

12 things to do with the kids before school begins

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Every summer, there comes a day when camp ends but school is still weeks away. What to do?

Our list of 12 kid-friendly venues in the Lower Hudson Valley is bound to yield some interesting diversions, from a hands-on experience at an art museum to blasting off in a simulated space mission to 3-D printing in your local library.

Get started this weekend!

(Photo: Groundwork Hudson)

1. Science Barge

There are not many places where you can catch a science lesson while floating on the Hudson River, but the Science Barge lets you do exactly that. Sitting at 99 Dock St. on the Yonkers waterfront, the prototype sustainable urban farm and environmental center is powered by windmills and solar panels and has a greenhouse irrigated by purified rain and river water.

Go: You can walk on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 6 p.m., with a \$5 suggested donation, or check out Science Sundays for workshops and activities Sundays through October. 99 Dock St., Yonkers. 914-375-2151, groundworkhv.org.

2. Katonah Museum of Art

Yes, there are world-class exhibits here designed to attract adult audiences, but KMA is brilliant in building its next generation of art fans with a fully stocked family program. There are stroller tours, Imagine It! Days in which families can draw in the galleries, work with special materials, and go on "treasure" hunts.

Go: Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Closed Monday. 134 Jay St., Route 22, Katonah, 914-232-9555, katonahmuseum.org.

3. Discovery Times Square

There's still time to catch three of the most popular exhibits here, including "Star Wars And The Power of Costume," "Body Worlds" and "The Vikings Exhibition." "Star Wars" features 70 hand-crafted costumes from the first six blockbuster films and many sets and props. The landmark "Body Worlds" exhibit explores the human body. "The Vikings Exhibition" showcases the largest collection of Viking artifacts ever assembled in North America, with more than 500 treasures including a model of a Viking Ghost Ship.



Go: All three are open through Labor Day, seven days a week. Adult tickets are \$29.50. 226 West 44th Street (between Broadway and 8th Avenues).

The famous gold bikini worn by Carrie Fisher's Princess Leia when she was enslaved by Jabba the Hutt. (Photo: Paul Martinka, Paul Martinka)

4. Legoland Discovery Center

Have your kids build up their imagination at Legoland Discovery Center. They'll be able to check out a very cool "Star Wars Phantom Menace," hone their skills in instructor-taught building classes, take in a 4-D Lego movie, enjoy two rides and more. Tickets start at \$16.50.

Go: 39 Fitzgerald Street, Yonkers. 866-243-0770, legolanddiscoverycenter.com.

5. Hudson River Museum

Want to see the stars? Head to Yonkers. The Hudson River Museum has a planetarium that features three shows a day each Saturday and Sunday. The museum has a full slate of science and art-related family programs, too. Open noon-5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday; planetarium shows are 12:30, 2, 3:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Go: 511 Warburton Ave, Yonkers. 914-963-4550, hrm.org.

6. Muscoot Farm

In any weather, it's fun to tromp around this working farm with its big red barn, chicken coop and cows grazing in the fields. There are no bells and whistles, no technology, just an old-fashioned farm experience that kids of all ages appreciate. You can wander around or take part in some of the many activities offered throughout the year.

Go: 51 Route 100, Katonah. 914-864-7282, muscootfarm.org.

7. Challenger Center

"Crew members" will attend a briefing session and select tasks to perform on a simulated space mission at the Challenger Center in Airmont, which is all about all things space. Think Matt Damon in "The Martian" and you'll understand why kids just get a kick out of traveling in a simulated outer space. The tasks are detailed enough to feel real and challenging, simple enough for kids to do, and fun.

Go: The Challenger Center, 225 Route 59, Airmont, 845-357-3416, LHVCC.com.

8. 'Autobahn' of West Nyack

The newest attraction at Palisades Center, Autobahn Indoor Speedway allows racers to thrill as they hit the track in the site's electric-powered go karts. Adult karts that can hit speeds of 50 mph can be used by racers 13 and up, but younger ones can fill their need for speed with junior karts for kids as young as 8 years old. Junior races are \$19.99 and adult races cost \$24.99.



Autobahn Indoor Speedway in West Nyack is New York's largest completely indoor go-kart facility. (Photo: Submitted)

Go: Find the speedway on the second floor of Palisades Center, 1000 Palisades Center Dr., West Nyack. 845-535-1515.

9. Tarrytown Lighthouse

A tour of this historic lighthouse is fun for kids and adults. You can climb to the top, see where the lightkeeper once lived and get a panoramic view of the construction on the new Tappan Zee Bridge.

Go: Last tour of the season is Aug. 28, 1-3 p.m. Last tour begins at 2:30 p.m. \$5 adults, \$3 kids. 299 Palmer Avenue, Sleepy Hollow (in Kingsland Point Park). 914-366-5109 for more information.



Sleepy Hollow Lighthouse, June 28, 2016. (Photo: Peter Carr/The Journal News)



10. The public library

Yes, the library. Kids can get a start back to school taking out books to read, or films to watch, but many local libraries also offer great programs for kids, including 3-D printing. At the White Plains, New City, Yonkers and North Castle libraries anyone can print everything from keychains to model cars.

(White Plains Librarian Erik Carlson teaches a 3 week course in 3D printing at the White Plains Public library on July 11, 2016. Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News)

Go: Find information on Westchester County Public Libraries at westchesterlibraries.org; in Rockland, go to www.rcls.org.

11. Bear Mountain

For some old-school fun, you can't beat this sprawling state park. There are trails to explore, boats to rent, a small zoo and a charming carousel.

Go: Parking (weekends and holidays) \$8. Bear Mountain State Park, 845-786-2701, bearmountainicerink.com.

12. Wolf Conservation Center

Kids of all ages will have a howling good time as they learn about wolf families and discover why it's a special time for packs in North America. The center recently welcomed a new member: a wolf pup, nicknamed Trumpet on account of his loud squeals, was born May 4, joining the center's 20 residents, including ambassador wolves Atka, Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr. Admission is \$13 adults, \$11 children under 12

Go: 7 Buck Run St, South Salem, 914-763-2373, nywolf.org.

The Mexican grey wolf, nicknamed Trumpet, should weight between 55 and 80 pounds once he's mature. (Photo: Maggie Howell)

