

# Family Field Trips: Learning and Fun All in One

Did you know that children can learn a great deal from going on **Family Field Trips**? A **Family Field Trip** can be a visit to a local museum, outdoor wildlife sanctuary, bike path, orchard, zoo, local park, or... wherever!

By exploring what your local area has to offer, children of all ages can learn:

**NEW VOCABULARY WORDS:** Research has shown that having a rich vocabulary is essential when learning to read. Therefore, helping children build their repertoire of words will help them become strong readers. This can be done easily during family field trips. When taking children to the zoo, they will learn the names of different animals, and words associated with them. For example, they may learn what an **emu** is, or that some animals are **nocturnal**, or *awake at night*. Expose children to new words everywhere you go, such as the park, the beach, on a bike ride, or on a walk right in your own neighborhood.



**READING SKILLS:** Make the connection to the place you visited via books. For example, after a family field trip to the New England Aquarium or beach, follow up by visiting the library for books on fish, whales, or other marine life. Following a trip to the Museum of Transportation, find some books on cars. Attending story hours at museums or libraries introduces your children to the world of reading. Children also can gain practice in reading at the museums by reading descriptions that accompany exhibits. Even if you do not go anywhere fancy, you can still encourage your children's reading skills. For example, the next time you go on a family picnic, along with the sandwiches and frisbee, pack some books to read under the shade of a tree.

**SCIENCE, HISTORY, MATH, ART, & OTHER CONCEPTS:** Oftentimes, museums will host special, educational programs, such as informative tours, science experiments, art, math, & hands-on history activities, culture days, etc. These activities can build children's skills in all academic areas in a fun way.

**PHYSICAL FITNESS:** Massachusetts is filled with wildlife sanctuaries\*, orchards\*, and bike paths. Some museums even offer educational, guided tours of the woods, salt marshes, or other interesting outdoor locations to talk about wildlife and environmental issues. Whether you go out on your own, or participate in a guided tour, getting out for some exercise is great for one's health!



In addition, children & youth need to know that the adults in their lives care about them. What better way to show your love than to spend some quality time with your children by doing something fun together?

\* Did you know that there are many sanctuaries throughout Massachusetts? The Massachusetts Audubon Society frequently holds activities for families at their sanctuaries, such as bird demonstrations, nature talks, etc. Visit [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org) or call (781) 259-9500 or 800-AUDUBON for a schedule of events near you.

\* Did you know that there are many places where you can pick your own apples, pumpkins, and other fruit and vegetables throughout Massachusetts? Visit the Web site of the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture at [www.state.ma.us/dfa/massgrown/](http://www.state.ma.us/dfa/massgrown/) or call (617) 626-1700 to find out locations and costs.