

FEATURE Philadelphia With Kids

# Family Fun in Philadelphia

Keep everyone from tots to teens entertained in the City of Brotherly Love.



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Play some putt putt at this Philly-themed mini-golf course in Franklin Square.

by **KAREN GASPERS**

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Philadelphia offers a wide variety of attractions to tempt kids, from Revolutionary history to IMAX theaters. But when vacationing with the family, there's a fine line between "Wow, cool!" and "I'm bored," whether they are old enough to verbalize that sentiment or just lay on the floor and cry. Visiting sites that are age appropriate can make all the difference.

Here are a few **Philadelphia** attractions that are especially good at grabbing the attention of certain age groups. But keep in mind that some sites could also work for slightly older or younger kids, which might come in handy if you have multiple ages in your household.

## Tots

### Please Touch Museum

Little ones need plenty of hands-on and interactive distractions to keep them busy. That's exactly what they get at **Please Touch Museum**. Kids can slip into a seat at the Mad Hatter's tea party and other scenes from "Alice in Wonderland," shop at the grocery store, repair a car at the garage, play music in the rain forest and so much more. It's designed for kids aged 7 and younger. Mornings tend to be more crowded, so go in the afternoon if you can.

4231 Avenue of the Republic (formerly N. Concourse Dr.). Tel. 215-581-3181. Admission: \$15 for anyone over 1. [www.pleasetouchmuseum.org](http://www.pleasetouchmuseum.org)

### The Academy of Natural Sciences

For more hands-on fun, stop by the **Academy of Natural Sciences**, where you'll find **Outside In**, the children's nature museum, on the third floor. Here kids can meet live animals, listen to a story on Lucy's Back Porch, watch a working bee hive and more. It's designed for ages 3 to 8, but older and younger are welcome. And don't bypass the other floors of the museum, where you'll find an indoor butterfly garden and Dinosaur Hall.



What kid wouldn't love Dinosaur Hall at the Academy of Natural Sciences?

© Katie O. Clark/ANSP

1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Tel. 215-299-1000. Admission: \$12 ages 13 and up, \$10 ages 3 to 12. [www.ansp.org](http://www.ansp.org)

## School-Age Kids

Older kids are learning about the events surrounding our nation's birth in school, so take them to Philadelphia's Revolutionary epicenter. The events are fresh in their minds as well as exciting for them to see firsthand.

Many Revolutionary-related sites are clustered in **Independence National**

**Historical Park**, including **Independence Hall**, the **Liberty Bell Center** and the **National Constitution Center**. Others sites are only a short walk away, such as **Christ Church** and **Betsy Ross' home**.

Start at the **Independence Visitor Center** to pick up maps, learn about walking and riding tours and even ask the staff for dining suggestions. It's also the place to pick up your timed tickets for a tour of Independence Hall. Some park sites are free to visit while others charge admission, so be sure to check before you go.

### Franklin Square

A short walk from Independence National Historical Park is one of the city's five original parks, making it a nice respite from the hustle and bustle of **Independence Mall**. There's the **Liberty Carousel**, spacious play area, 1830s fountain, Philly-themed miniature golf course, sand-sculpture area, snack bar and plenty of green space for goofing around. The play area is divided into areas for ages 2 to 5 and 5 to 12. My 8-year-old loves climbing and spinning on the equipment.

6th and Race Streets. Tel. 215-629-4026. Carousel rides are \$2 for children ages 3 to 12 and free for kids 2 and younger. A round of golf runs \$6 for ages 3 to 12, \$8 for ages 13 and up.



The Liberty Bell is a must-see for every family's history buff.

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## Teens

### Franklin Institute

Between the planetarium, IMAX theater, flight simulator and 3-D theater, and in addition to the permanent and traveling exhibits, there's something at the **Franklin Institute** to keep a teen's boredom at bay. This science museum is popular, and weekends and holidays can be crowded. During spring break this year, my son and I waited 30 minutes in line for tickets. Arrive early if you can or buy advance tickets online.

222 N. 20th St. Tel. 215-448-1200. Admission: \$14.75 adults, \$13.75 students ages 12 to 25 with ID, \$12 kids ages 4 to 11. [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu)

### Mütter Museum

For a collection of one-of-a-kind medical oddities sure to fascinate—or gross out—teens, stop by the **Mütter Museum** located at the **College of Physicians of Philadelphia**. Some of the weird stuff you'll see includes the preserved body of the "Soap Lady," rows and rows of human skulls, an assortment of antiquated medical equipment and a collection of 2,000 objects removed from people's throats.

19 S. 22nd St. Tel. 215-563-3737. Admission: \$14 adults, \$10 kids ages 6 to 17. [www.collphyphil.org/mutter.asp](http://www.collphyphil.org/mutter.asp)

## Other Attractions

**Insectarium.** Best for tots and school-age kids. 8046 Frankford Ave. Tel. 215-335-9500. Admission: \$7. [www.myinsectarium.com](http://www.myinsectarium.com)



The Franklin Institute, named for Philadelphia hero Ben Franklin, is one of the oldest centers for science education and development.

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**Philadelphia Museum of Art.** Franklin Parkway at 26th St. Tel. 215-763-8100. Sundays are pay-what-you-wish all day. Sundays also offer family programs appropriate for ages 3 to 10. [www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)

**Adventure Aquarium.** 1 Riverside Dr., Camden, N.J. Tel. 866-451-AQUA (2782). General admission: \$19.95 for adults, \$15.95 for children ages 2 to 12. [www.adventureaquarium.com](http://www.adventureaquarium.com)

**Philadelphia Zoo.** 3400 W. Girard Ave. Tel. 215-243-1100. Admission: \$18 adults, \$15 kids.

[www.philadelphiazoo.org](http://www.philadelphiazoo.org)

**Eastern State Penitentiary.** 22nd & Fairmount Ave. Tel. 215-236-3300. Admission: \$12 adults, \$8 kids ages 7 to 12. Children under the age of 7 are not admitted. [www.easternstate.org](http://www.easternstate.org)

**Rosenbach Museum and Library.** Don't miss the extensive collection of illustrations by children's author/illustrator Maurice Sendak. Best for school-age kids and teens. 2008-2010 Delancey Place. Tel. 215-732-1600. Admission: \$10 adults, \$8 children ages 5 and up. [www.rosenbach.org](http://www.rosenbach.org)

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