

Babes on the Town

WHO SAYS YOU HAVE TO STAY HOME WITH THE KIDS OR HIRE A SITTER? SF IS TEEMING WITH ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY. BY NINA WEISS

LET'S TALK WITH THE ANIMALS

Nothing says family time like the zoo. And with six acres and plenty of hands-on activity at the **SF Children's Zoo** (1 Zoo Rd., 415-753-7080, sfzoo.org/kids), there's more than enough to make a whole day out of it (all events described here take place daily until Labor Day and on weekends afterward). Start the day at 10:30 a.m., feeding breakfast to sheep, ponies and other domestic animals. Then, from 11 a.m. to noon, join the Hatchery Tour and help collect eggs and feed and water the chicks (the tour starts at 11:15 after Labor Day). Next, help the keepers groom the goats and lambs (daily, at 1 p.m.). For some downtime, take a walk along the Nature Trail, a secluded pathway that gets you up close and personal with birds, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Afterward, head to the indoor Insect Zoo and see more than 30 species of crawlies, including velvet ants and scorpions, in eye-level terrariums. Once back outside, watch your child's eyes light up to the native flutterers in the butterfly garden. End the afternoon with dinner at the zoo's kid-friendly Leaping Lemur Café for some mac 'n' cheese or chicken fingers.

GETTING BENDY

Carve out time to bond with your child while exercising your body, mind and spirit—all three of which are probably in need of a little TLC after taking care of a baby—at **It's Yoga Kids** in the Presidio (569 Rucker St., 415-561-0900, itsyogakids.com). Geared toward specific age groups, the workouts include Mom and Baby Yoga for newborns to pre-crawling babies, which emphasizes poses that work your abdomen and pelvic muscles while increasing flexibility. Mom and Baby Fitness In and Out, for newborns to toddlers, combines yoga and Pilates with such outdoor exercises as jogging and stair climbing.

GOING GEEK

Looking for an educational kid-centric activity that's brain food for parents too? At the nonprofit **Zeum** arts and technology museum (221 Fourth St., 415-820-3320, zeum.org), you'll find workshops and activities that capture young and old alike. First, spend some time with your child exploring the interactive stations—dedicated to such topics as clay animation, video production and digital art—spread throughout the 34,000-square-foot center on the rooftop of the Yerba Buena Gardens. Then, take a walk through the traveling exhibition "Children of Jerusalem: Painting Pain, Dreaming Peace" (on display through Sept. 30) in the Spiral Gallery. Presented in partnership with the Consulate General of Israel, the show features artwork by Israeli and Palestinian children that depicts images of conflict and peace.

DINNER AT SIX

You just changed the day's fifth dirty diaper, finished a second load of laundry and cleaned up the trail of toys that made its way from the upstairs nursery to the downstairs living room. You're starving, and the last thing you feel like doing is making dinner. Enter **Chenery Park** (683 Chenery St., 415-337-8537, chenerypark.com) in Glen Park, which offers an extra-special welcome to families on Kids Club Tuesdays. The cozy neighborhood restaurant serves contemporary American cuisine, with a special kids' menu that includes such favorites as grilled cheese, root-beer floats and "beef-a-roni." There's also the all-important changing table in the co-ed bathroom upstairs. Insider tip: Make reservations for dibs on the booster seats or high chairs.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

If you've exhausted the *Baby Einstein* series, get the little ones' creative juices flowing again while you shop at **Crafty Kids** (3108 Fillmore St., 415-771-0570, craftystyle.com), a children's boutique and activity center in the Marina. Kids ages three to six can express their inner Picasso as they decorate shirts, picture frames, hats and jewelry boxes (call for the current workshop schedule). Meanwhile, you're free to peruse cute kids' tees and jeans by Splendid, True Religion and Juicy Couture. Each session costs \$21 and includes all materials. For a more affordable (read: free) option, stop by Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for storytelling that will foster your child's love of reading.

PONY RIDES

Sometimes, all it takes is a ride on a classic carousel. (Remember when your parents took you to the local amusement park way back when?) Parents might also enjoy a visit to the carousel for a peek into some SF history. The hand-carved **Charles Loeff Carousell** at the Yerba Buena Gardens (Fourth and Howard streets, yerbabuenagardens.com), which recently turned 100, has gone through several relocations and restorations. Loeff originally built the carousel in 1906 in Rhode Island with the intention of installing it in San Francisco. The big quake intervened, however, and the carousel went to Seattle instead. The 1911 Luna Park fire in Seattle finally sent the carousel to SF's ocean-side amusement park, Playland-at-the-Beach, where it stayed until 1972. After a few more moves, it was bought in 1998 and fully restored by the City of San Francisco, and then installed at the Children's Garden in the Yerba Buena Gardens, where you can enjoy a ride for only \$2 (open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) x



(FROM TOP): LIKE WE ALWAYS SAY, THE BEST ZOO IS A PETTING ZOO; UPWARD-FACING BABY AT IT'S YOGA KIDS; THE ARTWORK OF "CHILDREN OF JERUSALEM" IS ON SHOW AT ZEUM.