

Splash Pad 101

Written by Amanda Rumore
Monday, 16 June 2014 12:16 -

If you're childless, you may question the necessity of splash pads. That was me one year ago (pre pregnancy plus an eleven week old daughter.) I can almost remember sitting at True Foods at the Scottsdale Quarter, probably drinking my second glass of wine, wondering why parents would even consider sprinklers on concrete and imagining the last time the pads were properly cleaned. If you don't have a pool, won't your friends let you bring your kids swimming? Can you not find a babysitter so you can enjoy lunch at True Foods?



Fast forward nine months and eleven weeks and I am a mom, so I now realize how valuable summer outings are. Even though we have a pool, mommy dearest needs to get out of the house just as much as baby does. My daughter, Mia Valentina, can't even crawl yet and I'm already planning splash pad trips. Not to mention my brilliant baby is in awe over bright colors, absolutely loves the outdoors and thinks anything water-related is the coolest thing (like the bath and pool.) I do have some mom friends that can accompany me when my husband is at work (because somebody needs to work) but, even if I didn't, I know moms and dads are vying to make new friends, so never skip play time because you're intimidated of going solo.



Are you a newbie to splash pads? Here's some friendly advice to keep you and your family feeling cool:

1. Swim Diapers are a must. Don't try to skip them. Your poor child will look like they have a beach ball in their diaper plus mall cops will check.
2. Play in the splash pads, not any hot puddles of stagnant water (duh.)
3. Drinking chlorine isn't so great – watch your kids and bring water and snacks.
4. Make sure your tots are wearing swim shoes or sandals.
5. Even the grownups get wet, so dress appropriately.
6. 2pm - 5pm tends to be the hottest part of the day. Try to plan your adventure earlier in the day.
7. Don't be delusional. Even though this is a water activity, it's still triple digits in Phoenix. Bring sunscreen, hats and sun protective wear. If your splash pad doesn't have ample shade options, take a sun shade or umbrella. Sunburns are especially dangerous for tots.

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So, you're now ready to check out the ever so refreshing family activity. Splash pads have become so popular, they're everywhere in the Phoenix-land area, from the West Valley to the East Valley. Here's a list of some of our favorite pads in the Valley.

- Kierland Commons Splash Pad
- The Splash Pad at Scottsdale Quarter
- Tempe Beach Splash Playground
- Tempe Marketplace Splash Pad
- The Phoenix Zoo's Leaping Lagoon
- Kidsplash Fountain at Desert Ridge Marketplace
- Westgate City Center Fountain Park
- Splash Park at Rio Vista Community Park in Peoria
- Adventure Park Splash Pad at Anthem Community Park

Have you been to a splash pad yet this summer? Send us your tips so we can include them!