

Hiking tips

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Hiking tips

How to find tot-friendly trails

The best way to research good places for family hikes is to ask other parents where they like to Verb -
Base Form. You can also check online or call your county's or state's Noun department to get
information on Noun space and marked Noun that are suitable for children.

The Sierra Club has a database to help find Noun - Plural near you. Day-hiking guides from the bookstore
or library can also steer you in the right direction. Online message boards or email trees for Noun and
hiking enthusiasts are other ways to find family-friendly trails.

But to some extent, you really won't know whether a hike is Adjective or Adjective for you until
you get there. Be prepared to Adjective and Adjective - and realize that sometimes the
Verb - Past Tense will be as fun (at least in retrospect) as the hits.

Hiking tips

Try a dry run without your child. Verb - Present ends in S yourself with the trail, find out what the
Noun is really like, and get an idea of how long the hike will actually take. If your favorite places have
Noun of Noun, you might discover you have to go inland to seek out little Noun and
Noun holes. Others might choose a particular trail based on the proximity of Noun and
air-conditioned Noun.

Choose a trail that's the right distance and terrain for your youngest hiker. Nothing spoils an outdoor trek more
quickly than an unhappy hiker. Whether you're taking a group of children or going with just one, be sure the
youngest

will enjoy the hike as much as the oldest.

Go early. You want your child to have his batteries fully charged when you hit the trail. If you're at the trailhead [at 9 a.m.](#), you can work your muscles, soak up all the good eco-vibes, and be home by noon - perfect timing for lunch and a nap. With an older child who can hike longer distances, starting early will still get you back to your car before the sun starts to set.

Plan rest stops. Children tire easily, so plan to stop and explore more often than not. Choose a spot about halfway through to rest and refuel with snacks and water. Set goals. Sometimes a waterfall, lake, or beautiful vista at the top of a trail is an exciting goal to hike toward. Just remember your child will likely be more energized by the journey than the destination, so be flexible and prepared to let go of goals if your child gets sidetracked.

Make it fun for everyone. Think of educational and fun activities to do along the way that will keep your child entertained. Learn to identify some of the local trees and flowers so you can point them out to your child as you wander. Singing, playing games, and telling stories will also keep children interested and make the experience enjoyable for everyone.

How far your child can hike

That depends on how old your child is and whether you carry her, push her, or let her walk by herself - and how energetic you both feel that day.

Here's a closer look at appropriate hiking distances for different ages:

Newborns: Don't even think about going on a hike if your baby is less than 1 month old. (You may even want to wait

a couple of extra weeks to give yourself time to fully recover from the birth of your baby.) Babies this age are just too young to be exposed to the sun, the possibility of bad weather, and the jostling that comes from walking on rough terrain.

1- to 5-month-olds: How long a hike you can take depends on your stamina and your baby's. A front carrier is a good idea for babies this age for head and neck support. An infant, especially one not used to the confinement of a front carrier, may get fussy after just a short while. Older babies may be content for more than an hour before the cranky, hungry, and wet diaper factors set in.

6- to 14-month-olds: The key here is a good back carrier. It's safe to start using one when your child is able to sit up on her own - usually when she weighs at least 15 pounds and is 6 months old. If you're well rested, your baby is comfortable, the weather is temperate, and you pack enough supplies (snacks, drinks, and diapers), you may last several hours if you take a few breaks.

14 months to 4 years: Once your child starts walking with some confidence, adjust your expectations. You can still put her in a back carrier if you've invested in a good one with a wide age and weight range (up to 60 pounds). But toddlers like to get out periodically to walk by themselves. That will slow you to a snail's pace as they look at this leaf over here, and that puddle over there. Given ample water and snacks, 2- to 4-year-olds can usually hike a mile or so in good weather if the terrain is safe and predictable and you take breaks. But be aware, you'll probably end up carrying your child at times, especially on the way home.