

# TOUCH AND LEARN

## Enjoy summer museum fun with children

CRYSTAL SARAKAS CORRESPONDENT

Learning shouldn't stop just because school is out for the summer. Fortunately, there are a number of kid-friendly museums within easy driving distance that will help youngsters explore the world around them.

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PROVIDED

The Sciencenter's Strange Matter exhibit has more than a dozen hands-on experiences.

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## Learn

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### Sciencenter

- » 601 1st St., Ithaca
- » (607) 272-0600
- » www.sciencenter.org
- » Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Mini-golf is open during regular hours.
- » Museum prices: \$6 for children ages 3-17; \$8 for adults; \$7 for seniors. Free for children younger than 3. Mini-golf is \$6 per player (\$5 for members) or free for children younger than 3.

The Sciencenter in Ithaca is a hands-on science museum, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Sciencenter welcomes more than 100,000 guests each year and has a variety of exhibits focusing on astronomy, health and wellness, early education, live animals, the ocean, sustainability, young scientists and more.

The current featured exhibit is "Strange Matter." It includes more than a dozen hands-on experiences in the world of materials science. Children can use a special filter to explore light waves, experiment with the thinnest material in existence, and make a pool of magnetic fluid dance. And don't forget the new 18-hole mini-golf course.

### Please Touch Museum

- » Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park, 4231 Avenue of the Republic, Philadelphia
- » (215) 581-3181
- » www.pleasetouchmuseum.org
- » Hours: 9 a.m. to 5



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

Keira William, of Binghamton, plays with the Water Wonder exhibit in the Curiosity Corner designed for young children at the Sciencenter in Ithaca.

p.m. Monday - Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

» Museum prices: \$17 for children and adults; free for members and children younger than 1.

Among the many wonderful places to visit in Philadelphia is the Please Touch Museum in Fairmount Park. Founded in 1976, the Please Touch Museum was one of the first in the nation to focus on families with children 7 and younger, with a mission of providing learning opportunities through play.

Today, kids can explore eight different exhibits, go to the theater, ride on a carousel and more. In the Flight Fantasy exhibit, children can row a flying machine or play hopscotch on clouds. The Imagination Playground features giant foam blocks, where kids (and parents too) can build whatever your imagination can dream up. Don't forget Wonderland, which features the Pool of Tears, the Tea Party and more.

### The Discovery Center of the



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The Sciencenter includes many hands-on exhibits.

### Southern Tier

- » 60 Morgan Road, Binghamton
- » (607) 773-8661
- » www.thediscoverycenter.org
- » Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday; closed Sundays through Labor Day.
- » Museum prices: \$7; free for children younger than 1.

The Discovery Center is located in Ross Park, next to the Binghamton Zoo. There are 30 play-and-learn exhibits, where kids can report the news and weather at a TV station, play inside a

giant bubble or fly an A-10 jet. And don't forget to shop in the Weis Market. (Parents can enjoy a trip down memory lane from their own shopping experiences as kids.)

The current featured exhibit is "What's the Buzz? A Honey of an Exhibit." Children can explore the life of the honeybee. Climb inside a 14-foot beehive, learn about bees and health with microscopes and learn to waggle-dance just like a bee. (Who doesn't love a good waggle-dance?)

Milton J. Rubinstein



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Two NASA rockets are on display outside the New York Hall of Science in Queens. The rockets debuted at the 1964 World's Fair as part of a space park.

When the kids are tired out from all the hands-on learning, check out the Bristol Omnitheater. The domed screen is 66 feet in diameter and six stories tall. Find the latest movie listings on the museum's website.

The museum also features the Silverman Planetarium at 11:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

### New York Hall of Science

» 47-01 111th Street, Queens (located in Flushing Meadows Corona Park)

- » (718) 699-0005
- » www.nysci.org
- » Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

» Museum prices: \$12 for children ages 2-17, seniors and students; \$15 for adults. Reservations are required and are made through the website. Parking is available at the museum for an additional fee, but check the museum website for blackout dates.

One of the top 10 science museums in the country, NYSCI features more than 450 exhibits, demonstrations and workshops that explore STEM principles.

The newest exhibit is "Connected Worlds," an animated world that features six ecosystems, each with its own trees, plants and animals but all sharing a common supply of water. Your actions affect how the world is kept in balance.

Explore how molecules shape our bodies and our world in the "Molecules and Health" exhibit. And there's the Preschool Place, where younger visitors age six and under can experience multi-sensory activities in a safe place.

### Museum of Science and Technology

- » 500 S. Franklin St., Syracuse
- » (315) 425-9068
- » www.most.org
- » Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday - Sunday. Open Tuesdays only during the summer.

» Museum prices: Exhibit Hall only is \$8 for children ages 2-11 and seniors, or \$10 for adults. For the Exhibit Hall and Omni Theatre, \$12 for children and seniors or \$14 for adults. Planetarium and Motion Simulator are an additional \$2 each and are only available with museum admission.

For older children, check out the MOST science museum in Syracuse. Many of the exhibits are targeted at middle-grade students, with features like Discovery Cave, where you can climb into the fossil pit and dig for fossils, or check out the living coral and tropical fish in the Coral Reef Adventure tank. The Science Playhouse allows kids to climb through a giant maze that teaches scientific principles through play.