

Family Fun in Northern San Diego

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When the Valley starts to heat up, families can find plenty of fun in the sun in northern San Diego.



Everyone in the Valley knows that when the temperature rises, it's a good time to pack up for San Diego. The well-known downtown area is outstanding for children, with venues such as SeaWorld and the beaches, but the northern areas of the city, coastal areas such as La Jolla and Oceanside and east to Escondido, Julian and the Anza-Borrego Desert, provide outstanding opportunities as well. "With 35 miles of beaches, lakes, lagoons and natural reserves, San Diego North offers a variety of activities for families visiting the area," says Hilary Townsend, director of public relations for the San Diego North Convention & Visitors Bureau. "There's always something new that families can experience together."

In June, at LEGOLAND in Carlsbad, the world's first LEGO-themed water park will feature a variety of kid-friendly attractions including a Build-A-Raft river where children can help custom build a LEGO raft, enjoy several water slides, a 45-foot-tall tower playground and two sandy-beach wading areas. Adjacent to the LEGOLAND entrance is the new Sea Life Aquarium, designed for children with interactive exhibits and life-sized LEGO models.

At The Wild Animal Park, children are face-to-face with exotic wildlife. The two-hour "Photo Caravan" takes visitors on a ride through the open-field animal exhibits, and children also get up close to the birds of the Australian rainforest at Lorikeet Landing aviary.

Seaside, children learn about Southern California's delicate tide pools and see anemones, hermit crabs, mussels and sea plants. The new "There's Something About Seahorses" exhibit showcases the life stages of the perennial favorites.



In Encinitas, the San Diego Botanic Gardens has added the Hamilton Children's Garden where children explore the natural world, discover the art of making music from natural elements in the music garden and learn about farm-to-fresh cooking through the onsite garden. Your children will also enjoy the Butterfly Vivarium in Encinitas, where children can discover butterfly cocoons and observe a butterfly hatching amidst fluttering Monarchs. Also nearby is the Lux Art Institute whose "Kids-In-Residence Program" allows children the opportunity to experiment with techniques and materials and observe a professional artist working.

Two other great locations are the Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, where children learn about the history of American music and music making, and Circus-Style Fun, where they learn circus-style flying trapeze through lessons at Escondido's Trapeze High School. While there, enjoy some of the area's great resorts. The Lodge at Torrey Pines is known for its golf course, and the children will enjoy the nearby beach at La Jolla Shores. To get to the water by foot, hike through Torrey Pines State Reserve and visit the nature center. Nearby is La Jolla Cove — a great spot for snorkeling as it has some of the area's clearest water.

The Grand Del Mar, The Hilton Garden Inn Del Mar and the La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad also offer great children's amenities. The Grand Del Mar's Explorer's Club provides children with games and arts and crafts projects. La Costa Resort hosts a supervised "Kidtopia Kids Club" which features a seven-foot tree house, toys, books, entertainment section, movie lounge and nursery as well as a "Vibz Teen Lounge." And, on request, children who stay at the Hilton Del Mar can go back of the house into the kitchen and learn to cook from a chef at the hotel's Bistro 39 restaurant.

For more information, see <http://www.sandiegonoorth.com/>, call 800.848.3336 or 760.745.4741.