

Local Kid-friendly Summer Activities

Written by Written by Julia Swem

Summer is near and that means the kids will be home for three fun-filled months. If you want to give your kids a memorable break, try taking them to these local sure-to-please spots.



Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix Water Park

Some Arizona summer days feel like it's too hot to do anything at all but there is a solution. Relieve your sweaty and probably cranky kids with the mention of Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix Water Park. This park is sure to please everyone no matter if your family is seeking an adventure or a relaxing day in the sun.

Thrill seekers may want to try the Constrictor (opening summer 2011), Tornado or Serpentine Complex. The Constrictor will feature the tightest turns of any other waterslide in the world and the Serpentine Complex with its drops, dips and twists make it an adrenaline-pumping ride.

Visitors can also get a family competition started with some of the slides that involve racing. Maximum Velocity and Desert Racers are sure to please as it allows your kids to put sibling rivalry into motion in a fun way. Maximum Velocity is the first and only ride of its kind in the world; the gravity-defying water coaster catapults riders uphill and downhill for more than 830 feet right next to their race competitor.

Laid-back visitors and small children can enjoy the Cactus Cooler or the Soak 'em Playground. Parents can watch their little ones have a blast while exploring sprinklers, spouts and splash attractions. Or try the Cactus Cooler, a leisurely 1,200-foot lab around and endless river.

<http://wetnwildphoenix.com/index.htm>



The Phoenix Zoo

Lions, tigers and bears, oh my! The Phoenix Zoo has been voted one of the nation's top five zoos for kids where you are sure to bring home some exotic memories. Visitors can wander the zoo at their own pace or take the Safari Train for a narrated tour past most of their major attractions.

There are also a variety of ways to meet some animals in a special way. Feed the giraffes and watch your kid's eyes bulge as they observe their long necks that can reach up to 18 inches long. Or monkey around at the Monkey Village where their chatter and antics make you feel as if you are in the rain forest. Other activities include camel rides and the Wild About Animals Show. <http://www.phoenixzoo.org/>



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UltraStar Cinemas Summer Kids' Series 2011

Grab the kids, some popcorn and get out of that hot summer sun and head to UltraStar Cinemas. Every Monday through Friday, UltraLuxe Scottsdale Cinema at The Pavilions at Talking Stick Resort and UltraStar Surprise Pointe Cinemas offer a kid-friendly film for 10 weeks.

This program is not only convenient, it's a great deal as well. A one-time ticket price of \$5 per person will allow your family to view 10 movies starting May 23 to July 29. The movies ratings range from G to PG ratings so you never have to worry about what content you and your children will be viewing.

All films start at 9:30 a.m with the doors opening at 9 a.m. Films include "Yogi Bear," "Shrek Forever After," "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," "Megamind" and more. <http://www.ultrastarmovies.com/summerseries.asp>



Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium

From Upsidedown Jellyfish to an Albino Alligator, the Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium is a must see. Kids can watch the vast variety of ocean wildlife swim by or learn how to feed and pet stingrays.

After your kids have given the stingrays their lunch, it might be time for theirs. Make lunch a spectacle as well by eating at the Tiburón Restaurant or Flamingo Lounge. Imagine dining indoors right next to giant sharks swimming right passed you. No matter where you sit in the Tiburón Restaurant, you will have jaw-dropping views of numerous predators swimming around the 60,000-gallon tank. But if you want to be in the sunshine, the Flamingo Lounge is the place for you. The lounge overlooks a new water feature with dozens of Caribbean Flamingos.

<http://www.wildlifeworld.com/>



Arizona Science Center

Take your kids on an adventure that feeds their minds at the Arizona Science Center. They can enter vitriol worlds in the IMAX theater and planetarium or learn interactively with exhibits like All About Me, exploring the functions of the human body, and Many Hands Make a Home, an in depth look at the process of creating a house.

If your youngster falls in love with the science center, you can make their day special and host a birthday party there as well. In the summer, your child can choose either the Mad Mixers- or Dinosaur Adventure-themed party. Watch you child have a good time learning with their friends through guided activities.

Arizona Science Center also offers camps to children from ages six to 14. Children six to 11 can participate in the Discovery and Invention summer camp. In their weeklong experience your child will explore and discover the many inventions of the 1800's. Children 12 to 14 can participate in BMI @ BNI where your child will get to experience the world of biotechnology and drug discovery from the point of view of

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research scientists, physicians and corporate marketers.

<http://www.azscience.org/index.php>



Children's Museum of Phoenix

Do your kids love to touch everything they set their eyes on? If so the interactive Children's Museum of Phoenix is a perfect place to let your child's imagination go wild. The museum has programs and activities that are suitable for children from birth to 10 years of age. It focuses on learning through play with an emphasis on school readiness and early childhood education.

You can explore the museum yourself or participate in the many classes, programs and workshops offered. They can be great bonding and learning experiences for both you and your children. Participate in Brain Time for Babies and Toddlers where you will learn about the importance of early childhood experience through hands-on activities. Or embrace your child's love for bugs in an educational setting. In Insects, Bugs, and More, children three to six discover bugs up close and personal through a variety of activities.

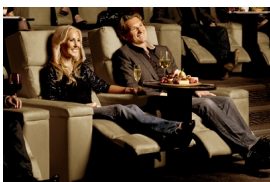
<http://www.childrensmuseumofphoenix.org/default.aspx>



iPic Theaters

Talk about comfort, iPic movie theaters is unbelievable. Imagine watching your movie in reclining chairs with complementary popcorn and receiving a blanket and pillow upon request. This theater does this and more and is perfect for your teenage children who think they are too cool for you.

This movie theater resembles more of a high-end hotel or fancy club. Transform your family movie night into a night out. Tickets can be ordered online, complementary valet parking is offered and food and beverage service throughout the movie is offered as well. And the food and beverage is not your typical movie theater food and beverage. Moviegoers can choose from a variety of restaurant-style meals that can be delivered to you seat. <http://www.ipictheaters.com/>



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Ice Den

Not only is this state-of-the-art ice rink home to the NHL's Phoenix Coyotes Hockey club but open for your entertainment as well. You and your kids can hit the ice then have a great meal right afterward in the Ice Den's many restaurants. Visit 18 degrees, North Scottsdale's newest neighborhood grill or if you prefer that your kids have fuel before they skate, enjoy a meal in Over Easy breakfast diner.

This is a perfect place to meet up with other families to have a day of fun or watch some hockey or figure skating competitions. This world-class ice facility is like heaven for your children who are heavily involved in hockey or figure skating. The Ice Den offers a variety of recreational activities. Your child can participate in beginner to advanced skating programs, youth hockey leagues and private ice parties.

<http://www.coyotesice.com/home.php>



Wazees World

Take your kids to Wazees World to have some out-of-this-world fun. Wazees World has something for all ages that includes laser tag, a miniature golf course and an inflatable obstacle course. The 43,000-sq.-ft. arena has an "Area 51" theme and the lights and attractions are sure to intrigue your active kids.

The 7,500-sq.-ft., multi-level laser tag arena is more like a movie set. From the glow-in-the-dark features to the state-of-the-art Nexus equipment, this laser tag facility is anything but lame as your young teenage boy might say. Or visit Cosmic Golf, which is a nine-hole miniature golf course illuminated by black lights. Playing with glow in the dark golf balls and clubs creates a reinvented miniature golf experience.

And for your older kids Wazees World offers to host graduation parties. The teenagers have a celebratory night of fun and parents can rest at ease because their child has to be picked up by them or stay overnight.

<http://wazeesworld.com/>

