

KID-FRIENDLY RECOMMENDATIONS

from THE BREVARD/TRANSYLVANIA VISITOR CENTER

HIKING/OUTDOORS

A. **Fun in our 3 State & Federal Forests**

- a. **Pisgah National Forest (PNF) – Ranger Station** near entrance, picnicking, swimming/wading, camping, hiking (includes kid-friendly), waterfalls (**Looking Glass Falls** right off road, plus one-of-a-kind **Sliding Rock**); **Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education** (feed trout, see indoor live animals or take fly fishing classes); **Cradle of Forestry** (first U.S. forestry school, indoor scavenger hunt, historic cabins and a real logging train), and more. See back of this sheet for more information on kid-friendly activities in PNF.
- b. **DuPont State Forest** – New and interactive Visitor Center, waterfalls, hiking, picnicking. Filming location of the “Hunger Games.” Ask for more info on the Unofficial Hunger Games Tours.
- c. **Gorges State Park** – Visitors Center with hands on kids’ activities, hiking, waterfalls, camping, picnicking

B. Water Fun – Guided canoeing and kayaking and tubing with shuttle options through Headwaters Outfitters in Rosman or tubing options in Pisgah National Forest. Paddle boarding with White Squirrel Paddle Boards (828-553-7329).

C. Fishing – Great trout fishing countywide. Davidson River Outfitters and Headwaters Outfitters provide guided trips. Cast & Reel fishing available at Morgan Mill Trout Farm and Adventure Village.

D. Local Parks – Franklin Park (public pool, playground, swings - downtown); Champion Park (public pool, playground - Rosman); Silvermont (playground, walking trail, tennis, basketball - downtown); Parks & Recreation (open play, horseshoes, corn hole, shuffleboard – 3 miles downtown on Ecusta Road)

E. Zip Lines – Soar like an eagle thru the trees and over the river – Sapphire Valley Resort (just inside Jackson County)

F. Horseback Riding – (Pisgah Forest Riding Stables in PNF, Whitewater Equestrian Center in Sapphire)

G. Walking/Biking – (Multi-Use Path) Walk/bike through the woods or alongside the streets of Brevard. Start at Lowe’s or Parks & Recreation parking lots. Maps available at the Visitor Center. Bike shops – Hub, Squatch, Sycamore Cycles for more detailed biking adventures.

H. Sculpture Walk – See over 19 sculptures of native animals of the region right in the downtown area. Ask for a map from the Chamber of Commerce.

I. Mountain Range Golf Center – A great place to practice that golf swing on the driving range or chipping on the green. Also batting cages. Only a few minutes from downtown.

INDOOR FUN

A. Coed Theatre – Retro theatre. Free for kids at 10am on Tue & Thu. (downtown) in summer

B. Transylvania County Library – Great quiet spot with books, computers, etc. See “Kids’ events” on website. (downtown)

C. O.P. Taylors – “Coolest toy store on the Planet” with over 6,000 sf of toys. (downtown)

D. Rockin’ Bowl – Bowling (w/bumpers for kids), pool, video games, and fun food (close to downtown)

E. Transylvania County Arts Council – Events and programs throughout the summer including family clay day, pottery classes, art programs (few blocks from downtown)

F. Gem Mining – Educational and fun. Crystal Market Mining is a downtown shop; Whitewater Equestrian Center has great covered outdoor mining in Sapphire; Bear Tracks also has an outdoor, covered gem mine – Lake Toxaway; Pisgah Forest Gem Mine in Pisgah Forest.

G. P.A.R.I. – Unique astronomical observatory w/multiple telescopes. Tours on Wed at 2 p.m. (Rosman)

SPECIALTY ICE CREAM

- A. **Kiwi Gelato** – Enjoy frozen Italian-style ice cream (downtown)
- B. **Rocky's Soda Shop and Grill** – Enjoy a retro 1950's old fashion soda shop and belly up to the lunch counter for homemade food and delicious ice cream treats (downtown)
- C. **Dolly's** – At the entrance to Pisgah Forest. Open in the summer only. Be prepared for a line.

Activities For Kids While You're In Pisgah National Forest

One of the many great things about [Pisgah National Forest](#) is that it has something for all ages. Young or old, there is always a slice of [Pisgah National Forest](#) that everyone can enjoy. Being a national forest, visitors are encouraged to recreate responsibly, so teaching young children what that looks like is incredibly important. We love seeing kids in our forests because they are the future stewards of the land. They are going to guide the next recreation and conservation movement and we should foster an environment for them to thrive in. It is great to get kids into the forest to hopefully spark an interest in nature and a love for the great outdoors.

There are **SEVERAL HIKES IN THE AREA THAT ARE VERY KID-FRIENDLY**, as well as great campsites nearby for a kid's first camping experience. While we are in the forest we want our leaders of tomorrow to learn, grow, stay active, and most importantly, have fun. It can sometimes be challenging to keep kids engaged while you are [Hiking](#) or just on a short walk, so I have compiled a few ideas for families to give kids an opportunity to have a positive outdoor experience.

There are several things that will keep your little ones busy while learning about nature and also giving them a chance to be explorers and observers of the forest. Try hitting your local hardware store for some **PAINT SAMPLE CARDS**. These can be used as a tool for finding colors in nature. See if your kiddo can find all the colors in the rainbow or even just five different shades of green. Another great activity is a scavenger hunt or a game of **I-SPY**. Come up with a few different natural objects (ex: acorn, heart-shaped leaf, smooth rock, etc.) for the child to spot. You'll be amazed at what they can find. This is a great way to get your child to start taking a closer look at what is around them on the trail.

There are also loads of resources at the **PISGAH RANGER STATION** on U.S. 276. Not only is this a great place to look around, but the gift shop has identification books amongst other inquiry based items such as a handy magnifying glass or pair of binoculars. There are books for all ages and abilities in the shop and the volunteers are great at giving suggestions.

If you happen to be camping at Davidson River, Lake Powhatan, or [North Mills River Campgrounds](#), there are wonderful and knowledgeable educators there who provide programs for kids (and adults) of all ages on weekends. Some of the programs that campers can participate in include things like nature walks, Junior Forest Ranger class, river exploration and even s'mores! This is a great opportunity to get out of the campsite, meet some other campers, and learn about the forest.

The most important thing is getting kids outside. Since kids can't drive, it's our responsibility to get them out there and at least give them the chance to learn something new about our natural world and inspire them to treat it with love and respect. So get outside and play responsibly!

Ella Tzinberg is the Education Manager at the [Cradle of Forestry](#) Interpretive Association in America and the Pisgah Field School.