

Get Out of the House

1 2 FAMILY OUTINGS



Barefoot Starbucks Drive Thru

Most Starbucks have drive-thrus which is the most excellent invention ever. My kids and I add a little something extra to the trip by not wearing any shoes, getting in the car and bringing along the dog.

Many locations have dog biscuits at the drive thru window or they may offer to make your four-legged-family member a "Puppiccino"- whipped cream in a cup. Treat yourself and order something off the **Starbucks Secret Menu**.

Visit A Fast Food Playground

Just because you go to a fast food playground, doesn't mean that you need to feed your kids fast food.

McDonald's has a great coffee drink and smoothie selection. Think of it as getting a nice drink for yourself (unfortunately, no alcohol), sitting peacefully, and watching your kids play on a gigantic, indoor playground. Many of these restaurants also have free wi-fi.

Go to the Library

Libraries are pretty underrated these days. My local library has a fantastic kid's section with touch-screen computers and a small play area for itty-bitties. Plus, this area also features comfy chairs that I have seen parents kicking back in and reading the library's free selection of magazines while their kids are happily entertained. The library also hosts a ton of cool free activities – everything from puppet theater to science experiments.

Check out the Mall

Using my local mall as an example: Chandler Fashion Square has a playground for those under 45 inches tall complete with a baby section for the little ones. There is also an indoor train and mini coin-operated merry-go-round. You can also go visit the animals at the Petfinder center. Barnes and Noble hosts Storytime on Fridays at 10:30AM. National Geographic Kids club is Wednesdays at 10:00AM and every Wednesday at 3:30PM your kids can get free cookies, milk and a craft at Wildflower Bakery. If no event is occurring at the time of your visit, the mall also provides very good people watching.

Go Grocery Shopping

No, really! Pile your kids into a car cart and have them come along for the ride. Many grocery stores have these carts available, although you may need to search for them. Home Depot has awesome car carts as does Whole Foods. Some grocery stores also have play centers where you can drop your (potty-trained) kids off to have fun while you shop.

Visit a Chocolate Factory

This is real! **Cerreta's** is a family owned chocolate confectionary that gives daily tours and chocolate samples. Kids can even make a chocolate pizza.

get outdoors

Play at a local park

Always fun and free! Two great parks in Phoenix are **Riverview** and Tumbleweed. They both have ziplines which is sure to keep kids and parents happy.

Go to the Public Pool

Public pools have upgraded since I was a kid. Here in Phoenix, the Hamilton Aquatic Center features two water slides, beach entry, lazy river, diving boards and a kid's playground in the water! Mesquite Groves in Chandler is like a mini water park. Check your local pools for hours of operation.

Visit a Zoo

Perhaps check out the petting zoo and farm or spy on some cheetahs at the Phoenix Zoo. Or, get up close and personal with sharks at the **Wildlife World Zoo and Aquarium**. Wildlife World Zoo also has a sky ride where you can fly above the tree and spy on kangaroos from the air.

Go on a Hike

If the weather is beautiful, get outside! The Phoenix area has a ton of amazing parks to explore. Go hiking at Papago Park, San Tan Mountain Regional Park or Utery Mountain Regional Park. Many of these parks also have free, scheduled classes where you can learn more about the outdoors and wildlife.

Visit the Airport

The top level of the parking garage of Terminal 4 at Sky Harbor has a fantastic view of the runway. Park there or for an extra treat, park at the meters in the Park N Ride lot off of 44th st and take Sky Train to the terminal. Not only can you pretend that you riding the monorail at Disneyland, but it also offers a unique vantage point of the tarmac from up above.

Visit a Museum for Free

Check out a Culture Pass. Some are indoors, some are outdoors. All you need is a library card to gain admission for two to a variety of Phoenix activities. Check out a new exhibit with kids at Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. Explore the Native American Room at the Heard Museum where a different craft awaits at each exhibit. Learn about space travel at the **Challenger Space Center**. Walk into Victorian times at the Rosson House Museum. There are also passes available for the Phoenix Zoo and the Children's Museum of Phoenix, but those are a littler harder to find.