A Guide to Free and Low Cost Activities to do with Children in New York City
Welcome!

Welcome to the ACS/CUNY Informal Family Child Care Project Guide to Free and Low Cost Activities to do with Children in New York City! As a child care provider, you have the unique responsibility and joy of caring for children during an important time in their lives. Being out in the world adds variety to the day and helps children develop a sense of themselves and the world around them. We hope this guide makes your time with children easier, more interesting and more FUN!

Who we are:
The ACS/CUNY Informal Family Child Care Project (IFCC) is a partnership between the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and the City University of New York (CUNY) created to support the important work you do with children and families every day. IFCC offers a variety of programs and services, including:

• Professional learning workshops
• Coaching and individualized support
• Career development, and
• Resources and materials to use with children

Who this guide is for:
Whether you are caring for one child a few days a week or several children on a regular basis, you are building relationships and providing important learning opportunities through the choices you make every day. IFCC created this guide for you, to share information about the rich resources and experiences available for young children in New York City, many of which are free or low cost.

How to use this guide:
Outings with children can include short trips – like a daily walk or a visit to a local park, library, or grocery store – or longer outings to specific destinations. In this guide, you will find information about places to visit with children and tips for making your outings safe and engaging. The guide is organized in two ways – by borough and by type of experience or venue – and puts information about the diverse resources NYC has to offer at your fingertips.
Places to Visit in

MANHATTAN
Plan Your Visit

- **CHOOSE** a museum or cultural venue to visit.
- **PREPARE** for the outing.
  - Visit the venue’s website or call in advance for information.
  - Choose one or two exhibits or areas to focus on during your visit.
  - Consider logistics like transportation, supervision, weather, and meals.
  - Inform families in advance about where you’re going.
  - Ensure children are dressed properly.
  - Pack a first aid kit.
- **BUILD** excitement before your visit.
  - **TALK** with children about what they might see and introduce new words and concepts (*What is a museum? What is an exhibit?*).
  - **READ** books and share stories about some of the things they may see.
  - **ASK** questions to learn what children are curious about.

While You’re There

- **FOLLOW** children’s lead and let them guide your exploration.
- **OBSERVE** children interacting with exhibits, displays, activities.
- **DOCUMENT** your observations with pictures or notes to help children remember the experience later.

- **LISTEN** and **OBSERVE** for opportunities to introduce new words or concepts.
- **ASK** open-ended questions like:
  - **What** do you **NOTICE**?
  - **What** do you **WONDER**?
  - **How** does it make you **FEEL**?

- **Make it FUN!**
  - Invite children to **ACT OUT** what they see.
  - **PLAY** “I SPY” (*I spy something red, round, HUGE, tiny, etc.*).

Extending Learning

- At home, **ENCOURAGE REFLECTION** about the outing. You might ask:
  - What did you like the most about our trip today?
  - What new words did you learn?
  - What can we find or use at home to make our own art (or structures, animals, etc.)?

- **EXTEND** children’s learning by trying the following activities after your visit:
  - **CREATE** an art gallery with children and **OBSERVE** each other’s creations.
  - **READ** and **TALK** about art and creative expression.
**El Museo Del Barrio**  
1230 Fifth Avenue (between 104th and 105th Streets)  
New York, NY 10029  
(212) 831-7272  
elmuseo.org  
*Pay As You Wish*  
*Mon - Sat 11am-6pm Sun 1pm-5pm*

El Museo del Barrio’s Education Programs offers something to people of all ages. It seeks to foster a space for individual and collective sharing and understanding through inquiry and dialogue. Participants have the opportunity to consider the experiences of people from Puerto Rico, Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States in a meaningful way by learning about these regions’ diverse histories, and cultures.

**Directions:**  
2 3 to Central Park North - 110th St  6 to 103rd St

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**International Print Center NYC**  
508 West 26th Street, Room 5A (between 10th & 11th Ave)  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 989-5090  
ipcny.org  
*Pay As You Wish*  
*Tue-Sat 11am-6pm*

Conceived to be the first and only non-profit exhibition space, resource and learning center devoted solely to artists’ prints, serving the needs of artists, printmakers, educators, publishers, students, collectors and general viewing public. It offers exhibition opportunities for contemporary artists through its New Prints Program which inaugurated the comprehensive program of exhibitions embracing all time periods and cultures, launched in 2000 with Hard Pressed at AXA Gallery and continuing today through our international and thematic exhibitions series.

**Directions:**  
C E to 23rd St  1 to 28th St
National Museum of The American Indian  
One Bowling Green  
New York, NY 10004  
(212) 514-3758  
nmai.si.edu  
*Free Admission*

The National Museum of the American Indian is committed to advancing knowledge and understanding of the Native cultures of the Western Hemisphere. The Museum encourages families to explore history together through permanent installations targeted for children 8-13 and a wide range of family learning programs for toddlers, children and preteens.

**Directions:**
- **4 5** to Bowling Green  
- **R** to Whitehall St  
- **2 3** to Wall St

American Museum of Natural History  
Central Park West at 79th Street  
New York, NY 10024-5192  
(212) 769-5100  
amnh.org  
*Pay What You Wish*

The American Museum of Natural History, located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, is one of the largest and most celebrated museums in the world. The museum’s collections contain over 32 million specimens of plants, humans, animals, fossils, minerals, rocks, meteorites, and human cultural artifacts, of which only a small fraction can be displayed at any given time.

**Directions:**
- **B C** to 81st St - Museum of Natural History
Children’s Museum of Manhattan

The Tisch Building
212 West 83rd Street
New York, NY 10024
(212) 721-1223
cmom.org

On the first Friday of every month admission is free from 5 – 8pm

CMOM believes that children learn best when provided with nurturing, creative environments that support play, imagination, curiosity and discovery. Our comprehensive early childhood curriculum engages all facets of your child’s life by bringing together the arts, language, science, math and the humanities.

Directions:

B C to 81st St - Museum of Natural History
1 to 79th St
2 3 to 72nd St
PARKS, RECREATION AND OUTDOOR VENUES

Plan Your Visit

• **CHOOSE** a park or other outdoor venue to visit.
• **PREPARE** for the outing:
  → Visit the venue’s website or call in advance to plan trip logistics.
  → Choose one or two areas to focus on during your outing.
  → Consider logistics like transportation, supervision, weather and meals.
  → Inform families in advance about where you’re going.
  → Plan your route and be prepared to adjust based on children’s needs.
  → Ensure children are dressed properly.
  → Pack a first aid kit.

• **TALK** about what to expect.
  → What do they think they will see?
  → Are there games or equipment they look forward to playing with?

While You’re There

• **ENCOURAGE** children to use their SENSES.
  → **ASK** them to close their eyes and tell you what they hear or smell.
  → **TOUCH** tree bark and other clean, safe objects you find and talk about texture, shape and size.

• **ENCOURAGE** children to **LOOK** for wildlife.
  → **LOOK** under rocks and sticks for bugs, look up in the trees for birds.
  → **LOOK** for animal tracks or for feathers that can tell the story of the animals that live in the area.

• **GO** on a scavenger hunt! Work together to create a list of items you may find and see outdoors.
• **COLLECT** leaves, rocks, sticks and other items to bring back with you.

Extending Learning

• When you get home, **ENCourage REFLECTION** about their experience and discoveries.
• You might ask:
  → What did you like the most about our time outside today?
  → What did you find on our outing today?
• **DISCUSS** what they see and **EXPAND** on their observations using descriptive words.
• **EXTEND** their learning by trying the following activities with them after your outing:
  → **ASK** children to share their observations and discoveries.
  → **OFFer** books and **FACilitate** discussions about the outdoors, living in a city, the animals they saw.
  → **MAKE** art using the items you collected. Press flowers, glitter pinecones or draw part of your favorite park outdoor activity.
MANHATTAN Parks, Recreation and Outdoor Venues

**Battery Park Pier A**  
Battery Park City Authority  
200 Liberty Street  
New York, NY 10006  
(212) 417-2000  
b pca.ny.gov

City Pier A is a municipal pier in the Hudson River at Battery Park near the southern end of Manhattan in New York City. It has also been named Liberty Gateway. It is the last surviving historic pier in the city.

Directions:

2 R to Rector St  4 5 to Bowling Green

**Central Park**  
Manhattan, NY  
(212) 310-6600  
centralparknyc.org  
Free Admission

Central Park is an urban park in the central part of the borough of Manhattan. It was initially opened in 1857, on 778 acres of city-owned land, later expanding to its current size of 843 acres.

Directions:

N Q R to 5th Ave/59th St  A B C D to Columbus Circle / 59th St  B C to 72nd St, 81st St, 86th St or to Cathedral Parkway -110th St  2 3 to Central Park North - 110 St

**Christopher Street Pier 45**  
Hudson River, Greenwich Village  
New York, NY 10014  
212) 627-2020  
hudsonriverpark.org/explore-the-park/locations/pier-45  
Free Admission

Amenities on this 850-foot-long pier include shade structures, seating areas, wood decking and passive grass lawns. This is a favorite spot for sunbathing in the neighborhood and an event space in the summer.

Directions:

1 to Christopher Street
Chelsea Piers
23rd Street, WestSide
New York, NY
(212) 336-6666
chelseapiers.com
Free Admission
Chelsea Piers is a series of piers in Chelsea, on the West Side of Manhattan. Located to the west of the West Side Highway (Eleventh Avenue and Hudson River Park) and to the east of the Hudson River, they were originally a passenger ship terminal in the early 1900s.

Directions:
2 3 to 14th St  C E to 14th St  L to 8th Ave

El Cataño Community Garden
171 East 110th Street (between Lexington and Third Avenues)
New York, NY 10029
(646) 474-4424
nyrp.org/green-spaces/garden-details/el-catano-community-garden
Free Admission
Named after a city on the northern coast of Puerto Rico, this beloved garden is enthusiastically supported by local residents.

Directions:
2 3 to Central Park North - 110th St  6 to 110th St

Family Garden – Sponsored by Tiffany & Co.
431 East 114th Street
New York, NY 10029
nyrp.org/green-spaces/garden-details/family-garden-sponsored-by-tiffany-and-co
Free Admission
Directly facing Thomas Jefferson Park, the Family Garden’s location inspired Loring to weave historical references into his design plan. Garden highlights include a wrought-iron entry gate that echoes the façade of Jefferson’s beloved Virginia home, Monticello, and garden furnishings that feature the Founding Father’s silhouette.

Directions:
6 to 116th St
**Friendship Garden**
499 West 150th Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue)
New York, NY 10031
nyrp.org/green-spaces/garden-details/friendship-garden-wicked
Free Admission

Echoing themes of the Land of Oz – and as portrayed in the Broadway production – the Friendship Garden features unique Oz-inspired lampposts and fencing, a poppy-painted mural, a “yellow brick” path, an “emerald” granite patio, a spiral-twisted stone barbeque and two new street trees in front of the space. The revitalized garden is also lush with plant life, including a variety of roses, lilies, hostas and hydrangeas. Finally, a wishing well, located in the middle of the garden, symbolizes that a community working together, as one, can truly make any wish come true.

Directions:
1. B D to 145th St
2. C to 155th St

**South Street Seaport / Titanic Memorial**
Pearl St and Fulton St
New York, NY 10038
South Street Seaport: (212) 748-8600
Titanic Memorial: (212) 830-7700
southstreetseaport.com
Free Admission

Directions:
2. 3 C to Fulton St

**Moira Ann Smith Playground**
Madison Square Park, Between 24th & 25th Street
New York, NY 10010
(212) 520-7600
madisonsquarepark.org/kids/playground
Free Admission

The innovative Police Officer Moira Ann Smith Playground provides hours of fun for children. There are swings, slides and a 15-foot waterwheel sprinkler.

Directions:
N R 6 to 23rd Street
B Q to 34th St / Herald Sq
Morningside Park Down to Earth Farmers Market
110th St. & Manhattan Ave
New York, NY 10026
(914) 923-4837
downtoearthmarkets.com/markets?region=Manhattan&market=Morningside
+Park+Winter+Farmers+Market
Saturday 9am-5pm
Free Admission

Directions:
B C to Cathedral Pkwy - 110th St

Fulton Stall Market
91 South St
New York, NY 10038
646) 801-5499
fultonstallmarket.org/
Sundays 10am-4pm
Free Admission
Fulton Stall Market operates an indoor farmers’ market on the weekends and a permanent market shop seven days a week. Fulton Stall Market offers chef demos from local restaurants, music performances by local artists, Saturday cartoons and movies for kids, and nutrition education workshops for school groups.

Directions:
2 3 4 5 C to Fulton St
MANHATTAN Parks, Recreation and Outdoor Venues

**Toyota Children’s Learning Garden**
603 East 11th Street  
New York, NY 10009  
nyrp.org/green-spaces/garden-details/toyota-east-childrens-learning-garden/  
*Free Admission*

Directions:

L to 1st Ave

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**Target East Harlem Community Garden**
415-417 East 117th Street (between First and Pleasant Avenues)  
New York, NY 10035  
nyrp.org/green-spaces/garden-details/target-east-harlem-community-garden  
*Free Admission*

Directions:

6 to 116th St

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**Indian Road Playground**
Inwood Hill Park, W 214th St between Indian Rd and Seaman Ave  
New York, NY 10034  
nycgpovparks.org/parks/inwood-hill-park/highlights/12342  
*Free Admission*

Situated in what may well be Manhattan’s wildest, most history-laden nature preserve, the refurbished Indian Road Playground in Inwood Hill Park lends its bucolic surroundings a welcome kid-friendliness. Built with American Indian references in homage to the nearby road of the same name and the people who used it, the playground sports a wooden canoe that kids can sit in or fill with sand, a Native symbol–bearing tic-tac-toe game and a thoughtfully shaded circular sand pit, plus two climbing structures (one for tots, the other for older children) that resemble science-class atomic models.

Directions:

A to 207th St  
1 to 215th St
LIBRARIES

Plan Your Visit

- **CHOOSE** a library to visit.
- **PREPARE** for your visit:
  - Visit the library’s website or call the branch you will be visiting. Most library branches offer interactive story times for different age groups as well as many other free programs and activities.
  - Consider visiting the library in advance to meet the children’s librarian and learn the layout of the library.
- **SIGN UP** for your own library card if you don’t already have one, and ask parents if their children have library cards before you go.
- **PREPARE** children for story times at the library by setting aside a daily Story Time when you read aloud to children. If there are older children in your care, you may want get them involved in reading aloud to children as well.

While You’re There

- **INTRODUCE** the children to the children’s librarian and encourage children to ask for help with finding books. Older children may ask for help with homework assignments or projects.
- **DO** a Picture Walk.
  - Choose a book – preferably with lots of illustrations – and “walk” through the book, one page at a time.
  - **OBSERVE** what children **NOTICE**.
  - **TALK** about the characters and ask children to **PREDICT** what might happen, then
  - **READ** the book together.
- **ENCOURAGE** children to select one or two books (or more!) to bring home. You may also consider checking out books on tape or CD, DVD’s and other available resources.

Extending Learning

- When you get home, **ENCOURAGE** **REFLECTION** about their experience at the library.
- You might ask:
  - What was your favorite part of the story you heard today?
  - Why did you choose these books today?
- **EXPLORE** the following activities to continue promoting **EARLY LITERACY** and **LANGUAGE** development.
  - **READ** to and with children
  - **OBSERVE** how they **INTERACT** with books and stories
  - **INVITE** children to create books of their own.
  - **CREATE** a quiet and comfortable Book Nook or area in your home with books and soft materials.
## Main Branch

**Grand Central Library**  
135 East 46th Street (between Lexington & Third Aves.)  
New York, NY 10017  
(212) 621-0670  
nypl.org

## Other Branches

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<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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| **115th Street Library**                    | 203 West 115th Street  
New York, NY 10026-2403  
(212) 666-9393 |                      |
| **125th Street Library**                    | 224 East 125th Street (near Third Ave.)  
New York, NY  
(212) 534-5050 |                      |
| **58th Street Library**                     | 127 East 58th Street (between Park &  
Lexington Aves.)  
New York, NY 10022-1211  
(212) 759-7358 |                      |
| **67th Street Library**                     | 328 East 67th Street (near First Ave.)  
New York, NY 10065-6204  
(212) 734-1717 |                      |
| **96th Street Library**                     | 112 East 96th Street (near Lexington Ave.)  
New York, NY 10128-2597  
(212) 289-0908 |                      |
| **Aguilar Library**                         | 174 East 110th Street (between Lexington  
& Third Aves.)  
New York, NY 10029-3212  
(212) 534-2930 |                      |
| **Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking  
Book Library**                              | 40 West 20th Street (between 5th and 6th Aves.)  
New York, NY 10011-4211  
(212) 206-5400 |                      |
| **Battery Park City Library**               | 175 North End Avenue (at Murray Street)  
New York, NY 10282  
(212) 790-3499 |                      |
| **Bloomingdale Library**                    | 150 West 100th Street (between  
Amsterdam & Columbus Aves.)  
Manhattan, NY 10025-5196  
(212) 222-8030 |                      |
| **Chatham Square Library**                  | 33 East Broadway (near Catherine St.)  
New York, NY 10002-6804  
(212) 964-6598 |                      |
| **Columbus Library**                        | 742 10th Avenue (between 50th & 51st)  
New York, NY 10019-7019  
(212) 586-5098 |                      |
| **Countee Cullen Library**                  | 104 West 136th Street (near Lenox Ave.)  
New York, NY 10030-2695  
(212) 491-2070 |                      |
| **Donnell Library Center**                  | 20 West 53rd Street  
New York, NY 10019-6185  
(212) 714-8400 |                      |
| **Epiphany Library**                        | 228 East 23rd Street (near Second Ave.)  
New York, NY 10010-4672  
(212) 679-2645 |                      |
| **Fort Washington Library**                 | 535 West 179th Street  
New York, NY 10033-5799  
(212) 927-3533 |                      |
| **George Bruce Library**                    | 518 West 125th Street (at Amsterdam Ave.)  
New York, NY 10027-3407  
(212) 662-9727 |                      |
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<th>Library Name</th>
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<td>Grand Central Library</td>
<td>135 East 46th Street</td>
<td>(212) 621-0670</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton Fish Park Library</td>
<td>415 East Houston Street (near Avenue D)</td>
<td>(212) 673-2290</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton Grange Library</td>
<td>503 West 145th Street</td>
<td>(212) 926-2147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harlem Library</td>
<td>9 West 124th Street</td>
<td>(212) 348-5620</td>
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<td>Hudson Park Library</td>
<td>66 Leroy Street (off Seventh Ave. South)</td>
<td>(212) 243-6876</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inwood Library</td>
<td>4790 Broadway (near Dyckman St.)</td>
<td>(212) 942-2445</td>
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<td>Jefferson Market Library</td>
<td>425 Avenue of the Americas (at 10th St.)</td>
<td>(212) 243-4334</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kips Bay Library</td>
<td>446 Third Avenue (at E. 31st St.)</td>
<td>(212) 683-2520</td>
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<td>Macomb's Bridge Library</td>
<td>2650 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd.</td>
<td>(212) 281-4900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Manhattan Library</td>
<td>455 Fifth Avenue (at 40th Street)</td>
<td>(917) 275-6975</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morningside Heights</td>
<td>2900 Broadway (at W. 113th St.)</td>
<td>(212) 864-2530</td>
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<td>Muhlenberg Library</td>
<td>209 West 23rd Street (near Seventh Ave.)</td>
<td>(212) 924-1585</td>
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<td>New Amsterdam Library</td>
<td>9 Murray Street (between Broadway &amp; Church St.)</td>
<td>(212) 732-8186</td>
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<td>Ottendorfer Library</td>
<td>135 Second Avenue (near E. 8th St. - St. Marks Place)</td>
<td>(212) 674-0947</td>
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<td>Riverside Library</td>
<td>127 Amsterdam Avenue (at W. 65th St.)</td>
<td>(212) 870-1810</td>
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<td>Roosevelt Island Library</td>
<td>524 Main Street</td>
<td>(212) 308-6243</td>
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<td>Seward Park Library</td>
<td>192 East Broadway (at Jefferson St.)</td>
<td>(212) 477-6770</td>
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<td>St. Agnes Library</td>
<td>444 Amsterdam Avenue (near W. 81st St.)</td>
<td>(212) 621-0619</td>
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<td>Terence Cardinal Cooke-Cathedral Library</td>
<td>560 Lexington Avenue (at E. 50th St.)</td>
<td>(212) 752-3824</td>
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<td>Tompkins Square Library</td>
<td>331 East 10th Street (near Avenue B)</td>
<td>(212) 228-4747</td>
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Washington Heights Library
1000 St. Nicholas Avenue (at W. 160th St.)
New York, NY 10032-5202
(212) 923-6054

Webster Library
1465 York Avenue (near E. 78th St.)
New York, NY 10021-8895
(212) 288-5049

Yorkville Library
222 East 79th Street (between Second & Third Aves.)
New York, NY 10021-1295
(212) 744-5824
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