

TIME TO GET OUT AND PLAY

**Places to Go, Things to Do
with Toddlers & Preschoolers
in the Bitterroot Valley**



by Syble Solomon



*"For the grandparents, moms and dads,
to make your ever-so-important journey a little easier."*

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Here we go

Many years ago, when my kids were little, my response to a beautiful, sunny day was, "Let's go on an adventure." I'd toss food, drinks and extra clothes into a bag and off we'd go. When we had a string of miserable days, my response was, "Where can we go on an adventure so we don't drive each other crazy?" And, by the way, since money was tight, I always looked for free or nearly free things to do.

Being new to the Bitterroot Valley, I was looking for some adventures to do with my grandson and when kids come to visit. There wasn't any obvious list of things that would work with toddlers and preschoolers, so I thought it would be fun to put one together and share it with others.

My goal was to put a lot of information in one place with contact information so you could check it out more thoroughly yourself as things change. I make no claims to have included everything, that everything will work out or that all the information is totally accurate. We're in Montana. One day there's a great place to play by a stream and a week later the water is raging with the spring melt. Another day hungry mosquitoes are out in force. Programs, stores, people and resources come and go. Call first or go with the attitude that it's an adventure and you may need to change your plans. I've also added tips to make the experience as successful as possible.

They say life is about the journey, not the destination. I can guarantee that the adventures you take with your toddlers and preschoolers will make your life journey more memorable and fun.

Enjoy!

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TEN TIPS FOR THE BEST ADVENTURES WITH TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

1. Sing! Some kids are amazingly patient when they ride in the car. Some aren't! Plan to sing songs or tell stories while you're driving. CDs of children's songs can be a saving grace. Sing along! It's tempting to use videos and digital games which can keep little ones occupied, but you can provide a more interactive experience by being part of the entertainment!

2. Enjoy yourself! If you have a pre-walker, just slip on the carrier (or take the stroller) and enjoy the things that make you happy. Bring food and drinks that are easy and not messy. (Cheerios, cheese cubes and grapes were always my go-to snacks.)

3. Focus on the kids! Stay off the phone. It's fun to go with a friend, but don't get so invested in your adult conversation that you forget to pay attention to your kids. If you have a two-year-old, expect to interact every two minutes, a three-year-old—every 3 minutes—whether they ask for your attention or not! A simple touch, eye contact, smile and/or a statement about what the child is doing or seeing (positive statement, of course!) can keep your child engaged longer without demanding your attention.

4. Stay present and patient! If kids are engaged with something that holds their attention, like going up and down a ramp 100 times or watching a lawn mower going back and forth, that's okay. We're so prone to distract kids if something else is fascinating or you believe it has educational or entertainment value or you're bored, but it's okay for kids to do these things and stay focused on what they care about in the moment. Simply respect their choice of engagement and enjoy it for what it is. It will make your life easier.

5. Balance talking and quiet! While it's important to talk to kids about what they are seeing and experiencing, don't ask dozens of questions, explain everything or talk non-stop. Kids need to look, listen and explore on their own to take in new experiences.

6. Heed the warning! If your child gives you every indication that s/he wants to leave, listen to him/her. Most meltdowns could be avoided by heeding those warnings and not staying that extra five minutes.

7. Leaving ritual! If it's time to leave and your child is engaged, tell him or her ahead of time that after s/he does X, you will both be leaving. Setting the timer on your phone is another good signal. Say what the routine will be. (When the phone beeps, we'll put away the books, get your coat and you can put it on yourself or I can help you.) Then do it. You can include other choices and that's a good idea, but there is no choice about it being time to go. And NEVER threaten to leave your child! It's important that kids know that there is nothing they can do that would ever make you leave them, including throwing a full-blown tantrum! You can't leave them for real, so you might as well build trust and don't threaten—just take them kicking and screaming if need be.

8. Stick to your word! If you tell your child you are ready to leave, don't start a conversation, get on your phone or get engaged with something else. Leave.

9. Review! On your ride or walk home, do a simple summary about what you did, what you saw and, if something was particularly interesting, describe it. Share it again at mealtime, later in the day and before going to bed. If you took pictures, look at them to reinforce the experience. It's also teaching kids to tell stories!

10. Have realistic expectations. Really, don't think your kids should be able to pay attention, behave and do what you want them to do more than this amount of time:

- 2 years - 6 to 8 minutes
- 3 years - 9 to 12 minutes
- 4 years - 12 to 16 minutes
- 5 years - 15 to 20 minutes

Hints on Tips

Believe it or not, even adults rarely stay on task more than 15-20 minutes unless we are personally invested in it! Usually our mind wanders, we doodle, talk, remember something important we must do, check our phone or otherwise distract ourselves. Unlike our kids, hopefully we don't throw a temper tantrum, but we may get crabby!

Because little kids can be mesmerized watching computer screens, TV, cell phones and tablets, we think they have a long attention span. Electronic media use all kinds of tricks with movement, color, sounds and timing to hook little kids (and adults!).

Don't be fooled into thinking your kids should be able to do what you want them to do and stay actively engaged for extended periods of time. Be prepared to change activities, take a break or leave.

Maybe your child does stay engaged longer or has some days or activities where s/he can be incredibly interested and well-behaved for long periods of time, but don't set that as your standard or come to expect it. Plus, if your child is tired, hasn't been feeling well, or there's been stress in the family, lower your expectations for how long s/he will stay focused and engaged. This simple shift in expectations is guaranteed to result in a more enjoyable time for everyone!

BITTERROOT COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA



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Bitterroot College has offered college, continuing education, and workforce training opportunities since 2009. **Bitterroot FabLab** provides access to the tools, training, and community you'll need to be successful in making just about anything.

Bitterroot College UM

103 South 9th Street
Hamilton, MT 59840
Phone: (406) 375-0100
www.umt.edu/bc

Nil Volentibus Arduum

– *Nothing is impossible for the willing*

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THINGS TO DO INSIDE

ANIMALS

Bitterroot Humane Society

Depending on your child, it might be a good place to pet cats and see dogs who are always happy to have some extra attention. Be aware, however, that it can be noisy in the dog area. If you're interested in walking dogs or volunteering it could be a good experience for you, your child and the dogs!

262 Fairgrounds Road, Hamilton
www.bitterroothumane.org
(406) 363-5311



ART EXPERIENCE

Paint Your Own Pottery at Stone Cottage

This is a fun place to walk around and shop for beautiful and unique things by local artists. Look for the framed butterflies and huge bugs! And best of all, there is a "Paint Your Own Pottery" studio upstairs. Customers can purchase and paint ceramic items any time Stone Cottage is open, Monday-Saturday, 10am-5:30pm. Prices are marked on the items, paints and brushes are on the tables and instructions are there too. Easy! No prep needed! Your kids will need supervision, but let's not be concerned with doing it "right." Have fun, be creative! Completed items will be fired and ready to be picked up within a week.

219 W Main Street, Hamilton
(406) 363-4789

BOUNCING

Bitterroot Bouncers

A fun place for children who enjoy bouncing. There are multiple bounce houses with options for bouncing, climbing, and crawling. Adult must accompany children and there are plenty of places to sit and keep an eye on your kids. No shoes allowed in the bouncing area and socks are required. Children two and under are free with an older sibling or \$3.50/hour. Three and over are \$7/hour. Multiple use discount cards available. Tuesday-Thursday, 11am-7pm, Friday-Saturday, 11am-8pm and Sunday, 11am-5pm. See page 42 for Parents Night Out information.

806 S. 1st Street, Hamilton
www.bitterrootbouncers.com
(406) 203-0033

MORE THINGS TO DO INSIDE

BOWLING

Bitterroot Valley Lanes

Bumpers can be put up for toddlers and young kids to make bowling a positive, fun indoor activity. Check out their Facebook page for hours and special family and kid events.

**300 Skeels Avenue, Hamilton
(406) 363-6172**

DANCE

Ballet Bitterroot Dance Academy

Little ones who love to move to music can start as young as two. Check the schedule for Creative Movement classes for 2- to 3-year-olds and 3- to 5-year-olds which generally meet in the late afternoon. Cost begins at \$35/month for a weekly 30-minute class and varies with the payment plan and length of the class.

**529 West River Road, Hamilton
www.balletbitterroot.com
(406) 529-2842**

Groovz Studio of Dance and Fitness

Tiny dancers' classes are offered weekly for 3- to 5-year-olds in the spring and fall. Kids are exposed to lots of different types of music and dance—ballet, jazz, creative movement and more. Ballet shoes are often used but are not required. Summer camps for 2- to 5-year-olds have a different theme each week and a daily craft project. Call for more information.

**810 S. 1st Street, Hamilton
217 Main Street, Stevensville
www.groovzdance.com
Hamilton: text (510) 828-7545
Stevensville: text (406) 214-5295**

GYMNASTICS

Velocity Gymnastics Academy

Open gym for parents to bring their kids from infants to 5-year-olds on Wednesdays, 12pm-1pm. Cost is free under a year and then \$5/child. Use the foam pit, balls, beams, bounce house and more. Staff is always there to help in this very informal, fun setting. Call for days and times for classes for 3- to 5-year-olds and summer camp information. See page 42 for Parents Night Out information.

**1269 S. 1st Street, Hamilton
www.velocitygymnasticsacademy.com
(406) 363-5398**

LIBRARIES

Bitterroot Public Library

The children's section of the library has lots of great books and so much more including toys, building blocks and other activities. If you need to get out of the house, it's a great place to go! Attend story time on Wednesdays at 10:30am (baby and toddlers) and Friday at 10:30am (preschoolers). Many events and activities are available for little kids and families throughout the year. It's also a community resource to learn about other activities. Stop at the gazebo outside for free books and the free magazines are great for finding pictures for all kinds of children's projects. Open Monday-Thursday, 9:30am-7pm, Friday and Saturday, 9:30am to 5pm. Check their hours and events online.

306 State Street, Hamilton
www.bitterrootpubliclibrary.org
(406) 363-1670

Darby Community Public Library

Open Tuesdays, 10am-6pm, Wednesday-Friday, 11am-6pm and Saturday, 10am-2pm. Come for children's story time, Tuesdays at 11am. In the summer there is a special program that has a different theme each year. The kids get a free lunch and then have activities in the gazebo in the park. Check online for additional events for children and families.

101 1/2 South Marshall Street, Darby
www.darbylibrary.net
(406) 821-4771

North Valley Public Library - Stevensville

Open Monday-Friday, 10am-7pm, Saturday, 10am-5pm. Check out the Play Space with its own puppet theater. Ongoing programs include Mother Goose Sings and Swings for babies and toddlers, Monday at 10:30am; Montana Mollie's Tales for 3- to 5-year-olds, Tuesdays at 10am; and story time, Wednesdays for kids five and under. Check the online calendar.

208 Main Street, Stevensville
www.northvalleylibrary.org
(406) 777-5061

MUSIC



Rooted Music and Bitterroot School of Music

It's fun to look at instruments and maybe get a shaker, bells or other small instrument to make music at home. Musical instruments, private lessons and more are offered. They are planning to have weekly music time for toddlers and preschoolers. Call to check for schedules.

100 Skeels Avenue, Hamilton
www.rootedmusic.com
bitterrootschoolofmusic.org
(406) 363-5491

PLAYSPACE

HEARTism Community Center

In November 2016 HEARTism Community Center opened its doors in downtown Corvallis offering services to children and families with special needs. HEARTism (Healing Arts for Autism and All Abilities) offers summer camps and a variety of art, music, exercise, cooking and life skills classes to children of all ages in a warm, welcoming, sensory friendly environment. Please contact us to learn more about our organization.

1130 Main St., Corvallis
heartism406@gmail.com
(406) 210-2937

Burger King Play Space

An indoor area to run, climb and use up some energy on a day when being inside makes sense, but you want to get out of the house.

1341 N. 1st Street, Hamilton

SCIENCE

O'Hara Commons & Sustainability Center

Tadpoles Nature Play Group meets on Fridays, 9:30am-10:30am for kids up to 6. Check online for many different types of programs for the family related to gardening and sustainability. Enjoy their small park for playing, climbing and seeing different gardens.

111 S. 4th Street, Hamilton
www.theoharacommons.org
(406) 369-6451

SWIMMING



Canyons Athletic Club

Non-members can come for open swim from 3:30pm-5:30pm and pay a guest fee of \$12 (adult) and \$5 (child). Also open to the public are parent and child programs for infants and toddlers as well as group and private instruction. Call for more specific information or check the schedule online.

472 Tammany Lane, Hamilton
www.canyonsathleticclub.com
(406) 361-1555

Bitterroot Aquatic Center

Baby Bobbers class, preschool swim classes and open swim available. The Baby Bobbers class is for ages six months to three years. Check website for times and cost. And there's an outdoor pool and water park area open in the summer!

59 Kurtz Lane, Hamilton
www.bitterrootaquaticcenter.com
(406) 361-7163

Lost Trail Hot Springs

Family friendly and the pool is kept at temperatures that are okay for young children. (Hot tub is not.) Children and Seniors \$6.25 Adults \$8.25. Open Thursday-Sunday, Labor Day to spring. Open Daily in the Summer.

Lost Trail Hot Springs, (406)821-3574
Lost Trail Hot Springs Road
Sula, Montana 59871
losttrailhotsprings@yahoo.com

YOGA

Aspen Leaf Yoga

You and your child can enjoy yoga together, plus classes are available for young kids. Check the website or call Val for programs, days and times.

100 Skeels Street Suite B., Hamilton
www.aspenleafyoga.org
(406) 545-5577

MORE THINGS TO DO INSIDE

VISIT OTHERS AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Go visit nursing homes or assisted living facilities. It will put a smile on the residents' faces! No training necessary—little kids equal automatic smiles! Call ahead; the activity directors can lead you to people who would appreciate visitors. For more information, contact Ashley Lyman at (406) 381-5023, a mom and former Social Services Director at the Living Center in Stevensville.



Beehive Homes

842 New York Ave., Hamilton
(406) 545-5737

Discovery Center

601 N. 10th Street, Hamilton
(406) 363-2273

Remington

841 Running Creek St., Hamilton
(406) 375-9047

Sapphire

Retirement Homes

501 N. 10th Street, Hamilton
(406) 363-2800

The Living Center

63 Main Street, Stevensville
(406) 777-5411

Valley View Estates

225 N. 8th Street, Hamilton
(406) 363-1144



THINGS TO SEE INSIDE



ART

Art is everywhere! Whether you're in a doctor's office, the bank or a store, it's likely that you will see paintings, sculptures and other art forms. For information on local artists go to:

www.artistsalongthebitterroot.com

Studio tours are scheduled annually in June and November:

www.bitterrootarts.org/workshops

Helpful Hints to keep your child engaged when looking at art:

- 1.** Pick your child up so s/he is at eye level with the art you're looking at.
- 2.** Pay attention to what your child likes and expand on it. If s/he is attracted to horses, focus on pictures of horses. You can talk about the color of the horses, their size, what they are doing, or where they are (in the middle of a field or inside a barn).
- 3.** Have one thing in mind when you're looking at paintings or photographs that will focus and engage children. Will you look for something yellow in each picture? Find things that are shaped like a circle? Find who looks happy or sad? Find fruit? See how many different animals you can see? What's the weather? What are the people doing?
- 4.** Keep toddlers captivated by asking them to point to things in the pictures. Can you find a chair? A man wearing a hat? Ask older preschoolers questions that make them observe and think: Is it morning or night? Is it winter or fall? Try rhyming with words you see in the pictures: what rhymes with snow? Sun? House? Bear?
- 5.** Make up a story about a picture you're looking at. Older preschoolers can tell you a story they make up about what you're seeing. Don't be afraid to make up silly stories.

MORE THINGS TO SEE INSIDE

Here are some art galleries to check out, but just walking around town, stop in any store that looks interesting and look at the art.

Art City

A cooperative art gallery with a wide variety of art: glass, pottery, batik, paintings, photography and more. Monday-Friday, 11am-5pm, Saturday, 11am-4pm.

**407 W. Main Street, Hamilton
(406) 363-4764**

Art Focus

A local art gallery that features a mixture of traditional and contemporary art including painting, ceramics, glass, sculpture, photography and more. Monday-Saturday, 10am-5:30pm.

**215 W. Main Street, Hamilton
www.artfocusmontana.com
(406) 363-4112**

Montana Bliss Artworks

Featured artwork includes unique concrete sculptures, kiln-fired glass, woven memory rugs, custom-designed jewelry, locally crafted woodwork, paintings, metalwork, and more! Monday-Saturday, 11am-3pm.

**101 S. 7th Street, Hamilton
www.montanablissartworks.com
(406) 351-0073**

Ponderosa Art Gallery

Enjoy beautiful paintings, wood and bronze sculptures, with primarily Western and wildlife themes. Irregular hours.

**944 Springhill Road, Hamilton
www.ponderosaartgallery.com
(406) 375-1212**

River's Mist Gallery and Gifts

An art gallery featuring local artists. Monday-Friday, 11am-6pm, Saturday, 11am-5pm.

**313 Main Street, Stevensville
(406) 777-0520**

MUSEUMS

Museums are great places to go and walk around, especially when you're getting tired of being in the house during bad weather! Point out some specific items and talk about what you are seeing. Don't overwhelm kids by trying to see everything. Take a break and give little ones a drink and a snack and review what you saw.

Bitterroot Gem and Mineral Society

What kid doesn't like rocks? See their display that travels between the Stevensville Historical Museum and the Victor Heritage Museum. Contact them for display location, kid-friendly activities and family-friendly rockhounding day trips. The annual Gem and Mineral Show is at the Fairgrounds the 3rd weekend in May and kids' activities are provided.

310 2nd Street, Corvallis
www.bitterrootgemandmineral.org
(406) 361-3347

Daly Mansion and Gardens

Open mid-May through mid-October, 10am-3pm. This mansion has 50 rooms to walk through, lots of art and a beautiful garden on 46 acres. You can take a tour or just walk through on your own which is probably best with a young child. There is a minimal fee but kids under 6 are free. Check online for events held there that are appropriate for kids.

251 Eastside Highway, Hamilton
www.dalymansion.org
(406) 363-6004

Darby Pioneer Memorial Museum

The key for access to the museum is held at Darby City Hall on Tanner Street. Open from Memorial Day to Labor Day on a volunteer basis.

Main Street behind the City Hall, Darby
(406) 821-3753

Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

Open Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm. The Visitor's Center is worth a visit. There are great displays of birds and other animals. Outside, live birds are everywhere—in the trees and bushes, on the ponds and flying through the air! We even saw a porcupine sleeping in a tree! And, if the weather is nice, go for a walk in the refuge.

4567 Wild Fowl Lane, Stevensville
(406) 777-5552



MORE THINGS TO SEE INSIDE



Ravalli County Museum

Built in 1900 as a courthouse, this wonderful museum has both permanent and changing exhibits so there is always something new and interesting to see. Kids activities are offered on Saturday mornings. Check online for other activities offered throughout the year. Open Tuesday-Saturday. Check the website for times. Thursday and Saturdays are free days.

205 Bedford, Hamilton
www.ravallimuseum.org
(406) 363-3338

St. Mary's Mission Museum

Open Tuesday-Saturday, mid-April through the summer. Families can explore inside the museum and you can take the tour of the beautifully restored buildings or do a self-guided tour around the grounds (the better option with a little one).

315 Charlos Street, Stevensville
www.stmarysmmission.org
(406) 777-5734

Stevensville Historical Museum

Open Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-4pm. Another opportunity to explore interesting exhibits and learn about the history of our area.

517 Main Street, Stevensville
www.stevensvillemuseum.com
(406) 777-1007

Theresa's Dolls & Gifts

A collection of over 1,000 dolls from all over the world, some over 200 years old. Call for hours.

5908 Eastside Hwy, Florence
(406) 273-6332

Victor Heritage Museum

Housed in the old Victor Depot. Open Memorial Day through Labor Day, Tuesday-Saturday, 1pm-4pm.

125 Blake Street, Victor
www.victorheritagemuseum.org
(406) 642-3997

VISIT STORES

It can be fun to go into stores to see new things and talk about what you see. Just going to a different type of store once in a while could be quite an adventure.

Helpful hints for making a store visit an adventure:



1. Before going into a store, tell your child what you will be doing, seeing, buying or looking at. It helps them focus. Tell them whether or not you will buy them something. There is no reason for kids to think they should get something every time they are in a store.

2. If you're in a store that is really crowded with stuff and has things hanging everywhere, be super careful if you have a little one in a backpack. Antique stores and thrift stores quickly come to mind. If something is shiny and interesting, their reach can be surprising! Note that this kind of store may not be the best place to be spending time in unless you have to get something.

3. Preschoolers are prone to touching things, so try this little trick. Tell them before you go into a store and then once you enter it that you know they will be very well-behaved and won't

touch things, but their thumb may cause a problem. Tell them to hold their thumb with their other hand so it behaves well too! This may sound dumb, but it works! Minimize visits to stores where kids need to be watched every moment for their own safety or so things don't get accidentally broken. Keep these visits as short as possible.

4. Remember, these are adventures. There is no reason to buy something every time you're in a store. If you do buy something, try giving him/her a choice of two things that you pick out. That way you get to control the price and your child starts getting used to making choices about what to buy. Preschoolers can be given money to start understanding what they can buy for the money they have and how to make choices and live with the consequences.

MORE THINGS TO SEE INSIDE

5. Even going to the supermarket can be an adventure. Include your little ones in decision making. Hold up two boxes of cereal or two cans of tomato sauce where either one is okay with you or ask him/her to choose one. Older preschoolers can “help” get items off the shelf and find items you tell them to look for.

6. Tantrums? Wild, inappropriate behavior? Pick your child up kicking and screaming and leave. Go to the car, give him/her something to drink/eat and if you have to go back in the store after things calm down, do it. Otherwise just leave.

Don't give warnings (i.e., if you do that again, we're going to leave)! If they do something inappropriate tell them the right thing to do. No threats. If they do it again, just leave. When you threaten, you're setting them up to do it again to test you.

Stay an adult. Spanking, yelling and threatening won't teach them what you want them to do. Your child is simply telling you something isn't working for him/her, it's time to go or seeing if you are paying attention. (Be honest, were you on your phone and not paying any attention to your child? Did your kid need a hug and you were too busy to stop for a second?) Sometimes your kid is just tired, hungry, thirsty or not feeling great. Offer a drink or something to eat before s/he asks or has a meltdown. And remember you once threw temper tantrums, and this too shall pass.



A FEW GREAT STORES TO VISIT

Chapter One Bookstore

Great children's selection of books and a fun place with toys to play with. Check when they have story hour for kids and other events. Going to buy a book is a wonderful treat!

252 W. Main Street, Hamilton
www.chapter1bookstore.com
(406) 363-5220



Grandfather's Clocks

Cuckoo clocks, grandfather clocks and more clocks! Most are about 100 years old and come from different countries. And if you happen to have a clock that needs to be repaired, this is the place to bring it! Although it's not a place for kids to run around, it really is fascinating to look at the clocks, point out different types and make up stories about the family that used to own the clock.

755 Main Street, Stevensville
(406) 239-1478

MT Mainstreet Toys

Toys, puzzles and games for kids of all ages. Their slogan: Come in and play around! You can't beat that invitation!

213 W. Main Street, Hamilton
www.mainstreettoysmt.com
(406) 375-5155

Murdoch's Ranch & Home Supply

Pick one part of the store and talk about what you're seeing. Things for horses. Safes. Pet supplies. Ropes. It's a pretty fascinating place for little kids if you think of it as a 15-to 30-minute adventure and not a store.

1189 S. 1st Street, Hamilton
www.murdochs.com
(406) 363-7644

Old West Candy & Antiques Gallery

This eclectic store has many rooms and lots of interesting antiques, art, gifts and even fun, unique toys for kids.

202 S. Main Street, Darby
(406) 821-4076
oldwestcandy.com

MORE THINGS TO SEE INSIDE

Rooted Music Store

Instruments for toddlers and young players. Besides introducing them to recognize different instrument, if you get a triangle, horn, shaker or other easy instrument, it can be an easy distraction on long car rides. Announce that it is NOISY TIME, put music on or sing and everyone be as loud as possible using the instruments/noise makers. Five minutes is all it takes to break up the ride and have some fun.

100 Skeels Street, Suite A, Hamilton
www.bitterrootschoolofmusic.org
www.rootedmusic.org
(406) 363-5491



Wild About Pets

See birds in cages.

612 N 1st St #1, Hamilton
(406) 363-6111



THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE

There are so many places to go in the valley to play with water. Rivers, streams, pools, ponds and creeks can provide endless fun. If the weather and water are warm enough, splashing, floating and swimming in the water can't be beat. Sometimes, dressing warm and wearing rubber boots can still work for splashing in small, shallow pools of water even when it's not warm. There are fun things to do by the water even if it's too cold, deep or dangerous to go in.

Helpful hints for water fun:

1. Throw stones or sticks into the water or bring a bucket to collect stones, leaves or feathers.

2. Float leaves in the water.

3. Put a string on a boat and let it float.

4. Use a small fishing pole or stick with a string attached. For toddlers, put a plastic fish or rubber worm on the end. They'll love just putting in the water and pulling it out. If they can't be by the water, just doing it in a bucket works. Preschoolers can fish with supervision.



5. Bring pails or other plastic containers, measuring cups and spoons or any plastic cups, scoops and spoons for pouring from one thing to another. Fill a bucket with water, sand, rocks or dirt and let the pouring begin. Scooping up rocks and sand also works.

6. Bring clean, empty bottles from shampoo, lotion, detergent, etc., with different types of tops. Fill with water and then let the kids pour, spray or squirt to their hearts content. Spraying rocks with water is always fun because the rocks change color when they get wet.

7. Bring a colander, strainer, net (butterfly or fish net), plastic container or bottle with holes punched in it and watch the water pour through it. See what happens if there are stones or sand in the water.

MORE THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE

RIVER ACCESS

Stop by the Forest Service Office or go to their website to find all the different access points. Some have trails that are easy to walk on with little kids. Sometimes the river is right by the parking lot and other times it is a fun little hike.

1801 N. 1st St., Hamilton
88 Main St., Stevensville
712 N Main St, Darby
406-363-7100

Angler's Roost

Privately owned site open to the public, 2.5 miles south of Hamilton. Stop in at Angler's Roost Store for snacks and info. Park by the store and walk down a short path to the river.

787 US-93, Hamilton

Chief Looking Glass Fishing Access

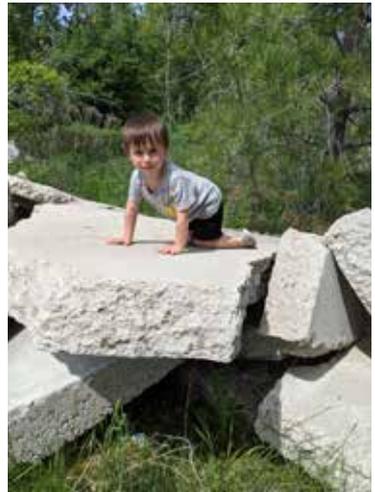
Swim, fish, float, picnic and play. There are campsites and a boat launch. Directions: Access the Bitterroot River 6.5 miles south of Lolo. Hwy 93 North in Florence, turn off on Chief Looking Glass road, mile marker 77.

**4228 Chief Looking Glass Road,
Florence**

Demmons River Access

Drive west on Main Street from Hwy 93 and parking is on the right side before the bridge. A short walk down some stairs to access the park, river, trails and sandy beach areas.

1326-1354 W. Main Street, Hamilton



Poker Joe River Access

Access the Bitterroot River 3 miles south of Florence. Take Hwy 93 and turn east on Luby Lane for 0.5 mile to Simpson Lane, follow signs for 0.6 mile. It's a short walk to access the river.

4668 Simpson Lane, Florence

Veteran's Bridge River Access

North end of Hamilton just south of Bowman Road on the west side.

Hwy 93, Hamilton



HIKING, STROLLING AND JOGGING

Put your little one in a pack or take the stroller and simply go for a walk. Look at interesting houses, historic buildings and new sights—a great way to get out and enjoy the day. Once kids are mobile, plan to let them wander and stop to look at things that are interesting to them. Watching someone mowing the lawn, washing windows or unloading a truck can be the highlight of your child's walk! Make it an adventure for preschoolers by giving them

a backpack, a map or something to look forward to seeing or doing—even if it's just counting how many dogs they see along the way. Montana State Extension has great walking maps (and often offer incentive programs with gifts to get you walking).

MSU Ravalli County Extension Walking Maps

for Hamilton, Stevensville, and Darby. Extension has done a great job of providing maps and different walks with things to see along the way. Stop by the office or go online and download the maps and information.

215 S. 4th Street, Suite G, Hamilton
www.ravalli.msuextension.org/healthandwellness.html
(406) 375-6611

Bike and Hike Path, Stevensville

Put your little one in a pack, ride your bike or take your stroller down and enjoy the bike path. Watch for waterfowl on the river and see cattle in the neighboring pastures. Look for lots of calves in the spring.

Main Street to the Bitterroot River

Blodgett Canyon, Hamilton

(which has Blodgett Creek access near the beginning of trail)
The website will show many trails in this area.

Directions: To get to Blodgett Canyon, coming from Main St in Hamilton, take Hwy 93 north, turn left onto Bowman Rd, take the 1st left onto W River Rd, turn left onto Ricketts Rd, continue onto Blodgett Camp Rd, turn right to stay on Blodgett Camp Rd, continue to trail head.

www.trailheadmontana.net/activities/bitterroots-blodgett-canyon/

MORE THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE

Darby Hiking Trail, Darby

Information is found at Darby Historical Visitors Center at the Forest Service office. Pick up trail information and Smokey Bear rulers and coloring books. This is a 3.5-mile loop that follows the roads, winds down by the river and up to the school, skatepark and rodeo grounds.

Lake Como, Darby

Hiking trail is paved for the first half mile, so easy access for strollers. Go past the beach to the highest parking area in order to access this paved path. When the weather is nice, the lake is great for playing on the beach or in the water and there's lots of hiking. Before you get to the lake, on the right is a small parking area. Walk up the little hill and there is a long, flat hiking/biking path along the canal.

***Turn west on Lake Como rd.
North of Darby***

Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge

This is a great destination any time of the year. The trails go by ponds, streams, lakes and wetlands, so there are lots of waterfowl to see. At the Visitor's Center (open Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm) there are displays of local wildlife, pictures, videos and more. You can borrow binoculars and look for waterfowl and other wildlife on the ponds next to the visitor center. If you want to get better at finding and pointing out birds to your child, watch for their beginning bird-watching classes where you can walk along with an expert and use their high-powered spotting scopes. You can also look up the Bitterroot Audubon Society on Facebook for another way to learn about birds to make walks with your kids more interesting.

***4567 Wild Fowl Lane, Stevensville
www.visitmt.com
(406) 777-5552***

Teller Wildlife Refuge

The 1.5-mile trail with fishing access is open to the public all year. Directions: North on 93, East on Woodside Cutoff Rd. Follow

fishing access sign and trail begins at the end of the parking lot.

***1288 Eastside Highway,
Corvallis
www.tellerwildlife.org
(406) 961-3507***





Get Maps Here!

Bitterroot Forest Service Offices

The Forest Service has many different trails in the Bitterroot area. Stop in for information and maps or go online. Pick up pamphlets and free coloring books about birds, bears, fish and more.

***Offices located in
Stevensville, Hamilton and Darby.***
***<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/bitterroot/home>
(406) 363-7100***

Examples of Trail Maps available at the Forest Service office.

Centennial Grove (off Skalkaho Rd.) (.3 mile)

An accessible interpretive trail meanders through a wide range of plant and tree species along the banks of Skalkaho Creek. During your walk you can learn about these different species through interpretive plaques strategically placed along the trail or just simply relax on benches placed on the route.

Directions: From Hamilton travel two miles south on Highway 93. Turn east (left) on Skalkaho Highway 38. Follow Skalkaho Highway 38 approximately 12 miles. There is a pull-out with an information board located on the south (right) side of the road.

Nature Trail #391 (.5 mile) up Bass Creek Rd. South of Stevensville off Hwy. 93

Near the Charles Waters Campground in the Bass Creek area, it begins at Road #1316 and ends at Trail 391 (Loop).

Directions: Take Highway 93, five miles north of Stevensville and turn left onto Bass Creek Road # 2200. Continue two miles to Charles Waters Campground. Turn right on Road #1316. Travel approximately 3/10 mile to the parking area.

MORE THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE

Willoughby 40 Environmental Trail (1 mile) South of Stevensville, East on Pine Hollow Rd.

This is a unique interpretive nature trail that travels through multiple habitats and is self-guided utilizing a 12-site interpretive brochure. The area contains a variety of habitats, including dry sagebrush, ponderosa pine forest, and a riparian area. Directions: From Stevensville go south on Eastside Highway for 1.7 miles. Turn east (left) at Pine Hollow Rd and follow for one mile, then turn right to remain on Pine Hollow and follow another 3.4 miles. Turn east (left) onto S. Sunset Bench Rd and follow for two miles. Site will be on the south (right) side of the road.

Willow Creek #399 Hiking Trail (3.5 miles) East of Corvallis

Directions: Take Willow Creek Road east from Corvallis and travel for 11 miles to the first switchback and the Willow Creek trailhead. This starts as an old jeep road and follows along the side of the creek.

ICE SKATING

Ice skating rinks are in Florence, Corvallis and Darby. Contact the Bitterroot Chamber of Commerce for the latest information.

(406) 363-2400

LABYRINTH West of Victor

A beautiful, peaceful location with wonderful views. It's one of the largest labyrinths in the US and is modeled after the design of an 800-year-old pattern from the Chartres Cathedral in France. The total walk is about 4/5 of a mile. If you're carrying a little one in a front or backpack, it's a great walk. If there are no people there, your toddler or preschooler is free to run around. No pets. Open during the day. There is a box at the entrance and a \$3 donation is requested.



**Redsun Labyrinth
1802 Pleasant View Drive, Victor
www.redsunlabyrinth.com
(406) 642-6675**

PARKS

American Legion Park

Play structures. Water play in the summer.
220 S. 2nd Street, Hamilton

Bear Mountain Playground, Lewis and Clark Park

Find them on Facebook! A wonderful, accessible, innovative playground. Outdoor swimming pool open from the 2nd weekend in June through late August.

West end of W. 2nd Street, Stevensville

Bitterroot River Park

Nature River Trail and fishing access.
100 Stevi Cutoff Road, Stevensville

Claudia Driscoll Park

Great playground with one area specifically for younger children. The band shell can be fun to climb on the steps and pretend to do a performance on the stage. The skateboard park is also there and it's fun to watch the older kids on skateboards, scooters and bikes.

200 N. 10th Street, Hamilton

The Grounds at the Daly Mansion

Always beautiful, quiet, and spacious.
251 Eastside Hwy, Hamilton, MT 59840

Father Ravalli Park

Swings and open space! **700 block of College Street, Stevensville**

Hideout Mountain Park

This wonderful, very large playground has turrets, bridges, slides, a replica of an old coach to climb on and more. There is a water park feature for hot summer days. Good place for picnics.
5458 Florence Carlton Loop, Florence



MORE THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE

Hieronymus Park

Off Hwy 93 between Dairy Queen and Bitterroot River Inn. Paved trail along a canal with ducks, a pond for fishing or go off on other trails and walk through the meadow and by the river. The trail has information about the Salish Indians, birds and Lewis and Clark.

196 Hieronymus Park Drive, Hamilton

Kiwanis River Park/River Park

There is a playground near the parking lot. It's a wonderful park to hike around, toss rocks in the river, sit and play in shallow water when it's warm or hang out in the gazebo. Stay on the paved path or go over the little bridge and hike through different paths by the river. If you're using a stroller, it's best to stay on the paved path.

375 S. 9th Street, Hamilton

O'Hara Commons & Sustainability Center

Small park for playing and exploring different gardens.

**111 S. 4th Street, Hamilton
(406) 369-6451**

Steve Powell Park

This 22-acre natural area along the Bitterroot River, has trails along the river. Enjoy playing on some sandy beach spots and in warm weather find a shallow spot for playing in the water. Lots of opportunities to see eagles and other birds along the river as well as deer and even moose.

**Parking and access south of the Main Street Bridge on West Main Street at Demmons Fishing Access.
Hamilton**



SWIMMING

Bitterroot Aquatic Center

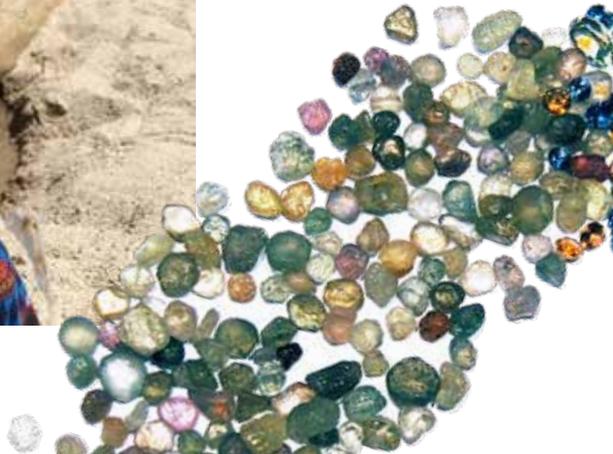
Outdoor pool is open in summer: Monday-Thursday, 1pm-5pm, Friday, 1pm-7pm and Saturday, 1pm-7pm. Under 7 is free with an adult (\$5.50). Call for swim classes and check online for more information.

59 Kurtz Lane, Hamilton
www.bitterrootaquaticcenter.com
(406) 361-7163

Stevensville Outdoor Swimming Pool

Not only can you have a great time at the swimming pool on a hot day, have a picnic and play in the playground.

306 W. 2nd Street, Stevensville



ROCKS AND MORE

The Gem and Mineral Society is a great source of information if you're looking for a fun, rock-related experience while you're in other parts of the State. Try Crystal Park (Dillon) where you can dig for crystals and enjoy the recreation area. Look for cranberry-colored garnets at Ruby Reservoir above Ruby Dam near Virginia City and hike in highly decorated limestone caverns at Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park in Whitehall. You can only access the cave May 1-September 30.

Sapphire Gallery

Right in the center of Philipsburg, this interesting store sets up tables with "wash" so you can mine for sapphires, amethysts, garnets and citrine year-round. \$25/bucket. Walking around Philipsburg is also fun. Note that the famous candy store is not open on Saturdays.

115 E. Broadway, Philipsburg
www.sapphiregallery.com
(406) 859-3236

Gem Mountain Sapphire Mine

Basically, you purchase a bucket of dirt/gravel (about \$25) and using their equipment (and your hands — great fun!) look for sapphires. Staff is available to help. Lots of wildlife to see, and they have free camping if you want to make it into a bigger adventure. There's an area with Tonka trucks for kids to play in the gravel. Open Memorial Day to Labor Day, Wednesday-Saturday, 9:30am-5:30pm.

21 Sapphire Gulch Lane
38 (slow) miles east on Skalkaho Pass Road,
www.gemmountainmt.com
(406) 859-4367



THINGS TO SEE OUTSIDE

AIRPORTS

Airports are a lot of fun for little kids and some become absolutely obsessed with watching the planes. They love to look at them sitting on the tarmac and at our small airports, you can often walk around and see the planes up close. There is a bench right outside the office at the Ravalli County Airport. If any planes are taking off and landing, you can just sit and enjoy watching them. If you're lucky, someone will be taking a flying lesson and will do multiple takeoffs and landings! Keep your eyes open for helicopters. During fire season we've seen fire-fighting helicopters parked there. Or you may see the fuel truck come out and put fuel in a plane. People there are friendly. Don't be surprised if people offer to let your child sit in the cockpit of their planes!

Living in the Bitterroot Valley we mostly see small planes, helicopters transporting people to the hospital and helicopters that are used to fight forest fires. There are lots of appropriate books about planes and other things that fly (like hot air balloons) for young kids. If your child is really interested in planes, you may want to buy a book at our local bookstore, check out a book from the library or go on the Internet and learn more about different types of aircraft their parts. It's great to come home and engage in dramatic play with planes. Build an airport with blocks, talk about places you can go, what you will see, what you need to take with you. Get a bag, backpack or suitcase and pretend to pack for a trip.



Stevensville Airport
3495 Flying Lane,
Stevensville
(406) 777-5271

Ravalli County Airport
203 Airport Rd,
Hamilton
(406) 375-9149

MORE THINGS TO SEE OUTSIDE

ANIMALS

There is no shortage of animals in the valley! Driving on Eastside Highway or any of the back roads around Hamilton and throughout Ravalli County it is common to see horses, sheep, cows, llamas, alpacas, turkeys, mules, donkeys, chickens, ducks, dogs, cats, goats, rabbits and deer, plus lots of birds. Sometimes you may spot a moose or elk and the unlikely bear may show up. It is fun to stop, pull over (in a safe spot!) and just watch the animals in the fields. In the spring there are lots of babies so it's a great time to take a ride or walk and see calves, lambs, foals, fawns, goslings and more. Here are places to go to see animals outside.



Kratofil Duck Pond

The Kratofil family built this duck pond for the community more than 50 years ago. It is a wonderful place to go and watch the ducks, geese and other migrating birds, as well as see the good-sized trout swimming in the pond. Bring quarters to buy food to feed the ducks and fish. Directions: Take First Street (Hwy 93) south from Main Street to Golf Course Road. Turn left for about a mile. Immediately past Upper Skyway Drive on your right, watch for the pond on the left side of the road. It's small and easy to miss.

Golf Course Road, Hamilton

Hamilton Dog Park

It may be best to stay outside the fence to watch the dogs running and playing here in order to avoid getting bumped or hurt. There are benches in the middle and on the sides to sit and watch as well. Never let your child get close to a group of dogs or pet a dog without asking the owner first.

S/he could get pushed around if the dogs are playing and hurt if one gets aggressive. If there are dogs there, it's fun to just watch them play or chase a ball.

843 New York Avenue, Hamilton

Homestead Organics Farm

Come see peacocks, pot-bellied pigs, goats and more! See chickens and collect eggs. Call before you come the first time to be shown around and then just drop by to say hi to the animals when it works for you. Check out the Farm Stand Tuesdays, 2-6 from May through October for your fresh produce. See their Website for camps and other events. More information on page 36.

175 Skalkaho Hwy, Hamilton, MT 59840

www.homesteadorganicsmt.com

(406) 363-6627

Huls Dairy Farm

Large windows give you an excellent view of the mechanical milking process as the cows ride the rotating milking platform. There is also a methane digester on site which produces the electricity to run the farm and several houses. If you're not on a tour, you can just watch the cows.

1769 Simpson Lane, Corvallis
www.hulsdairy.com
(406) 961-8887

Lifeline Farm

This organic and biodynamic dairy farm with about 350 cows is located west of Victor. You can also see pigs and chickens, collect eggs, get up close to impressive farm equipment and, my grandson's favorite thing, run through "tunnels" of hay bales in the fall. Stop at their store for their own cheese, bottled milk, butter and grass-fed beef, sausages and pork. Open daily from 8am-6pm. Contact them for tours and directions to the farm.

2427 Meridian Road, Victor
www.lifelinefarm.com
(406) 642-9717

Rocking L Alpaca Farm

Beautiful, friendly alpacas (30+) are usually out and you can just drive by and stop to watch them from the side of the road or call to take a tour. Check them out on Facebook to see the schedule for shearing and family fun activities in mid-May.

1760 Red Crow Road, Victor
(406) 642-3085

Safe Haven Llama and Alpaca Sanctuary

It is not open for general visits, but the llamas and alpacas may be seen when they are outside if you're driving by. There are llamas and alpacas at the sanctuary that are either waiting to be adopted or can't be placed because of age or other reasons. If you're interested in volunteering or possibly adopting a llama or alpaca, call to visit and get more information.

780 Old Corvallis Road, Corvallis
(406) 961-4027



MORE THINGS TO SEE OUTSIDE



Western Montana Equine Rescue & Rehabilitation

This is also not somewhere you can just go to visit, but if you want to expose your kids to horses, check their website for special events that allow you to come and see the horses or inquire about volunteering. Call to set up a time to visit if you are interested in sponsoring or adopting a horse.

Corvallis
www.westernmontanaequinerescue.org
(406) 961-3101

Wild Rose Emu Ranch

Lots and lots of emus! They are in multiple enclosures and fun to see. They are not visible from the road so call owner Clover Quinn to ask if you can visit or arrange a tour of the ranch. Her information about the emus is interesting! Emu meat, oil and other products are also available for sale.

284 Rose Lane, Hamilton
www.wildroseemuranch.com
(406) 363-1710

CONSTRUCTION SITES

Bitterroot Valley is growing! Nearly everywhere you look there is a construction site or roadwork. Many children are fascinated and will watch the big construction equipment at work for a long time. Something is always in motion: cement mixers, diggers, cranes, jack hammers, dump trucks and excavators. Look for books ranging from simple pictures to ones that identify the parts of the equipment in more detail to story books. It's another reason to go to the library, Chapter One Bookstore or the thrift stores to find books. There are also lots of videos online about construction but going to see it in person is so much more exciting, and it's a memorable outdoor adventure! Go for a walk or just pull over, get out of the car and watch from a safe distance!

FARMS

Homestead Organics

This is a great place to go with kids to get your produce. Veggies are so much more interesting when you see where they come from and they can see the animals too, including a peacock which is quite a draw! Farm Stand Tuesday, 2pm-6pm and self-serve eggs all day, every day. They are part of the Loyal to Local Community Agricultural Cooperative. Guided tours are available on Tuesdays during the summer months or call to see the farm and learn more. Check their website for their kids' farm camp, special programs for kindergartners, a parent-child volunteer program and other fun, family-friendly events.

175 Skalkaho Hwy, Hamilton
www.homesteadorganicsmt.com
(406) 363-6627

K-T Farms

Come out and walk the fields and pick your own veggies. Depending on what's growing, you can gather strawberries, pull carrots, pick zucchini, dig for potatoes and more! The owners are there to give you information and help you do what needs to be done. You and your child can also just watch the activities and buy produce at the farm stand. They are also part of the CSA project. Ask about kid-friendly projects they may be doing like a pick-and-carve your own pumpkin or participate in a kids' garden from planting to harvesting. Open Tuesday-Sunday.

419 Red Fox Lane, Stevensville
www.ktfarms.com
(406) 540-3576

Meadowlark Farm

Open during peak pumpkin season. Pick your own pumpkin and enjoy a little kids' area with calves, haystacks to climb and a little train to ride. See cows and llamas in the field.

250 Meadowlark Lane, Hamilton
Find them on Facebook
(406) 640-3276

Swanson's Mountain View Apple Orchards

You can't pick your own apples, but the quality and variety of apples here is fantastic. The store is open from 9am-5pm daily when apples are available from August through December. Call for information to see the process of making cider, grading apples, pressing apples and bottling the cider.

1752 Mountain View Orchards, Corvallis
(406) 961-3434

SEASONAL AND ANNUAL EVENTS

Check the newspaper, online sites or call for dates, times and specific information for seasonal events.

FARMERS MARKETS

Besides seeing great produce and local crafts and eating special treats, there is usually other entertainment happening. Street performers juggle and make animal balloons and in front of the Ravalli County Museum you can usually hear live music. The Ravalli County Museum hosts a kid's Learning Adventure each Saturday.



Darby
Main Street Park
106 S. Main St, Darby
Tuesdays, 2pm-6pm,
May-October

Florence
5189 Highway 93, south of Florence
(406) 777-3638
Saturdays, 9am-1:30pm

Hamilton
Bedford and 3rd Streets, Hamilton
Saturdays, 9am-12:30pm, Mid-April – October

Stevensville
Between Rocky Mountain Bank drive-up and the library
Saturdays, 9am-1pm



FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Spring Air Show:

Check to see when the annual airshow is scheduled in the spring. Come see the Easter Bunny parachute out of the helicopter the Saturday before Easter.

**Ravalli County Airport
203 Airport Road, Hamilton
(406) 375-9149**

March: Bitterroot Valley Highland Games

The free Bitterroot Valley Highland Games are action packed and when the kids aren't watching the activities, they can play in the park. Details on Facebook and the Stevensville Calendar.

Lewis and Clark Park, Stevensville

June: Stevensville Western Heritage Days

Wagon rides, games and entertainment for all.

Lewis and Clark Park, Stevensville

July: (3rd weekend) Strawberry Festival

An annual celebration and fundraiser hosted by the Darby Volunteer Fire Department in the Main Street Park. Fresh strawberry shortcake, music, and entertainment for all. Hosted on the third Saturday of July each year.

www.darbymt.net/a/recreation/annual-events/

July: Daly Days

Games, weiner dog races, car show, music and so much more to see and do. Look for this at the end of July.

Main Street, Hamilton

August: (3rd weekend) Bitterroot Celtic Games

The Bitterroot Celtic Society Highland Games has non-stop events to watch plus lots of music and dancing which will entertain young children as will other fun activities for kids. Irish and Scottish Dancing, dog herding, athletic competitions, pipe and drum bands and food!

At the Daly Mansion. www.bccg.org



MORE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

August: Ravalli County Fair

Seeing rabbits, goats, pigs and all the different animals is enough to keep little kids fascinated. Most rides do not allow kids under 3, but there is an area to play in a large sandbox. Scheduled the week before Labor Day Weekend.

At the Fairgrounds in Hamilton
www.ravalli.us/560/Fair-Schedule



October: Annual McIntosh Apple Day

Sponsored by the Ravalli County Museum and Historical Society. Food, crafts and activities celebrating the apple harvest. Live entertainment and biggest bake sale anywhere!

**At the Ravalli County Museum,
205 Bedford St., Hamilton**



MORE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

October: Halloween Parade

Come dressed up for Halloween and trick-or-treat downtown. Watch out for the Witches Brigade!

Main Street, Hamilton

October: Haunted Hay Rides

Scariest ride you will ever be on. Bring Mom and Dad! The whole family will have enjoy the hay ride around the Mansion grounds.

*At the Daly Mansion
251 Eastside Hwy, Hamilton
(406) 363-6004*

November: Holly Jolly Craft Fair

All three floors of the Daly Mansion are decked out in Holiday Style. Artisans and crafters will be there to display the fruits of their talents. A great time to shop for those unique and wonderful gifts for others, and something for yourself also. This is a great time to see the Daly Mansion and to imagine what life was like in the late 1800's.

*At the Daly Mansion
251 Eastside Hwy, Hamilton
(406) 363-6004*

December: Bitterroot Community College Open House

At this community event in December, besides food and music, little kids can experience fun science experiences like making goop and seeing a 3-D printer at work.

*103 S. 9th Street, Hamilton
(406) 375-0100*

December: Toy Train Exhibit

Open for the Christmas holidays. Sponsored by the Bitterroot Valley Railroad Club.

*Kohl Building, Stevensville
(in the basement)*



SEASONAL MUSIC

Free concerts are ongoing throughout the summer. Check online for performances and more details.

Tuesdays at 12

Noon concerts on the lawn in front of the Ravalli County Museum.
Bedford and 3rd Streets, Hamilton

Music + Art

The last Friday in June, July and August.

Main Street Park, Darby

Sapphire Summer Concert Series

Sapphire Lutheran Homes

Fridays, 7pm. Free in July. Plenty of room for kids to run around.

Free ice cream during the intermission.

501 North 10th Street, Hamilton

www.sapphirelutheran.org

(406) 363-2800.

Hamilton Tonight

The Downtown Association sponsors this event on the second Friday of each month. Check out new stores. Often there are musical performances and other special activities going on.

www.hamiltondowntownassociation.org



Parents Night Out!



Sometimes the best thing you can do for your children is take some time for yourself! Here are some resources to help. If you have a regular babysitting job you can post, contact local high schools, churches and the Bitterroot College and ask if they can direct you to students looking to babysit. Of course, if you can coordinate care with your friends—even better. (Marcus

Daly Hospital offers a babysitting course for teens. Although they are not a referral source, if you know a teen who's interested in watching your kids, you may recommend it.) Here are some other options in the community.

FUN CHILDCARE OPTIONS

Bitterroot Bouncers

Saturday Date Nights from 6pm-9:30pm, drop your children off for bouncing and a movie with popcorn. For children who are 4-13. Reservations required. \$20 for the first child. Call for more information.



806 S. 1st Street, Hamilton
www.bitterrootbouncers.com
(406) 203-0033

Velocity Gymnastics Academy

Parents Night Out offers adult supervised free play, bounce houses, foam pit, snacks and may include a movie for \$15. Call for dates, availability and for more information.

1269 S. 1st Street, Hamilton
www.velocitygymnasticsacademy.com
(406) 363-5398

Canyons Athletic Club

Members can use childcare while exercising: Monday-Thursday, 8am-12pm and 4pm-8pm, Friday, 8am-12pm and 4pm-6pm. Cost: \$4/hour for the 1st child and \$2/hour for the 2nd child or a reduced monthly fee.

472 Tammany Lane, Hamilton
www.canyonsathleticclub.com
(406) 361-1555

MORE PARENTS NIGHT OUT

Iron Horse Athletic Club

Members can use on-site daycare for 1½ hour limit/day. Starts at \$5 per child. Monthly \$35 for one child, \$50 for two. Available Tuesday-Friday, 9am-12pm. Check website for gym hours.

99 Marcus Street, Hamilton
www.ihacmt.com
(406) 363.0300

Aspen Leaf Yoga

Bring your little one! No babysitting available, but even better, some young children can be incorporated into your yoga workout! Try it out. Call for more information.

100 Skeels Street, Suite B, Hamilton
www.aspenleafyoga.org
(406) 545-5577



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<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterroot Community College	40	<input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton Farmers Market	37
<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterroot Gem and Mineral Society	16	<input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton Tonight	41
<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterroot Public Library	10	<input type="checkbox"/> Haunted Hay Rides	40
<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterroot River Park	28	<input type="checkbox"/> HEARTism Community Center	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterroot Star	46	<input type="checkbox"/> Holly Jolly Craft Fair	40
<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterroot Valley Lanes	9	<input type="checkbox"/> Hideout Mountain Park	28
<input type="checkbox"/> Blodgett Canyon	24	<input type="checkbox"/> Hieronymus Park	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Burger King Play Space	11	<input type="checkbox"/> Homestead Organics Farm	33&36
<input type="checkbox"/> Canyons Athletic Club	12&42	<input type="checkbox"/> Horses, Equine Rescue	35
<input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Games	38	<input type="checkbox"/> Huls Dairy Farm	34
<input type="checkbox"/> Centennial Grove	26	<input type="checkbox"/> Humane Society	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter One Bookstore	20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Skating Rink	27
<input type="checkbox"/> Chief Looking Glass Access	23	<input type="checkbox"/> Iron Horse Athletic Club	42
<input type="checkbox"/> Claudia Driscoll Park	28	<input type="checkbox"/> K-T Farms	36
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction Sites	35	<input type="checkbox"/> Kiwanis River Park	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Daly Days	38	<input type="checkbox"/> Labyrinth, Redsun	27
<input type="checkbox"/> Daly Mansion and Gardens	16&28	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake Como	25
<input type="checkbox"/> Darby Community Public Library	10	<input type="checkbox"/> Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge	16&25
<input type="checkbox"/> Darby Farmers Market	36	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifeline Farm	34

Check all of the places you have been!

<input type="checkbox"/> Llama and Alpaca Sanctuary	34	<input type="checkbox"/> Teller Wildlife Refuge	25
<input type="checkbox"/> Lost Trail Hot Springs	12	<input type="checkbox"/> The Living Center	13
<input type="checkbox"/> McIntosh Apple Day	39	<input type="checkbox"/> Theresa's Dolls	17
<input type="checkbox"/> Meadowlark Farm	36	<input type="checkbox"/> Toy Train Exhibit	40
<input type="checkbox"/> Montana Bliss Art Works	15	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday at 12	41
<input type="checkbox"/> MT Mainstreet Toys	20	<input type="checkbox"/> Valley View Estates	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Murdoch's	20	<input type="checkbox"/> Veteran's bridge River Access	23
<input type="checkbox"/> Music+Art	41	<input type="checkbox"/> Victor Heritage Museum	17
<input type="checkbox"/> Nature Trail #391	26	<input type="checkbox"/> Walks: Hamilton & Stevensville	24
<input type="checkbox"/> North Valley Public Library, Stevensville	10	<input type="checkbox"/> Western Heritage Days - Stevensville	38
<input type="checkbox"/> O'Hara Commons	11&29	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild About Pets	21
<input type="checkbox"/> Old West Gallery & Candy Store	20	<input type="checkbox"/> Willoughby 40 Environmental Trail	27
<input type="checkbox"/> Paint your own pottery	8	<input type="checkbox"/> Willow Creek Trail #399	27
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents' Night Out	42		
<input type="checkbox"/> Poker Joe River Access	23		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ponderosa Art Gallery	15		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ravalli County Extension Agency	24		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ravalli County Fair	39		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ravalli Historic Museum	17		
<input type="checkbox"/> Remington	13		
<input type="checkbox"/> River's Mist Gallery and Gifts	15		
<input type="checkbox"/> Rooted Music Store	11&21		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sapphire Gallery	31		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sapphire Retirement Homes	13		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sapphire Summer Concert Series	41		
<input type="checkbox"/> St. Mary's Mission Museum	17		
<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Powell Park	29		
<input type="checkbox"/> Stevensville Farmers Market	37		
<input type="checkbox"/> Stevensville Historical Museum	17		
<input type="checkbox"/> Stevensville Main Street Association.	46		
<input type="checkbox"/> Stevensville Outdoor Swimming Pool	30		
<input type="checkbox"/> Stone Cottage	8		
<input type="checkbox"/> Strawberry Festival	38		
<input type="checkbox"/> Swanson's Apple Orchards	36		

More Places You Discovered!

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find both recurring and new local family-friendly activities, check out these websites.

Bitterroot Chamber of Commerce

www.bitterrootchamber.com

Bitterroot Star

www.bitterrootstar.com

Ravalli County Library

www.bitterrootevents.net/BRPublicLibrary

Stevensville Main Street Association

www.stevensvillemt.org or [facebook.com/mainstreetstevensville](https://www.facebook.com/mainstreetstevensville)
(406) 777-3733





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Michelle Post, Groovz Dance Studio

Moms at Storytime, Bitterroot Public Library

Sarah Monson, Ravalli County Historical Society & Museum

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Stacey Caron, Darby Public Library

Wendy Campbell, Bitterroot Public Library

The owners and staff of many of the places listed who provide a valuable service to the community and took the time to answer my call and talk with me.

Caden and Sully Gimpel (grandsons), my inspiration and adventure partners.

Bob Gimpel (husband), my life adventure partner

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