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Fun Things To Do With Kids In and Around Manhattan



In Manhattan:

[Sunset Zoo](#) in Manhattan: a nice-sized zoo with a great playground and picnic area perfect for taking younger children.

[Splash Parks](#) at City Park and by the Discovery Center in Manhattan

[Konza Prairie](#) near Manhattan: this area has hiking trails. You can take the longest loop which is 6 miles or do one of the shorter ones, or just walk out a bit and turn around. Sometimes you can see turkeys, buffalo and other wildlife plus lots of native Kansas wildflowers.

[Manhattan Public Library](#): we've used libraries all over the country and this one is the best by far.

They have a great children's section, with scheduled activities for little ones and adults alike. The staff is friendly and helpful. If they don't have the book or movie you are looking for, they can get it through InterLibrary Loan, or will consider purchasing it.

[Tuttle Creek Dam](#) and [State Park](#) near Manhattan: the spillways are always fun to visit, especially when they are open. You can do canoe trips from here down the Kansas river, have a relaxing picnic or camp close to home if you want. Be mindful that the federal park and state parks are adjoining and you may need to get a permit to use either one.

[Annenberg Park](#) in Manhattan: this park has a pond for fishing and a nice trail that goes around the perimeter of the park, a playground, as well as a soccer and baseball fields.

[Goodnow Park](#) in Manhattan: I think this is a hidden gem, it's not a heavily used park so it's great if you don't want to navigate a crowded playground.

[City Park playground](#) in Manhattan: a nice, large playground with lots of equipment. City Park is pretty large and has lots of open areas for chasing a Frisbee or just running around. There are tennis courts, a sand volleyball court and covered picnic areas.

[Discovery Center](#) in Manhattan: a museum with some hands-on activities for younger ones. I like to combine this with a trip to the [Tall Grass Prairie National Preserve](#) since a good portion of the exhibits explain the tall grass ecosystem. The Tall Grass Prairie National Preserve has hiking trails which can be explored via a free bus tour. There is a buffalo herd you may see while you are exploring. The preserve offers seasonal events.

[Call Hall Dairy Store](#) on the Kansas State Campus: KSU makes some of the best ice cream ever. This store also sells farm products such as meat produced by university students.

[K-State Insect Zoo](#) on the Kansas State Campus: if your little ones are into creepy crawly critters, then this is the place to bring them.

[Wild Wood Adventure Park](#) in Manhattan: hiking and zip lines for your adventurous ones.

[A&H Farm](#) in Manhattan: this farm is a great place to get home grown produce, and they have seasonal events that are family friendly like a pumpkin patch in the fall.

Nearby areas:

[Wamego City Park Train](#); the train has a short ride through the park, great for younger kids. The park itself has a stocked fishing lake, a museum with several historic buildings, a pool and a nice playground.

[Pott State Lake 2](#) near Manhattan: this is what I consider another hidden gem, it's tucked away and has fishing and camping. I like to go there for picnics.

[Milford Fish Hatchery and Wildlife Sanctuary](#) near Junction City: the wildlife sanctuary has owls, eagles and other wildlife that has been injured and can't be released back into the wild. There is a nice sized museum that has lizards, snakes etc. My children were enthralled with the prairie dog exhibit (think giant hamster runs that you can see the prairie dogs moving through). Hiking trails, picnic areas and a playground make this a perfect day trip.

Farther afield:

[KU Natural History Museum](#) in Lawrence: my son who was into dinosaurs really wanted to visit here. They have more than dinosaurs though so it was interesting for the entire family.

[Legoland Discovery Center](#) in Kansas City: Legos. Need I say more?

[Sea Life Aquarium](#) in Kansas City: the aquarium is compact but has lots of interesting fish to see. I think the size is just right for younger ones since it doesn't take all day unless you really want it to.

[Hallmark Visitors Center](#) in Kansas City: think of this as the Hallmark museum. My kids really liked seeing the machines that worked, and were fascinated by the bow making machine that gave each of them a bow near the end of the museum.

[Science City](#) in Kansas City: a large hands on science museum that has gotten rave reviews from friends who have taken their children there.

[Liberty Memorial and WWI Museum](#) in Kansas City: a great place to complement learning about WWI, I think this museum is better suited to older children and adults.

[Topeka Zoo](#): a fun zoo that is larger than the one in Manhattan but not too large for younger children. It has a train to ride which was a bonus for my family.

[Kansas Museum of History](#) in Topeka: this is a good place to take late elementary/middle school children as well as any family or friends who might be visiting the area.

[Children's Discovery Center](#) in Topeka: hands-on learning for young and elementary age children.

[Eisenhower Presidential Museum](#) in Abilene: I think this museum is great for late elementary and above., You can tour the president's boyhood home too.

[Abilene and Smoky Valley Railway](#) in Abilene: operating historic railways are magnets for my family.

[C.W Parker Carousel](#) in Abilene: yes, you can really ride the carousel! Great for little ones and history lovers.

[Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun](#) in Kansas City: if you have kids who love amusement parks, this is a great place to spend a day.

[Kansas City Zoo](#): we really enjoy zoos, and Kansas City has a great zoo. A bonus for my family was the train you can ride through the zoo, plus the African Sky Safari for a bird's eye view of the zoo.

[Stratata Underground Salt Museum](#) in Hutchinson: I think this is a great place to bring late elementary and above. We found the storage areas where film reels, costumes and other things from movies are kept interesting.

[Cosmosphere](#) in Hutchinson: this museum has an emphasis on the space program so it's a great place to learn about it. My children liked the hands-on exhibits and participating in the Goddard's Lab show. My hubby had fun here too so I consider it a great family trip.

[Kansas Aviation Museum](#) in Wichita: known in the past as the aviation capital of the world, Wichita is an appropriate location for this museum. I think middle schoolers and above will enjoy it.

[Sedgwick County Zoo](#) in Wichita: this zoo is fun because you can get some great views of elephants, giraffes and other animals. There is also a boat tour of the zoo for a different perspective.

[Big Brutus](#) near Pittsburg: if you have a child who loves Tonkas, then this is the ultimate earth moving machine to see. It is HUGE! You can take a tour to actually go through Brutus, but for some, just seeing it is enough.

[Little House on the Prairie Museum](#) in Independence: while small, if you have children who are Laura Ingalls Wilder fans, or if you are one yourself, there is something special about being at the exact location she was in the book Little House on the Prairie.