.pepparent.org



pep
Educating parents.
Enriching families.

When spring brings sneezes



BIGSTOCK/ASTREWSKA

Sneezing, itchy eyes and runny noses can signal spring allergies. Here's how parents in DC, Maryland and Virginia can identify symptoms and help kids feel better.

BY TROY BAKER, DO

As winter finally loosens its grip and spring begins to bloom, many families welcome the warmer days. Yet for a significant number of children, spring also marks the beginning of allergy season. Sneezing, itchy eyes, runny noses and general misery can quickly take the joy out of outdoor fun. Understanding what triggers spring allergies, how to spot symptoms and what practical steps parents can take can make a difference.

Why spring allergies are so common

Trees are the earliest pollinators in many regions, often beginning their pollen release as temperatures climb into the upper 50s and low 60s. A consistent week of mild temperatures is usually enough to kick off a noticeable pollen season in the Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC, area.

Some years, pollen appears as early as mid-February; in others, it might not begin in earnest until late March or early April.

Different trees pollinate at different times, and sensitivities vary widely between children. Oak and birch trees are major culprits, typically peaking in April and May. Earlier in the season, elm, cedar, pecan, hickory and maple can trigger symptoms.

National statistics reflect just how common spring allergies are: Approximately 26% of U.S. adults and 19% of children have seasonal allergies, according to the Allergy & Asthma Network. Boys are slightly more likely to have seasonal allergies than girls.

Genetics also play an important role: A child with one parent who has allergies is 30% to 50% more likely to develop allergies; if a child has two parents with allergies, that risk rises to 60% to 80%.

Identifying symptoms in kids

Seasonal allergy symptoms may mimic symptoms associated with a lingering cold, especially in young children who may not clearly describe what they're feeling. Classic spring allergy symptoms include:

- Sneezing
- A runny or congested nose
- Itchy, watery or red eyes
- Facial itchiness, including the nose, eyes and ears
- Itching of the roof of the mouth — this is a classic sign of seasonal allergies

Allergy symptoms are usually persistent, lasting weeks or months, unlike a virus, which usually clears in about two weeks.

As a board-certified allergist at Kaiser Permanente/the

Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group, I am often asked to differentiate between allergies and viral infections. I tell patients that fever, muscle aches and overall body soreness usually point to a viral illness rather than allergies.

Oral allergy syndrome

Some children also experience oral allergy syndrome, in which the mouth becomes itchy when eating certain raw fruits or vegetables. This is especially common among kids allergic to birch pollen, which cross-reacts with apples, peaches, cherries, pears and carrots. Symptoms are usually worse in peak pollen months, from April through June.

When to get allergy testing

If you suspect your child has seasonal allergies, reach out to your child's pediatrician. Pediatricians can order blood tests, which many families prefer because they require only a single needle prick. Skin-prick testing, which is performed by allergists, is equally accurate but involves up to 40 tiny pricks on the child's back, which some find uncomfortable. Skin-prick testing will also leave small/temporary hives where allergies are found. This will lead to an itchy back for about one hour. Allergy testing is often recommended because:

It helps predict when symptoms will start based on known triggers, such as tree, grass or weed pollen. Knowing when symptoms may start can help determine when to start taking medication to combat allergies.

It will show whether a child is allergic to indoor triggers such as dust mites or pet dander, which can cause nighttime congestion, increased snoring or year-round symptoms.

Over-the-counter medications that help

I recommend parents take stock of their medicine cabinets early in the allergy season, replacing expired products and

preparing for weeks or months of possible symptoms.

Effective over-the-counter medications for allergies include:

- **AstePro (azelastine nasal spray):** Often more effective than oral antihistamines. This is typically approved for ages 6+ but sometimes used younger.
- **Flonase (fluticasone nasal spray):** The most effective allergy medication overall, but I caution against year-round daily use in children because long-term use may affect height. Seasonal use for a few weeks or months is generally considered safe.
- **Saline nasal spray:** Helps rinse pollen and mucus from nasal passages.
- **Oral antihistamines (Claritin, Zyrtec, Allegra):** All are available in children's formulations.
- **Pataday 0.7% eye drops:** A strong, over-the-counter option for itchy, watery eyes.

Parents of kids with eye symptoms may also consider keeping artificial tears on hand to rinse pollen from irritated eyes.

Very few allergy medications require a prescription. Singular (montelukast) is sometimes used for allergy-related asthma, but it does not outperform over-the-counter options for most allergic symptoms.

For more persistent or severe cases, allergists may recommend sublingual immunotherapy: dissolving tablets (available for dust mites, grass pollen, or ragweed pollen) under the tongue that desensitize the body to some allergens. These require an initial dose in the allergist's office and an EpiPen at home as a precaution but are safe and effective in the long term.

Practical steps to take at home

Parents can take several simple steps to help minimize pollen exposure:

- Encourage kids to shower at night to remove pollen from hair and skin before bed.
- Change clothing as soon as they come indoors.
- Keep windows closed during high-pollen days.
- Use a high-quality HEPA air filter and replace HVAC filters as recommended.
- Encourage sunglasses or hats outdoors to keep pollen away from the eyes and hair.
- Vacuum regularly, especially in homes with pets who track pollen inside.

Small changes like these can help reduce pollen accumulation on furniture, bedding and in the air.

Why managing allergies matters

Beyond discomfort, unmanaged allergies can interfere with a child's life, negatively affecting sleep, school performance or participation in outdoor activities. A kid should be able to do any sport they want, and if allergies are holding them back, getting treated is important.

With the right combination of awareness, preparation and support from your child's doctor, spring can be fun.

Dr. Troy Baker, DO, is a board-certified allergist with the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group. He sees patients at the Kaiser Permanente Caton Hill Medical Center.



BIGSTOCK/VASTREMSKA

'Round the natural world with books



BY MARY QUATTLEBAUM

From award-winning picture books about walking trees to teen nonfiction on wildfires and climate change, these titles give young readers every reason to fall in love with the natural world this Earth Day.

Earth Day, on April 22 this year, is the perfect opportunity to head for the hills—or backyard or city park—and celebrate the surrounding flora and fauna. This is also the day when the prestigious [Green Earth Book Awards](#) are announced by [Nature Generation](#). These national awards honor the books for young people that “best convey the message of environmental stewardship.” The Nature Generation, in Arlington, Virginia, also provides grants and resources for “educators, communities and institutions to expand environmental engagement.” As you await this year’s winners, you might check out [2025’s choices](#) (two are reviewed below) as well as recently published “green” titles.

walk their trees (planted in large tubs) throughout the city, providing shade and beauty along the way. In the story, Lily and her tree (which she christens George) are joined by increasing numbers of people, demonstrating the power of one person to create change.

The Night Artists

By Joan Waites
Schiffer, 2026, \$18.99

This lyrical book is perfect for Earth Day and National Poetry Month (April)—and a lovely read-aloud throughout the year. Popular Maryland author/illustrator Joan Waites’ mixed-media illustrations beautifully complement the text. She depicts nocturnal creatures in a landscape rendered in deep, restful hues. The quiet drama builds as the night artists whistle (cicadas), chirp (crickets) and peep (tree frogs). And then, at last, bats “pirouette in an aerial ballet” and “dawn makes an entrance.” Back matter proves both educational and entertaining, with answers to questions like “How do fireflies light up?”

April 11 at 10:30 a.m. Joan Waites at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston, Va. scrawlbooks.com

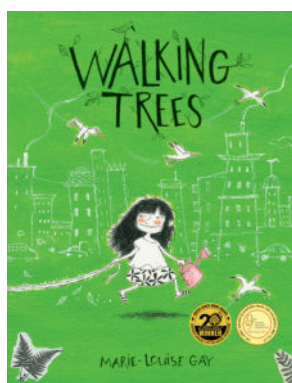


TOTS TO AGE 7

Walking Trees

By Marie-Louise Gay
Groundwood, 2024, \$19.99

This delightful picture book won last year’s Green Earth Award in the Primary category. Author/illustrator Marie-Louise Gay notes that it was inspired by a program in the Netherlands. Like the young protagonist Lily, the actual townspeople regularly volunteer to



PRETEENS

V. Malar: Greatest Ranger of All Time

By Suma Subramaniam
Illustrated by Archana Sreenivasan
Candlewick, 2026, \$17.99

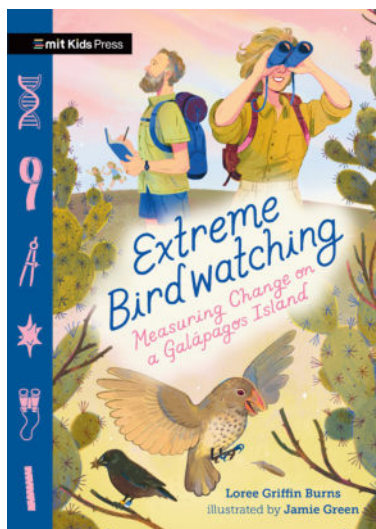
Suma Subramaniam's lively new chapter book series should prove as popular as her acclaimed picture books. At Camp Kurinji, in South India, Malar wrestles with challenges common to this age. She is sometimes homesick, yearns to befriend the other campers and bristles at an aloof boy. Selvi madam, the kindly female camp counselor, helps her navigate these issues. Selvi also acquaints the young characters (and curious readers) with the workings of a wildlife reserve. Malar dreams of seeing a real tiger in the wild. Over time, though, she learns how acting on that desire may impact others, both humans and tigers.



Extreme Bird Watching

By Loree Griffin Burns
Illustrated by Jamie Green
MIT Kids Press, 2026, \$16.99

Kids interested in being scientists have few books that provide insight into the scientific mindset and actual work. Thankfully, we can now hand these kids Loree Griffin Burns' Discovery Chronicles series. This book follows Peter and Rosemary Grant as they study two types of finches on isolated Daphne Island, to determine how they change over time. As with her many other compelling books on science exploration, Burns immerses the reader in the fascinating world of research. She shows how the Grants (and other scientists) gather the information to test their ideas—and discusses the larger implications of their findings.

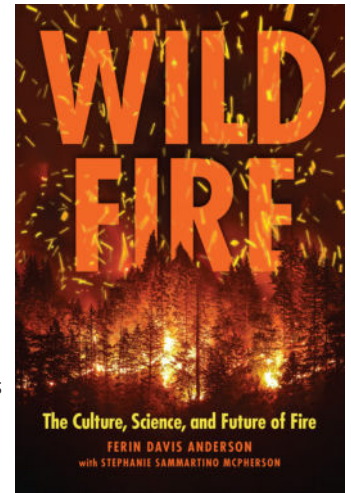


TEENS

Wildfire: The Culture, Science, and Future of Fire

By Fern Davis Anderson and Stephanie McPherson
Lerner, 2024, \$18.99

The authors offer a clear-eyed account of the benefits and destructiveness of wildfires. They compare the devastation wrought by rampaging fires, like that in Paradise, California, with the Indigenous practice of rejuvenating the land through planned, controlled fire. Might lessons from Indigenous people, farmers and forest rangers help the world to better prevent such widescale destruction even as climate change increases the magnitude and frequency of wildfires? This timely, important book won last year's Green Earth Book Award for teen nonfiction.

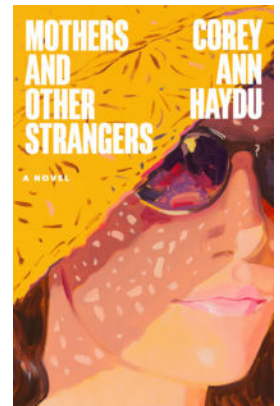


ADULTS

Mothers and Other Strangers

By Corey Ann Haydu
Little Brown, 2026, \$29

Corey Ann Haydu writes award-winning books for young people across genres and age categories. You may know the picture book "A Place for Feelings," the Hand-Me-Down Magic chapter book series and the middle-grade novel "Eventown." We're lucky now to have her first novel for adults, an intricate, well-paced story that moves back and forth in time. With nuance and grace, Haydu explores the relationship between two mothers, who become friends, and that of their daughters. The daughters are BFFs when young but thirtysomething, pregnant and estranged when the story opens. Will they be able to unpeel all the secrets that bedeviled their mothers' relationship—and impact their own? And can their re-kindled friendship withstand the truth? **April 14 at 7 p.m.** Corey Ann Haydu at East City Bookshop, 645 Pennsylvania Ave SE, Washington, DC. eastcitybookshop.com



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.



THE ST·JAMES SUMMER CAMPS

**AWARDED BEST CAMP IN THE
DMV 5 YEARS RUNNING**

ADVENTURE, SPORTS, & STEAM CAMPS
TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AVAILABLE
LUNCH INCLUDED

thestjamescamps.com

Enroll now & get up to:

15% OFF



More weeks = more savings.

Amazing Summer Camp Experiences Await!*

**GRADES
K-9**

**camp
woodend**
BY NATURE FORWARD



***...but they fill up fast!**

Currently, a few camps in each grade still have space.

Check availability and register for these camps
and more at natureforward.org/campwoodend

SUMMER ADVENTURE CAMP

at Hard Bargain Farm - July 6 to August 21



**SUMMER
2026**

Where curiosity
leads,
confidence
grows, and
outdoor
adventure
awaits.



- Children ages 4-13
- Bus options from Washington, DC
- Staffed by professional educators
- Extended care available
- Day camp, mini-overnight, and full-week overnight options available
- Hands-on nature exploration and farm experiences

Register!



fergusonfoundation.org/2026SummerCamp



SUMMER CAMPS

Camps & Summer Programs Guide

From creative arts and outdoor adventures to STEM, sports, and performing arts, this year's Camp & Summer Guide highlights a wide range of enriching experiences for children of all ages and interests. Whether families are seeking flexible day programs, immersive specialty camps, or overnight adventures, these listings showcase opportunities designed to inspire confidence, curiosity and lifelong memories. Explore the possibilities and find the perfect summer fit for your child.

CAMPS & SUMMER PROGRAMS GUIDE



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.

STAMP Camp

Sign up to receive five free, hands-on activities from the National Postal Museum and another Smithsonian partner, connecting postal history with exciting STEAM learning across subjects throughout June and July all designed to be completed at your own pace. Perfect for learners ages 6–12 with adult support. Remote. 202-633-5555.



VIRGINIA

Art League Art Camp

Spark your child's creativity this summer! Our art camps offer hands-on projects in drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture, with fresh curricula each week. Choose regular or specialty (single-medium) camps, available in half-day or full-day sessions. All materials provided. Register for multiple weeks for a truly immersive artistic experience! Alexandria, Va. 703-683-2323.

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.



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



"They came for camp.
They left with confidence."



SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA CAMPS
Overnight Camp

3 nights to 3 weeks. Start where your family feels comfortable.

Now Enrolling for Summer 2026

www.smyymca.org | 610.670.2267

ACA Accredited • Praesidium Accredited in Child Protection

CAMPS & SUMMER PROGRAMS GUIDE



Fairfax County Park Authority Camps

Form friendships, learn new skills, embark on adventures and create lifelong memories! Choose from locations near your home, work or anywhere in between)! Aquatics, Boating and Fishing; Arts and Crafts; Equestrian and Farm; Nature; Outdoor Adventures; Performing Arts; Specialty; Sports; STEM; Variety; and Virtual — there's something for everyone (even adults). Fairfax County, Va.

MedStar Capitals Iceplex Summer Ice Skating Camps

We have on ice full and half day summer camps for ages 4-12. MedStar Capitals Iceplex – Arlington, Va.

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.

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.

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.

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.

C-Unit Studio

The perfect summer dance experience for kids who love to move! Dancers explore jazz, hip-hop, ballet, and contemporary dance to fun, high-energy music, and wrap up each session with a special performance. 5521 Landy Lane, Bethesda, Md. 301-664-7900.

NatPhil Summer String Institute

String students in grades 2-12 take part in an immersive music experience featuring

CONTINUED...

Summer Survival 101

- ☒ Book a family vacation
- ☒ Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate
- ☒ Buy sunscreen in bulk
- ☒ Visit Grandma and Grandpa
- ☐ Register for DAY CAMP

Sign up with Fairfax County Parks today!

Adapted • Adult • Adventure
Aquatic, Boating, Fishing • Arts & Crafts • Nature
Equestrian & Farm • Performing Arts • Sports
Specialty • STEM • Virtual

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



at **The Art League** (ages 5—Teen)



The region's longest-running visual arts camp!



Register online at www.theartleague.org/classes

The Art League | 105 N. Union St. | 800 Slaters Ln. | 1201 N. Royal St. 2. | Alexandria, VA 22314 | 703.683.2323 | school@theartleague.org

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

- ★ NATIONAL
- ★ CHILDREN'S
- ★ THEATRE



In Capitol Hill

Register Today!



2026 Capitol Debate Summer Camps

Learn from the Experts in Public Speaking and Debate from across the United States

LEARN MORE

www.capitoldebate.com
800 450 5012

SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY

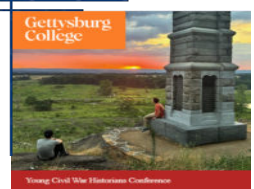


CAMP SHAKESPEARE

JUN 22-AUG 15, 2026
Ages 6-18

REGISTER TODAY
ShakespeareTheatre.org
202.547.5688

STC



Gettysburg College Academic Camps

Young Civil War Historians:
June 12-17

Psychology Camp:
July 12-17

Highlights:

- \$1,395 (includes all activities, room & board)
- 6 Days, 5 Nights
- Historic Gettysburg, PA



Apply at: gettysburg.edu/summercamps

CAMPS & SUMMER PROGRAMS GUIDE



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.

Summer Musical Theatre with ATMTC 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 grades 7–12 provides students with a foundational and expanded understanding of technique in ballet, jazz, music and acting. Wintergreen Plaza, Rockville, Md.

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, DC

Capitol Debate Public Speaking & Debate Summer Camp

Students strengthen public speaking, debate, and leadership skills in an engaging, supportive environment. With personalized coaching and dynamic workshops, campers gain confidence, think critically, and form lasting friendships — preparing them for success in school and beyond. American University, Washington, DC. 800-450-5012.

National Children's Theatre Summer Camp

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. July 13–Aug. 21 for ages 6–15. Financial assistance available. Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, 201 4th St. SE, Washington, DC.

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, DC. 202-824-0449.

Sleepaway Camp

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 op-

CONTINUED...

CAMP HIDDEN MEADOWS
Offering 1-, 2-, 3- and 4- Week Sessions
in Wild & Wonderful West Virginia

Choose your adventure!

Zipline Pottery Farming Archery Cooking Swimming

Learn More & Enroll!

WOODBERRY SUMMER CAMP

1,200 ACRES OF
Choose-Your-Own Adventure

LEARN MORE
woodberry.org/woodberry-summer-camp

NAT PHIL HARMONIC

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 27–31

Location
6301 River Road Bethesda, MD 20817

Visit nationalphilharmonic.org/ssi/ for more information

The Theatre Lab
SCHOOL OF THE DRAMATIC ARTS

DRAMA CAMPS

Nationally Recognized
Summer Arts Programs
for Grades 1–12

REGISTER AT WWW.THEATRELAB.ORG

CAMPS & SUMMER PROGRAMS GUIDE



tions 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.

Camp Hidden Meadows

Nestled in the mountains of West Virginia, an all-gender sleepaway camp with a child-centered and caring staff. Offering 1- and 2-week sessions packed with adventure and connection. Campers do activities like hiking, climbing, swimming, archery, pottery, and explore the beautiful outdoors, building confidence, friendships, and independence in a welcoming, unplugged community. Bartow, West Va. 304-456-5191.

Gettysburg College Academic Camps

At Gettysburg College, we're here, all of us, to do great work. Summer camp participants will join our community of passionate achievers, on a campus where history and innovation meet to shape the future and enjoy a glimpse into life as a Gettysburgian. From enriching academic programming to meaningful social connections, the week-long experience is unforgettable! Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa. 717-337-6924.



South Mountain YMCA Camps

A transformative overnight experience that builds confidence, independence, and character through meaningful friendships and supportive mentorship. Set on 450 acres, campers enjoy climbing, horseback riding, arts, and water activities while developing resilience, teamwork, and lifelong skills through outdoor adventure. Reinholds, Pa. 610-670-2267.

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.





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







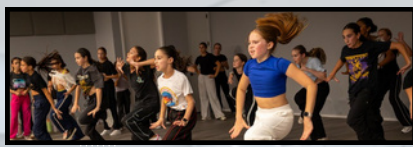





LTS FUN CAMP - HOCKEY CAMPS - ELITE CAMPS
SCAN THE QR CODE TO SEE ALL OF OUR CAMP OFFERINGS!







SUMMER PROGRAMS

INTENSIVE
JUNE 15-18

-

MINI MOVERS (PRESCHOOL)
JUNE 22-26

-

DAY CAMP SESSION I
JULY 27-31

-

DAY CAMP SESSION II
AUG 3-7



SCAN HERE FOR DETAILS

C-UNITSTUDIO.COM

INFO@C-UNITSTUDIO.COM

@C_UNIT_STUDIO



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

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
& ATMC ACADEMY**
 SEE THEATRE. BE THEATRE.

Experienced,
Professional
Staff

Final Musical
Performance
on the Stage



LEARN MORE

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

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



SUBSCRIBE

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

40 Years WASHINGTON
Parent

THINGS TO DO

Loudoun County Adventures

From outdoor adventures and historic villages to hands-on museums and sweet treat stops, here's where families can explore in Loudoun County.

IN THIS SECTION

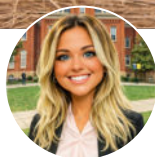
- Loudoun County Adventures 36
- Earth Day Events Not to Miss 40
- Top Boba Tea Spots in the DMV 42
- Best Places to Get DC Style Cheesecake 44
- Coolest DMV Murals 46
- "The American Story" Exhibit 50
- Mother's Day Events 52
- DC Kids Events Calendar 54



Great Country Farms, Bluemont, VA



Great Country Farms, Bluemont, VA



BY JENNA DOLCH

Loudoun County offers a mix of wide-open outdoor spaces, charming small towns and hands-on attractions that make it easy to plan a full day or weekend of family fun.

Whether your crew loves hiking trails, farm animals, interactive learning or historic exploration, there's something here for every age group.

Here are 10 family-friendly stops worth adding to your list.

1. Great Country Farms

This working farm in Bluemont is a seasonal favorite for families, offering pick-your-own produce, farm animals, playgrounds and large-scale festivals throughout the year. Kids can jump on giant pillows, ride cow trains and explore open play areas while parents relax with mountain views.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 34345 Snickersville Turnpike, Bluemont
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday and Friday; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; closed Tuesday-Thursday.
- **Phone:** (540) 554-2073
- **Best ages:** Toddlers through elementary
- **How long families usually stay:** 2-4 hours
- **Cost expectation:** Paid admission; event pricing varies
- **Planning tip:** Visit during weekday mornings for smaller crowds.

2. Leesburg Animal Park

A classic hands-on animal experience, Leesburg Animal Park allows kids to feed goats, meet exotic animals and enjoy wagon rides. The indoor play zone makes it a reliable option even on hot or rainy days.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 19246 James Monroe Highway, Leesburg
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday, Thursday and Friday; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday; closed Tuesday and Wednesday

- **Phone:** (703) 433-0002
- **Best ages:** Toddlers to elementary
- **How long families usually stay:** 2-3 hours
- **Cost expectation:** \$19.95/adults, \$16.95/ children & seniors
- **Planning tip:** Bring quarters or small bills for animal feed machines.

3. Morven Park

This 1,000-acre historic estate offers scenic trails, open lawns and equestrian events. Families can tour the historic mansion, explore wooded paths or pack a picnic for a relaxed afternoon outdoors.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 17195 Southern Planter Lane, Leesburg
- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-5 p.m. daily
- **Phone:** (571) 474-2754
- **Best ages:** All ages
- **How long families usually stay:** 1-3 hours
- **Cost expectation:** Grounds free; mansion tours ticketed
- **Planning tip:** Bring bikes or scooters for longer paths.

4. Claude Moore Park

Claude Moore Park offers a peaceful escape in eastern Loudoun, surrounded by neighborhoods and shopping areas. Families can explore wooded trails, open meadows and quiet ponds while spotting local wildlife along the way. It's a relaxing spot for hikes, picnics, bird-watching and nature photography.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 21544 Old Vestals Gap Road, Sterling
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily
- **Phone:** (571) 258-3700
- **Best ages:** All ages
- **How long families usually stay:** 1-3 hours
- **Cost expectation:** Free park access
- **Planning tip:** Check the recreation center schedule before visiting.

CONTINUED...

5. Oatlands Historic House & Gardens

Older kids and history lovers will enjoy exploring this preserved 19th-century estate. The gardens offer open space for roaming, and seasonal events often include family programming. The visitor center reopens daily beginning March 23, and guided tours resume Saturday, March 28.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 20850 Oatlands Plantation Lane, Leesburg
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily (grounds open select March weekends; tours resume March 28)
- **Phone:** (703) 727-0670
- **Best ages:** Elementary and up
- **How long families usually stay:** 1-2 hours
- **Cost expectation:** Ticketed entry
- **Planning tip:** Visit in spring for peak garden blooms.

6. Rust Nature Sanctuary

A quieter outdoor option, this nature preserve in Leesburg features easy trails, wildlife viewing and open meadow space. It's ideal for families who prefer a slower pace.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 802 Childrens Center Road SW, Leesburg
- **Hours:** Dawn-dusk daily
- **Phone:** (202) 306-9127
- **Best ages:** All ages
- **How long families usually stay:** 1-2 hours
- **Cost expectation:** Free
- **Planning tip:** Wear sturdy shoes after rain.

7. Loudoun Museum

Located in Leesburg, this small but engaging museum highlights local history through interactive exhibits and rotating displays. It's a quick educational stop near other downtown attractions.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 16 Loudoun St. SW, Leesburg
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday-Sunday
- **Phone:** (703) 777-7427
- **Best ages:** Elementary and up
- **How long families usually stay:** 1 hour
- **Cost expectation:** Modest admission
- **Planning tip:** Combine with lunch downtown.

8. Ida Lee Park Recreation Center

This recreation complex includes indoor pools, sports courts and seasonal outdoor programming. It's a reliable rainy-day backup or winter activity hub.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 60 Ida Lee Drive NW, Leesburg
- **Hours:** 5 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Friday; 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday; 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday
- **Phone:** (703) 777-1368
- **Best ages:** All ages
- **How long families usually stay:** 1-2 hours
- **Cost expectation:** \$5.50/\$7.50 adults (resident/non-resident), \$4/\$5.25 youth (15 and under), \$4/\$5.25 seniors (60 and over)
- **Planning tip:** Check public swim schedules before heading out.



COPYRIGHT MICHAEL BAXTER

9. TopGolf Loudoun

TopGolf Loudoun is a high-energy entertainment complex where families can enjoy a modern twist on golf using micro-chipped balls and interactive targets, no golfing experience needed. Beyond the driving bays, there's a full menu of food and drinks and casual seating areas, making it easy to turn an outing into lunch or dinner with play.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 20356 Commonwealth Center Drive, Ashburn
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m.-1 a.m. Friday-Saturday; 9 a.m.-midnight Sunday
- **Phone:** (703) 763-2020
- **Best ages:** Elementary and up
- **How long families usually stay:** 1.5-3 hours
- **Cost expectation:** Pay-per-game or bay rental (varies by time/day)
- **Planning tip:** Visit earlier in the day for smaller crowds and easier bay reservations.

10. iFLY Indoor Skydiving – Loudoun

If your kids have ever dreamed of flying, iFLY Indoor Skydiving in Ashburn offers a high-energy indoor adventure that feels like the real thing, no plane required. Using a state-of-the-art vertical wind tunnel, flyers float on a cushion of air with trained instructors guiding every step. It's surprisingly beginner-friendly, and even younger kids can safely participate. The experience feels thrilling but controlled, making it a standout birthday or special occasion outing.

Planning your visit:

- **Address:** 20315 Commonwealth Center Drive, Ashburn
- **Hours:** 2-8:30 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday; noon-8:30 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Sunday; closed Monday-Tuesday
- **Phone:** (571) 446-4359
- **Best ages:** Ages 3 and up
- **How long families usually stay:** 1-2 hours
- **Cost expectation:** Packages start around \$80+ per flyer
- **Planning tip:** Book reservations in advance, especially on weekends, and have kids wear comfortable clothes and lace-up sneakers.

NEVER WONDER WHAT TO DO THIS WEEKEND

EVENTS. PARENTING ADVICE. GIVEAWAYS. ALL IN ONE PLACE.

Stay in the know across the DMV

- ✓ Weekly things to do in DC, Maryland & Northern Virginia
- ✓ Expert parenting tips
- ✓ Contests and family giveaways

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Join Thousands of parents who stay in the know

40 YEARS WASHINGTON
Parent
WashingtonParent.com

Go green in the DMV

Here are the best Earth Day events happening across DC, Maryland and Virginia this April.

BY JACQUELINE KIM

Earth Day is celebrated every year on April 22 to promote global health initiatives and environmental activism. Millions of people around the globe participate in a series of tree-plantings, clean ups and practice environmentally-conscious habits in observance of the day.

The DMV area hosts numerous activities in anticipation of Earth Day, and if you're in the area, you won't want to miss out. Check out these local events to show your environmentalism!



BIGSTOCK/SARAYUT

The National Postal Museum's "Stamp Out Waste!" event

Educators from both the Smithsonian Gardens and the National Museum of Natural History are working in collaboration to host a series of arts-and-crafts events in support of environmentalism. These family-friendly activities are open to individuals of all ages, and include stations to create "Stamped for Sustainability" murals, write "Postcards for the Planets" to promote eco-friendly behaviors, and an "Upcycle Studio" to recycle old material into new pieces of artwork. The event is focused on reinforcing practices to reduce waste and to develop more environmentally-conscious perspectives.

■ **Date:** 11 a.m.-3 p.m. April 11

■ **Location:** 2 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, DC

GWRCCLC 2nd Annual Earth Day Alternative Vehicle Display

The Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition is hosting its second annual Earth Day Alternative Vehicle Display on April 18, 2026. The public event is free of charge and includes several workshops that introduce cleaner lifestyle habits and promote environmentally sustainable options for transportation. In addition to this, there will be a Green Expo exhibition that will showcase several energy and environmental organizations as well as a 5K walk and award ceremony. This is a great opportunity to learn more about environmentally-conscious practices and to connect with community and industry members. Register in advance to get a free T-shirt.

■ **Date:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. April 18

■ **Location:** The National Mall, 3rd Street Southwest and Madison Drive Northwest, Washington, DC

Anacostia River Earth Day Clean Up (Anacostia Watershed Society)

Every year, the Anacostia Watershed Society hosts a Anacostia River Earth Day clean up, one of the largest clean up volunteer opportunities in the DMV. Volunteers have the opportunity to come together to pick up trash along the watershed while also enjoying the views and nature. In addition to this, the Anacostia Watershed Society also coordinates other environmentally-friendly events including their Bottle Bill initiative in both Maryland and DC, individuals receive a monetary return on every item that they recycle, as well as their City Nature Challenge, which is a city-wide event that challenges participants to upload pictures of wildlife in their communities.

■ **Date:** April 25

■ **Location:** Anacostia River (select your site on the registration form)

Succulent Garden - Flower arranging workshop

Petal's Edge Florist and Flower Delivery is hosting a succulent garden flower arranging class in celebration of Earth Day. Create your own beautiful succulent garden through this guided class with provided materials and tools, and learn gardening techniques and tips. This event is a great way to destress and tap into your creativity while celebrating the beauties of nature this Earth Day.

■ **Date:** 6:30-8:30 p.m. April 21

■ **Location:** 1105 Oronoco St, Alexandria, VA

Earth Day Fairfax

Participate in the largest Earth Day celebration in Fairfax County, VA, this year at Fairfax Park on April 25. The event is comprised of a series of outdoor activities and festivities to celebrate Earth Day. The family-friendly events include nature exhibits, food trucks and vendors, local bands, live entertainment, giveaways, and farm animals. Learn more about environmentally healthy best practices and celebrate nature through this interactive and engaging event.

■ **Date:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. April 25

■ **Location:** 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston, VA

Boba tea for you and me

Check out these top-rated boba spots in the DMV.

BY JACQUELINE KIM

Boba tea is a popular Taiwanese drink that traditionally incorporates chewy tapioca pearls with a tea base. However, in recent years, the beverage has gained increasing popularity worldwide, particularly in the United States. If you're in search of a refreshing drink or a unique flavorful experience, search no farther! We've listed the top boba shops in the DMV area for your next



Washington, DC

Sharetea

Sharetea is a boba tea spot in Washington, DC's Chinatown that serves authentic Taiwanese boba teas, including their signature Classic Milk Tea, Mango Green Tea and Brown Sugar Boba Milk. The hidden boba shop is located on H Street Northwest in a tiny basement cafe that adds to its charm.

- **Address:** 519 H St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 10:45 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday-Friday; 10:45 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Saturday
- **What to try:** Wintermelon Tea with Lemon, Okinawa Pearl Milk Tea or QQ Happy Family Milk Tea

Spot of Tea - Dupont Circle

Spot of Tea is a boba tea shop with several locations in DC (Dupont Circle, Union Market, Georgetown). It serves unique and creative boba tea drinks including their Vanilla Taro, Mango Sticky Rice Matcha and Blue Jasmine. Their colorful drinks match their colorful and inviting interior with brightly painted walls, neon light signs and cute seating. In addition to boba tea, they also serve coffee, matcha and specialty drinks.

- **Address:** 2101 P St NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday



BIGSTOCK/MAKISTOCK



Taichi Bubble Tea

Taichi Bubble Tea is a boba tea shop located in Georgetown that serves Asian-inspired drinks with reimagined flavors. Their unique menu selection includes their Dragon Fruit Lemon Tea, their Brown Sugar Zang Zang and their Cheesy Milk Foam Tea. In addition to this, Taichi Bubble Tea also serves poke bowls, sushi burritos, ramen and more fun fusion items.

- **Address:** 1357 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington DC
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday
- **What to try:** Vanilla Taro, Mango Sticky Rice Matcha or Blue Jasmine

secreTea

secreTea is a boba tea shop on E Street Northwest that serves unique boba tea drinks that merge Asian and modern flavors. They serve top quality drinks, importing most of their original teas directly from Taiwan. Their menu includes fresh milk teas, fresh fruit teas, cold brew teas and monthly surprise drinks. In addition to beverages, secreTea also serves unique all-day croissants, well-known for their Monk Temple Tofu croissant, as well as dessert croissants, like their Boba Croissant.

- **Address:** 1959 E St, NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Saturday; 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday
- **What to try:** Tiramisu Cake Milk Tea, Black Sesame Series or Signature Bunny Drinks

Virginia



Tea Do Fairfax

Tea Do Fairfax is a boba tea shop located in Fairfax with a wide variety of creative drinks along with seasonal drinks. Their signature menu includes their Brown Sugar Milk, Tiger Milk Tea, Cold Brew Vietnamese Coffee, Wintermelon Jasmine and Fire Dragon drinks. Don't miss out on their season menu that includes their Coconut Coffee and Mango Berry Citrus.

- **Address:** 11075 Fairfax Boulevard, Fairfax, VA
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-midnight Sunday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-1 a.m. Friday and Saturday
- **What to try:** Cold Brew Jasmine Milk Tea, Tiger Milk Tea or Hello Kitty

BoBaPoP Tea Bar

BoBaPoP Tea Bar is a boba tea shop located in Kingstowne, in Alexandria City County. Its expansive menu and cute interior, including adorable dog murals, are immediately inviting and intriguing. Their featured drink items include their Dragon Colada Slush, BoBa PoP (Ceylon Black) Milk Tea and Japanese Brown Rice Fresh Tea. They also serve a variety of croffles on their signature croffle menu.

- **Address:** 7013a Manchester Blvd., Alexandria, VA
- **Hours:** 11:45 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11:15 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday-Sunday
- **What to try:** 3Q Milk Tea, Lotus Biscoff Croffle or S'mores Croffle

Teas'n You

Teas'n You is a boba tea shop located in Falls Church City County, known for their variety of unique fusion teas and drinks and their contemporary cafe. Their unique tea flavors include a series of Thai teas, Vietnamese coffees, matchas and fruit teas in addition to their seasonal tea series including their February Situationsips series and New Year series.

- **Address:** 8032 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA
- **Hours:** 7:30 a.m.-2 a.m. Sunday-Thursday; 7:30 a.m.-4 a.m. Friday-Saturday
- **What to try:** Pistachio Milk Tea, Fusion Fruit Tea or Pandan Thai Tea

Maryland



Ding Cafe

Ding Cafe is a popular drinks shop in Rockville that serves a wide variety of teas, coffees, matchas and smoothies. Ding Cafe serves drinks that intersect tradition with innovation, with menu items ranging from Vietnamese Egg Coffee and Ceremonial Matcha to options like Ube Coffee and Taro Milk Tea.

- **Address:** 785 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **What to try:** Vietnamese Egg Coffee or Coco Avocado Coffee Blend

Sweet Bamboo Boba

Sweet Bamboo Boba is a DIY bubble tea shop located in College Park. Customers can build their own boba by selecting their own toppings, syrups and base drinks from a wide variety of options. The store also features suggested recipes on the wall, free stickers for visitors and a secret menu.

- **Address:** 545 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard, Severna Park, MD
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday
- **What to try:** Sweet Bamboo Brew, Hunter's Elixir, Matcha KitKat or Japanese Lavender Field

TasteTea

TasteTea is a boba shop located in College Park, popular with local college students with favorites including their brown sugar milk tea, their butterfly mango fruit and their peachme sweettea. They also serve delicious Hong Kong-Style Chinese food takeout.

- **Address:** 5403 East Drive, Unit 1/2, Arbutus, MD
- **Hours:** 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Friday-Sunday
- **What to try:** Matcha Oreo Tornado, Brown Sugar Crème brûlée or peachme sweettea

Mouthwatering DC-style cheesecake

These are the DC metro cheesecake spots worth saving room for.



BY MARIAM LOMIDZE

Washington, DC's dessert scene is full of small bakeries, neighborhood cafés and specialty shops that put their own spin on the classic cheesecake. Whether you're looking for a family-friendly bakery, a date-night dessert stop or a grab-and-go slice, these local favorites deliver rich, creamy DC-style indulgence. Here are some of the best places in the DC metro area to satisfy your cheesecake cravings.

The Cakeroom Bakery

One of the most cheesecake-focused bakeries in the entire city, The Cakeroom bakes everything from scratch with a home-style philosophy. Their flavor roster is genuinely impressive: Lotus Biscoff, peanut butter with dark chocolate ganache, raspberry pistachio, Oreo and a rich New York-style classic. It's a wonderful destination for birthdays and celebrations, with custom whole-cake orders available.

- **Address:** 2006 18th St NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday



COPYRIGHT THE CAKEROOM BAKERY



Sweetz Cheesecake

Few places in the DMV can say they've been doing one thing and doing it exceptionally since 1989. Sweetz is a family-run institution in Gaithersburg where cheesecake is the entire menu. It's a fantastic spot for families picking up whole cakes for gatherings or events.

- **Address:** 8367 Snouffer School Road, Gaithersburg
- **Hours:** Noon-4 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, noon-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday

Filomena Ristorante

When JoAnna Filomena opened this Georgetown landmark in 1983, overlooking the historic C&O Canal, she wanted to recreate the kind of Italian dining experience where dessert was as essential as the main course, and 40 years later, the cheesecake proves she succeeded. With generous portions, warm old-world decor and a menu big enough to satisfy every family member, this is the spot for special celebrations where you want to feel like you've been transported to someone's Italian grandmother's table.

- **Address:** 1063 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday-Sunday

Ellé

Housed in the shell of the beloved 80-year-old Heller's Bakery building, Ellé is one of DC's most celebrated independent eateries, a Michelin Bib Gourmand recipient for five consecutive years that operates as a bakery and café by day and a full-service dinner restaurant by night. Their rotating honey goat cheese cheesecake, often crowned with seasonal fruit and a gingerbread crumb, has become something of a cult dessert.

- **Address:** 3221 Mt. Pleasant St NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday-Monday

Rose Ave Bakery

In the mood for a more unique-style cheesecake? Rose Ave is an Asian American-owned café in Woodley Park known for a Japanese-style cheesecake that is lighter and fluffier than the traditional New York or DC style. It's a noticeably different product from what most DC bakeries offer, and it pairs well with their specialty coffee drinks. Located near the National Zoo, it's a convenient stop for families exploring the neighborhood.

- **Address:** 2633 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday-Sunday

Pluma by Bluebird Bakery

Pluma is the bakery-café from the Bluebird Bakery team, located in the Union Market District. They run a rotating seasonal pastry program and the menu changes with the season, so cheesecake-inspired specials come and go throughout the year. It works well as a morning stop for coffee and pastry before exploring the Union Market area.

- **Address:** 391 Morse St. NE, Washington, DC
- **Hours:** 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Friday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday-Sunday

Bakeshop

Bakeshop is a family-owned bakery in Arlington that has been open since 2010 and makes everything from scratch, including cupcakes, macarons, layer cakes, pies and cheesecake by the slice or as a whole cake. It's a consistent neighborhood option that works well for casual visits or picking up a cake for a family event. Their extended Friday and Saturday hours make it a convenient stop after dinner in Clarendon.

- **Address:** 1025 N Fillmore St., Suite G, Arlington
- **Hours:** 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday

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)

By Liam McClelland | August 21, 2024 | 10:00 AM

SUBSCRIBE FOR UPDATES

40 YEARS WASHINGTON Parent

washingtonparent.com

*Public art mural
featuring the
WashingtonDC
Metropolitan Police
Department emblem -
Ward 8 neighborhood*

CREDIT AUSTIN K. GRAFF

Painted stories of the DMV

A family-friendly guide to the most eye-catching murals around DC, Maryland and Virginia

BY ZAKKARY PARKER

Some of the most powerful stories aren't found in books or museums, but painted across bricks and concrete. Across DC, Maryland and Virginia, vibrant pieces of art stretch across alleyways, crosswalks and storefronts, each telling a unique story about the communities they call home.

From towering tributes beside high rises to abstract creations of color tucked just out of sight, these 12 striking murals offer a great opportunity for families to learn, explore and turn a simple walk into a memorable experience.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA MARBLE FEMALESOLOTEK

Amanda Gorman mural by Kaliq Crosby, located at on the side of the New Washington Land Company at 1606 17th St NW First Floor Washington, DC 20009, Dupont Circle

“Amanda Gorman” by Kaliq Crosby Dupont Circle, DC

Located alongside 17th Street NW, this mural by local artist Kaliq Crosby depicts poet and activist Amanda Gorman as she delivers her poem “The Hill We Climb” at former president Joe Biden’s inauguration in January 2021. At just 22 years old, she became the youngest inaugural poet in United States history.

Sprawling across the side of the New Washington Land Company building, the vibrant mural turns a high-traffic Dupont Circle corridor into a place of reflection. For families, it’s an opportunity to talk about art, activism and the impact young voices can have on the world around them.

“Neptune” by Jeff Huntington and Juan Pineda Bloomington, DC

Painted on the exterior of Bacio Pizza at 81 Seaton Place NW, “Neptune”, by Jeff Huntington and Juan Pineda blends classical mythology and bold contemporary design. The mural features the Roman God of the Sea set against a geometric background in Pineda’s vibrant, signature style. Whether grabbing a slice or simply passing by, the piece turns an ordinary building into something worth slowing down for.

“Guardians of the Four Directions” by MISS CHELOVE Downtown, DC

Towering above Thomas Circle on the side of Hotel Zena at 1155 14th St. NW lies “Guardians of the Four Directions.” Standing at seven stories tall, this mural by artist MISS CHELOVE depicts two gallant warriors, each gazing in opposite directions.

Paired with strong stances and spears in hand, these two women stand guard over the city. The scale alone makes this piece hard to miss, transforming the building’s side into a powerful statement of strength and visibility that celebrates women as leaders.

“Culture House DC” by HENSE Southwest Waterfront, DC

Located at 700 Delaware Ave. SW, this mural spans nearly the entirety of a historic Baptist church. Originally built in 1886, the church took on a drastically new look in 2012, when artist HENSE reimagined its exterior, transforming classic Victorian architecture into stunning curves of vibrant color.

The bold design has made it one of the most recognizable landmarks in the city. In addition to its striking exterior, Culture House serves as a community gathering center and an art gallery, offering families the chance to experience creativity both inside and outside the building.



PHOTO BY AUSTIN K. GRAFF

"Micro/Macro: Rooted in Space" by Rose Jaffe Southeast DC

“Micro/Macro: Rooted in Space” by Rose Jaffe invites the viewer to consider how everything living is connected — from the ground up to the cosmos. At its heart are two figures: Jeanette Epps, aerospace engineer and NASA astronaut (and proud University of Maryland graduate), and a young person discovering the world through a microscope. A circle weaves them — and everything between them — into one.

CONTINUED...

PICTURE COURTESY OF TERESA MARKLE, FEMALESOLOTREK



Dog Columns by Jason Swain, Thomas Ruttkay, Max Stumpf, & Beth Meyer. Located at Kensington Dog Run Park at 10450 Metropolitan Ave, Kensington, MD 20895.

Maryland

“Car Dealership: Looking Into the Past” by Antonia Ramis Miguel Ellicott City, Maryland

Located off of 8289 Main St. lies “Car Dealership: Looking Into the Past” by artist Antonia Ramis Miguel. Adorning the exterior of a former Ford dealership built in 1921, this mural offers onlookers a glimpse into a long-gone world. Brimming with color and soul, the piece brings a nearly forgotten time back to life, its subjects touting historical cars and vintage fashions.



Car Dealership: Looking Into the Past by Antonia Ramis Miguel, located at 8289 Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043

PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA MARKLE, FEMALESOLOTREK

“After Dark, Hyattsville” by Liz LaManche Hyattsville, MD

Sprawled across the south side of Franklin’s General Store, located at 5123 Baltimore Ave., “After Dark, Hyattsville” quite literally brightens the block. Created by Massachusetts-based artist Liz LaManche, this vibrant, unique art piece uses color-changing lights that shift the appearance of both the mural’s colors and its surfaces. The interactive-feel of the mural rewards repeat visits, and for families, it’s a great opportunity to witness how art evolves alongside the community surrounding it.

“Dog Columns” by Jason Swain, Thomas Ruttkay, Max Stumpf & Beth Meyer Kensington, MD

Located in the Kensington Dog Run Park, on the remnants of an old concrete plant lies the “Dog Columns” by artists Jason Swain, Thomas Ruttkay, Max Stumpf and Beth Meyer. These charming murals, originally part of an effort to clean up graffiti, now brighten the park with depictions of cheerful canines in fun poses and bold colors. The paintings bring a bit of whimsy to the space, inviting families and pet owners alike to stop and marvel, or snap a photo!

“Black Lives Matter” by Isak Shah and Darren Soto College Park, MD

Tucked at the south end of the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail, “Black Lives Matter” by Isak Shah and Darren Soto is a lively tribute to black culture, leadership and resilience. Drawing on historical moments from both the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter Movements in 2020, the piece blends the past and present while honoring local residents of Prince George’s County.

For those exploring the trail, it offers a great chance to immerse themselves in local history and learn about civic engagement through art, all on an accessible walking path.



Virginia

“Kids and Dogs” by Patrick Kirwin Alexandria, VA

Painted across the brick exterior of Vélocity Bicycle Cooperative, located at 2111 Mt. Vernon Ave., “Kids and Dogs” by Patrick Kirwin brings the feel of a NYC-style grocery straight to the heart of Alexandria. The piece is brought to life by abundant rows of colorful flowers and produce, setting the scene for an imaginative, bustling street market. If you look closer, you’ll even notice the mural features local children and their four-legged friends! It’s a quick and easy stop for families to snap a photo and a great reminder of how interconnected art and community can be.

“Pink Giraffe and Rainbow Stairs” by Kelsey Montague Fairfax, VA

Towering above the sidewalk on the side of True Food Kitchen, located at 2910 District Ave., this giant pink giraffe is hard to miss. Created by artist Kelsey Montague, the awe-inspiring mural features a bright and bold giraffe peering down at onlookers. Paired with a rainbow staircase below, the scene adds a playful burst of color to the street. Its scale and vibrant colors make it an especially popular stop for families, offering larger-than-life photo opportunities and fun for all ages.

“Spirit” by Nicholas Zimbro Manassas, VA

Adorning the brick exterior of Sinistral Brewing Company, located at 9419 Main St., this eye-catching mural by artist

Nicholas Zimbro sprawls across the building with mesmerizing color. Titled “Spirit,” the piece memorializes Zimbro’s late grandmother in a heartwarming and vibrant scene.

Rather than invoking a somber feeling, the mural radiates warmth, emphasizing its themes of legacy, love and the power of preservation through art. Located in historic Manassas, it offers a quieter stop for those exploring the area, inviting onlookers to pause and reflect on both its detail and meaning.

“Gale Waldron” by Penny Hauffe Leesburg, VA

The final mural on this list is located outside the town parking garage in Leesburg, at 25 W Market St. Created by artist Penny Hauffe, the piece paints a beautiful scene depicting Leesburg’s history while also honoring lifelong art advocate Gale Waldron. Waldron was a driving force in the Leesburg art scene, establishing numerous ventures including the Loudoun Art Magazine, and founding the Loudoun Academy for the Arts Foundation.

The mural serves not only as a memorial to Waldron’s passion for the arts but also as a reflection on the community’s solidarity and celebration of its history.

Reflection

Across DC, Maryland, and Virginia, these pieces of art turn ordinary sidewalks into real-life storybooks. They celebrate leaders, honor loved ones, reflect on history, and brighten the neighborhood in unexpected days.

Whether you’re planning a night out, a weekend activity, or simply come across one during an outing, these murals offer more than just a photo opportunity. They invite families to slow down and look closer at the creativity and passion that shape our communities!



THINGS TO DO



Chartering Freedom Gallery

Experience “The American Story”

Explore the National Archives’ reimagined flagship exhibit with this family-friendly guide.

BY MAGGIE MCINTYRE

Families looking for an educational adventure in the heart of Washington, DC, will find “[The American Story](#)” exhibit at the [National Archives Museum](#) a perfect destination. Families can explore more than 40 original artifacts and documents, including a rare 1823 Stone Engraving of the Declaration of Independence and George Washington’s annotated copy of the Constitution.

A fully reimagined experience

The exhibit uses artificial intelligence to help visitors chart their own path through history which is ideal for kids who like to explore at their own pace. Interactive galleries combine original documents, digitized images, film and artifacts to create a choose-your-own-adventure feel.

- **Location:** Constitution Avenue NW and 7th Street NW, Washington, DC
- **Cost:** Free general admission [tickets](#); [timed entry passes](#) recommended
- **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily



Discovery Center



Cosmos Gallery



Innovation Nation Gallery



Land and Home Gallery

Exploring the exhibit

While you could spend an entire afternoon exploring the Archives, most families find that 60-90 minutes is the sweet spot for “The American Story.” The exhibit is self-guided, so you can move at your family’s pace.

Because the museum also houses the Charters of Freedom, which include the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, many families pair “The American Story” with a quick visit to the Rotunda. Expect a line, especially on weekends or holidays.

The National Archives Museum is fully accessible, with elevators, wide walkways and family-friendly restrooms. Strollers are welcome, though many parents prefer baby carriers for easier movement through the more crowded areas.

Timed entry passes help manage crowds, so consider [reserving your slot in advance](#), especially during school breaks or summer travel season.

Don’t miss the Discovery Center

Right next to “The American Story,” the [Discovery Center](#) offers hands-on activities designed specifically for families. Kids can play educational games in the Archives Arcade and Family Room, learn about the three branches of government through interactive challenges or even recreate dance moves from historic footage in “Democracy Disco.”

If you have children under 10, plan to spend extra time here — it’s one of the most engaging museum spaces for younger learners on the National Mall.

Make a day of it

Because the museum is centrally located on the National Mall, you’re steps away from plenty of family-friendly options before or after your visit.

Nearby eats

- **Teaism** (Penn Quarter): A quick walk away, offering kid-friendly bento boxes, noodles and baked treats.

- **Shake Shack** (F Street): Easy, familiar and fast which is ideal for families with picky eaters.
- **National Gallery of Art Cafe**: A quieter option with sandwiches, salads and indoor seating.

Nearby activities

- **National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden**: Kids can stretch their legs among large-scale sculptures.
- **Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History**: A perennial family favorite — especially the dinosaurs.
- **U.S. Navy Memorial Fountain**: A fun spot for kids to cool off in warmer months.

Need to know more about “The American Story?” exhibit?

What documents are on display in “The American Story”? The exhibit features more than 40 original artifacts and documents, including a rare 1823 Stone Engraving of the Declaration of Independence, George Washington’s annotated copy of the Constitution, the Louisiana Purchase and an array of presidential state gifts. You’ll also find patents for inventions like Velcro, the artificial heart and the Zamboni.

Is this a new exhibit? Yes. “The American Story” opened Nov. 21, 2025, as part of a once-in-a-generation redesign of the National Archives Museum’s permanent galleries.

How does the AI technology work? Interactive digital stations let visitors use AI to search and explore more than 2 million records from the National Archives, tailored to their personal interests, creating a customized history tour for each visitor.

Is there a photography gallery? Yes. The “Picturing a Nation” gallery features rotating displays of original photographs from the Archives’ holdings. The current rotation showcases the iconic work of Ansel Adams, with images of the National Parks and the American West.

Do I need tickets? General admission is free, but timed entry passes are recommended, especially during busy travel seasons and school breaks.

Make Mother's Day meaningful

From mommy-and-me activities to elegant brunches and spa days, these Mother's Day events and experiences across the capital region make it easy to celebrate the moms in your life.



BY JENNA DOLCH

Mother's Day is the perfect excuse to slow down and celebrate the moms, grandmothers and mother figures who do so much for their families all year long. Across the DMV, there are plenty of special events designed to help families make meaningful memories together.

From activities and outdoor festivals to elegant brunches and scenic cruises, the region offers a wide range of ways to celebrate. Whether your family wants a relaxed day exploring nature or a more upscale dining experience, there's something for every kind of mom.

Here are some of the best Mother's Day events and celebrations around Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia to help you plan the perfect day.

Mother's Day Market at National Harbor

Celebrate Mom at the waterfront during National Harbor's annual Mother's Day market. Local vendors and artisans offer handmade gifts, crafts and spring-inspired goods perfect for finding a thoughtful surprise. Families can explore the harbor, enjoy live entertainment and even take a ride on the Capital Wheel while celebrating the day together.

- **Address:** 165 Waterfront St., National Harbor, MD
- **Date:** May 9

Tips for planning:

- **Best ages:** All ages
- **How long families usually stay:** 2-4 hours
- **Cost expectation:** \$-\$\$ (free to explore; attractions and meals extra)
- **Tip:** Parking garages fill quickly on holidays — arrive early or use rideshare.



BISTOCK/CHOREOGRAPH

HAPPY Mother's Day



Mother's Day at Clark's Elioak Farm

- **Address:** 10500 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD
- **Date:** May 9-10

Tips for planning:

- **Best ages:** Toddlers to elementary school (ages 2-10)
- **How long families usually stay:** About 2-3 hours exploring the farm, playground areas and storybook displays.
- **Cost expectation:** \$-\$\$ (typically around \$8-\$10 per person; some activities like pony rides or hayrides may cost extra).
- **Tip:** Arrive earlier in the day if possible — Mother's Day weekend is popular and parking can fill up quickly, especially in the afternoon.

Mother's Day Brunch Cruise on the Potomac

Celebrate Mother's Day with a scenic brunch cruise along the Potomac River. Families board a sightseeing vessel and enjoy a buffet brunch while passing landmarks like the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. It's a fun half-day outing where kids can move around the boat, take photos and enjoy the views while Mom relaxes with brunch and music.

- **Address:** Pier 4, 580 Water St. SW Washington, DC
- **Date:** May 10

Tips for planning:

- **Best ages:** 5+
- **How long families usually stay:** About 2-2.5 hours
- **Cost expectation:** \$\$\$ (\$90-\$150 per person depending on package)
- **Tip:** Book early — Mother's Day cruises tend to sell out weeks in advance.
- Ways to celebrate mom around the DMV

Mother's Day Brunch at The VUE Rooftop

Treat Mom to a rooftop brunch experience with sweeping views of Washington, DC. The celebration features made-to-order omelets, crepes, fresh seafood and specialty cocktails. It's a great option for families looking to make the day feel a little extra special.

- **Address:** 515 15th St. NW, Washington, DC
- **Date:** May 10

Tips for planning:

- **Best ages:** 8+
- **How long families usually stay:** 1.5-2 hours
- **Cost expectation:** \$\$\$ (\$75-\$120 per adult)
- **Tip:** Request a window table when booking for the best monument views.

The Spa at Four Seasons

If mom would love a relaxing day instead of a busy outing, the spa at the Four Seasons offers luxury treatments in the heart of Georgetown. Families often book massages or facials for mom while planning brunch nearby, making it a calm half-day experience focused on relaxation and self-care. The spa features multiple treatment rooms and wellness services.

- **Address:** 2800 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC
- **Phone:** (202) 342-0444

Tips for planning:

- **Best ages:** Best as an adult outing
- **How long families usually stay:** 1-3 hours depending on treatments
- **Cost expectation:** \$\$\$ (\$150+ per treatment)
- **Tip:** Mother's Day appointments fill quickly, book at least two weeks ahead.



Clark's Elioak Farm



2025 Parent PICKS
★ FINALIST ★

- PETTING FARM
- TRAIN RIDES
- BABY GOATS
- FAIRY FOREST
- PONY RIDES
- PLAY AREAS
- PICNIC AREAS
- HAYRIDE
- ENCHANTED FOREST
- GEM MINING

EGG HUNTS MARCH 28 TO APRIL 5TH!

Open March 28 thru Nov 8
Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm
Also Open March 31, April 6 and Memorial Day!

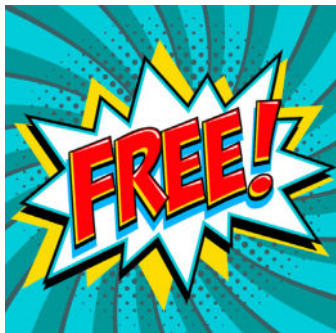
10500 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-730-4049
www.clarklandfarm.com

DC KIDS EVENTS CALENDAR APRIL 2026

Free Comic Book Day is May 2 — Here's what you need to know

FCBD is an annual promotional effort by the North American comic book industry to attract new readers to independent comic book stores, with over 2,000 participating stores giving away millions of comic books each year. The tradition dates back to 2002, when it was timed to coincide with the opening weekend of the original "Spider-Man" film — and it's been a beloved fixture of the pop culture calendar ever since. The rules are simple: head to a participating store, grab your free comics (quantities and per-person limits vary by shop), and browse while you're there. Many locations host special events with sales, celebrity guests and costume contests. Some stores go above and beyond with creator signings, cosplay prizes and door giveaways for the first fans in line. Use the official Store Locator at [freecomicbookday.com](https://www.freecomicbookday.com) to find a shop near you. For DMV-area fans, here are a few confirmed participating locations to check out:

- **Third Eye Comics:** 4744 Cherry Hill Road, College Park, MD
- **Fantom Comics:** 2010 P St NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC
- **Big Planet Comics:** 426 Maple Ave. E, Vienna, VA; 7939 Norfolk Ave., Bethesda, MD; 1524 U St., NW Floor 1, Washington, DC
- **The Amazing Comic Shop:** 10647 Braddock Road, Fairfax, VA
- Confirm hours and any special events directly with your chosen shop before heading out — and get there early. Free comics go fast.



Travel the world without leaving DC: Around the World Embassy Tour returns May 2

You don't need a passport or a plane ticket to experience dozens of countries in a single day. The Around the World Embassy Tour is back on May 2, running from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and it's one of the most unique and beloved free events the District has to offer.

Pick up a free souvenir passport to collect stamps at each embassy you visit. Passports will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis at three information booth locations: Dupont Circle, 1 Dupont Circle NW; the UDC Student Center, 4200 Connecticut Ave. NW; and the Mexican Cultural Institute, 2829 16th St NW. Maps will be available at the same spots.

Participants can travel the world as they experience the food, art, dance, fashion and music of different countries. This year's tour features an impressive lineup of 33 participating embassies. Each embassy opens its doors to showcase the best of its country's heritage — whether that's a traditional dish, a live performance, a craft demonstration or a hands-on cultural activity.

Admission is free and reservations are not required, though they are recommended to stay updated on the latest event info. You can RSVP via Eventbrite to receive alerts. Street parking is available but can be difficult near many embassy locations, so the Dupont Circle and Van Ness/UDC Metrorail stations are the best bets.

The Events DC App will also be available to enhance your experience, offering embassy information and augmented reality features that highlight national landmarks associated with each participating country — plus automatic virtual stamps as you visit each stop.



Egg Hunts Galore

- **April 1-5.** Hop into spring at this family-friendly Easter egg hunt running the weekend of April 4-5, plus weekdays through April 3. Kids ages 1-3 and 4-6 hunt in separate age groups, then turn in their eggs for a goodie bag so every child goes home happy regardless of how many eggs they find. Hunts run throughout the day with multiple time slots available. The petting farm, rides and play areas are also open for the full farm experience. The farm is also open Easter Monday, April 6, though egg hunts will not be held that day.
- **Location:** Clark's Elioak Farm, 10500 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD



"Beauty and the Beast"

- **April 1-5.** Disney's beloved musical brings the romance, grandeur and magic of the classic tale to the stage with spectacular new sets, dazzling costumes and favorite songs like "Be Our Guest" and "Beauty and the Beast." Recommended for ages 6 and up.
- **Location:** The National Theatre, 1321 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC

90-Minute Weekday Recess at Funbox Bowie

- **April 1-3, 6-10, and 13.** This relaxed weekday play session offers 90 minutes of inflatable fun with flexible start times every 15 minutes. Families, homeschool groups and learning pods can enjoy an inclusive environment, with the first session of each day designed to be sensory-friendly.
- **Location:** Funbox Bowie, 3861 Evergreen Parkway, Bowie, MD

Hershey Super Sweet Adventure

- **April 2-6, 9-13, 16-20, 23-27, 30.** This interactive, family-friendly experience invites kids and parents into a whimsical candy-themed world filled with hands-on games, active play, multi-sensory activities and sweet surprises inspired by Hershey favorites like Reese's, Hershey's Kisses, Twizzlers, Jolly Rancher and more.
- **Location:** Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons, VA

Cinderella

- **April 2-4, 6, 9-12 and 16-19.** The Puppet Co.'s adaptation of this classic fairy tale brings Cinderella's journey to the royal ball to life with 15 handmade rod puppets, magical transformations and a hopeful rags-to-riches story. Recommended for ages 4 and up.
- **Location:** The Puppet Co. Playhouse, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, MD

Easter Egg Hunts at Green Meadows Petting Farm

- **April 2-5.** Children 12 and under can enjoy age-grouped Easter egg hunts throughout the day, meet the Easter Bunny and have fun with hayrides, animal feedings, pig races and more at the petting farm.
- **Location:** Green Meadows Petting Farm, 10102 Fingerboard Road, Ijamsville, MD

Storytime

- **April 3, 10, 17 and 24.** Families can drop in for a free museum storytime with a fresh story, a stroll through the museum, hands-on postal play and activities that explore how mail connects people, places and big ideas.
- **Location:** National Postal Museum, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Washington, DC

"The Wizard of Oz"

- **April 3-4.** This original adaptation of the classic tale brings Dorothy's journey to life with high-energy dance, catchy music, clever dialogue, special effects and creative costuming.
- **Location:** Weinberg Center for the Arts, 20 West Patrick St., Frederick, MD

Black Barn Alpacas' Easter Egg-stravaganza

- **April 3-4.** Families can celebrate the season with hand-feeding alpacas, an untimed Easter egg hunt with prizes,

photos with the Easter Bunny, fleece Easter egg crafts, lawn games and a jumbo farm slide.

- **Location:** Black Barn Alpacas, 2401 Bollinger Mill Road, Finksburg, MD



"Dog Man The Musical" at Capital One Hall

- **April 3-4.** Based on Dav Pilkey's bestselling series, this hilarious and heartfelt musical follows Dog Man as he fights crime, faces off against Petey the cat and tries to save the city in a family adventure full of action and laughs. Recommended for ages 6 and up.
- **Location:** Capital One Hall, 7750 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons, VA

Easter Extravaganza

- **April 4.** This free family celebration features live music, Easter egg hunts, a puppet performance, games, prizes and more.
- **Location:** Timonium Presbyterian Church, 303 W Timonium Road, Timonium, MD

Petalpalooza

- **April 4.** Celebrate spring along the



Anacostia River at Petalpalooza, a full day of music, art and family-friendly activities as part of the National Cherry Blossom Festival. The event features multiple outdoor stages with live performances, interactive art installations, hands-on activities for kids and roaming entertainers throughout the waterfront. The evening concludes with the Official National Cherry Blossom Festival fireworks show set to music beginning at 8:30 p.m.

- **Location:** Capital Riverfront, Navy Yard Metro (West Entrance at Half Street SE), Washington, DC

Anime, Video Game, and K-Pop meet Jazz!

- **April 4.** This free concert features jazz arrangements of favorite anime, video game and K-pop music, with selections inspired by Pokémon, Super Mario, The Legend of Zelda and more.
- **Location:** Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St Germain Drive, Centreville, VA

Good Morning, Good Night

- **April 4, 11-12 and 18-19.** This gentle, multi-sensory show invites very young children to discover the beauty of daytime and nighttime as they help Winnie and August wake the birds, bake fresh clouds, release fireflies and shine the stars.
- **Location:** Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda, MD

KIDOOO Install Day

- **April 4-5.** Young artists ages 5-16 are invited to bring one original framed artwork to be exhibited at Maryland Art Place as part of this youth version of Out of Order. The free first-come, first-served installation day gives kids a chance to showcase their work in a major arts venue.
- **Location:** Maryland Art Place, 218 West Saratoga St., Baltimore, MD

Springfield Town Center Blossom Festival 2026

- **April 11.** This free family festival features spring activities, live music, entertainment, kid-friendly fun and dozens of exhibitors outdoors.
- **Location:** Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield, VA

CONTINUED...

DC KIDS EVENTS CALENDAR APRIL 2026



National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade®

- **April 11.** One of DC's biggest annual spectacles, this parade fills Constitution Avenue with giant balloons, elaborate floats, marching bands, celebrity performers and festive spring energy.
- **Location:** Constitution Avenue NW between 7th and 17th Streets, Washington, DC

Stamp Out Waste!

- **April 11.** Families can celebrate Earth Month with creative and educational activities focused on sustainability and reducing waste. Activities include writing eco-themed postcards, creating art from reclaimed materials and participating in story times at noon and 2 p.m. Smithsonian educators are also on hand throughout the day.
- **Location:** National Postal Museum, 2 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, DC



"Aesop's Fables"

- **April 25-26.** "Aesop's Fables" is a lively theatrical adventure that brings classic stories to life through humor and imagination. A troupe of traveling storytellers retells beloved tales including "The Tortoise and the Hare," "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" and "The Lion and the Mouse." Each story shares lessons about patience, honesty and kindness, creating a fun and meaningful experience for young audiences.
- **Location:** Adventure Theatre, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, MD



IS 100% ADVERTISER-SUPPORTED.

THANK YOU

TO THE ADVERTISERS IN THIS ISSUE:

- [The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#)
- [Jonah Green and Associates](#)
- [Adventure Theatre & ATMC Academy](#)
- [Camp Griffin](#)
- [Gettysburg College Academic Camps](#)
- [Barrie Camp](#)
- [Cardinal Fencing Academy](#)
- [Brooksfield School](#)
- [Crossway Montessori Forest School](#)
- [The Montessori School of McLean](#)
- [Parent Encouragement Program \(PEP\)](#)
- [Camp Woodend by Nature Forward](#)
- [Natural Leaders](#)
- [Camp Shakespeare](#)
- [Woodberry Forest Summer Camps](#)
- [Woodland Horse Center](#)
- [The Theatre Lab School of the Dramatic Arts](#)
- [Alice Ferguson Foundation](#)
- [The Siena School](#)
- [The St. James](#)
- [Congressional Camp](#)
- [The Treatment and Learning Centers](#)
- [MedStar Capitals Iceplex](#)
- [Capitol Debate](#)
- [C-Unit Studio](#)
- [Camp Hidden Meadows](#)
- [National Children's Theatre](#)
- [National Philharmonic Summer String Institute](#)
- [Clark's Eliaok Farm](#)
- [Fairfax County Park Authority Summer Camps](#)
- [Ideaventions Academy](#)

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

