



IT'S SPRING BREAK! (and you've got kids!)

Your kids will be climbing the walls during their spring break — in a good way. In a city like NYC, there's plenty to keep them occupied.

Stuck in the city for the kids' school vacation? Don't fret. Here's our planning guide for parents who want to make the most of the time off

By ROSE GORDON SALA

SPRING break starts Saturday for many New York parents — and the prospect of nearly a dozen consecutive school-free days for kids might have parents panicking. Sure, heading out of town solves the problem, but it can be expensive and requires advance planning.

Sharon Celecia, 40, of Fort Greene, Brooklyn, says she plans to let her 6-year-old daughter Ella Mei go "off the grid" a bit by skipping a formal camp and having the option to sleep in. But they'll remain busy, trying to tour every art museum possible: the Met, Whitney, and Children's Museum of the Arts, among others. "We're going to be tourists in our town," says Celecia.

For those bypassing pricey getaways to stick around the city, The Post put together a day-by-day guide filled with kid-friendly (ages 5 to 12), boredom-busting activities.

SATURDAY, APRIL 12

Queens County Farm Museum's Children's Carnival

Kick off spring break with an old-fashioned county fair, a trip back in time at one of the oldest farms in the state, right in Queens. The farm hosts the last weekend of its annual Children's Carnival on April 12 and 13, with rides and games intended to appeal to toddlers up to preteens. Kids can ride the Ferris wheel, take a hay or pony ride, or get their face painted. They'll mingle with the farm's resident animals — heritage pigs, goats, chickens and cows — and enjoy a special animal show.

INFO: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; \$11 per person; 73-50 Little Neck Parkway, Floral Park, Queens; 718-347-3276

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HAVE A SPRING FLING WITH

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SUNDAY, APRIL 13**Bartow-Pell Mansion's Easter Egg Hunt**

Venture up to Pelham Bay Park's 19th-century mansion for an afternoon outdoor Easter egg hunt. The timed hunts are divided by age, letting the toddlers hunt for rubber duckies, while the preschoolers attend an egg hunt in the formal garden, and the 7- to 12-year-olds take over the rest of the grounds. Younger kids will enjoy meeting the Easter Bunny, while older ones participate in an egg toss and other games. Mary Beth Fisher moved from the city to Pelham about six years ago, and has been a regular at the hunt with her two kids ever since. "It's like a killer backyard and a huge play date," she says. "We always bring friends or family if they're in town." Light refreshments will be served. Bring your own basket. Registration requested. (Rain date: Saturday, April 19, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

►INFO: 1:30 to 4 p.m.; \$12 per kid, adults free; 895 Shore Road, The Bronx; 718-885-1461

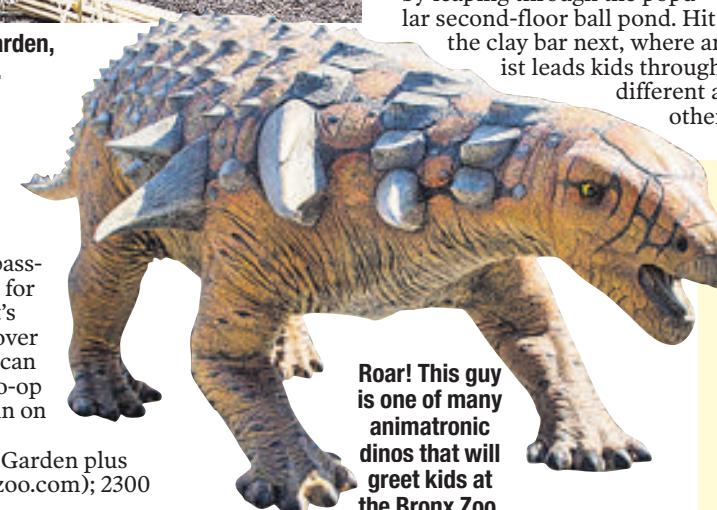


At the Kids Food Festival at the New York Botanical Garden, children will get up close and personal with crops.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16**The Bronx Zoo's "Dinosaur Safari"**

Check out the more than 30 robotic dinosaurs in the special safari ride opening the week of spring break at the Bronx Zoo. The narrated wagon ride is part history lesson, part thriller movie as the animatronic dinosaurs, including a 40-foot-long Tyrannosaurus rex, roar at the passengers-by. Kids can dig for fossils at the end of the ride, pose for a photo with T. rex or rummage through a paleontologist's lair. Counter-balance all that reptilian brawn with a trip over to the Butterfly Garden, just opened for the season. Kids can play insect dress-up at the Pollination Hall of Fame photo-op station, donning bumblebee and fly costumes. Join the fun on "suggested donation" admission Wednesdays.

►INFO: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; \$5 for Safari, \$3 for Butterfly Garden plus zoo admission (check Web site for various rates: bronxzoo.com); 2300 Southern Blvd., The Bronx; 718-367-1010



Roar! This guy is one of many animatronic dinos that will greet kids at the Bronx Zoo.

MONDAY, APRIL 14**New York Botanical Garden's Culinary Kids Food Festival**

Got a budding Mario Batali on your hands, or a kiddo with a green thumb? The New York Botanical Garden's weeklong "Kids Food Festival" kicks off Monday with food-centric activity stations. Kids will explore the insides of a beehive before taste-testing several varieties of honey, and meet a flock of chickens as they learn about eggs. Make a keepsake pysanka paper Easter egg and take home a basil seed packet to try a little gardening at home. Arrive in time for the daily 1 p.m. cooking demonstration to enjoy tasty samples from local chefs. Parents will want to steal away to the Orchid Show, where thousands of exotic flowers will be on display for one last week. Or, slip over to listen to a Key West-inspired musical number by Jimmy Kenny and the Pirate Beach Band at 3 p.m. and imagine you took that tropical getaway after all.

►INFO: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; \$10 for kids ages 2 to 12 (under 2, free), \$20 adults; 2900 Southern Blvd., The Bronx; 718-817-8700

Little ones get creative at the Children's Museum of the Arts, painting and making clay sculptures (below and inset).

**TUESDAY, APRIL 15****The Children's Museum of the Arts**

Enjoy an afternoon of art-making at this West Side museum, normally closed on Tuesdays. Kids 5 and up can join an art gallery workshop and build rainbow-colored spider webs with yarn, pipe cleaners and markers. Burn off some extra energy before the next project by leaping through the popular second-floor ball pond. Hit

the clay bar next, where an artist leads kids through molding different animals and other shapes,



or tinker with animation in the Media Lab.

"He would come here just for the clay bar," says Jacqui Gittens of her 5-year-old son Mark, who was busy sculpting a gray giraffe one Thursday afternoon. Gittens, 39, of Cypress Hills, Brooklyn, home schools her three kids, including 11-year-old and 14-year-old daughters, and relies on cultural events to supplement their education.

"They're all into the creative arts, so this is perfect."

►INFO: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; \$11 per person; 103 Charlton St.; 212-274-0986

THURSDAY, APRIL 17**Central Park's Loeb Boathouse**

Play city tourist for the day and rent a rowboat from the Loeb Boathouse. The calm lake is the perfect place for kids to practice their rowing skills stress-free. Let them bring a friend, as each boat fits up to four people. Not ready to go home? Rent cruisers and kids' bikes from the Boathouse afterward to finish out the afternoon pedaling around Central Park's greening foliage.

►INFO: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; rowboats: \$12 first hour, \$3 each additional 15 minutes (cash only); bikes: \$9 per hour or \$45 a day for cruisers; \$6 per hour for kids; The Lake off East Drive at 74th St.; 212-517-2233

THESE KID-COOL ACTIVITIES

Got giraffe? Hop in the car for a road trip to Six Flags Great Adventure & Safari.



FRIDAY, APRIL 18

Brooklyn Boulders

Scale the rock wall at this Brooklyn climbing spot tucked away in Gowanus. Choose from a "Family Learn the Ropes" parent-and-child class (\$108 per pair), where you'll both learn climbing basics, from belaying to knot climbing, or a two-hour Kids Academy training in bouldering, climbing and games for 5- to 12-year-olds (\$39 per kid). Families with experienced climbers arrive weekend mornings to simply enjoy the free time on the wall with thinner crowds. Book classes at least a day ahead.

Vanessa Woog, 41, of Prospect Lefferts Gardens, signed up her 6-year-old, Tristan, for lessons when he started climbing the kitchen counters at home.

"We stayed for three hours the first time, and I had to pull him away," she says.

"When he got home, he said, 'I want to go back.' She likes the low commitment and the ability to drop him off. The best part, according to Tristan? 'When you let go.'

INFO: 8 to 11 a.m.; rates vary; 575 Degraw St., Brooklyn; 347-834-9066

MONDAY, APRIL 21

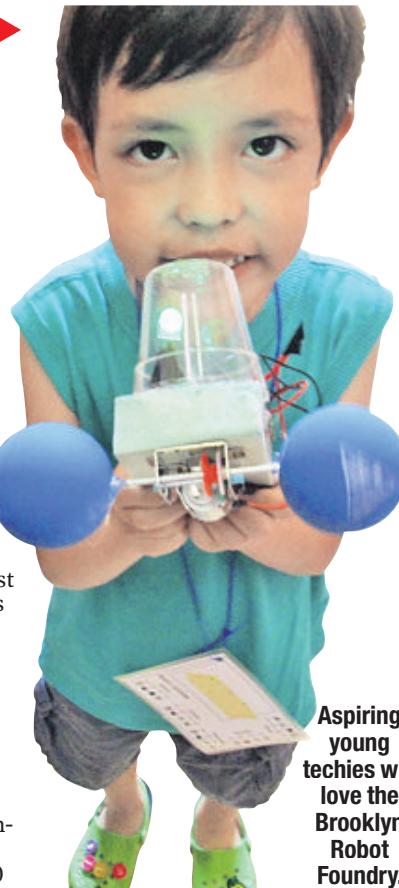
Brooklyn Robot Foundry

Drop the kids off for an engineer-inspired spring break play session at the Brooklyn Robot Foundry. They'll be able to choose from all manner of building materials — giant Legos, K'Nex, marble tracks, Straws and Connectors and even beaded jewelry makings — as they work on their creations alongside other kids ages 5- to 9-years-old. Join the robot-making table for an extra fee if there's room and come away with a motorized, light-flashing, self-built toy.

Lisa Bender's 9-year-old son, Wolf Mermelstein, is "bonkers" for the Robot Foundry, she says, taking a weekly after-school class and sometimes another over holiday breaks. "My son is one of those who doesn't want to leave," Bender says. "They're really learning there, about circuitry or art or just putting things together. The teachers have a lot of patience and are very creative."

Brooklyn too far? Check out the full- and half-day mini spring break sessions (Vibrating robots! Soldering?) at the Foundry's newly opened Tribeca location (347-762-6840).

INFO: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; \$10 per hour for free play, \$10 to \$20 additional for robot station; 303 Third Ave., Brooklyn; 528 Canal St.; 347-762-6840



Aspiring young techies will love the Brooklyn Robot Foundry.

SATURDAY, APRIL 19
Six Flags Great Adventure & Safari

Hit I-95 South for an hourlong road trip as Six Flags opens up its theme park and safari just in time for New York City kids' spring break. Hop on the Safari Off Road Adventure truck for baby-animal bliss, where the newly hatched and born will be on display in nearly every section of the safari, including lion cubs, a giraffe named Josie and bison calves.

INFO: 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; \$39.99 to \$66.99 per person; 1 Six Flags Blvd., Jackson, NJ; 732-928-2000

SUNDAY, APRIL 20
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Young artists can relax after a morning Easter egg hunt at two separate family art events this Sunday at the Guggenheim. Kids will pull up a pillow for the "Just Drop In!" session taking place right in the modern-art museum's galleries for ages 3 to 10. Kids will create 3-D dioramas and collages inspired by the "Carrie Mae Weems: Three Decades of Photography and Video" exhibit. An afternoon open art studio lets kids ages 5 to 14 and their families create works of art to take home.

INFO: 1 to 4 p.m.; \$22 for adults, kids under 12 free; 1071 Fifth Ave. at 88th Street; 212-423-3500

TUESDAY, APRIL 22

Randalls Island Golf & Sports

Shake off any lingering spring break energy before heading back to the classroom with a visit to this outdoor sports complex. Usher in baseball season with a round at the batting cages enjoying kid-friendly slow baseball and softball pitch settings. Or line up for 36-hole, waterfall-spotted minigolf. After wearing out your arms, sidle over to the adjacent grill where kids can feast on burgers and fries and the parents can take in a little ESPN and select a pint from the more than two dozen on tap. Don't linger for long, though, because foosball, ping-pong, horseshoes and badminton await.

Tatiana Samoylova spent four hours at Golf & Sports the first Sunday in April with her husband, their 7-year-old daughter, 11-year-old son and his friend. "The boys did the driving range, then the batting cages, then they ate, and then we all played minigolf together," says the 43-year-old Upper East Sider. "The setting is very relaxing. It feels safe, so we don't have to follow the kids around."

A shuttle to the center runs every hour along Third Avenue in Manhattan, and every half-hour on the weekends, picking up at 72nd, 77th, 86th and 96th streets.

INFO: 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.; \$3.50 for 30 pitches; \$7 for kids under 12, \$9 for adults minigolf; 1 Randalls Island; 212-427-5689

Rainy Day Movie Bonus

Kids running up the walls on a rainy day? Shuttle them off to the movies for one of these two family-friendly comedic singing sequels: "Muppets Most Wanted" or "Rio 2." The PG-rated Muppet movie sprints around Europe while the gang of puppets gets caught up in an international crime ring. In the G-rated "Rio 2," a family of endangered rare blue macaw parrots sets off for a rain-forest adventure to find more of their long-lost relations.