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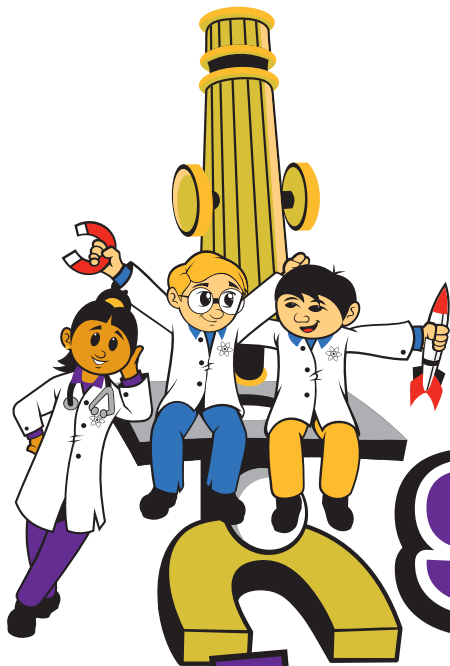
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### Top Gun: Maverick

Read online at: [www.austinfamily.com/films](http://www.austinfamily.com/films)



Cover Kid Winner Aria graces this month's cover. She loves photography, theatre, dance and a whole list of other things! Photo by Karen Andrews at Jordan-Ashley Photography.

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Photo by Karen Andrews at Jordan-Ashley Photography.

## 8 Kid-Friendly Backyards To Inspire Nature Play



## 4 Parenting Tools From a Dad of Twins

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## editor's note

### ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

*Lucksinger is a mom of two and author of the guidebook and app "Exploring Austin With Kids."*

Welcome to summer! This month, we look forward to all of the great things that come with this season. Our feature gives tips on how to turn your backyard into a haven for kids to spend summertime days. There are so many benefits to outdoor play.

As temperatures peak in the afternoons, check out the education column that highlights the many resources that public libraries provide for cool, summertime fun. They house so much more than just books.

Many kids will be spending their days at summer camps as well. Recently,

I happened upon a statistic from the American Camping Association that said kids report that "92% of people at camp helped me feel good about myself." The report also mentioned that campers said they left camp with an "appreciation for diversity, living in the moment, empathy and compassion, perseverance, self-confidence, and self-identity." The experience also gave kids space to try new things and explore areas of interest. If you are still on the lookout for summer camps, our Camp Guide can direct you to some amazing ones in the area.

Summer also brings special celebrations. This month's Smart Screen Time column shares ways to celebrate Juneteenth with children. Finally, I'm excited that in honor of Father's Day, a new dad – to twins, no less – shares his insights into the joys of fatherhood.

So much to celebrate!

Annette

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# Austin IN ACTION

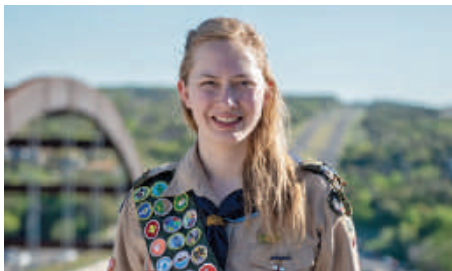
GO TO [AUSTINFAMILY.COM](http://AUSTINFAMILY.COM) FOR WEEKLY UPDATES OF AUSTIN IN ACTION NEWS

## Double Scouting Awards

Tina Carter is one of the first girls to earn both the Girl Scout Gold Award and Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Eagle Rank. Congratulations, Tina!

This local Austinite has enjoyed scouting since kindergarten. Starting as a Girl Scout, she worked her way up to earn Girl Scouts' highest award, the Gold Award. In 2019, Tina joined BSA Troop 4540, in large part because of its emphasis on outdoor adventures. She recently earned the Grand Slam of High Adventure after camping on the ice at 40-below-zero at Okpik (Northern Tier), backpacking through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at Philmont Scout Ranch, paddling 50 miles down the New River at Summit and sailing 120 miles through the Florida Keys at Sea Base.

Her projects for both the Gold and the Eagle awards benefited the local community. She improved the safety of a horse-trail street crossing and led a neighborhood tree-planting effort.



Tina Carter earns the highest awards in both the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Photo courtesy of Becky Carter.

## Award for Serving Others

Betty Richardson, Austin Family magazine's longtime "Family Matters" columnist, recently earned the Service Above Self Rotary International Award. In the history of the local district, which includes over 50 clubs, only three women have ever received the award.

Betty earned the honor for her many years of service that have included medical trips to Mexico and Central America where she served as a leader and nurse. Her skills at grant writing and oversight have also resulted in a new playground and restroom for children in India, beds for immigrants at the Texas border and equipment for a tuberculosis clinic in Mexico. Many of her grants have focused on improving the lives of family and children, from building needed libraries, soccer fields and computer labs to working with the Red Cross blood banks and assisting families across the nation after natural disasters.

Betty joined the Austin University Area Rotary Club in 1987, the first year Rotary International allowed women to become members. In that time, she has dedicated countless acts of service to improving the lives of many people around the world. Congratulations on being recognized for your amazing work, Betty!



Mary Reynolds and Betty Richardson are two of the three women to ever receive the Service Above Self Award from the local district's Rotary Club. Photo courtesy of Betty Richardson.

## Rainbow on the Creek

Waterloo Greenway and community partners will celebrate Pride Month with the family-friendly Pride Festival, Rainbow on the Creek. The celebration will feature live music performances, drag storytime, family-friendly activities and much more. Families can engage in

## by the numbers



**2/3**

of fathers took leave from work after the birth of their first child

source: [census.gov](http://census.gov)



**32**

number of libraries in the Austin metro area

source: [tsl.texas.gov](http://tsl.texas.gov)



**74%**

of kids tried new things at summer camp that they had been afraid to try.

[americancampassociation.com](http://americancampassociation.com)

interactive exhibits with Austin's LGBTQIA+ nonprofits, small businesses and health service providers. Participants can also learn more about the history of Pride, the 50th Anniversary of Stonewall, and the local LGBTQIA+ heroes at the History and Heroes of Pride historical exhibit. The event takes place at Waterloo Park on June 11 from noon to 9 p.m.

## Juneteenth Celebration

The 2022 Central Texas Juneteenth Celebration will take place on Saturday, June 18, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. The event celebrates Emancipation Day when the abolition of slavery was announced in Texas. A parade will kick off the event, starting at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Salina Street. Traveling down Chicon Street, it will lead to an all-day festival at Rosewood Park and along

the Boggy Creek Greenbelt. Vendors and family-friendly entertainment begin at noon and conclude with a fireworks show at 9:30 p.m.

### Former Longhorn Gives Back

Derrick Johnson (DJ), a former Texas Longhorn and Kansas City Chiefs linebacker, has returned to Austin to give back to his community through the creation of the nonprofit Defend the Dream Foundation. Through partnerships with Austin Ed Fund (Austin ISD's nonprofit education foundation) and Horns With Hearts (affiliated with the University of Texas), DJ is creating "Discovery Dens" in AISD elementary schools. The goal is to transform these libraries into places that inspire young students to read and start imagining their own dreams.

The Foundation is investing nearly \$58,000 into Oak Springs Elementary, the first school to be updated. A multi-functional space is being installed for students to read and learn. Flexible furniture, bookshelves and flooring will be donated along with new books that will update the current collection and better reflect the diverse student

population. Horns With Heart student athletes will help build and create the actual Discovery Dens and then become reading ambassadors to kids at schools.



Derrick Johnson meets with students in their updated library. Photo credit Defend the Dream.

### Round Rock ISD Recognized

Round Rock ISD has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation. The recognition comes from the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation for the district's outstanding commitment to music education. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, the district had to provide evidence and data related to program requirements, funding, instruction and support for innovative music programs and community music-making programs.

## Things To Celebrate

**June 3**

World Bicycle Day

**June 14**

Flag Day

**June 19**

Father's Day

Juneteenth

Since the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 and a renewed focus on the importance of a well-rounded education, many school districts have re-committed to music and arts education programs. Jager Loyde, director of fine arts and music, said, "This distinction exemplifies Round Rock ISD's commitment to music education and the strong support of fine arts in our community!"

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# Play it safe

product recalls

## Government Recalls Infant Garments

About 46,500 **infant garments** from Winter Water Factory are being recalled. The recall involves all infant French terry jumpsuits, rompers, snap suits, baby dresses and bibs from the fall 2020, spring 2021, fall 2021 and spring 2022 seasons. The snaps on these garments can detach and also expose small, sharp prongs, posing choking and laceration hazards to young children. The clothing items were sold at small boutique stores nationwide and online at winterwaterfactory.com from August 2020 through April 2022 for between \$19 and \$49, depending on style. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled garments and contact Winter Water Factory for instructions on how to receive a full refund or store credit.

The US Consumer Products Safety Commission works to protect the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products.

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## FAMILY matters

BETTY RICHARDSON

*Richardson, PhD, RN, CS, LPC, LMFT, is an Austin-based psychotherapist.*

**Q** My wife and I are divorcing. She doesn't want a divorce and is angry with me. I'm insisting on one. We have two children, ages 6 and 9, who we both love. I'm hoping that we can share custody of the children. I want to make this as easy on them as we can. What suggestions do you have for my wife and I to make this divorce less difficult for the kids?

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Asuntos Familiares.  
Hablar con los Niños  
Sobre el Divorcio**

**A** One out of two marriages today will end in divorce, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Regardless of the reasons for divorce, parents need to talk about, and agree on, ways to help the children get through the experience without trauma, or with the least amount of trauma. Here are some suggestions on how you and your wife can help your children best deal with your divorce.

1. The day or so before you both tell your children about the divorce, talk to their teachers so that they will be aware of the situation and can be prepared for changes in the children's behavior. Your kids may also have questions that they will want answered from a trusted adult, such as their teachers. Ask the teacher not to mention the divorce unless the child brings it up first.

2. Ask your wife to tell the children with you. Getting her cooperation may not be easy since she does not wish to separate. However, experts agree that telling the children together helps them to better handle the divorce. Experts also agree that you should not discuss each

other's faults with your kids. Setting it up for them to take sides (your or your wife's side) is not good for their well-being. You don't help them through the divorce by encouraging them to see one of their parents as "bad."

3. Let your kids know they are loved and can love both parents equally. Let them know that both of you will always be their parents.

4. Tell your children that the divorce is not their fault. Children often believe that they did or didn't do something, which led to the current situation. Sometimes parents hear children asking "What did I do?" They might promise to stay good if their parents will stay together.

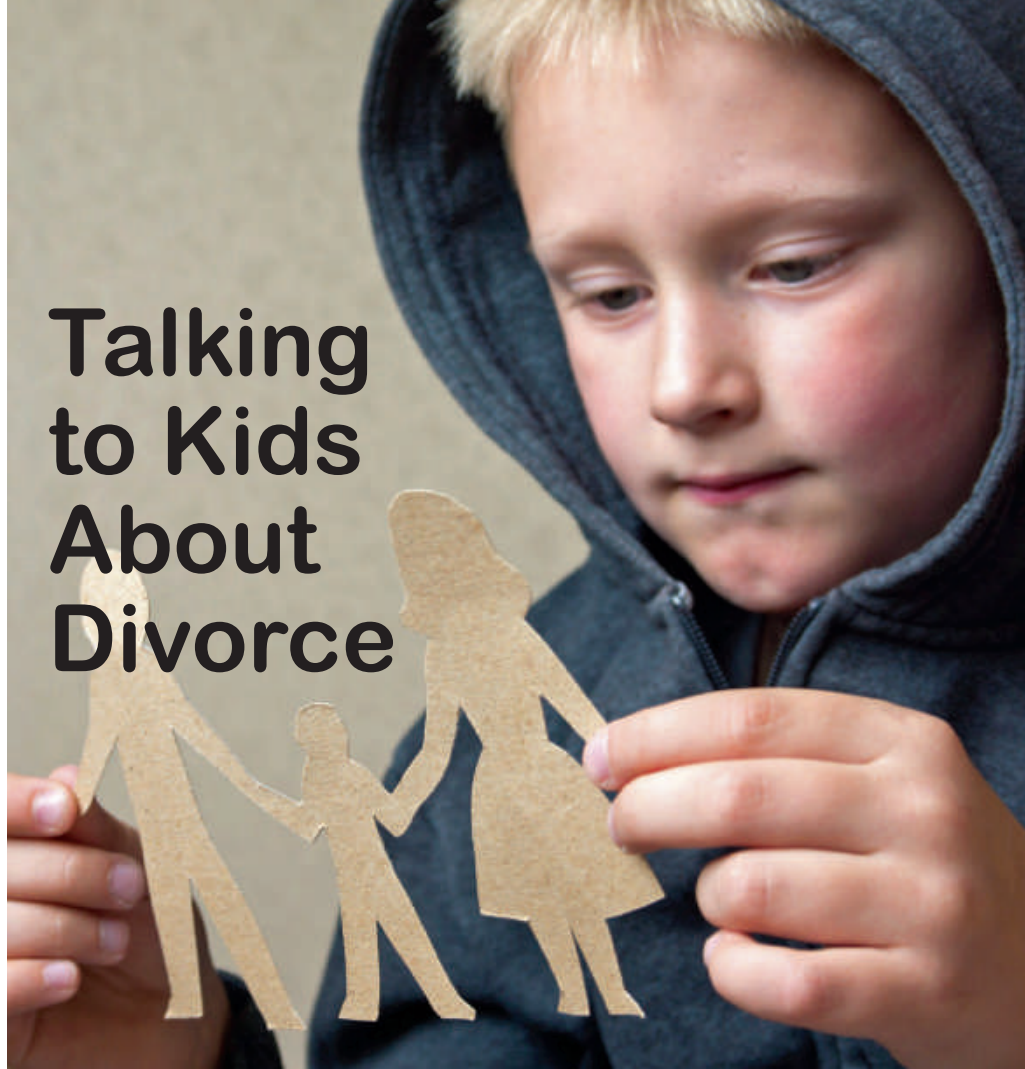
5. Give your children room to feel how they feel. Let them know that their feelings are normal and that you will work through things together. Having kids draw or journal may help identify what they are experiencing inside.

6. Answer their questions. They may ask why you are divorcing. Have a truthful answer ready.

7. Spend some time in activities with your children every day if you can. When allowed and possible, eat lunch with them at school. Time and attention tell your children that you love them.

8. Get the children emotional support through counseling as well as through family and friends. There are numbers of books for kids of various ages on the topic of divorce. You can find some for any age. Books include "Dinosaurs Divorce" by Laurene and Marc Brown, "Two Homes" by Claire Masurel and "Divorce Is Not the End of the World" by Zoe and Evan Stern, along with many other useful titles. Give your kids appropriate books to read and then discuss them together.

Once divorced, if you have joint custody, you still need to work together in co-parenting. Rules and routines need to be as close as possible in both homes. These provide reassurance to kids. Avoid being critical of the other parent. Don't try to outdo each other in buying or doing things for the kids. Parenting is not a competition.



# Talking to Kids About Divorce



# Kid-Friendly Backyards To Inspire Nature Play



SANDI SCHWARTZ

*Schwartz is a journalist, mother of two and author of "Finding Ecohappiness: Fun Nature Activities to Help Your Kids Feel Happier and Calmer" and "Sky's Search for Ecohappiness." Learn more at [ecohappinessproject.com](http://ecohappinessproject.com).*

As the weather warms up, it is a wonderful time to encourage outside play. The natural world offers both physical and emotional benefits for our kids, helping them feel happier, healthier and calmer. Yet, it can sometimes be a challenge to compete with screen time. Plus, kids are busy with schoolwork,

extracurricular activities and other commitments. With kids' outdoor play time declining sharply in recent decades, it is more important than ever to incorporate nature time into family routines. Fortunately, many of us have the perfect place to do just that: our own backyard.

So, how can we make our backyard more attractive to kids so they will want to head outside? There are many fun, easy ways, including water play, arts and crafts, animal connection and gardening.

*Sisters Aria and Eliza build a birdhouse.  
Photo by Karen Andrews at Jordan-Ashley Photography.*



## Water Play

Spending time in and around water has a tremendous soothing effect, helping kids feel more relaxed and refreshed. Both swimming and floating have been shown to reduce stress and boost mood. These activities also provide hours of enjoyment and exercise for kids of all ages, whether they are swimming laps, doing cannonballs, playing Marco Polo, or engaging in water sports like basketball, water gymnastics and volleyball.

You can be sure the kids enjoy water time out back by providing a few key items. You might decide to invest in a pool for your family, but you do not need to build an expensive in-ground pool. A large inflatable one will do the job. Make sure to have all the toys and equipment that make pool time a blast, such as goggles, rafts, tubes, sports games, snorkels, water squirters, and of course, sunscreen.

You can also add water fun by setting up a water table for the kids to splash around in. Be sure to include some floating toys like boats and marine animals for them to play with. Sprinklers are also an enjoyable way for kids to cool off and get some exercise as they run around in the backyard. Finally, every child will love playing out back on a Slip 'n Slide or similar water play product.

## Arts and Crafts

Another way to get the kids interested in heading outdoors is to set up creative activities for them. Children love arts and crafts, and it is a wonderful way to keep them busy and calmly focused on a project. Try setting up an outdoor easel or craft station filled with art supplies. They can paint a picture of a favorite tree or draw a bird they see.

You can also encourage them to collect nature items they find in the yard – such as sticks, flower petals, rocks and grass – to create a collage, nature mandala or even musical instruments to play. Some kids also enjoy making fairies and fairy houses, which leads to hours of imagination time. Another fun activity is to create your own inks, paints and brushes out of natural materials. The brushes, for example, can be made by wrapping yarn around sticks and making a brush head from straw, grass or leaves.

The options for nature art in your backyard are endless. Some other ideas include nature photography, keeping a nature journal, sculpting animals out of clay, doing leaf prints and making your own paper. The trick is to have the supplies on hand and ideas ready to go to inspire kids.

## Animal Connection

Children tend to love animals, so what better place to connect them to both pets and wildlife than in your own yard? If you have a dog, for example, be sure to encourage your kids to play outside with your furry friend. There is also so much wildlife if we just pay attention.

Here are some ways for your kids to enjoy animals out back:

Make your own birdhouses to attract more birds to your backyard. Your kids will love looking out for new visitors and listening to their cheerful birdsong.

Create a wildlife bingo game or scavenger hunt to find animals in your yard, such as lady bugs, squirrels, types of birds, bees, spiders or ducks.

Have science kits or outdoor exploration backpacks on hand. Locally, Keep Austin Beautiful offers in-home learning activities and kits filled with lesson plans and materials. Topics include composting, recycling and more.

Sign up for a citizen science project, which involves volunteering to collect scientific data for government offices and other organizations. Many of the projects ask people to count or take backyard pictures of nature, such as butterflies, flowers or birds. Your kids will not only help the scientific community, but also discover how incredible their own backyard is!

## Gardening

Getting kids involved in the family garden is a wonderful way to make outside time enjoyable. They can help by planting, watering and weeding. Gardening offers so many benefits, such as teaching kids about healthy eating, providing some exercise, and offering a time to unwind and be mindful. The best part about this activity is that your children will want to visit over and over again to water the plants and check on their progress.

You can engage your children in gardening by buying them their own gardening tools, asking them to pick out the seeds they want to plant and using the vegetables you grow to cook meals together. Setting aside a section of your backyard to grow fruits and vegetables creates a special place for kids to gather outside. If digging an entire garden in your backyard sounds intimidating, start small and grow a few herbs in containers or one vegetable at a time in large flowerpots.

You can also encourage more outdoor time by hosting a backyard barbecue or picnic featuring the produce from your garden. Any time you can take a meal or family gathering outdoors, you are helping to build a nature connection for your children that they will then end up seeking on their own.

## Make Your Backyard More Playful

Some ideas to include in your backyard:

- Digging pit
- Dirt pile
- Plants
- Rocks and boulders
- Rain barrel
- Sandbox
- Somewhere to sit (swing, hammock, bench, Adirondack chair)
- A play log that can be used as a table, bench, balance beam and more.



It is also handy to have some essential nature play tools around like shovels, rakes, hoes, buckets, collection boxes, binoculars, a compass, a magnifying glass, flashlight, tweezers, bug cages and nets.



# Not Just for Books!

## Surprising Summer Resources at Your Local Library

### THE Learning curve

ALISON BOGLE

*Bogle is a writer living in Austin with her husband and three children. A former fourth grade teacher, she now enjoys writing about children and education. You can also catch her talking about articles from Austin Family magazine each Thursday morning on FOX 7 Austin.*

Each summer I impose a special kind of cruelty upon my children – a dreaded “no screens” rule for our long car trips. And when I say long, I mean 12+ hours of riding in the car. I had hoped that being screen-free would build their frustration tolerance and adaptability, and it definitely has. My kids journal, read, daydream and play car bingo to pass the time. We also stock up on loads of audio books from the library before our trips. These, more than anything, are the magic that gets us through. The kids love picking out titles, and I love that we have yet another reason to visit our library.

It turns out that books and audiobooks are not the only reason to head to the library. In fact, summer is a wonderful time to visit because there are so many extra and exciting resources for families to explore.

### Reading challenges

Summer, with its absence of dedicated learning time, leads to what is known as “summer slide,” the loss of learning that typically occurs when kids are out of school for such an extended time. Reading is one of the best ways you can help your child avoid summer slide, and most public libraries offer reading challenges to help keep kids engaged with books.

This summer, Austin Public Library branches are offering the “Austin Completely Booked” challenge. Kids can log 10 hours of reading time over the summer and earn five “activity badges” by reading, exploring and creating in their chosen badge categories. Once the

challenge is complete, the reader can claim a prize. (Adults can participate as well and earn adult prizes.) To join the Austin Public Library challenge, pick up a paper form from your local branch or sign up online at: <https://library.austintexas.gov/summer>.

### Storytime

Where can you go to escape the heat and also get a short respite from active parenting duties? To a library storytime! Almost all public libraries offer scheduled English and bilingual storytimes for various age groups. Some locations also offer storytimes in American Sign Language. You can relax on the carpet with your child as someone else reads a story. Then check out your own books to take home for later. Additionally, storytimes are a great way to meet other parents and kids of similar ages. You don’t have to be a member of a library to attend, so you might even want to explore storytimes all over town.



## Fun physical spaces

If you haven't stopped by your local library lately, you might be surprised to find that they no longer house just bookshelves filled with books. Many libraries now offer fun physical spaces that are a great option for filling summer free time. For example, our local library has a playground, complete with a sandbox and dinosaur sculpture that kids can climb on or through. Many branches of the Austin Public Library offer a "Lego Lab" where kids can build to their hearts' content. Both the Round Rock Public Library and Cedar Park Public Library have planned ample, interactive outdoor spaces for their new libraries, which are projected for completion in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

## Classes

While summer camps and enrichment classes can be costly, you can look to your local library to provide interesting and fun learning opportunities to keep kids busy. A quick online search of local libraries resulted in this selection of summer classes available to kids: knitting, meditation, writing workshops, magic workshops, book clubs, online game design, computer programming, crafting, cooking, chess and more. Best of all, these classes and workshops are free!

## Special programming

Many libraries bring in special guests over the summer to offer exciting programming. The Round Rock Public Library is hosting the Austin Reptile Show where kids will have a chance to see live lizards, snakes and turtles from around the world. They also have a magic show, suitable for all ages, on their calendar. Check with your local branch for upcoming events.

## Teens

Being a teen and avoiding boredom in the summer can be tricky. Many teenagers feel too old for summer camp, but they may lack access to a car or are considered too young to get a job. Libraries have done a great job of developing spaces and programming specifically for teens so that they feel welcome and valued year-round.

The Central Library downtown has a dedicated "teen area" on the third floor, reserved just for kids ages 13-18. Adults and younger kids are welcome to "stop in and take a peek around, or borrow a book, but all the seats, computers, programs and resources are reserved just for teens." The Austin Public library also offers a teen-run magazine,



teen-specific special events and a summer youth volunteer program. (The application deadline has passed, but the fall application is available.)

This summer, whether you're gearing up

for a long road trip or looking for ways to fill the long, hot days at home, stop in to your local library. You'll be amazed by how many fun things there are to do, and you may just discover your new favorite place to be!



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- 1 – Go to AustinFamily.com and click on Summer Fun Contest.
- 2 – Submit your favorite Summer Fun photo.
- 3 – Get your family & friends to go online and vote for your photo.
- 4 – The photo with most votes by midnight June 15 WINS!

\*Restrictions apply and reservation must be made 21 days in advance. NO TRANSPORTATION INCLUDED.



# SUMMER FUN

### AUSTIN YACHT CLUB

The Club's mission is to be a premier sailing club with an emphasis on sailboat racing, sailing education and sailing activities for the entire family.  
**5906 Beacon Dr., Austin**  
[www.austinyachtclub.net](http://www.austinyachtclub.net)  
512-266-1336

### CAMERON PARK ZOO

UNPLUG those video games and connect with colorful creatures. How about an oasis of natural wonder for this summer?

**1701 N. Fourth St., Waco**  
[www.cameronparkzoo.com](http://www.cameronparkzoo.com)  
254-750-8400

### DREAMLAND

We are dedicated to fun. The perfect summer outdoor destination with pickleball, mini-golf, splashpad and much more.

**2770 U.S. Highway 290,  
Dripping Springs**  
[www.dreamland.us](http://www.dreamland.us)  
512-827-1279

### JELLYSTONE PARK

A family vacation spot accommodating RV or offering cabins. Meet Yogi Bear and enjoy the new waterpark!

**10618 U.S. Highway 290,  
Fredericksburg**  
[www.twcjellystone.com](http://www.twcjellystone.com)  
800-990-CAMP

### ROCK-ABOUT CLIMBING ADVENTURES

Experience a safe vertical adventure. We are the oldest rock climbing outfit in Central Texas. Our guides provide a safe environment in which you can experience hiking, sight-seeing, camping and climbing.

**Marble Falls**  
[www.rock-about.com](http://www.rock-about.com)  
512-415-0804

### AUSTIN PARKS

Movies in the Park are back, plus play dates, fitness, trails and more. Check our calendar for all the latest events all over Austin.

[www.austinparks.org](http://www.austinparks.org)

austinfamily.com





# FUN GUIDE

## **LEGOLAND FLORIDA THEME PARK AND WATER PARK**

Get ready to slide, splash and build your way to fun. Vacation packages available.

**45 minutes from Orlando and Tampa, Florida**

[www.legoland.com/florida](http://www.legoland.com/florida)

## **PEPPA PIG THEME PARK**

Join Peppa the Pig and friends at the first Peppa Pig theme park located steps away from Legoland Florida.

**One Legoland Way,  
Winter Haven, Florida**

[www.peppapigthemepark.com](http://www.peppapigthemepark.com)

## **WATERLOO GREENWAY**

Enjoy free weekly workouts, family-friendly activities, our signature community festivals and much more.

**500 E. 12th St., Austin**

[www.waterloogreenway.org](http://www.waterloogreenway.org)

**512-541-3520**

## **BOB BULLOCK STATE HISTORY MUSEUM**

Adults and children can explore the Story of Texas together. From fun family programs to one-of-a-kind artifacts, the Bullock Museum is the best place to experience Texas.

**1800 N. Congress Ave., Austin**

[www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com)

**512-936-8746**

## **PLAYLAND SKATE**

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**8822 McCann Dr., Austin**

[www.playlandskatecenter.net](http://www.playlandskatecenter.net)

**512-452-1901**

## **SUGAR AND SPICE RANCH**

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[www.texas-horse-camps.com](http://www.texas-horse-camps.com)

**830-460-8487**



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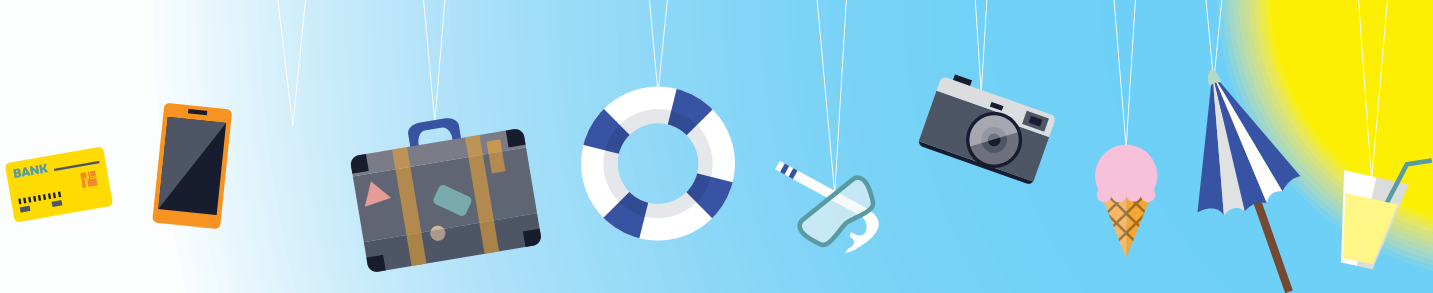


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[twcjellystone@gmail.com](mailto:twcjellystone@gmail.com)**

# FAMILY



# SUMMER FUN GUIDE

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 OF ZOOS &  
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### Barton Creek Greenbelt

(multiple locations)  
[www.austinparks.org/barton-creek-greenbelt](http://www.austinparks.org/barton-creek-greenbelt)

### City of Austin Parks

(multiple locations)  
[www.austinparks.org](http://www.austinparks.org)

### Irving and Hazeline Smith Trail

5479 Old Spicewood Springs Rd.

### McKinney Falls State Park

5808 McKinney Falls Pkwy.

### Northern Walnut Creek Trail

12138 N. Lamar Blvd.

### Pedernales Falls State Park

2585 Park Road 6026, Johnson City

### River Place Nature Trail

9000 Big View Dr.

### St. Edward's Trail

7301 Spicewood Springs Rd.

### Turkey Creek Trail

1600 City Park Rd.

### Zilker Nature Preserve and Hiking Trails

301 Nature Center Dr.

Detailed information can be found in the local guidebook "Exploring Austin with Kids" by Annette Lucksinger or on the app.



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# Summer Camp

## DAY CAMPS

### ART CAMPS OF CORDOVAN

Chalk, pencil, pastels, watercolors, acrylic, paper mache, technology, clay and pottery! Georgetown and Round Rock, 512-275-4040  
Cedar Park, 512-284-9784  
Northwest, 737-300-1200  
Southwest, 512-531-9353  
[www.cordovanartschool.com](http://www.cordovanartschool.com), Ages 5-16

### AUSTIN CHAMBER MUSIC

Chamber music (small ensembles 2-6 players), chamber orchestra, composition, improvisation, percussion ensemble and rhythmic classes. 512-454-7562  
[www.austinchambermusic.org/summer](http://www.austinchambermusic.org/summer)  
Ages 7-18

### AUSTIN YACHT CLUB

PB&J for ages 4-8, plus unique sailing experience for ages 8-16.  
512-266-1336, [www.austinyachtclub.net](http://www.austinyachtclub.net)  
Ages 4-16

### BADGERDOG CREATIVE WRITING CAMPS

Poetry, fiction and nonfiction.  
512-542-0076  
[www.bit.ly/387lzvr](http://www.bit.ly/387lzvr)  
Ages 3rd-12th Grade

### BRANDY PERRYMAN SHOOTING CAMP

A 4-day shooting-intensive basketball camp. 9 Locations throughout Austin metro area, 512-779-8891  
[www.bperrymanshootingcamp.com](http://www.bperrymanshootingcamp.com)  
Ages 7-16

### CAMP GIRLS EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

A camp for tween and teen girls that will make your girl feel more confident and powerful.  
512-808-4044  
[www.girlsempowermentnetwork.org](http://www.girlsempowermentnetwork.org)  
Ages 8-18

### CAMP HALF-BLOOD AUSTIN

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[support@camphalfbloodaustin.org](mailto:support@camphalfbloodaustin.org)  
[www.camphalfbloodaustin.org](http://www.camphalfbloodaustin.org)  
Ages 9-18

### CAMP LATINITAS

Latinitas camps are where art, expression, technology and advocacy intersect.  
512-900-0304  
[www.latinitasonline.org](http://www.latinitasonline.org)  
Ages 9-14

### CAMP SWITCH WILLO

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512-920-0554  
[www.switchwillo.com](http://www.switchwillo.com)  
Ages 9-14

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[www.clubscikidz.com](http://www.clubscikidz.com)  
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[adventures@newktnnis.com](mailto:adventures@newktnnis.com)  
830.625.9105  
[www.newktnnis.com](http://www.newktnnis.com)



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512-288-8220  
13120 U.S. Highway 183 N.  
512-331-1441

[www.countryhomelearningcenter.com](http://www.countryhomelearningcenter.com)  
Ages 5-13

**DANCE DISCOVERY**

Start your child's year with dance.  
Allandale, 512-419-7611  
Avery Ranch, 512-658-2996  
[www.dancediscovery.com](http://www.dancediscovery.com)  
Ages 3-18

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Concordia University, St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic School, Huston-Tillotson College  
[www.edmo.org](http://www.edmo.org)  
Ages 4-10

**FANTASTIC MAGIC CAMP**

We teach life skills and confidence through magic, juggling and puppets.  
Crestview, North Austin  
512-988-3045, [www.magicccamp.com](http://www.magicccamp.com)  
Ages 5-12

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8620 Burnet Road  
512-710-9654  
[www.austin.idealabkids.com](http://www.austin.idealabkids.com)  
Ages 5-13

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Ages 4-18

**MAD SCIENCE & IMAGINE ARTS ACADEMY OF AUSTIN**

Spark the imagination and curiosity of children with fun, hands-on and educational activities. Multiple locations in Austin metro area,  
512-892-1143  
[www.austin.madscience.org](http://www.austin.madscience.org)  
[www.imagineartsacademy.com](http://www.imagineartsacademy.com)  
Ages 5-12

**ORPHEUS ACADEMY SUMMER CAMPS**

All about music, musicals, Broadway, piano, guitar, violin and more.  
Austin and Cedar Park, 512-231-8999  
[www.orpheusacademy.com](http://www.orpheusacademy.com)  
Ages 4-18

**ROCK-ABOUT CLIMBING**

Campers visit natural climbing walls.  
3755 S. Capital of TX Highway  
512-415-0804  
[www.rock-about.com](http://www.rock-about.com)  
Ages 9-18

**STEPPING STONE SCHOOLS**

Students will embark on new journeys each week! 19 locations in Austin metro  
512-459-0258  
[www.steppingstoneschool.com](http://www.steppingstoneschool.com)  
Ages 5-13

**SYNERGY DANCE**

Ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, tumbling, theater, crafts and performances on Fridays.  
2314 Bee Cave Road. 512-327-4130  
[www.synergydance.com](http://www.synergydance.com)  
Ages 2 and up

**TWIN LAKES YMCA SUMMER CAMP**

Explore, play and make lifelong friends in the great outdoors.  
1902 S. Bell Blvd., Cedar Park  
512-792-2639  
[www.ymcagwc.org](http://www.ymcagwc.org)  
Ages 5-14

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Kids experience filmmaking, screenwriting, animation, video game development, making music with Garage Band and cinematography.  
512-471-6617  
[www.rtf.utexas.edu/camps](http://www.rtf.utexas.edu/camps)  
Ages 6-18

**YMCA CAMP MOODY**

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[www.bit.ly/3rP9wdo](http://www.bit.ly/3rP9wdo)  
Ages 8-13

**YMCA OF AUSTIN SUMMER DAY CAMP**

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[www.austinyymca.org](http://www.austinyymca.org)  
Ages 4-13





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## OVERNIGHT CAMPS

### NEWK'S OUTBACK ADVENTURE CAMP

Don't even think of coming to Outback Adventure Camp unless you are looking for a week of action-packed adventure. 830-625-9105 Ages 8-17 [www.newktnnis.com/outback-adventures](http://www.newktnnis.com/outback-adventures)

### SUGAR & SPICE RANCH CAMP

We help mothers and daughters bond through horses. 884 Rikki Drive, Bandera 830-460-8487 [www.texashorsecamps.com](http://www.texashorsecamps.com) Ages 5 and up

### YMCA CAMP TWIN LAKES

We give campers the chance to reconnect with the simple joys of being a kid. 1902 S. Bell Blvd., Cedar Park 512-792-2639 [www.ymcagwc.org](http://www.ymcagwc.org) Ages 5-14

## SPECIAL NEEDS CAMP

### RED ARENA SUMMER CAMP

Kids of ALL ability levels can join in the fun with trail rides, hands-on horse care, gross motor games with the mini horses, fine motor crafts and lots of social skills. Dripping Springs. 512-221-5036 [www.redarena.org](http://www.redarena.org) Ages 5-18



## Music Summer Camps

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# Camp Latinitas

**CALENDAR 2022**

## JUNE / JULY

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>CINE CHICA</b> JUNE 27TH - JULY 1ST	26						2
<b>DESIGN CHICA</b> JULY 4TH - 8TH							
<b>POWER CHICA</b> JULY 12TH - 16TH							
<b>HEALTHY CHICA</b> JULY 18TH - 22ND							
<b>GAME CHICA</b> JULY 25TH - 29TH	24						30

**IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL CAMPS OFFERED**

SIGN UP FOR IN PERSON CAMPS

SIGN UP FOR VIRTUAL CAMPS

# 4 Parenting Tools

## From a Dad of Twins

Our home life with twin girls is a blessing, but to be honest, it can be rough. We are mixing a sleep-deprived couple, two rightfully demanding babies, and a to-do list of tasks unrelated to babies. It's not the best mixture. As a first-time dad of twin girls, I joke about how I am outnumbered in the house – it's dad vs. girls.

Though I joke, there are several things I have noted in the time these two additional ladies came into my life, causing me to balance loving my wife and loving my two daughters. As dads, it seems like every day a new tool is needed to help repair something, but we don't always have all the tools needed. So, here are four tools I'd love to share from my toolbox to yours.



ASHFORD SONII

*Sonii is a writer, primarily focusing on family and fatherhood. He is co-founder of YoungHearts Ministries. Visit [youtube.com/c/YoungHeartsMinistriesKidsFamily](https://youtube.com/c/YoungHeartsMinistriesKidsFamily).*

### #1 – Don't forget about mom

A few weeks after the twins came home, it came to a point where I wondered if my wife and I had forgotten about each other as the twins became our main focus. After a couple of comments and expressions of annoyance passed between us, I realized that in some cases, I had put the twins before my wife. Though it is not intentional to forget our spouses, we dads (moms too) may tend to do this as we are absorbed by babies' feeding schedules, their sleep schedules or simply the twinkles in their eyes that wrap us around their little fingers. Being deliberate about how you are also going to love and take care of your spouse daily is important as you both adjust to a new norm. Even if it's the little things you do in showing your appreciation for her, don't forget about mom.

### #2 – Be open to learning and implementing new things

I will never forget the day I confidently dressed one of our girls with the clothes mom left out for me. There I was, proud of how I overcame the rigor that some of these baby blouses bring when trying to place them on newborns. As I walked out of our nursery with my head held high, my wife busted out laughing. "Honey, her blouse is on backwards." As dads, many times we will have to humble ourselves, especially when it comes to the girl stuff. At times, we'll need to laugh and take the egg off our faces if we get it wrong (and that's okay). Always be open to learn and implement new things that aren't second nature, especially as a dad of girls.



### #3 – Bond, The Dad Bond

Imagine a connection with your 18-year-old daughters that started from the moments you rocked them in your arms as infants. Today, there is so much research available that teaches us about the art of bonding with our newborns – through locking eye contact with them, reading to them, speaking words of affirmation over them, or just talking to them about the plans for the day. Even when they aren't responding yet, there are so many non-verbal ways to bond with our little ones. As a new dad, I have learned how bonding not only helps developmentally with our daughters' cognition as they grow, it also forms the foundations of our relationships. Simply aiming to be the best father you can be today makes a great place to start a lasting relationship with your daughter. I encourage fathers to investigate ways they can strengthen bonds with their children at every stage of their lives, even newborn!

### #4 – Go ahead and plan it!

You know how money typically grows over the years when you invest? The same thing applies for investing in our newborns now for tomorrow. When I became a dad, I was thrilled to plan a life for the future of our daughters with college funds, journals filled with letters from me throughout the years, and traditions formed now that we would hold as a family later. I want them to know they are beautiful, special and loved. Sometimes it feels silly to plan for such things, years in advance, when they aren't even saying "da-da" yet. But after learning from an older generation about things they had done years ago that their kids are benefiting from today, it reminded me that though we don't see or feel the investment today, we shouldn't lose stamina in being intentional in planning for the future. We can't always know tomorrow, but we can do our best to help their tomorrow. Though our labor in sentiments, traditions and literal investments may not seem to be worth much today, they will be worth more every day that passes by.





**SMART  
SCREEN  
TIME**

BENJAMIN KRAMER

*Kramer, PhD, is the director of education for Austin PBS.*

# Juneteenth

As we celebrate our second national Juneteenth this month, fine Texans will quickly say: a) the holiday first started here and b) some of us have been celebrating for over a century!

With Juneteenth leaping into national attention, I wondered how to talk to young children about the central issue of Juneteenth. After the conclusion of the Civil War, federal officials traveled to Texas to spread the word that slavery had ended, a message that many Texans were not eager to accept. So, for some kid-friendly answers, I turned to Dr. Daina Ramey Berry, Professor of History



and Chair of the History Department at the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Berry suggests we lead by discussing slavery, which essentially forces others to work for free, and keeps them working through fear and force. Though we see this today as fundamentally wrong and illegal, slavery, particularly of Black Americans, was part of life on this land for 246 years. It lasted from the colonial period through the first 89 years after the U.S. became its own nation.

Juneteenth starts with the recognition that we as a country corrected a

serious wrong. Juneteenth then offers an opportunity to give attention to the individuals and communities who were enslaved and who obtained their freedom. They used that freedom to go to school, take up new jobs, build communities and produce future generations of free Americans. Dr. Berry encourages us to examine the true stories and artifacts of enslaved and freed peoples at two online sources: People Not Property and UT's own Teaching Texas Slavery. Austin PBS has 13 episodes of our own show, Juneteenth Jamboree, at [austinpbs.org/juneteenth](http://austinpbs.org/juneteenth).

*Happy Juneteenth, ya'll!*

**Think again  
this Juneteenth  
with Austin PBS.**

Juneteenth is a time for community service and celebration. Learn more about Juneteenth and its importance by watching *Juneteenth Jamboree* with your family on [austinpbs.org](http://austinpbs.org).

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PBS**

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Evening and Weekend Appointments Available

# June 2022

Go to [austinfamily.com](http://austinfamily.com) for expanded listings.

## calendar

Any family-friendly events can be posted at [austinfamily.com](http://austinfamily.com) and will be made live once approved. Certain

### Wed 1

**Music on Main.** 7-9 p.m. Join us Wednesday nights in May and June in downtown Round Rock. Prete Main Street Plaza, 221 E. Main St. [roundrocktexas.gov](http://roundrocktexas.gov).

**"Paper Moon"** (rated PG). 7:30 p.m. Part of Paramount Summer Film Classic Series. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. \$10. [austintheatre.org](http://austintheatre.org).

### Fri 3

**Rhythm & Reels.** 6 p.m. A music and movie summer series. Music by Stoney Gable and movie "Parent Trap" (rated PG). Lakeway City Park. FREE. [lakeway-tx.gov](http://lakeway-tx.gov).

**KUTX98.9 Rock the Park.** 6 p.m. Come enjoy Joe McDermott. Mueller Lake Amphitheatre, 4550 Mueller Blvd. FREE. [kutx.org](http://kutx.org).

**"Family Fun Nights" at Yonders Point - Country Hoedown.** 6:30-9 p.m. "Friday Fun Nights" at Yonders Point is back for 2022. Yonders Point, 3103 Aten Loop. [roundrocktexas.gov](http://roundrocktexas.gov).

**Country Music With Zach Day.** 6 p.m. Country blues with The Zach Day Band. Live music in the covered beer garden. Dreamland, 2770 U.S. Highway 290, Dripping Springs. FREE. [dreamland.us](http://dreamland.us).

### Sat 4

**National Trails Day Scavenger Hunt.** 9 a.m. to noon. The City of Kyle Parks and Recreation Department invites you to participate in the National Trails Day Scavenger Hunt. Waterleaf Park, 628 Abundance Lane. FREE. [cityofkyle.com](http://cityofkyle.com).

**Texas Farmers Market at Lakeline.** 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Texas Farmers Market at Lakeline is open every Saturday, rain or shine. Lakeline Mall, 11200 Lakeline Mall Drive. [visitcedarparktexas.com](http://visitcedarparktexas.com).

### Sun 5

**Concerts in the Park.** All ages, including pets, enjoy relaxing Sunday evenings with different musical ensembles presented

by the Austin Symphony Orchestra. The Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Drive. FREE. [austinsymphony.org](http://austinsymphony.org).

### Mon 6

**Summer Reading Kickoff Concert With Joe McDermott.** 10 a.m. Summer Reading at Round Rock Public Library is back, and Joe McDermott is helping us celebrate. All ages are welcome. Prete Plaza on Main, 221 E. Main St. FREE. [bit.ly/37JByQi](http://bit.ly/37JByQi).

### Tue 7

**Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series.** 10 a.m. Featuring interactive sessions with our partners plus art projects, storytimes, yoga and more. This year, we are so excited to bring back our beloved Teddy Bear Surgery (2 sessions) and our Outdoor Movie Night (June 23). Priced by each session. [austinhumanesociety.org/sks2022](http://austinhumanesociety.org/sks2022).

### Wed 8

**CONTINUED:** Music on Main, see Wed 1; Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

### Thu 9

**Little Texans: Calm.** Kick off the season with calming activities to keep the peace during the hot summer days. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. [thetoryoftexas.com](http://thetoryoftexas.com).

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

### Fri 10

**Summer Concerts in the Park.** 7-9:30 p.m. Enjoy a free concert in the park and prepare to have a rockin' good time. Blankets, chairs, food and drink are allowed. Elizabeth Milburn Park, 1901 Sun Chase Blvd. FREE. [cedarparktexas.gov](http://cedarparktexas.gov).

**Juneteenth Street Dance.** 7 p.m. to midnight. The Juneteenth Celebration kicks off the weekend-long event with vendors in Veterans' Memorial Park and the annual street dance held in historic downtown Elgin at Depot Street. [elgintx.com](http://elgintx.com).

**Movies in the Park.** 8 p.m. Bring the whole family for "The Little Rascals" (rated PG). The movie will begin at sundown. Gregg Park Clark, 1301 Center Ave. FREE. [cityofkyle.com](http://cityofkyle.com).

### Sat 11

**Kyle Market Days.** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Kyle Parks and Recreation Department is hosting Kyle Market Days. [cityofkyle.com](http://cityofkyle.com).

### Juneteenth Parade and Celebration.

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The celebration of Juneteenth continues at 10 a.m. with the Grand Parade. After the parade there will be activities at Veterans' Memorial Park downtown until 6 p.m. [elgintx.com](http://elgintx.com).

**Pop Up Play Day.** 5-7 p.m. Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department's Pop Up Play Day is coming. Join us in the park for family activities. Rock Hollow Park, 1415 Appollo Circle. FREE. [roundrocktexas.gov](http://roundrocktexas.gov).

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

### Sun 12

**Cardboard Boat Regatta.** 6 p.m. Join Lakeway Parks and Recreation for a splashing good time. Lakeway Swim Center, 3103 Lakeway Blvd. FREE. [lakeway-tx.gov](http://lakeway-tx.gov).

**CONTINUED:** Concerts in the Park, see Sun 5.

### Mon 13

**Vacation Bible School at Redeemer Austin.** 9 a.m. to noon. Join us for a "Monumental" Vacation Bible School (VBS) experience at Redeemer this summer. Redeemer Austin, 1500 W. Anderson Lane. FREE. [redeemer.net](http://redeemer.net).

**Run With Round Rock PD.** 5:45-7 p.m. The leisurely-paced, socially-distanced 5K starts at 6 p.m. at Fleet Feet running store. 3750 Gattis School Road, Suite 500. [roundrocktexas.gov](http://roundrocktexas.gov).

### Tue 14 - FLAG DAY

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.



## Wed 15

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

## Thu 16

**Pop Up Play Day.** 9-11 a.m. Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department Pop Up Play Day is coming. Join us in the park for family activities. Chisholm Valley Park, 1201 Trey. FREE. roundrocktexas.gov.

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

## Fri 17

**Family Skate Nights.** 7 p.m. Awesome opportunity to get the family out together as you skate to music at the Ash Pavilion. We will have music, lights, concessions and a fun skating environment. Ash Pavilion at Gregg Clarke Park, 1231 W. Center St. \$4 adults, \$3 kids. cityofkyle.com.

**CONTINUED:** Vacation Bible School at Redeemer Austin, see Mon 13.

## Sat 18

**Cedar Park Market Days.** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Head out to Cedar Park Market Days the third Saturday of every month for live music, yummy food trucks and over 70 local artisans. 11066 Pecan Park Blvd. visitcedarparktexas.com.

**Round Rock Pop Up Art Show.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Shop for unique and original artwork by local and area fine artists. Prete Main Street Plaza, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Juneteenth Festival Round Rock 2022.** 4-11:30 p.m. This year's event includes the legendary Hip Hop Duo Kid N Play, a health fair, moonwalks, games, food, retail vendors and more. Old Settlers Park. FREE. roundrocktexas.gov.

**World Refugee Day.** Learn about the cultures that continue to make Texas the diverse place it is today. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com.

## Sun 19 FATHER'S DAY JUNETEENTH

**Rock and Roll Playhouse for Kids: Bob Marley.** 11:30 a.m. Bring entire family to celebrate Father's day and Juneteenth listening to music by Bob Marley. Mohawk Outdoor, 912 Red River St. \$12. therockandrollplayhouse.com.

**CONTINUED:** Concerts in the Park, see Sun 5.

## Tue 21

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

## Wed 22

**Tuneful Tales** (formerly Children's Day Art Park). Austin Symphony will kick off the kids summer program. Watch for details on the AFM website. austinsymphony.org/education-community-concerts/asotunefultales.

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

## Thu 23

**Elgin Western Days.** 6-10 p.m. Carnival opens the weekend-long event, followed by a parade at 10 a.m. on Saturday, music in the park at 11:30 a.m. and more. elgintxchamber.com/western-days.

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

## Fri 24

**CONTINUED:** Elgin Western Days, see Thu 23.

## Sat 25

**Build a Native Bee House.** 8 a.m. to noon. Join the City of Kyle Parks and Recreation Department as they host the Build a Native Bee House event in celebration of National Pollinators Week. cityofkyle.com.

**Summer Family Film Series: "Up"** (rated PG). Noon to 1:30 p.m. Take an incredible adventure with the most unlikely of friends at a special multi-sensory screening of this family film favorite. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. \$8 - \$12. thestoryoftexas.com.

**CONTINUED:** Elgin Western Days, see Thu 23.

## Sun 26

**"Annie"** (rated PG). 1 p.m. Come celebrate the 40th Anniversary of "Annie" (1982) as a part of the Paramount Summer Classic Film Series. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. \$10. austintheatre.org.

**CONTINUED:** Concerts in the Park, see Sun 5.

## Tue 28

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

## Wed 29

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

## Thu 30

**"Dinosaurs of Antarctica."** 4 p.m. From glaciers to Glacialisaurus, with real expedition footage and next-level CGI, this film introduces the amazing and bizarre of the prehistoric age. Science Mill, 101 S. Lady Bird Lane, Johnson City. sciencemill.org.

**CONTINUED:** Austin Humane Society's Kids Summer Series, see Tue 7.

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# So Long, Farewell

## JUST FOR GRINS

CATE BERRY

*Berry is an Austin-based children's book author and mother of two. She also teaches writing workshops for young people at [cateberry.com](http://cateberry.com).*

Don't you love the party scene in "The Sound of Music"? If you're not familiar (we can no longer be friends, for starters), the seven von Trapp children sing a delightfully, heart-tugging "goodnight" song to a glittering ballroom of dinner guests. My cousins and I used to act out that scene on my Grandmother's terrace steps, over and over, growing up. I'm sure when I die, that song will be the last to leave my addled brain.

I'm terrible at goodbyes. I invented "ghosting" in adolescence long before it was an expression. And the deeper my emotional ties to a person, place or thing, the more I dissolve into the ether

as we part ways, avoiding that sad, oogy tummy feeling.

But I'm making myself stay and say goodbye to you all, wonderful readers, instead of ghosting this time. I'll be moving on from spinning these columns after today. (Don't worry, I'm leaving you in good hands!) Like the seven von Trapp children singing:

*I'm sad to go, I cannot tell a lie,  
I flit, I float, I fleetly flee, I fly.*

Fleetly? Overlooking the bad rhyme and the made-up word—I realize my mistake. Young Brigitta sang that stanza, but instead of "sad" she actually sang "glad." We introverts understand Brigitta. We know the relief of leaving a

loud party, diving into our cozy beds and snuggling up with a book. I'm certainly in that camp from time to time. Funny that I remembered it as sad. But I think more accurately, and probably why I remembered the lyrics incorrectly, I will be so terribly sad to no longer leave these words for you every month. Not glad at all. But, it is time.

I hope all your goodbyes are filled with more sad than glad. After all, laughter and joy are the B-side of sadness. You can't have one without the other. So let's laugh at our collective goofs, share our misadventures and not take life too seriously. That was my aim every month, at least!

*So long, farewell. For now.*




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# Summer Outdoor Activities

Early summer in Central Texas still offers plenty of opportunities for nature enthusiasts and families looking to create meaningful outdoor experiences.

Doctors and educators are recognizing the benefits of time spent outdoors, particularly for children. Research has shown that children who play outside and spend time in nature are more physically active, which helps prevent obesity, heart disease, diabetes and other health issues. Other benefits include:

- More advanced motor skills, such as agility, balance and coordination
- Higher levels of vitamin D, which in turn strengthens their bones and immune systems
- Stronger awareness, reasoning and observation skills
- Greater likelihood of developing a lifelong love of nature and care to preserve it
- Fewer incidences of illness
- Significantly fewer symptoms of ADHD

As a result, parents may be looking for simple steps to keep their families active outside even as the temperatures climb.



Photos courtesy of YMCA Austin.

From backyard games to excursions at the 85-acre YMCA Camp Moody along Onion Creek, there are a range of options to help everyone stay in touch with their natural environment.

According to YMCA Executive Director Bret Kiester, who oversees Camp Moody, there are several ways to inspire your children to head outside. Try some of these outdoor activities:

**Create your own backyard outdoor space** – Kids don't need acres of woods to experience the benefits of nature. An outdoor craft table, sandbox, slackline, swing or treehouse can do the trick.

**Go for a hike** – How do you stay cool on a summer hike? Head to the water! We are

fortunate in this area to have so many hiking trails that lead to creeks, rivers and lakes. Take buckets and water shoes so you can play in the water and cool off before hitting the trail to head back home.

**Get back to the garden** – Kids love digging in the dirt, and gardening projects can become a family activity. In the summer months, native and adapted plants like cactus and other succulents can work well.

**Pick up a paddle** – Kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddle boarding and boating are all great physical activities that encourage family communication and coordination. Plus, they make for fun outings into nature. From the water, you can keep a lookout for fish, birds and turtles too.

**Prepare ahead of time** – Have a dedicated "outdoor" backpack filled with all the things you need for your outdoor adventures (sunscreen, bug spray, hats, gloves, binoculars, magnifying glass). Keep it stocked and by the door, ready to go when you are.



## YMCA

YMCA Camp Moody offers a variety of summer day camps through August for kids ages 8 to 13. In addition, Camp Moody is open to the public for family hiking every Saturday during June and July from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stop at the office next to the natatorium to register and pick up a trail map. Find more information at [austinyymca.org/programs/camp-moody-outdoor-summer-day-camp](http://austinyymca.org/programs/camp-moody-outdoor-summer-day-camp) or by calling (512) 523-9640.





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