

## Kids New York

New York can be a wonderful city to visit with children

. Obvious attractions include museums, skyscrapers and ferry rides, as well as the simple pleasures of just walking the streets, seeing the street entertainers and taking in the shopping scene. Free events, especially common in the summer, range from puppet shows and nature programs in the city's parks to storytelling hours at local libraries and bookstores. In addition, many museums and theaters have specific children's programs.

For a further listing

of what is available when you're in town, see Friday's Daily News

or

New York Times

, and "Activities for Children" in the weekly

New York

magazine, as well as

Time Out

and the

Village Voice

. An excellent automated directory of family-oriented current events all around the city is available through the New York Convention and Visitors Bureau, 810 7th Ave (between 52nd and 53rd sts), NY 10019 tel 212/484-1222 (Mon-Fri 8.30am-6pm, Sat & Sun 9am-5pm; [www.nycvisit.com](http://www.nycvisit.com)).

### THEATER, PUPPET SHOWS, CIRCUSES AND OTHERS

The following is a highly selective roundup of miscellaneous activities, particularly cultural ones that might be of interest to young children.

Barnum & Bailey Circus

Madison Square Garden tel 212/465-6741.

This large touring circus is usually in New York between the end of March and the beginning of May.

Big Apple Circus

Lincoln Center tel 212/546-2656.

Small circus that performs in a tent in Damrosch Park next to the Met, from late Oct to early Jan. Tickets \$10-45.

## SHOPS: TOYS, BOOKS AND CLOTHES

### Books of Wonder

16 W 18th St (between 5th and 6th aves) tel 212/989-3270.

Excellent kids' bookstore, with a great story-hour on Sun at 11.45am, and author appearances Sat in the spring and fall.

### F.A.O. Schwarz

767 5th Ave (at 58th St) tel 212/644-9400.

Showpiece of a nationwide chain sporting three huge floors of everything a child could want. Fans of Barbie will want to check out the Barbie store, in the back of F.A.O. Schwarz, with its own Madison Ave entrance.

### New Victory Theater

209 W 42nd St tel 646/223-3020.

There is always a rich mix of affordable theater, music, dance, storytelling, film and puppetry, in addition to pre-performance workshops and post-performance participation. Everything about this theater is child-oriented, including the duration of performances (60-90 minutes). Closed during the summer.

### Thirteenth Street Repertory Company

50 W 13th St (between 5th and 6th aves) tel 212/675-6677. Sat & Sun 1pm and 3pm, year-round; \$7.

Forty-five-minute original musicals - such as "Rumplewho?" - specifically created for "little humans." Reservations needed, as these are very popular shows.

### Penny Whistle Toys

1283 Madison Ave (at 91st St) tel 212/369-3868; also 448 Columbus Ave (at 81st St) tel 212/873-9090.

Wonderful shop selling a fun, imaginative range of toys that deliberately eschews guns and war accessories, including replicas of old-fashioned toys rarely seen these days. Highly recommended.

### Red Caboose

23 W 45th St (between 5th and 6th aves); lower level - follow the flashing railroad sign in back of lobby tel 212/575-0155.

A unique shop specializing in models, particularly trains and train sets.

Tannen's Magic Studio  
24 W 25th St (between Broadway and 6th Ave) tel 212/929-4500.

Kids will never forget a visit to the largest magic shop in the world, with nearly 8000 props and magic sets. The staff consists of magicians who perform free shows throughout the day.

## MUSEUMS

Children's Museum of the Arts  
182 Lafayette St (between Broome and Grand sts). Wed noon-7pm, Thurs-Sun noon-5pm; \$5, under 1 free; tel 212/274-0986.

Art gallery of works by or for children. Children are encouraged to look at different types of art and then create their own, with paints, clay, plaster of Paris and any other simple medium.

Children's Museum of Manhattan  
212 W 83rd St (between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave). Tues-Sun 10am-5pm; \$6, under 1 free; tel 212/721-1234, [www.cmom.org](http://www.cmom.org)

A terrific participatory museum, with exhibit space over five floors; not to be missed is "Seuss!" - a whimsical area with decor inspired by the Dr. Seuss books, where kids can (literally) cook up some green eggs and ham. For ages 1-12, and highly recommended.

Fire Museum  
278 Spring St (between Hudson and Varick sts). Tues-Sun 10am-4pm; \$4, students \$2, under 12 \$1; tel 212/691-1303.

More popular than ever now, this unspectacular but pleasing homage to New York City's firefighters, and indeed firepeople everywhere, has fire engines from yesteryear, helmets, dog-eared photos and a host of other motley objects.

## SIGHTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Bronx Zoo (formally, the International Wildlife Conservation Park)  
Bronx River Parkway at Fordham Rd. March-Oct Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat & Sun 10am-5.30pm; Nov-Feb daily 10am-4.30pm; \$9, kids \$5, free on Weds, rides and some exhibits are an additional charge; tel 718/367-1010, [www.wcs.org](http://www.wcs.org)

The largest urban zoo in America has more than 4000 species of animals, reptiles and birds on display, many in huge simulated natural habitats. A children's section allows kids to climb around on large exhibits, including a giant spider web, and pet some of the tamer animals.

New York Aquarium  
W 8th St and Surf Ave, Coney Island, Brooklyn (Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat & Sun 10am-5.30pm; \$9.75; tel 718/265-FISH).

The aquarium is largely a series of darkened halls containing creatures from the deep, but open-air shows of whales and dolphins are held several times daily, as are the shark, sea otter and walrus feedings. Call for daily show/program info.

Skyride 350 5th Ave (at 34th St) in the Empire State Building. Daily 10am-10pm; \$13.50, 4-12 \$10.50; combination ticket to Skyride and observatory \$17 and \$10; tel 212/279-9777.

The Skyride, in the Empire State Building, is a big-screen thrill ride through the most well-known sights in the city, complete with tilting seats and surround sound. Bring a strong stomach; it may be too much for small children.