

# THE FAMILIES ISSUE

FIND  
THE RIGHT  
SUMMER  
CAMP  
PAGE 28

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# Globe Magazine

## SHOULD YOU LET YOUR CHILD PLAY FOOTBALL?

BY DANIEL MCGINN

*Plus*

23 FUN, FREE THINGS TO DO

DINNERTIME PICKS

IS YOUR PEDIATRICIAN  
IGNORING THESE TESTS?

MY TEEN'S HOLLYWOOD  
ADVENTURE



TOP PICKS IN BOSTON

**LOOK TO THE HEAVENS AT THE COIT OBSERVATORY**

**IDEAL FOR** Ages 5 and up  
Telescopes, binoculars, and even astronomers are on hand to inspire young scientists to cast their gaze skyward at Boston University's free weekly Public Open Night. Both bedtimes (in the spring and summer, the hourlong sessions begin at 8:30) and telescope-using abilities make this better for older kids, who will be dazzled by the complex wonders of the moon, planets, and countless stars. Call ahead to make sure weather conditions haven't forced a cancellation. 617-353-2630; [bu.edu/astromy](http://bu.edu/astromy)

**SOAK UP SUN AND HISTORY ON CASTLE ISLAND**

**IDEAL FOR** All ages  
Castle Island offers the chance to explore Boston's inner harbor from multiple points of view. The island is connected by causeways to South Boston, allowing for easy walking or biking access to Carson Beach, M Street Beach, and other spots along Dorchester Bay. Fort Independence, a pentagonal defense structure, marks the area as a military guard post dating back to 1634. Free tours are available from Memorial Day through Columbus Day. 617-268-8870; [mass.gov/dcr](http://mass.gov/dcr)

**EXPLORE NATURE AT THE ARNOLD ARBORETUM**

**IDEAL FOR** All ages  
The arboretum's 281 acres in Jamaica Plain and Roslindale are a wonderland of plant life, from the springtime lilacs to



the deep colors of autumn trees. In addition to simple nature walks, family-friendly activities abound. Kids ages 3 and up can borrow free

Discovery Packs containing materials to explore the park as a Living Museum or Science Lab. Families can also play Wildlife Bingo on print-at-home cards or do a season-specific "photo hunt," searching for and photographing plants described in free downloadable lists. 617-524-1718; [arboretum.harvard.edu](http://arboretum.harvard.edu)

# 23 Free Things to Do With the Family

BY HOLLY LEBOWITZ ROSSI



**IMAGINE A SAILOR'S LIFE ABOARD THE USS CONSTITUTION**

**IDEAL FOR** History and military buffs ages 8 and up  
GO BELOW DECKS ON THE WORLD'S OLDEST COMMISSIONED WARSHIP THAT'S STILL AFLOAT TODAY. A US NAVY SAILOR WILL LEAD YOUR FREE 30-MINUTE TOUR OF THE 44-GUN FRIGATE, WHICH FIRST SET SAIL IN 1797. LEARN ABOUT LIFE AT SEA DURING THE BARBARY WARS AND THE WAR OF 1812, AND DISCOVER THE HEROIC REASON THIS WOODEN SHIP WAS GIVEN ITS FAMOUS NICKNAME, "OLD IRONSIDES." VISITORS 18 AND OLDER MUST PRESENT A GOVERNMENT-ISSUED PHOTO ID TO BOARD THE SHIP, DOCKED IN CHARLESTOWN. 617-242-5601; [WWW.HISTORY.NAVY.MIL](http://WWW.HISTORY.NAVY.MIL)

**DON'T FORGET THE TOURIST FAVORITES**

**IDEAL FOR** All ages  
The grassy Boston Common, the country's first public park, and the more formal neighboring Public Garden come alive in springtime. In the Garden, admire the blossoms and play on and snap a photo at the iconic *Make Way for Ducklings* sculpture. On the Common, relax at the large playground next to the Frog Pond, which opens as a free splash pool in late June. Younger kids will ooh and aah when they see the golden dome of the Massachu-

setts State House next door, while older kids might like to step inside for a free tour (high schoolers can even train to become volunteer guides).  
*Frog Pond:* 617-635-2120; [bostonfrogpond.com](http://bostonfrogpond.com)  
*State House:* 617-727-3676; [www.sec.state.ma.us](http://www.sec.state.ma.us)

**TAKE IN THE VIEW AT THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT**

**IDEAL FOR** All ages, notably 8- to 12-year-olds studying the American Revolution  
The site of the first major



battle of the American Revolution will appeal to both history buffs and those up for a physical challenge: Visitors can climb the 294 steps of Charlestown's obelisk-shaped monument to take in a sweeping view of the famous battle site and the neighborhood that now surrounds it. The Battle of Bunker Hill Museum, also free, features a large diorama, complete with sounds, lights, and narration. 617-242-5641; [nps.gov/bost](http://nps.gov/bost)

## Mark Your Summer Calendars

### REVERE BEACH NATIONAL SAND SCULPTING FESTIVAL JULY 18-20

Remarkable sand creations emerge each year on America's historic first public beach. A free Interactive Kid Zone is packed with hands-on activities, including sand-sculpting lessons. 781-902-9742; [reverebeachpartnership.com](http://reverebeachpartnership.com)

### LOWELL FOLK FESTIVAL JULY 25-27

Folk, bluegrass, and ethnic music spills into the streets at this lively gathering, and free family activities like beanbag toss and "box hockey" games up the fun quotient. 978-970-5000; [lowellfolkfestival.org](http://lowellfolkfestival.org)

### DOWNTOWN PLYMOUTH WATERFRONT FESTIVAL AUGUST 23

Listen to live music on two stages, with children's entertainers featured on the main one, watch the exhilarating Ducky Dash race in Brewster Gardens (purchase a \$2 rubber duck to enter), or admire the classic cars on display at the Motor Heads Cruisin' Car Show during this day-long event. 508-830-1620; [plymouthwaterfrontfestival.com](http://plymouthwaterfrontfestival.com)



## From Modern Art to Stuffed Monkeys

VISIT THESE MUSEUMS WITHOUT PAYING A PENNY.

### THE DISCOVERY MUSEUMS ACTON

Free admission first Friday of the month, October-June, 4:30-8:30 p.m. 978-264-4200; [discoverymuseums.org](http://discoverymuseums.org)

### FULLER CRAFT MUSEUM BROCKTON

Free admission Thursdays, 5-9 p.m. 508-588-6000; [fullercraft.org](http://fullercraft.org)

### HARVARD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY HARVARD SQUARE

Free admission to Massachusetts residents Sundays (year-round), 9 a.m.-noon, and Wednesdays (September-May), 3-5 p.m. 617-495-3045; [hmn.harvard.edu](http://hmn.harvard.edu)

### INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART SEAPORT DISTRICT

Free admission Thursdays, 5-9 p.m. 617-478-3100; [icaboston.org](http://icaboston.org)

## Story Time, Craft Projects, and More

Many retailers offer free activities for children. A sampling:

### KIDS WORKSHOPS AT HOME DEPOT MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

First Saturday of the month, materials included; first come, first served. 800-466-3337; [workshops.homedepot.com](http://workshops.homedepot.com)

### BUILD AND GROW CLASSES AT LOWE'S MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Select Saturdays, materials included, registration required. 800-445-6937; [lowesbuildandgrow.com](http://lowesbuildandgrow.com)

### SMALAND AT IKEA STOUGHTON

Supervision provided at drop-off play space for potty-trained kids from 37 to 50 inches tall. 888-888-4532; [ikea.com](http://ikea.com)

### JEREMY LYONS SINGALONG AT STELLABELLA TOYS CAMBRIDGE

Saturdays, 11 a.m. 617-491-6290; [stellabellatoys.com](http://stellabellatoys.com)

### MUSIC AT HENRY BEAR'S PARK MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Thursdays, 11 a.m., singalong with Jeff Jam, Arlington, 781-646-9400; one Friday per month, 5-6 p.m., music, Cambridge, 617-547-8424, and Brookline, 617-264-2422. [henrybear.com](http://henrybear.com)

### FAMILY ACTIVITIES AT BAREFOOT BOOKS CONCORD

Times and dates vary; music, story times, infant play groups, and some crafts. 978-369-1770; [barefootbooks.com](http://barefootbooks.com)

### STORYTELLER SUSAN LENOE AT ANDOVER BOOKSTORE

ANDOVER  
Fridays, 10 a.m. 978-475-0143; [hugobookstores.com](http://hugobookstores.com)

### STORY TIME AT NEWTONVILLE BOOKS NEWTON CENTRE

Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. 617-244-6619; [newtonvillebooks.com](http://newtonvillebooks.com)

### STORY HOUR AT PORTER SQUARE BOOKS

CAMBRIDGE  
Wednesdays, 11 a.m. 617-491-2220; [portersquarebooks.com](http://portersquarebooks.com)

### STORY TIME AT BROOKLINE BOOKSMITH

BROOKLINE  
Third Saturday and last Sunday of each month, 10:30 a.m. 617-566-6660; [brooklinebooksmith-shop.com](http://brooklinebooksmith-shop.com)

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