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ParentMap

summer

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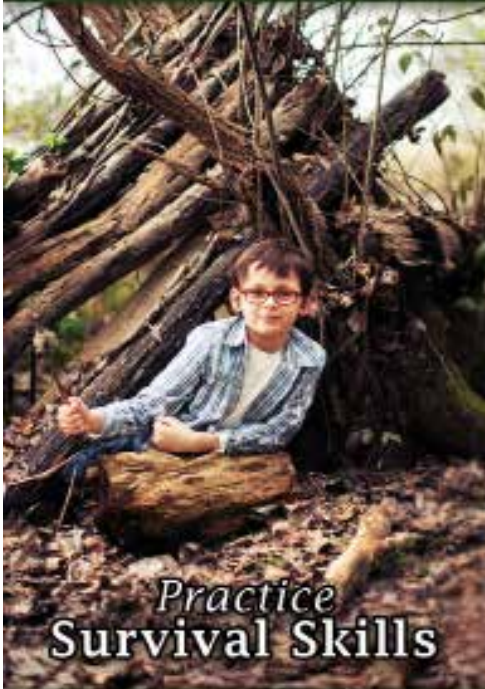
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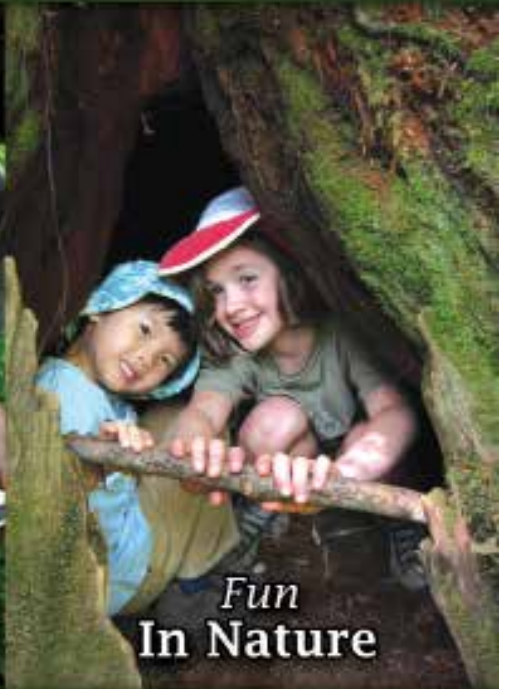
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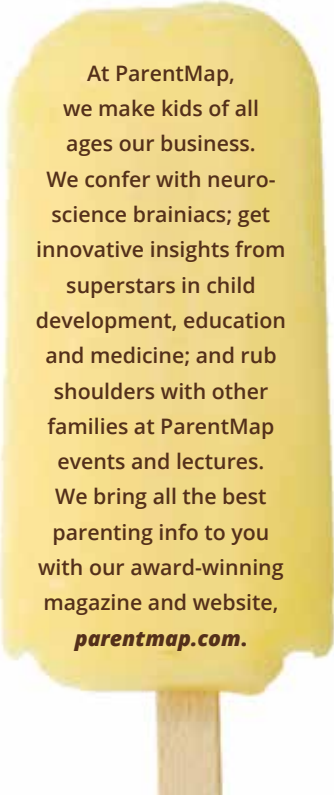
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tips for making the most of June, July and August

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At ParentMap, we make kids of all ages our business. We confer with neuroscience brainiacs; get innovative insights from superstars in child development, education and medicine; and rub shoulders with other families at ParentMap events and lectures. We bring all the best parenting info to you with our award-winning magazine and website, parentmap.com.

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Five must-know trends in summer camps

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COVER PHOTO BY SANDRA LAMB, TAKEN AT WILLIS TUCKER COMMUNITY PARK IN SNOHOMISH



CINDY UTAMA © THE ERIC CARLE MUSEUM OF PICTURE BOOK ART



COURTESY CAMP SEALTH

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On our summer radar



The slide of your life

Wheweee! Slide the City — the epic, 1,000-foot slip-and-slide that took Salt Lake City by storm last summer — is slated to hit Seattle this summer. You bring the floatie, they provide the water gun. Note: Kids have to be 48 inches tall to slide, but can attend the free party around the slide; expect water fights, food trucks, live music and more. Get details and buy tickets early at slidethecity.com/events/seattle (earlybird tickets range from \$15 for a single slide to \$50 for a VIP pass).



Home sweet someone else's home

Rome, Provence, New York City, Cape Cod. So many dream vacations, so much money to realize them. Ever consider a house exchange? Swapping your home with a family from another part of the globe can not only save you money, but also lets you live like a local. And with an ever-increasing roster of online resources to facilitate your switch, it's easier than ever to do. A Seattle mom and veteran house swapper gives the inside scoop in a new article at parentmap.com/houseswap.



Taking the crazy out of camps planning

From art to archery and from STEM to swimming, the range of summer-camp choices for kids is overwhelming. And some of the most popular camps can fill up before parents have cracked a Google search. Check out ParentMap's guides to all things summer camp at parentmap.com/camps, and mark your calendar for one of ParentMap's three summer camp fairs in March, where you can peruse dozens of camp options and meet staff (parentmap.com/campfair).

Island time easier

If you nixed the San Juan Islands from your summer list years ago because of ferry lines, time to reconsider. Washington State Ferries just debuted a San Juan Islands reservation system in January. Reserved spots are now available on all westbound sailings from Anacortes, and eastbound sailings from Friday Harbor and Orcas Island. Snag your spot up to two months in advance, and as late as two days prior to your trip. Find out more at wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/takeaferry.

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SUPERCHARGE YOUR SUMMER

*26 tips for making the most
of June, July and August*

BY KELLY KNOX

Believe it or not, planning a terrific summer begins with just one simple step: Start early. It might be hard to think about sunny days and warm temps when you're still sporting winter coats and rain boots, but did you know February and March are the ideal times to get started?

Here are 26 tips and ideas for planning fun- and learning-filled days that are sure to make your kids declare, "This is the best summer ever!"



Plan the plan

1 MAKE A SUMMER BUCKET LIST together with your kids. Sit down and dream about the places you want to go as a family, and camps and activities they want to participate in. When summer comes, write the easy-to-do activities on pieces of paper and put them in a fun box; kids get to take turns choosing.

2 BOOK CAMPSITES NOW. You know this, right? If you want a prime camp site or yurt for July or August (or several sites, for bringing friends), make campground reservations now. Find the reservation schedules for state and national park campsites — and tips for the best family spots — at parentmap.com/campingplan.

3 PURCHASE ONE OR TWO MEMBERSHIPS to a favorite museum or zoo (perhaps one indoor spot and one outdoor) and plan for multiple visits over the summer to take your time and get the most bang for your buck. Plus, you'll get discounts and early registration for camps at your family's favorite Seattle spots, such as the Pacific Science Center, Seattle Aquarium and Woodland Park Zoo. >>

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Supercharge your summer

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Get out there

4 MARK FREE DAYS FOR STATE AND NATIONAL PARKS.

State parks are free to visitors on June 6, June 13 and Aug. 25 and national parks are free on Aug. 25, so if you don't want to shell out for a Discover Pass or national-park admission, mark those dates on the calendar now.

5 VISIT SKI RESORTS IN THE SUMMER

for loads of family outdoor fun in spectacular settings with fewer crowds (and even some off-season discounts). Crystal Mountain, Whistler and Mt. Hood Skibowl's Summer Adventure Park offer thrilling activities, such as gondola rides, biking, zip-lining, family activities and more in the sunshine.

6 If you must go to a Disney theme park this summer, **GO IN MAY OR EARLY JUNE** before school ends. "You will see shorter wait times and cooler temperatures," says Anne Taylor Hartzell of HipTravelMama.com.

7 PLAN TRIPS TO LOCAL VACATION HOT SPOTS EARLY.

It's wise to book up to a year in advance for popular destinations like Campbell's Resort in Lake Chelan, Suncadia Resort in Cle Elum and the cabins at Cama Beach State Park on Camano Island.

Find cool camps

8 **ATTEND A CAMP FAIR.** Not only do you have a chance to meet the camp staff face-to-face before signing up, but also camps can offer discounts for early registration for signing up at the fair (and even giveaways of free camp weeks!). Check out ParentMap's schedule for its CampFairs at parentmap.com/campfair.

9 If you're looking for camps on a budget, then **COMMUNITY CENTERS** are your best friends. You'll find a variety of day camps offered at reasonable prices and close to home. Boys & Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts also offer affordable summer camps with some financial assistance available.



10 **SIGN UP TO BE NOTIFIED BY EMAIL** when registration for high-demand camps opens, such as the free Apple Store in-store day camps (apple.com/retail/camp/notify.html). You can also sign up for newsletters from your favorite museums that offer camps to get early notification.

11 **JOIN THE SEAHAWKS KIDS CLUB** to get a spot in the popular free Gatorade Junior Training Camps (seahawks.com/youth/camps/gatorade.html). The two-hour clinics, held in the Seattle area, teach kids ages 7-14 football fundamentals with a Seahawks coach or player.

12 **TEAM UP WITH OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD PARENTS** and create your own themed summer camp, rotating between each home daily. You'll save money, and camps can easily be tailored to kids' interests. (See parentmap.com/diycamps for ideas.)

Have a blast on a budget

13 **SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION OFFERS FREE BEGINNING SWIM LESSONS** for kids 6 and older in summer afternoons and evenings at nine beaches around the city (seattle.gov/parks/beaches.asp).

14 Looking for **FUN, FREE WAYS TO BEAT THE HEAT INSIDE?** Here's a quick cheat sheet: KidsBowlFree.com, where kids can bowl gratis in locations across the Seattle area; your local library's summer reading program events; \$1 morning movies through the Regal Cinema Summer Movie Express program; and indoor playgrounds in malls such as Kids Cove in Bellevue Square and at Alderwood Mall.

15 **BUY WILD WAVES YEARLY PASSES OR A FAMILY FOUR-PACK** of tickets during the Black Friday/Cyber Monday weekend to save big for the following summer. During the summer, you can sometimes buy discounted passes through Seattle Parks and Recreation.

16 **RESERVE MUSEUM PASSES THROUGH LOCAL LIBRARY SYSTEMS**, including Seattle Public Library, King County Library System and Pierce County Library System for fantastic museums like EMP Museum and KidsQuest Children's Museum.

17 You can also plan outings around one of the many **FREE MUSEUM DAYS** (parentmap.com/museumfree) or to the region's many wonderful always-free museums, such as Puget Sound Navy Museum in Bremerton, Children's Museum of Tacoma and the Western Heritage Center in Monroe. >>

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W

DISCOVER HIDDEN TALENTS

Supercharge your summer

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18 Rather than paying pool fees, dive into the area's great **LAKE BEACHES** for swimming, such as Madison Park Beach, Green Lake, Pine Lake Park in Sammamish and Idylwood Beach Park in Redmond. And don't forget what some say is the best family beach in Puget Sound, Jetty Island, accessible by free foot ferry in July and August. (Find beach tips at parentmap.com/bestbeaches.)

19 PICK UP A SEATTLE CITYPASS to play tourist for a day and save on Seattle's best attractions (citypass.com/seattle). (When you're in Disneyland, grab a Southern California CityPass to save money and skip the long lines.) The Seattle-area **CHINOOK BOOK** is also packed with discounts for museums, plays and activities; check with your local parents' listserv to ask for coupons other families aren't using.



Manage screen time

20 SET SCREEN-TIME RULES for summer early and stick to them. Agreeing on rules will cut down on daily negotiations for just one more show or one more hour. Some families maintain the same screen-time rules as in the school year, allow more tech access or even tie rules to how often kids get outdoors.

21 Enforce screen-time rules with **HASSLE-FREE APPS**. PBS Kids Super Vision monitors and sets time limits for what your kids are watching and playing on the PBS Kids website and app (pbskids.org/supervision). The Amazon FreeTime parental controls also set limits on screen time for Kindles, Fire tablets and Fire TV, and provide kid-friendly content for a small monthly fee (amazon.com/freetime).

22 If you have young kids, pick up **150+ SCREEN-FREE ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS** by Seattle-area author Asia Citro. Stock up on the basic supplies for the book's sensory activities, such as baking soda and cornmeal, and you'll have a hands-on activity ready in minutes.

23 To maximize non-screen time, keep your family's **FAVORITE OUTDOOR GAMES** — such as badminton, Frisbees, horseshoes and sidewalk chalk — stashed in the car trunk for spontaneous fun.

24 MAKE YOUR OWN TECHNICOLOR. Use spray paint to turn concrete pavers into a permanent hopscotch path for your backyard. Painting the stepping stones is a fun family project for a colorful game that won't wash away in the rain.

Savor summer

25 WRITE DOWN some of your family's summer adventures on a calendar, or ask your kids to create a journal to record their favorite summer days. Not only does it help you plan ahead, but you can also look back once school begins.

26 DON'T OVERBOOK! Include downtime to unwind. Give your kids time to explore, read and get outside on sunny days. ☀️

Kelly Knox is a freelance writer and content editor at GeekMom.com.



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21st-century camps

Five must-know trends in summer camps

By Joanna Nesbit

Summer camp has been an American tradition for more than 150 years, offering the perennial experience of making new friends, sleeping in bunk beds and singing songs around the campfire. But while kids are having fun, they're also learning skills in communication, problem solving and resilience that benefit them for life. Each year, day camps and overnight camps branch out to offer more specialized programs, in areas such as gardening, rock climbing, environmental education, robotics and more. Here are intriguing new trends in summer camps and where families can take advantage of them in the Puget Sound area.



Happy campers: Girls code at DigiGirlz High Tech camp

STEM camps

WHAT AND WHY: It's no surprise that the greater Seattle area abounds with camps that explore STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). And for good reason. By 2020, 1.4 million computer science jobs will be available, but only 400,000 people will be trained for them (learn why everyone should learn to code at code.org). Because STEM curricula at schools can be spotty, summer is the ideal time for kids to dive in to their topic of choice, from coding to robotics to Web design.

WHERE: The **University of Washington's STEM camps** (summer-camp.uw.edu) serve kids grades K–12 with options, including a new short course in “material science” for middle school and high school students, and computer programming for middle schoolers using Scratch, HTML and Java. **Seattle Parks and Recreation's** robotics Lego camps (seattle.gov/parks/camps) were so popular last year that the organization is running four sessions in its northeast quadrant alone, hosted through Play-Well TEKnologies.

At **DigiGirlz High Tech Camp** in Redmond, part of Microsoft's YouthSpark Initiative, high-school girls spend a week in workshops and exploring careers.

ID Tech (idtech.com) runs camps for ages 6–18, offering subjects such as game design, Web design, coding, programming in Java and C++, Minecraft modding and robotics, as well as **Alexa Café** camps for girls only (ages 10–15) with a curriculum that emphasizes creative coding, Web design, leadership and entrepreneurship. Other Seattle STEM camp stars include **Girls Rock Math** (girlsrockmathematics.com), **DigiPen ProjectFun** (projectfun.digipen.edu) and **Pacific Science Center** camps (pacificsciencecenter.org/camps). Find more STEM camps at parentmap.com/stemcamps.

Nature and outdoor camps

WHAT AND WHY: Camps that incorporate nature and outdoor experiences are not a new concept, but these days they're spotlighting aspects such as gardening, environmental responsibility and wilderness experiences, subjects that feel increasingly important in the 21st century. According to Peg Smith, CEO of the American Camp Association, children's time outdoors has decreased by 50 percent in the past 20 years. “These are the kids who have the legacy of maintaining the planet and yet they're not even exposed to the beauty of nature,” she says. “Camp addresses a really important need for kids to feel comfortable and at ease in the outdoors.” According to Smith, gardening programs have increased 28 percent in the last two years, along with a 31 percent increase in nature/environmental education.

WHERE: **Seattle Tilth** (seattletilth.org) offers gardening and farm education camps for ages 6–14 in several locations around Seattle and the Eastside. **Wilderness Awareness School** (wildernessawareness.org) offers perennially popular camps in several locations (Duvall, Seward Park, Saint Edward State Park) for ages 4–18 that teach kids about plants, animals, tracking and survival skills. **IslandWood** day camps (islandwood.org) on Bainbridge Island and in Woodinville, for grades K–8, provide kids with educational experiences in nature that also build science skills. >>

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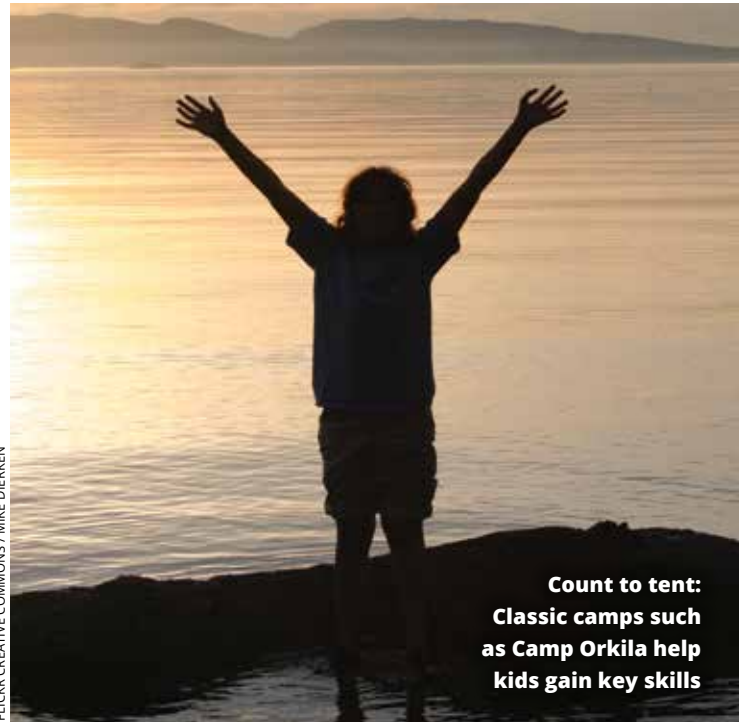


FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS / MIKE DIERKEN

camp trends

21st-century camps

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Count to tent:
Classic camps such as Camp Orkila help kids gain key skills

Overnight and family camps

WHAT AND WHY: Overnight camps have been popular for decades, but these days they're even more valued for teaching old-school skills that yesteryear's kids took for granted: independence, personal responsibility and screen-free time for play. And now, many overnight camps open up for entire families for a session or two during a summer. Mom and dad — and even grandparents — can unplug, roast marshmallows and learn to canoe alongside their kids.

WHERE: YMCA camps such as **Camp Orkila** on Orcas Island and **Camp Colman** in Longbranch, west of Puyallup (seattleyymca.org); and Camp Fire camps such as **Camp Sealth** on Vashon Island (campfireseattle.org) offer the quintessential overnight camp experience, along with "21st-century skills such as

critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity under the guise of lots of fun and laughter," says Meredith Cambre, overnight camps executive director at the YMCA of Greater Seattle. Overnight camps stay relevant by incorporating modern trends, including "green" efforts to source food locally, compost and recycle, or bullying prevention programs.

Within the overnight experience, family camps have added themed getaways, such as "Mom & Me" or "Grandparents & Me." **Camp Seabeck** (campseabeck.org) on Hood Canal welcomes grandparents and emphasizes family connection without technology. **Camp Seymour** (campseymour.org/family-camp) in Gig Harbor welcomes extended family. The faith-based **Grand Camp at Lazy F Camp** (lazyfcamp.org) in Ellensburg offers worship, wacky songs and water Olympics for grandparents and grandkids grades K-6.



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WHAT AND WHY: Adventure camps have enjoyed a 40 percent bump in popularity in the past two years, according to the American Camp Association. These camps get kids out kayaking, backpacking and climbing — experiences that deliver physical challenges in nature and foster self-discovery, leadership skills and teamwork. “The life skills getting a lot of buzz right now are courage and grit,” says the YMCA’s Cambre.

WHERE: The **YMCA’s Boys Outdoor Leadership Development (BOLD)** (ymcaleadership.com/bold) and **Girls Outdoor Leadership Development (GOLD)** (ymcaleadership.com/gold) for grades 6–12 have a dual mission.

For boys, BOLD addresses the need for emotionally intelligent programming by providing a safe place where boys can express compassion as they develop leadership skills. GOLD aims to develop girls’ confidence and personal strength. **Rite of Passage Journeys** (riteofpassagejourneys.org) for kids ages 8–18 take kids on multiday trips in the Olympic National Park or North Cascades National Park. A unique Puget Sound opportunity, Sound Experience’s **Fantastic Voyage Sailing Adventure** (soundexp.doubleknot.com) is designed for grades 7–12. Campers spend six days exploring the San Juan Islands on the Adventress, a two-masted schooner, and learning about marine life and our role in its protection. >>

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21st-century camps

continued from page 17

Ultraflexible camps

WHAT AND WHY: Responding to the needs of busy parents whose work, life and vacation schedules don't match the typical five-day workweek (or camp session), some camps offer new kinds of schedules and options.

WHERE: Steve and Kate's Camp (steveandkatescamp.com) is relatively new to the Seattle area, managing three camps for grades K-7 (in Seattle, Bellevue and Tacoma) with a uniquely flexible enrollment policy and philosophy. The day camp offers highly specialized "studios" for activities such as dance, music, bread making and animation, along with many outdoor activities. The difference? There is no "schedule" — kids get a full choice of activities. Parents are "recognizing kids' needs for developing passions over fitting into a rigid structure," says camp partner Mike Saperstein.

Conveniently, the camp allows parents to purchase day passes to use as needed according to the family's work schedule. If you don't use up the day passes, your money is refunded.

Summer Adventures Day Camp is another intriguing model (summeradventuresdaycamp.com), providing door-to-door transportation in passenger vans for its mobile day camps for kids ages 5-16. The camps run a variety of field trips to such places as the Pacific Science Center, Woodland Park Zoo, Henry Moses Water Park, Seattle Mariners games — even Great Wolf Lodge. New this year, the camp's Challenge Zones will likely feature field games, drama, laser tag, science and more (still in the planning stage). ☀

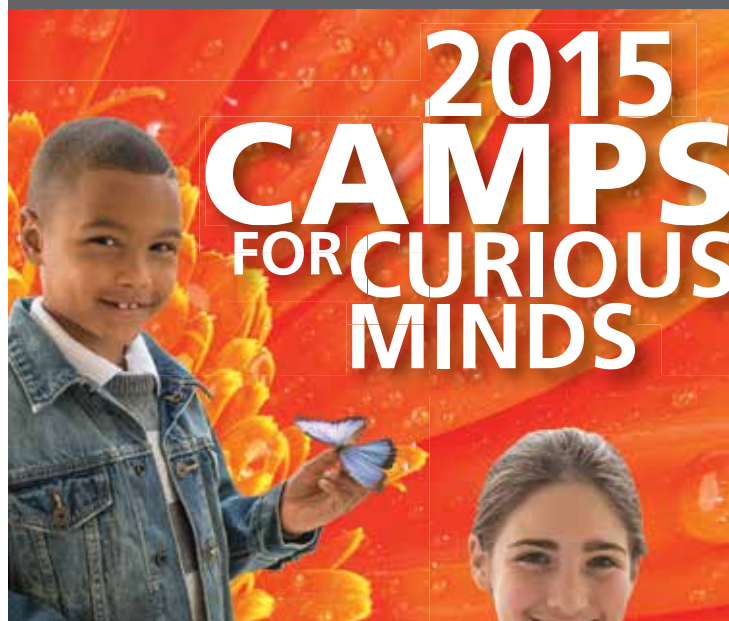
Joanna Nesbit is a freelance writer who lives in Bellingham with her husband and two children. Learn more about her at joannanesbit.com.

why kids benefit from camp

- **More than ever, kids need outdoor experiences and physical play.** Camp offers myriad opportunities to try new activities, be physical and engage in free play.
- With time off from technology, **kids meet other kids who are different from themselves and develop authentic relationships.** According to Smith, 96 percent of kids who go to camp talk about making new friends.
- **Camp promotes community.** Youngsters learn teamwork, problem solving, collaboration and communication through engaging with a diverse group of children.
- **Kids build resilience, confidence and independence when they are away from family,** skills that are perhaps more important today than at any other point in our past.

Source: Peg Smith, CEO of the American Camp Association

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Bookworm vacations

From Harry Potter's London to Laura's prairie,
five unforgettable trips

By Lynn Schnaiberg

Do you and your book-loving kids ever dream about how cool it would be to enter some of the fictional worlds you read about together — Narnia, Hogwarts, Mount Olympus? With increasing numbers of tourist sites and itineraries centered around kid lit's greatest reads, it's easier than ever. These five book-centric vacations turn summer reading on its head by letting your family explore great books and authors in real time, from sleeping in a covered wagon on Laura Ingalls Wilder's prairie homestead to quaffing butterbeer Hogwarts style on a back lot in London.

1 MUGGLE FOR THE CAMERA *Harry Potter's London*

London is always fantastical, but Potterheads can now triple the city's magic by playing out J.K. Rowling's series for themselves with Harry-inspired tours and activities that add up to a once-in-a-childhood family vacation. Start by joining a **Muggle walking tour**, which, in two and a half hours, explores film locations and haunts that inspired Rowling, such as the real-life spot that sparked Diagon Alley (roughly \$16–\$19, recommended for ages 7 and older; muggletours.co.uk).

Make a requisite pilgrimage to take photos at **Platform 9 3/4 in King's Cross station**, complete with a luggage trolley wedged halfway into the wall to give the illusion of the famous portal to the Hogwarts Express, open to wizards only (the-magician.co.uk/harry-potter-london-locations.htm).

And, of course, the **Warner Bros. Studio Tour London** (in nearby Leavesden; accessible by public transit) lets you inhabit scenes from the eight films on two soundstages and a back lot filled with original sets, animatronic creatures and amazing special effects (family tickets \$14; wbstudiotour.co.uk). Kids can board the Knight Bus, hop on Hagrid's motorbike, stroll Diagon Alley, or put themselves on a broomstick or on the front page of *The Daily Prophet* via green-screen technology. Thirsty? Sample authentic nonalcoholic butterbeer.

SLEEP: **The Georgian House** near Victoria



COURTESY OF MUGGLE TOURS

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Station offers “The Wizard Chambers,” rooms with four-poster beds, battered steamer trunks, spell books, potion bottles and cauldrons (from \$325 for double occupancy including breakfast; georgianhousehotel.co.uk/offers/Harry-Potter-Tour-Package-London.asp).

BOOKWORMING: Award-winning **Children's Bookshop in Muswell Hill** is a London literary landmark for the kid set. Add more kid-lit tourism to your trip with inspiration from **A Children's Literature Tour of Great Britain**. >>



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Bookworm vacations

continued from page 21



**Green Gables
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Victorian period pieces, a replica of the writer's wedding dress and her personal scrapbooks (\$1–\$3.50; lmmontgomery.ca). Early July brings the **L.M. Montgomery Festival** to Cavendish. Also, don't miss the national park's **gorgeous red sand beaches**. Tip: If you're going to do all things Anne on the island, one of the myriad packages offered may be worthwhile (check ticketpro.ca).

SLEEP: Producers of the acclaimed TV series *Road to Avonlea*

used elegant **Dalvay By The Sea**, an 1895 beachfront inn near Charlottetown, as Avonlea's White Sands Hotel (rooms from \$200, cottages from \$325; dalvaybythesea.com). **Kindred Spirits resort**, next door to Green Gables, offers marshmallow campfires, giant chess set, games room and playground (rooms from \$90, cottages from \$170; kindredspirits.ca).

BOOKWORMING: **Charlottetown's Bookmark** is one of the Maritimes' oldest independent bookstores, with loads of space for kids to spread out with a good read.

3 PICTURE-BOOK PERFECT **Eric Carle's Amherst, Mass.**

Engage small book lovers with a vacation built around the **Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art**, the only full-scale museum in the nation devoted to picture books and their art form. Located in the lovely



ANDREW GRETO © THE ERIC CARLE MUSEUM OF PICTURE BOOK ART

western Massachusetts town of Amherst, the 40,000-square-foot museum collects, preserves and presents picture books and picture-book illustrations from around the world (\$6–\$9; carlemuseum.org).

Carle, author of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and more than 70 other books, cofounded the museum with his wife and still visits each year for a book signing. Loads of kid activities include daily story time, picture-book-based movies, guided art projects and special auditorium events such as puppet shows. The museum regularly changes artwork on display, though one gallery is always devoted to a rotating display of Carle's artwork.

While Amherst's other bookworm draw isn't kid lit per se, much of Emily Dickinson's poetry is kid accessible. Check out the **Emily Dickinson Museum**, which includes The Homestead, where Dickinson was born and lived most of her life (visitor center free, guided museum tours \$5–\$10, kids younger than 6 free; emilydickinsonmuseum.org). The college-rich region of western Massachusetts also boasts wonderful summer festivals and outdoor activities in the Berkshire Mountains and beyond.

SLEEP: For the New England B&B experience, try Amherst's **Stone House Farm**, where kids can make friends with Nubian goats, chickens and ducks (suites from \$175; stonehousefarmbb.com). Or go corporate with the indoor pool and free

breakfast at the **Holiday Inn Express & Suites** in nearby Hadley (from about \$180; ihg.com).

BOOKWORMING: In downtown Amherst, **Food for Thought Books** has a comfy kids' area with a thoughtful selection of books. (Look for *The Mouse of Amherst*, a fictional story of a poetic mouse who corresponds with Emily Dickinson.) >>

2 ROMANTIC AVONLEA **Anne of Green Gables' Prince Edward Island**

Fans of the red-headed heroine flock to pastoral Cavendish — the fictional Avonlea — to visit **Green Gables Heritage Place in Prince Edward Island National Park** (tourismpei.com), the gabled house that inspired Lucy Maud Montgomery's story. Although Montgomery never lived here, she grew up nearby with her grandparents (the farm belonged to her cousins). With the house now restored to its original late-1800s style, it includes exhibits that highlight Montgomery's life and works, with an award-winning biographical film and docent guides. Look for daily interpretive programs, such as **Sunday Picnic**, with ice cream making and old-fashioned games (high-season family pass about \$17; pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/pe/greengables/index.aspx).

Your family can explore the surrounding woodland trails and look for spots named in Montgomery's books, such as Lovers' Lane and the Haunted Wood (be sure to nab a free Parks Canada Xplorer activity book; pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/pe/greengables/activ/xplorateurs-xplorers-gg.aspx).

While Montgomery's childhood home is long gone, a **small museum** on the site offers guided tours (peisland.com/lmm). **Avonlea Village** combines historic and re-created 19th-century homes and businesses to give a taste of the fictional Anne's rural community (avonlea.ca).

Visit the **Lucy Maud Montgomery Birthplace**, which overlooks the sand dunes and harbor in New London, to see authentic



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Bookworm vacations

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PLAYING LITTLE HOUSE *Laura Ingalls Wilder's De Smet, South Dakota*

Who's more Little House crazy — you or your pioneer-playing progeny? A visit to De Smet, where Wilder's family moved when she was 12 and which became the setting for several of her "Little House" books, should thrill everyone.

Start with the **two-hour guided Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Homes tour**, which visits the Ingalls family's first home in the then Dakota Territory, the school the Ingalls girls attended, a replica of Brewster School (where Laura taught), and the final home of Pa, Ma and Mary Ingalls. The tour also visits the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Discovery Center**, where kids can try out an old treadle sewing machine, learn to write their names in Braille and dress up like a pioneer (tour \$6-\$12, kids younger than 5 free; discoverlaura.org).

At **The Ingalls Homestead**, budding pioneer kids can drive a team of horses, twist hay and make dolls out of corncobs. Around town, **stroll the old Main Street** (Calumet Avenue S.E.), visit Silver Lake and stop by the cemetery where several Ingalls family members (not Laura) are buried. On select July weekends, watch the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant** in an open-air prairie theater, with preshow wagon rides (\$8-\$12, younger than 5 free.) Note: De Smet is about an hour-and-a-half drive from one of the state's major airports, in Sioux Falls.

SLEEP: Enjoy nighttime on the prairie by camping in one of four covered wagons at the **Ingalls Homestead** (\$50; ingallshomestead.com/camping.html). My friend did this and said it was a highlight of her family's trip.

BOOKWORMING: Mentioned in several of Wilder's books, the original **Loftus Store** in De Smet still stands and sells virtually all of the author's books, including some hard-to-find titles. >>



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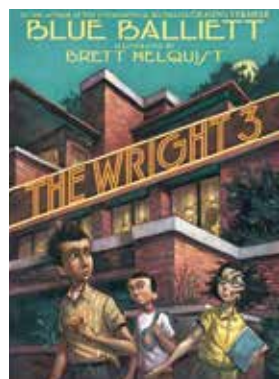
Bookworm vacations

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SNOOPING AROUND BOOKS

The Sixty-Eight Rooms and The Wright 3 in Chicago

You can design all kinds of bookworm adventures around the Windy City's riches. When I was growing up in Chicago, one of my favorite places was **The Art Institute's Thorne Room**, a collection of 68 exquisite miniature rooms, each designed in the style of a different time and place with perfect tiny details. Author Marianne Malone's "The Sixty-Eight Rooms" series imagines her sixth-grade characters finding a key on their field trip that lets them shrink down to explore the rooms' secrets in tales that combine mystery, magic and fantasy. Let your kids visit the Thorne Room and weave their own tales (museum admission \$17–\$23, kids younger than 14 free; artic.edu/aic/collections/thorne).



Engage kids in books, mystery and architecture with *The Wright 3*, a novel by teacher turned best-selling author Blue Balliett in which three sixth-grade supersleuths try to save Frank Lloyd Wright's landmark Robie House from demolition. Located in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, **Robie**

House now offers the **Wright 3 Mystery Tour**, led by specially trained fifth- through 10th-grade interpreters who point out locations of interest found in the book, as well as architectural and historical background (\$12–\$15, children 3 and younger free; cal.flwright.org/tours/robie).

SLEEP: Stay downtown; **The Intercontinental Chicago** has the best (and most elegant) pool (from \$320; icchicagohotel.com). **Historic Palmer House Hilton** also has a pool, along with Friday-night kid movies and Radio Flyer red wagons (from \$269; palmerhousehiltonhotel.com).

BOOKWORMING: The annual **Printers Row Lit Fest**, held June 6–7 in 2015, draws big-name children's authors to town for readings. In Oak Park, **The Magic Tree Bookstore** has lots of young adult, manga and foreign-language books in addition to a stellar kids' selection. ☀

Lynn Schnaiberg is a national award-winning journalist and author of *Outside magazine's* Urban Adventure Chicago.

book it closer to home

PORTLAND DOUBLE FEATURE

Bridge City's many bookwormish opportunities include a free "Walking with Ramona" self-guided tour for fans of multiple Newbery Award-winning author **Beverly Cleary**; or opportunities to explore vast, wild **Forest Park**, a setting for "The Wildwood Chronicles" trilogy, an illustrated fantasy-adventure series by the husband-and-wife team of Colin Meloy (of The Decemberists fame) and Carson Ellison.

TWILIGHTING IN FORKS

The Olympic Peninsula town that *Twilight* made famous will host the 10th annual **Stephenie Meyer Day/Bella's Birthday Weekend** on September 10–13. See forkswa.com/twilight for details as well as a DIY Twilight tour map or sign up for guided tours year-round at teamforks.com. Visit the stunning coastline and cliffs by **La Push**, center of the real Quileute Nation, which inspired the fictional Quileute werewolves like Jacob Black. Join other "TwiHards" dining at the Port Angeles restaurant **La Bella Italia**, scene of Bella and Edward's first date.

BETTY MACDONALD'S VASHON ISLAND

Best known to kids everywhere as author of the "Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle" series, MacDonald lived on Vashon from 1942 to 1956. Guests can stay at the **Betty MacDonald Farm**, the large barn on her 6-acre property where you'll find MacDonald memorabilia and books, honeybee hives, stellar views and a wooded trail to the beach. More Vashon highlights include the charming vintage **Vashon Theatre** and the 1915 **Point Robinson Lighthouse** (featured in the children's Christmas classic *Red Ranger Came Calling* by Berkeley Breathed).

HOTEL ON THE CORNER OF BITTER AND SWEET TOUR

The Wing Luke Museum in Seattle's Chinatown-International District offers **90-minute tours** based on the best-selling book about a Chinese boy and a Japanese girl during the World War II internment — a story inspired by author Jamie Ford's family. The tour hits **Canton Alley**, whose buildings housed many early emigrants from China, including an apartment Ford used as a model for the home of his fictional character Henry Lee's family.

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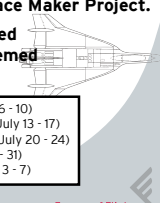
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Family reunions offer huge benefits to kids. How to plan and where to go

By Lauren Braden

When was the last time your children toasted marshmallows over a bonfire with their favorite cousins, or listened as your great-aunt shared memories of her childhood from decades ago? If your answer is “never,” it’s time to plan a family reunion — a real, offline, in-person family reunion.

In this digital age, most of what I know about the day-to-day lives of my extended family is whatever pops up in my Facebook feed, from what Aunt JoAnn is planting in her garden in Oklahoma to the dress that Cousin Kellie wore at her beach wedding in Florida. But my connections to them are rooted more deeply than what social media can provide, thanks to our annual family gatherings when I was a child. Some family experiences can’t be “liked” on Facebook — they need to happen in real life, face-to-face.

Recent research shows that spending time with extended family as children provides more than a fun, feel-good tradition. It turns out that kids who have a firm grasp on their family narrative, from where their grandparents grew up to how their aunt and uncle met, tend to be more emotionally resilient, healthier and happier. Researchers believe family connections and stories give kids a strong intergenerational sense of self. In our high-tech world, firsthand knowledge of family stories — both the joys and challenges that previous generations have faced — may be even more important.

With vacation days in short supply, it makes sense to combine a family reunion with summer vacation. The Pacific Northwest offers many beautiful, fun destinations that are perfect for both.

Are you ready for some serious offline family time? Read on as we unpack the trends in destination family reunions and give you tips on planning stress-free, connection-building gatherings that will create lasting memories.



Three trends for destination reunions

First, figure out what type of gathering is appropriate for your family, given factors such as size of group, ages of relatives, budgets and where people live. Here are three types of reunions you can plan to fit any budget.

1 LOW BUDGET: CAMPOUT OR CABIN

The great outdoors provides a perfect playground for gatherings that have lots of high-energy children, and planned activities like short hikes and canoe trips can tempt kids away from tablets and gaming devices for quality bonding time. Camping is easy on your budget, and nature provides the entertainment. But unless your family is made up of camping die-hards, walking through ferns to the bathhouse can get old fast, so save this trend for short reunions. Look for campgrounds that have group picnic areas and a variety of lodging options, from tent spaces to RV hookups and shelters like yurts or cabins. Some parks also have group campsites (tip: book far ahead for these). For an experience closer to

glamping than camping, opt for rustic resorts that have cabins.

TOP PICK: Cape Disappointment State Park on the Washington coast has it all, from beaches to hiking trails, plus more than 150 campsites and 17 yurts and cabins. Two onsite lighthouse-keeper residences serve as vacation rentals with large kitchens and common areas (parks.wa.gov/486/Cape-Disappointment).

OTHERS TO TRY: Doe Bay Resort camping and cabins on Orcas Island, **Cama Beach State Park cabins** on Camano Island, **Copper Creek Inn and Cabins** near Mount Rainier.

2 MODERATE BUDGET: RENT A HOUSE

For a smallish gathering of family members (fewer than 25 people), consider renting a large vacation house or retreat center, where all of your lodging, cooking and

common areas are under one roof. This keeps the per-person costs low, you can save cash by cooking your own meals together, and such accommodations are available all over the mountains, beaches and islands of the Pacific Northwest.

“We have had our 20 family members from all over the country come to the Northwest each year,” notes one *ParentMap* reader. “We’ve rented vacation houses on Lake Joy in Carnation, Vashon Island and Gig Harbor.”

Opt for a setting that offers day-trip excursions nearby, such as hiking and biking trails, a golf course or kayak rentals.

TOP PICK: The Willow Pond Lodge and Lake House on Whidbey Island features two vacation-rental homes, each with five bedrooms and three baths, which can be rented individually or together; combined, they’ll sleep as many as 30 people. The 50-acre estate is dotted with ponds, prairie and wildlife habitat (willowpondlodge.com).

OTHERS TO TRY: Harmony Hill on Hood Canal, **Snowgrass Lodge** in Leavenworth. Or, of course, try a **vacation-rental site**, such as VRBO, HomeAway or AirBnB. >>



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continued from page 29

3 MORE EXPENSIVE: RESORT FUN

Leave the stress at home when your family gathers at a destination resort. The big draw? An abundance of onsite activities that foster teamwork and family bonding, from golf for the grownups to pool time for the kids. Some resorts offer group activities that will transport you back to summer camp, such as crafting and horseback riding.

Accommodations are usually flexible, offering a mix of lodge rooms and vacation homes with full kitchens. You'll have more flexibility for mealtimes if you plan a mix of resort restaurant dinners and DIY meal gatherings.

Pam Mandel, a Seattle-based travel writer, recently attended an anniversary celebration at Seabrook,

a resort on the Washington coast, with dozens of family members and friends, and ranks it as an ideal place for a reunion. "There are so many different configurations for accommodation. People who need privacy can book a studio cottage, people who like to be surrounded by others can get a big house, and they're all close together."

TOP PICKS: In addition to **Seabrook** — a beachfront resort town with family-friendly activities from an indoor pool to a pottery studio and cruiser bikes (seabrookwa.com) — **Black Butte Ranch** in Sisters, Oregon, is a huge family-oriented oasis flanked by ponderosa pine trees in the Oregon Cascades. Lodging options include 120 vacation condos and homes that sleep from four to 20 people. There are laid-back restaurants,



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tips for planning your gathering

- **Plan far in advance.** You'll be accommodating many different calendars and work schedules, so once a date is chosen, set it in stone.
- If your family reunion will be large, **designate one person in charge** of the planning, with a small group that works on specific tasks. This ensures planning gets done and provides a clear contact for questions and input.
- **Set up a way to communicate.** A private Facebook group for reunion attendees is a great way to keep people in the loop. You can also keep all reunion documents on Google drive.
- **Get input from at least one rep from each family** on dates, budget, location, meals (including dietary restrictions) and activities — this creates buy-in and helps avoid conflict later. Using a free online survey service (such as SurveyMonkey.com) makes this easy.
- **Select a location that attendees can easily access** (for example, not too far from a major airport) and that people will truly want to go to, especially if family members are using precious vacation time.
- **Decide how attendees will pay for reunion costs**, and stick to it. Avoid surprises and hidden costs.
- **Accommodate every budget**, if possible. Destinations that offer flexible lodging choices (for example, both campsites and cabins) give attendees more options. You could create a donation-based fund that helps cover the costs of attendees who are on a tighter budget than others.
- When planning reunion activities, **consider all ages**,

plenty of golf courses, nature paths, paved bike trails, swimming pools with waterslides and tennis courts (blackbutteranch.com).

OTHERS TO TRY: Sunriver Resort near Bend, Oregon, and **Suncadia Resort** near Cle Elum.

And here's one more reunion idea for families who can splurge: **Take a cruise.** When Seattle attorney Richard Smith's grandmother turned 90 years old, their extended family embarked on a celebratory cruise from Seattle up the Inside Passage to Alaska, giving everyone the opportunity to spend several days together and with her while enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime scenic trip in the process. ☀️

Lauren Braden is a Pacific Northwest writer who focuses on recreation and travel. She blogs at nwtripfinder.com.



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Evergreen City Ballet 10
 Classes, camps and intensives, performances, parties
 Renton; 425-228-6800
evergreencityballet.org
info@evergreencityballet.org

The Evergreen School — Summer Program 7
 Academics, theater, arts, sports, outdoors; ages 3-14
 Shoreline; 206-364-2650
evergreenschool.org
summerprogram@evergreenschool.org

Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart
 Catholic, all-girls school for grades 5-12
 Bellevue; 425-641-0700; forestridge.org
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French American School of Puget Sound ✨ 35
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fasps.org; katieg@fasps.org

French Immersion School of Washington ✨
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fisw.org; admission@fisw.org

Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery ✨ 37
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programs, parties
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issaquahfish.org

Fusion Beads ✨
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fusionbeads.com

Future of Flight Foundation ✨ 28
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futureofflight.org/camp
camp@futureofflight.org

Gage Academy of Art ✨ 40
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Seattle; 206-323-4243
gageacademy.org; info@gageacademy.org

German Language School Seattle 18
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K-12
Seattle; 425-883-1397
germanlanguageschool.org
info@germanlanguageschool.org

Giddens School ✨
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preschool-grade 5
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giddensschool.org
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gigglesandgrins.com
contactus@gigglesandgrins.com

Girl Scouts of Western Washington 7
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grades 1-12
Seattle; 800-767-6845
girlscoutsww.org; info@girlscoutsww.org

Girls Rock Math 20
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Hamlin Robinson School ✨ . . . 26
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grades 1-8
Seattle; 206-763-1167
hamlinrobinson.org

Hands On Children's Museum ✨ 32
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harmonyridgeequestrian.com
harmonyridgeequestrian@gmail.com

Hidden Valley Camp ✨ 35
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co-ed ages 7-16
Granite Falls; 425-844-8896
hvc-wa.com
hiddenvalleycamp@earthlink.net

Hilltop Children's Center 47
Big kids summer camp; ages 5-11
Seattle; 206-283-3100
hilltopcc.com; registrar@hilltopcc.org

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continued from page 37

- KidsQuest Children's Museum** ☀️ 43
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 info@kidsquestmuseum.org
- Kidz Bounce** ☀️
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 kidzbounce.com
- KinderCare Learning Centers** ☀️ 8
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 888-523-6765; kindercare.com
- Kirkland Arts Center** 44
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 Kirkland; 425-811-7161
 kirklandartscenter.org
- Lake Union Crew** ☀️ 26
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 Seattle; 206-860-4199
 lakeunioncrew.com
 info@lakeunioncrew.com
- Lakemont Academy** ☀️
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 Bellevue; 425-564-8200; kindercare.com
- Le Petit Village French Immersion School** 31
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 leptovillage.com; jpetitvillage@yahoo.com
- LearningRX** ☀️ 25
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 issaquah.wa@learningrx.net
- LeMay — America's Car Museum** 22
 Celebrating America's love affair with the automobile
 Tacoma; 253-779-8490
 lemaymuseum.org
 info@lemaymuseum.org
- Lindamood-Bell Learning Center** 47
 Teaching reading, comprehension and math
 Bellevue; 425-827-6288
 lindamoodbell.com
 bellvue.center@lindamoodbell.com
- The Little Gym** ☀️ 8
 Gymnastics, parties, camps, karate, dance, sports skills
 11 Puget Sound locations
 thelittlegym.com
- Living Wisdom Yoga Day Camp** 28
 Yoga, nature, swimming, crafts, music, more
 Lynnwood; 425-772-9862
 livingwisdomschoolseattle.org
- Lynnwood Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts** ☀️ 18
 Day camps, pools, parks, sports; all ages
 Lynnwood; 425-670-5732
 playlynnwood.com
- Mandarin Experts** ☀️
 One-on-one and group language instruction; all ages
 Seattle; 206-226-2627
 mandarinexperts.com
- Mercer Island Parks and Recreation** 45
 Art, kayaking, music, sailing, sports, day camps
 Mercer Island; 206-275-7609
 playonmercercor.com
- The Meridian School** ☀️ 32
 Enrichment classes and day camps
 Seattle; 206-632-7154
 meridianschool.edu
 dcoppinger@meridianschool.edu
- Metro Parks Tacoma** ☀️ 36
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 MetroParksTacoma.org
 info@tacomaparks.com
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 mgrparty.com
- Montessori Children's House** ☀️ 22
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 Redmond; 425-868-7805
 mchkids.com; office@mchkids.com
- Morningside Academy** ☀️ 45
 Academic summer program; ages 6-16
 Seattle; 206-709-9500
 morningsideacademy.org
 info@morningsideacademy.org
- Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI)** 12
 Exhibits and programs for kids and families
 Seattle; 206-324-1126
 mohai.org; information@mohai.org
- Music Works Northwest** 24
 Camps for voice, piano, rock, jazz, special needs, more
 Bellevue; 425-644-0988; musicworksnw.org
 registration@musicworksnw.org
- Musikgarten Northwest** ☀️
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North Cascades Institute ☀️ . . . 6
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Northwest Choirs ☀️
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Northwest Girlchoir 28
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Seattle; 206-527-2900
northwestgirlchoir.org
info@northwestgirlchoir.org

The Northwest School International Summer Camp . 20
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northwestschool.org/summercamp
nwsummer@northwestschool.org

One Happy Camper / Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle .34
Grants to families to go to Jewish camp
Seattle; 206-443-5400
jewishinseattle.org/camp
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Open Window School 28
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Bellevue; 425-214-0523
openwindow.school.org
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The Overlake School ☀️ 18
Creativity, collaboration and challenge; grades 5–12
Redmond; 425-868-1000
overlake.org/programs/summer
questions@overlake.org

Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center 26
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oxbow.org; education@oxbow.org

Pacific Science Center ☀️ 19
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pacificsciencecenter.org
edprograms@pacsci.org

Paint Away! ☀️ 44
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Paint the Town ☀️ 45
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ceramics-painting.com
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PCC Natural Markets ☀️ 11
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Pedalheads Bike Camps ☀️ . . . 28
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phoenixfarm.com; phoenix_farm@hotmail.com

PlayHappy Café ☀️
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playhappycafe.com
info@playhappycafe.com

PRO Sports Club 26
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Bellevue; 425-885-5566
proclub.com; membership@proclub.com

Pump It Up ☀️ 28
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425-820-2297, 425-774-2297
pumpitupparty.com/kirkland-wa
pumpitupparty.com/lynnwood-wa

Rain City Fencing Center 25
Half and full-day fencing programs, equipment provided
Bellevue; 425-747-6300
camps.raincityfencing.com
info@raincityfencing.com

Red Gate Farm ☀️ 42
Horse riding camps, grooming, care; ages 6–11
Sammamish; 425-392-0111
redgatefarmdaycamp.com
redgatecamp@earthlink.net

Redmond Camps and Recreation Programs ☀️
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recreationoffice@redmond.gov

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riteofpassagejourneys.org
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Roaring Mouse Creative Arts Studio ☀️ 10

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RockMeadow Equestrian Center ☀️ 44

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Sammamish; 425-392-0600
rockmeadowec.com; rockmeadow@aol.com

Russian School of Mathematics ☀️

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Safe N Sound Swimming ☀️

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sambica.com; sambica@sambica.com

Samena Swim and Recreation Club ☀️ 18

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Bellevue; 425-746-1160; samena.com

Sammamish Montessori School 45

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Redmond; 425-883-3271
sammamishmontessori.com
info@sammamishmontessori.com

The School of Acrobatics & New Circus Arts (SANCA) 12

Circus classes for ages 2 and up, camps for ages 6–16
Seattle; 206-652-4433
sancaseattle.org; office@sancaseattle.org

School of Rock ☀️

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seattle.schoolofrock.com

Seabury School 36

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Tacoma; 253-952-3111
seabury.org; office@seabury.org

Seattle Aquarium ☀️

Marine biology camps, educational programs
Seattle; 206-386-4300; seattleaquarium.org
info@seattleaquarium.org

Seattle Area German American School (SAGA) 24

Language immersion for preschool–grade 5
Seattle; 206-442-2023
sagaschool.org; info@sagaschool.org

Seattle Art Museum ☀️ 22

Exhibitions and hands-on art programs
Seattle; 206-654-3210; visitsam.org

Seattle Audubon Society ☀️ . . . 24

Summer nature camps for grades 1–9
Seattle; 206-523-4483; seattleaudubon.org

Seattle Children's Hospital ☀️

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Seattle; 206-987-2000; seattlechildrens.org

Seattle Children's Theatre ☀️

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Seattle; 206-441-3322; sct.org; info@sct.org

Seattle Girls' Choir ☀️ 40

Summer choir and music day camps for girls and boys
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seattlegirlschoir.org
info@seattlegirlschoir.org

Seattle Humane 12

Pet adoptions, youth programs, services, more
Bellevue; 425-641-0080
seattlehumane.org

Seattle Music House 32

Small-group lessons on piano, guitar, violin and cello
Seattle; 206-913-8665
seattlemusichouse.com
info@seattlemusichouse.com

Seattle Parks and Recreation ☀️

Summer camps in all areas, specialty and all-day
Seattle; 206-684-4075
seattle.gov/parks; pks_info@seattle.gov

Seattle Public Library ☀️ 47

Homework help, story times, programs for all ages
27 Seattle locations; 206-386-4636; spl.org

Seattle Shakespeare Company 20

Camp Bill Shakespeare summer camps; ages 8–18
Seattle; 206-733-8228 ext. 251
seattleshakespeare.org

Seattle Symphony ☀️

Performances, community and family programs
Seattle; 206-215-4747
seattlesymphony.org
info@seattlesymphony.org

Singapore Math Club ☀️ 34

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tacomaartmuseum.org
info@tacomaartmuseum.org

Tacoma German Language School 32
German classes and summer camps; ages 4 and up
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tacomagermanlanguageschool.com
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Tacoma Nature Center ✨ 38
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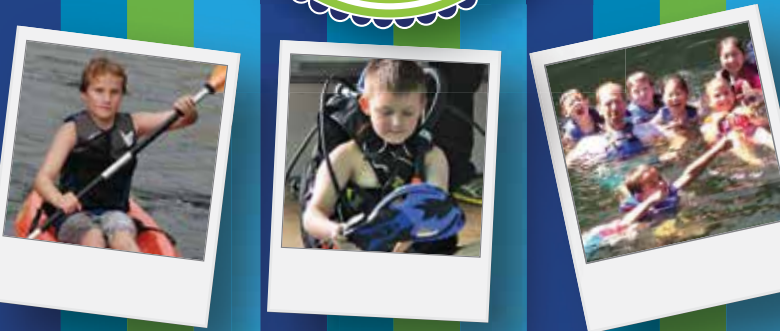
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