



SUMMER FUN GUIDE 2020 COVID EDITION

**Your exclusive guide to
having fun this summer
despite Coronavirus closings
and restrictions.**



Introduction

Every summer Fun 4 Kids creates a list of activities to do around town called Summer Fun on a Dime. This year, with COVID-19 changing the way we not only enjoy summer, but the way we live in general, I decided to pause my Summer Fun on a Dime series. Instead, I created the Summer Fun Guide 2020 Edition, that includes things you can do at home, or that are safe for social distancing.

The first few pages of this guide are dedicated to hiking, beaches and day trips. You'll find lists along with a summary of information about each of the places I mention. Whenever possible, I included a link to more information to help you plan your visits.

Another big change due to COVID is summer camp! Each year, I spend a lot of time talking about summer camp but with many being closed or parents opting to keep their kids home, I wanted to provide a lot of activities to help. Inside you'll find ideas for camp at home, activities for teens, camp kits for sale and even snack ideas!

Lastly, I wanted to help you keep track of some of the things that have re-opened, specifically camps so I've included a list of summer camps that plan to re-open as of 6/12/20. I will continue to post updates to this on the site.

Even though there aren't as many in-person events, I'm updating the calendar regularly with virtual and in-person events as I see them. In July, a new series called Summer Camp at Home will launch. In it, I'll post ideas for themed activities at home.

I hope the information in this guide helps you and your family have a fun summer!

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Have fun.

Jenn



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Kid Friendly Hiking Spots and Trails in WNY

There is a post on the Fun 4 Kid's website with some of the most common hiking spots, like Reinstein Woods, etc. throughout WNY. [Click here to view the post.](#)

Below are some less commonly mentioned ideas!

Hiking Trails Good for All Ages

1. Akron Park Falls, Akron, NY

There's a waterfall, hiking trails, a picnic area and a number of playgrounds to check out.

Bathrooms - Yes

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

2. Buckhorn State Park, Grand Island, NY

Buckhorn offers a 2 mile walk to a peninsula where you'll find some great views.

Bathrooms – No

Make a Day of It – [Adrian's Custard and Beef](#) is a great spot for family friendly dining and/or ice cream.

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

3. Chorizo Loop, Depew, NY

Chorizo Loop is a 1.6 mile loop that takes you around the perimeter of Reinstein Woods.

You can usually spot some wildlife like deer, beavers, turtles, geese and a lot of birds.

Bathrooms – Yes

Make a Day of It – [Green Acres Ice Cream](#) is nearby and they always have a lot of family-friendly outdoor events.

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

4. John B. Austin Nature Trail, Lockport, NY

This is more of a walk than a hike so it's good for all ages.

Bathrooms – Not noted online.

Make a Day of It – [Reids Drive In](#), [Lake Effect Ice Cream](#) and [Hoover Dairy](#) are nearby.

[Get directions and find more information.](#)



5. Knox Farm, East Aurora, NY

Knox Farm is noted as a quiet, safe walk for families. The trails are smooth and easy to navigate.

Bathrooms – Yes

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

Hiking Spots for Families with Older Kids

1. 18 Mile Creek, Hamburg, NY

Also called the Southcreek Trail, this path features a waterfall with a few bigger climbs in spots which is why it is suggested for older families.

Bathrooms – Not noted.

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

2. Niagara Gorge Trails, Niagara Falls, NY

In between Niagara Falls and Lewiston, NY you'll find the Niagara Gorge Trails. There are a lot of stairs, but you can avoid them. You walk along the water and there are some potential tripping hazards so this spot would probably be best for older children.

Bathrooms – Yes

Make a Day of It – A few minute drive will take you in to the Village of Lewiston where you can eat at [The Silo](#) restaurant or enjoy a local favorite, [Hibbard's Custard](#).

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

3. Royalton Ravine Park, Royalton, NY

Royalton Ravine Park is home to a waterfall, suspension footbridge, and historic homestead ruins.

Bathrooms – Yes

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

4. Sprague Brook Big Loop

It's a 9.9 mile loop that takes you through trails passing streams, a footbridge and some uphill terrain.

Bathrooms – Not noted.

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

Other Hiking Resources

- Visit [Erie County Park/Forest Locator](#) allows you to plug in your address and find trails near you.
- [The Hiking Project website](#) has a lot of information on local hiking spots and it breaks trails down by difficulty.

Kid Friendly Beaches in Driving Distance to WNY

There are a number of beaches within driving in and around WNY. We have a complete list on the Fun 4 Kids site. [Click here to view it.](#)

We also polled our community and asked for their favorites. Here's the top 4 beaches in WNY according to the poll.

Beaver Island State Park

2136 West Oakfield Road, Grand Island, NY Phone: 716-773-3271

Dawn to dusk, swimming 11am-7pm. Fees: \$7 per car when swimming and \$6 per car without swimming. In past years, lifeguards have been on duty during swimming hours. Changing rooms and showers were also available. Please check for changes due to COVID.

[Click here for more info.](#)

Bennett Beach

Beach hours are 10 to 7 p.m. but you can't start swimming until 11 a.m. Swimming doesn't start until 6/21 and then it's weather permitting and when lifeguards on duty.

[The beach doesn't have a specific address, but here's directions.](#)

[Click here for more info on the beach.](#)

Evangola Beach

10191 Old Lake Shore Road, Irving, NY, Phone: 716 549-1802

Here you'll find a natural sand beach on Lake Erie. Hours are dawn to dusk, swimming 11am-7pm. Fees: \$7 per car when swimming and \$6 without swimming. Lifeguards have been on site in previous years.

[Click here for more info.](#)

Sunset Bay Beach

1028 South Shore Dr. Irving, NY

At Sunset Bay you'll find a sandy beach perfect for swimming. However, the area does also attract a party crowd so be conscious of where you set up shop if you don't want your kids around it. [Click here for more info.](#)



Kid Friendly Day Trips to Take That Are Social Distancing Friendly

PLEASE NOTE – Before taking the drive to visit any of these establishments, please check the website's provided to make sure they aren't closed or operating with restrictions that might impact your time there.

Ellicottville, NY

Ellicottville is generally known for its festivals and large events, but even without events there is still things to explore in the area. Ellicottville is surrounded by nature which means there are number of hiking trails available. [Here's where you can find info on hiking in Ellicottville.](#)

If hiking isn't for you, you can visit the Nannen Arboretum. Nannen Arboretum is a beautiful garden you walk through. Sky High Adventure Park is opening with added measures to ensure social distancing on June 6, 2020. And, if you're hungry, many restaurants in the village are open for takeout.

Griffis Sculpture Park, East Otto, NY

The park has 250 large scale sculptures plus hiking trails. [Check out their site for details.](#)

Green Lakes State Park, Fayetteville, NY Green Lakes was recommended by a Fun 4 Kids community member! It's about 2 hours away from Buffalo but there is a lot to do while you're there including hiking, a beach and camping. As of June 5, 2020 their website noted that they were restricting the number of occupants in the park so please check to see if that's changed before you plan to visit.

[Here's a link to more information about Green Lakes.](#)

Kinzua Bridge and Damn, Alleghany Reservoir – Spans between New York and The Kinzua Bridge and damn was a reader recommendation. The reader took the drive to Pennsylvania and said it was a good day trip. [Here's more details.](#)

Letchworth State Park, Castile, NY

Letchworth offers 66 miles of hiking trails complete with 3 waterfalls! Letchworth offers a lot of things to do, perfect for a day trip, plus amenities.

[Get directions and find more information.](#)

Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls, NY

Niagara Falls is a popular tourist destination. Typically, during the summer months, it's packed with out of town guests. With the restrictions on travel due to COVID, you may find it to be less crowded this year, especially while travel between the US/Canadian border is restricted. Head to



Niagara Falls for the day, explore the park and then check out [Third Street Alley](#). When you're done, visit some of the local restaurants for a meal or desert. When I visit Niagara Falls, I love to go to [Michaels](#) or the [Como](#) for Italian, [Buzzy's](#) for Pizza and [Dee Dee's](#) for ice cream (Dee Dee's is cash only)! [Here's a site to help you plan your trip.](#)

Presque Isle State Park, Presque Isle in Erie, PA

Presque Isle is a favorite destination for many WNYers looking for beach day outside of WNY. Please check their website before visiting to see if they've put any restrictions in place due to COVID. [Here's a link to more information that should help you plan your day.](#)

Watkins Glen State Park, Watkins Glen, NY and the Finger Lakes Region

Watkins Glen is a beautiful state park in the Finger Lakes area, with trails, hiking and waterfalls. According to their site, the park is open but operating with restrictions. The Finger Lakes area in general has a lot of hiking and beaches.

[Visit this link before visiting to see the most up to date information.](#)

[You can also find information about the Finger Lakes area in general at Gofingerlakes.com.](#)

Ideas to Keep the Kids Busy at Home

Theme Weeks

Many camps have weekly themes. You could consider doing something similar at home to keep activities fresh and new each week!

Here's an example of how a theme week could look with activity ideas you could adapt for most elementary age kids. They are broken down by day but you could do them in any order that worked for you. We've also included products you can purchase and more for each. If you'd like more ideas like this, visit our website and check out our Summer Camp at Home series. I'll be posting ideas like this regularly throughout July and August.

1. Water Week - A week full of water experiences, games, experiments, toys and more.

Day 1

Water Safety and Play Day

- Teach the kids about water safety. Gold Fish Swim School has a series of videos on YouTube dedicated to water safety. [You can find them here.](#)
- Depending on the age of your child, you could incorporate information about how to teach kids to perform CPR. [Here's a video to help.](#) [There's also this book from Amazon that teaches kids the basics of first aid.](#) At the end of the book they can earn their "Official Junior Paramedics" card.
- End the day by setting up a sprinkler and letting the kids play some games. [Here is a list of sprinkler games.](#)
- If you need a sprinkler, [here's one we found on Amazon!](#)

Day 2

Water Experiments

For Toddlers or Younger Kids

- Go to the dollar store and buy something small they can "dig for". Could be colored marbles, little army men, plastic figurines, what ever you can find that might interest them.
- Buy a small plastic bin too. It could be shoe box size or a little bigger.
- Put the toys in the bin, add water and freeze.
- Give your kids a hammer and let them chip away at the ice to uncover all the toys.
- This [Sink or Float](#) activity is also good for younger kids.

For Older Kids

- [Here's](#) are a few sites with easy at-home experiments:

-
- [The Magic Water Experiment](#)
 - [Oil and Water Experiment](#)
 - [Climbing Rainbow](#)
 - [Walking Water](#)

Day 3

Water War Day

- Get the kids to make “hiding spots”. These could be two lawn chairs with a towel over them, or anything you have in your yard they can “hide” behind.
- Get big buckets for “filling stations”. You can use what you have around the house or get [buckets like this](#) from Amazon.
- Then fill a bunch of water balloons. You can use regular balloons or make your like easy and buy [Bunchos!](#) Get squirt guns and some blasters. The Dollar Tree usually has both in summer but if you can’t find them in stores or would like some higher quality ones to last the summer, here’s [water guns](#) and [blasters](#) on Amazon.
- Then, let them play as long you can!
- When they are done playing, have a contest for whoever can pick up the most pieces of broken water balloons. Give the winner a prize!

Day 4

Messy Play Day

There are endless things you can do here, but here’s a few ideas.

Get out your slip and slide. If you don’t have one, [here’s one from Amazon](#). Instead of using water, go to the dollar store and buy a few bottles of foamy shaving cream. Fill the slip and slide with shaving cream and let the kids run and slide on that. When they are done, hook up the water and rinse them off.

[Mud Painting](#)

[Water Gun Painting](#)

You’ll need:

[Paper](#)

[Squirt-able Paint](#)

[Bubble Foam Pit](#)

[Muddy Cars or Trucks Wash](#)

Day 5

Take a “field trip” to a local beach for the day. Here’s a list of [beaches in WNY](#) in addition to what’s mentioned above.

For Older Kids

Entrepreneur Week

Teach your child about being an entrepreneur by helping them create and start a business. It could be as simple as a lemonade stand to something more complex, but help them go from concept to launch. If you aren’t familiar with the process yourself, check out the [Kidpreneurs Academy](#).

Life Skills Week

So much has changed with addition of cell phones, social media and texting! A lot of kids don’t know some of the old-fashioned skills that are used as often in today’s society, but are still very important.

Here’s a list of [40 old-fashioned skills kids should know](#). Break up the list and do a few each day. This is another great list of [life skills that teens should know](#).

Outschool also some great courses on financial literacy too.

For more theme week ideas, visit our Pinterest board about [Summer Camp at Home](#).

Local Buffalo Businesses Selling Camp or Activity Kits

If you don’t want to put together all the activities, find a local business selling camp kits. Camp kits are a great way to bring some of the activity’s kids would normally do at camp, home. Here’s some of the local companies offering camp kits.

[Dee Romito](#) – Local author Dee Romito has a book called Fort Builders with activities for kids.

[Engineering For Kids Buffalo](#)

[Little Buffalo](#)

[Rolly Pollies of WNY](#)

National Companies Selling Camp or Activity Kits

[Annie’s Kit Clubs](#) – A variety of monthly kits that have everything from crafts to woodworking activities.



[KiwiCo](#) – Kiwi is a subscription company that has branched out to include summer camp boxes this year. They are going to start offering them as of June 22 but you can [get on the list to pre-order here](#).

Virtual Camps and Events

[Local Businesses Offering Virtual Camps](#)

Betty's Music Together

Betty's is offering 30-minute classes weekly for 7 weeks. You can register online [here](#).

Danceability

Danceability is offering virtual dance classes throughout July and August. You can register for individual classes or pay a flat fee for unlimited classes.

Explore & More Museum

Explore & More is offering virtual programming for kids ages 5 to 10 years old. [Details are on their site and can be found here.](#)

[National Camp Opportunities](#)

Arree

If offering Creativity Camp which teaches kids how to do things like write stories, make a comic and several other things. [Visit their site for details.](#)

Camp Invention

Camp Invention features STEM related programming for children in grades K-6. They are also have centers offering in-person camp here locally. [Visit their site for details.](#)

Bloodline Hockey

Bloodline Hockey is offering virtual hockey camp at various times throughout the summer. The camp is interactive. Details can be **found here.**

Outschool

Outschool is a website offering both virtual classes and camps all summer long. Some options start as low as \$10 and they have a lot of options! From your typical drawing/art classes to learning a foreign language to learning life skills, there is something for every age and interest on Outschool. [Click here to visit their site and browse.](#)

Oyster

Oyster isn't really a "camp kit" but based on the description it seems like it could be something that would be both fun and entertaining that would keep kids busy for a while. Each month they



send your child a kit that features a new profession. It includes STEM & art activities to keep them busy plus online tests and projects. [Here's their site for info.](#)

Varsity Tutors

Varsity Tutors is offering weeklong fully interactive sessions for kids ages 5 to 18. They have a variety of camp topics to choose from. [Here's a link to their camp catalog.](#)

Events

Every Kid Outdoors Program

If you're planning to visit a lot of the state parks this summer and you have a fourth grader, look in to the Every Kid Outdoors Program that is run through the National Park Service. When you enroll your child can get free admission in to any state park. [Here's a link to info.](#)

In-Person Camps Taking Place

Below is a list of summer camps that we have confirmed will be operating in-person camps for summer 2020. As always, please contact each camp directly for information on what COVID safety procedures they have put in place and for availability.

PLEASE NOTE: Daycares that offer camp are not included in this list. If you are having a hard time finding a camp, please check the daycares in your area. They may have programming too.

[Blossom Scholastic](#), Buffalo, NY – STEM day camps for girls age 8 to 12.

[Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo](#) – Locations throughout the City of Buffalo – Programming for school age kids.

[Buffalo Yacht Club Summer Junior Sailing Program](#), Buffalo, NY – Programming offered for kids age 6 to 17.

[Camp Centerland at the JCC](#) – Amherst, NY – Programming for school age kids.

[Camp Invention](#) – Several sites throughout WNY (plug in your zip code to find the site closest to you.) This camp features STEM related programming for children in grades K-6.

[Elmwood Franklin Summer Camp](#), Buffalo, NY – Programming for kids age 3 ½ to 14.

[Engineering For Kids Buffalo](#) – They normally have various sites throughout WNY and this year they are offering private, in home options where an instructor would come to your home for groups for 5 kids or more. Programming is for ages, 5 to 7 or 8 to 11. The info on this was originally found on a Facebook post and I couldn't find it on their site. [Here's a link to their post.](#)

[Genesee Country Village & Museum](#) – Mumfordsville, NY – Programming for kids age 4 to 18 with options for older returning campers to return as assistants.

[Hybrid Ninja Academy](#), Lancaster, NY – Programming for school age kids with half or full day options.

[Jefferson Youth Center](#) - Tonawanda, NY – Programming for school age children.

[Just for Kids](#) – Williamsville, NY – Programming for school age children.

Note: They normally have a site in Grand Island too, but their site says that is not operating for summer 2020 due to COVID.

[Launchpad for Learning](#) – East Amherst, NY - Programming for kids age 2 to 9 years old.



[Michael Phelps Swim School](#), Amherst, NY – Half day programming for school age kids.

[Orchard Park Recreation](#) – Orchard Park, NY – Programming for kids age 4 to 13.

[Rolly Pollies of WNY](#) – 3 locations throughout WNY - Programming for kids age 3 to 9.

[Sit n' Stay Pet Services's Kid Dog Central Camp](#), Orchard Park, NY – Day camp for kids age 9 to 13 and their dogs.

[Stutelage Innovations](#), East Amherst, NY – Programming for ages 3 to 10.

[Sweet Charlottes](#), Clarence, NY – Programming for kids ages 2 to 7.

[The Coder School Buffalo](#), East Amherst, NY – Programming for kids interested in learning to code ages 7 and up.

[The Salvation Army Summer Day Camp in the City](#) – Buffalo, NY – Programming for children age 5 to 12.

[YMCA](#) – Locations throughout WNY – Programming for school age children.

Note: They are open but limiting the number of locations this year.

Kid Friendly Recipes You Can Make Together at Home This Summer

Snacks

[Two Ingredient Pretzel Bites](#)

[Apple Fruit Donuts](#)

[Pancake Mini Muffins](#)

[S'mores Trail Mix](#)

[Dairy Free Popsicles](#)

Lunch

[Make A Head Lunch Boxes](#) – So you and the kids can cook once for the whole week!

[Pizzadillas](#)

[Mini Taco Bowls](#)

Click on each image to shop some of the reusable lunch containers you see in these posts.



Things Teens Can Do That Don't Involve A Screen

(or Use a Screen to Teach a Life Skill)

Teens are a tough demographic. They've outgrown a lot of the kid friendly events and classes that happen around town and many parents struggle with how to keep them engaged without a screen. Here's a few ideas to try this summer.

Work on Life Skills – This was mentioned earlier in camp at home section but it applies here too. A lot of older kids don't know basic life skills like how to shake someone's hand, how to take a phone message, or how to do household chores like laundry. [Here's a great of list of things you can work through this summer and help your tween or teen grow as a person!](#) Make a challenge out of it and reward them with something fun as they work through the list.

Get Active – Kids of all ages are spending more time than ever before on screens. Tween and teens are no different. If you're struggling to get your tween or teen active, consider using the summer to introduce them to different types of fitness activities to help them find something they enjoy doing that can be part of their regular routine. Here a few free resources that allow you to try different activities for free.

[YMCA 360](#) – Various classes to choose from on demand.

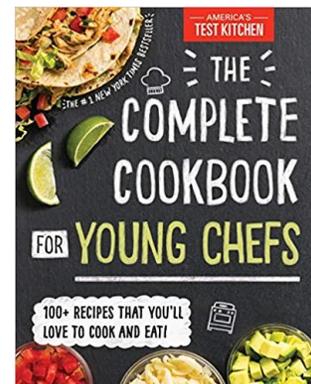
[Fitness in the Parks](#) – Classes are usually offered at local parks but they've moved to virtual programming this summer. There are 5 class types to choose from.

[Daily Burn](#) – Tons of classes to choose from and they usually have a free trial of some kind.

Couch to 5k – Encourage your tween/teen to run using the Couch to 5k app available for both Apple and Android devices. Make it a challenge with them to complete it and reward them with something if they do!

YouTube is also a great resource for free workouts. There are workouts for just about every sport and fitness category.

Learn to Cook – With many schools limiting or eliminating home and careers, a lot of kids never learn to cook! Challenge your tween/teen to prepare one meal a week for the family. Have them manage the process from start to finish. Start by having them decide on the meal they'll cook. Then ask them to prepare a list of ingredients they need to cook it and have them check to see



what you have at home. For the next step, have them create a shopping list and head to the store for the ingredients. Finally, help them follow the recipe, cook, serve and clean up the meal!

[Here's a great cook book on Amazon for young chefs.](#)

Take a Weekly Walk – Above you'll find some great walking and hiking spots. Pick a place and do a weekly walk together.

Scavenger Hunt – Scavenger Hunts can easily be adapted for older kids, especially tweens. You could do them around your neighborhood or if you are willing to drive, you could expand the hunt throughout your town or city. Here's a [great post](#) that will give you ideas on what to include on your scavenger hunt list. Or, you could head in to the City of Buffalo and have your tween/tween find items off of the Visit Buffalo Niagara Scavenger Hunt list, [found here](#).

Photo Challenge – [In this post, you'll find a list of photo ideas.](#) Print this list and give it to your tween/teen. Have them take photos every day for month based on the list and compile them at the end for a memory of the summer.

Try an Escape Kit – Escape Rooms are popular in-person activities and one company has put together an at-home version of it. [Here's a link to the site with details.](#)

Redecorate Their Room – Encourage your tween/teen to clean out their room, donate items they are no longer using and redecorate their space with items that reflect them now. This doesn't have to be expensive! They can make decorations using stuff you have around your house. Here's a few ideas:

- Spray paint old picture frames to match their room.
- Hang old holiday lights on the ceiling.
- Use old sports equipment (sticks, bats, pom poms, etc.) as wall décor.
- Create a photo collage using pictures of their friends.

Here are a few great resources for redecorating on a dime.

[Teen Girl Bedroom DIY Projects](#)

[15 Stylish DIY Projects for Teen Girls](#)



Image originally found on Wayfair



Towns That Have Reopened Parks as of 6/15/20

Amherst Parks

City of Tonawanda

Hamburg

North Tonawanda

Orchard Park

Additional Resources

The calendar on the Fun 4 Kids in Buffalo site is being updated regularly with both virtual and in-person events. If you're looking for in-person events still taking place, visit our site and select the ['in-person events' category](#). This will automatically filter the calendar for you.

As always, please visit the site regularly as we'll be adding new content, new ideas and new events, **ALL SUMMER LONG!**