

Best of Our Valley 2012: Kids

Written by Elizabeth Liberatore

Teens and tots want to look good, eat well and have fun, too. Take a look at the Valley favorites of local kids...



Best Kid's Clothing

Urban Kidz

It's never too early to start dressing like a pro, and with Urban Kidz your child will make life his or her runway. Urban Kidz is a one-stop shop for wardrobing Valley children from head-to-toe. Many lines carried are exclusive, high-quality pieces that are all moderately priced. New inventory arrives weekly, so your fashion-forward tot will always be the talk of the playground. www.urbankidzwear.com.

Best Kid's Birthday Spot and Best Kid's Entertainment: Indoors

Great Play, A Unique Gym for Kids

Is your little munchkin full of energy? If so, bring them down to the best birthday and indoor entertainment spot in the Valley: Great Play, A Unique Gym for Kids. Great Play is designed with a child's development in mind. The gym's Interactive Arena houses a variety of activities and classes, which make it fun for kids to increase motor skills, sports skills, fitness and coordination (but don't tell the kids that or it will spoil the fun). www.greatplay.com.



Best Kid's Entertainment: Outdoors

Wildlife World Zoo

Nothing but wonder and awe will radiate from your child's eyes after a visit to the Wildlife World Zoo. Witness Arizona's largest collection of exotic animals with more than 6,000 individual animals representing more than 600 exotic and endangered species. Your child will get a hands-on experience with the giraffe-feeding station, the petting zoo and an African safari train. www.wildlifeworld.com.

Best Kid's Restaurant

18° Neighborhood Grill-2011 Winner

Chef Aaron May definitely had a kid's appetite in mind when creating 18° Neighborhood Grill's menu. Little diners can munch on their choice of delicious chicken nuggets, mini hot dogs, mac and cheese, grilled cheese sandwiches, cheeseburgers and itty bitty (but big in flavor) cheese pizzas. If being next to the Ice Den wasn't enough, 18° serves kid's meals on-the-house every Tuesday. www.18-degrees.com.

Best Toy Store

Auntie Em's Miniatures

Auntie Em's Miniatures in Glendale is everything but generic. The shop is filled with old-fashioned dollhouses and charming miniatures to fill every playroom's nook and cranny. In the summer, the shop hosts a series of Dollhouse Camps during which your little one will have everything she needs to decorate her own miniature world. www.auntieemsmiiniatures.com.



Best Kid-Friendly Hotel

Arizona Grand Resort-2011 Winner

Not many hotels pass the test as a kid-friendly environment; Arizona Grand Resort, however, gets a big A-plus from local kiddos. With several family packages, amenities, and, of course, the Oasis Water Park (complete with a lazy river, wave pool and three thrilling waterslides), this resort is a haven for both adults and kids. www.arizonagrandresort.com.

Best Private High School

Notre Dame Preparatory High School

Since its establishment in 2002, Notre Dame Preparatory has quickly proven to "get after it" academically, athletically and spiritually. The Notre Dame Prep community is committed to building the minds, bodies and souls of young adults by integrating faith into a challenging

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college-preparatory curriculum that promotes academic excellence, instills moral values and encourages lifelong service. Every Notre Dame student graduates with a complete understanding of the school's infamous three R's: Reverence, Respect and Responsibility. www.notredamepreparatory.org.

Best Private or Charter School

Mesa Preparatory Academy-2011 Winner

Mesa Preparatory Academy is a state-chartered public school dedicated to discovering and developing each child's potential by providing a comprehensive liberal arts education. As a member of the prestigious Great Hearts Academies network, Mesa Prep believes in every student's innate potential to grow in the virtues that mark a profound, philosophical life. www.mesaprep.org.