



Family Hike Recommendations

There are some great nearby hiking trails just waiting to be explored! To get your family started on the right foot, REI employees have selected some of their favorites below.

Be sure to bring these necessities along in your daypack:

- Drinking water
- Lunch or snacks
- Extra clothing layers
- Map and compass
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Insect repellent
- Whistle
- Headlamp or flashlight



For a complete day hiking checklist, visit [Expert Advice](#) on REI.com.

Here Are Five of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Hikes

Hike One: **Anne U. White Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **3 miles roundtrip, 560' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: It's a beautiful trail that's close to Boulder. Lush and cool, it is also loaded with flowers in season. Lots of stream crossings make it especially fun and interesting.

Hike Description: This is my favorite trail in all of Boulder. It's great for children or visitors who aren't acclimated to the elevation. It follows Fourmile Canyon Creek the entire way. And you'll cross the creek 22 times! (Kids and dogs love that.) The canyon is quiet and very peaceful, and you may see lots of wild-life in the dense stands of spruce, cottonwood and pine. Resident critters include deer, squirrels, lizards, butterflies and lots of birds. Wildflowers make a spectacular showing, too, in season. Near the end of the trail is an oasis with a small waterfall that pours into a pool (a good spot to take off your shoes and go wading). It also makes a wonderful picnic spot.

Driving Directions: From Boulder, go north on Broadway St. and then turn left (west) on Lee Hill Road. Proceed 1.1 miles to Wagonwheel Gap Road (if you reach the fork with Olde Stage Road, you've passed it). Turn left on Wagonwheel Gap Road and go one mile to Pinto Drive. Turn left on Pinto, to the trailhead. Parking is VERY limited at the trailhead. If the lot is full, go back to the bottom of Pinto Road and park there. Parking is free.

Tips: Be careful at the stream crossings (trekking poles are useful). There are plenty of rocks to use, but small kids will need a hand. There are no restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Two: **Canyon Loop Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **3.2 miles roundtrip, 880' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: Close to town and suitable for all ages, this is a terrific hike with great views and lots of wildlife.

Hike Description: Leading you through the scenic Betasso Preserve, this hike offers families just enough challenge to make the experience rewarding. Along north-facing slopes, you'll pass through dense forests of Douglas fir. On the warmer south-facing slopes, Rocky Mountain juniper and ponderosa pine provide shade. (Ask kids if they can identify the familiar scent given off by the ponderosa. It's vanilla.) Stretches through the woods are punctuated by striking views across the high plains. Great picnic spots are available along the way as well as near the trailhead. The narrow, single-track trail is popular with mountain bikers. But they're not allowed on Wednesdays and Saturdays, so on those days you'll have the hike to yourselves.

Driving Directions: From the intersection of Broadway St. and Canyon Blvd. in Boulder, take Canyon west about four miles (up Boulder Canyon). Turn right on Sugarloaf Road, and look for the signs to Betasso Preserve. Parking is free in the Preserve lot.

Tips: On the way home, cool off on the banks of Boulder Creek at Eben Fine Park. It's at the mouth of Boulder Canyon. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Three: **Enchanted Mesa Trail/
McClintock Nature Trail Loop**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **1.8 miles roundtrip,
430' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: You'll get nice views of the Flatirons, and kids will enjoy the interesting interpretive signs on the Nature Trail.

Hike Description: The Enchanted Mesa Trail starts at the picnic pavilion by the Chatauqua Auditorium. It wanders through a pine forest and along a lovely stream. If you want to add the McClintock Nature Trail to your walk, simply follow the Mesa Trail for about 1 mile, where you'll come to the intersection with the 0.3-mile Nature Trail loop. This little side trip includes 20 stations with interpretive signs that highlight the native flora and fauna. Kids may notice the hammering of woodpeckers as well as the sounds of many other birds. (Also, have them look for a couple of apple trees amid the forest.) Dogs aren't allowed on the Nature Trail, so leave Fido home for this one.

Driving Directions: From the intersection of Broadway St. and Baseline Rd. in Boulder, go west on Baseline to 9th Street. Enter Chatauqua Park on the left, and wind your way back to the picnic pavilion. Park here. (On busy weekends, you may have to park on the streets around 9th and Baseline, or in Chatauqua Park itself.) Parking is free.

Tips: Pack a lunch and have a picnic at the pavilion. You can make a day of it by checking out the many events available in the park and its auditorium. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Four: **Lichen Loop Trail
at Heil Valley Ranch**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1 mile roundtrip,
155' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: It's close to town, but still has a "remote" feel to it. It's also easy enough for the whole family.

Hike Description: Kids will find this to be an easy hike that's also fun and interesting. There's a small creek running adjacent to the parking lot and trailhead. It's a great place to cool your feet after a hike. At the same time, you can talk to your kids about the critters that live in the creek and the surrounding ecosystem. Mountain bikes aren't allowed on the trail, so you can be assured of a relaxed stroll. You'll need to leave Fido at home for this one, because dogs aren't allowed on the Lichen Loop Trail or anywhere else at Heil Valley Ranch.

Driving Directions: From Boulder, go north on 28th Street (Hwy. 36) about four miles. Turn left on Lefthand Canyon Drive (the Greenbriar restaurant is at the intersection). Go one mile to Geer Canyon Drive. Turn right on Geer Canyon and go about 1.5 miles to the trailhead parking lot. (The trailhead is on the west end, so for convenience, try to park as close to that end as possible.) Parking is free.

Tips: There are picnic tables at the trailhead, so pack a lunch for before or after your hike. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Five: **Pines-to-Peak Trail
at Bald Mountain Scenic Area**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1 mile roundtrip,
240' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: It's a simple, easy hike that's close to Boulder and that offers great views of the plains.

Hike Description: This hike starts at the Bald Mountain picnic area. You follow the Pines-to-Peak Trail through the meadows and ponderosa pines. Along the way there are nice views of the Continental Divide. At your feet, you'll also see a variety of wildflowers, if you go from late May through July. My kids love to picnic at the top, where there's a nice bench that overlooks Boulder and the plains. Fido is welcome, just be sure he's on a leash.

Driving Directions: From Boulder, take Mapleton Avenue west until it turns into Sunshine Canyon. The trailhead is about five miles up Sunshine Canyon, on the left. Parking is free.

Tips: Bring your binoculars. On a clear day, you can see all the way out to Denver International Airport! There are no restrooms at the trailhead.



REI's PEAK program uses a fun presentation filled with hands-on activities and games to teach kids ages 6 through 12 about taking care of the outdoors.

Ask an REI team member about scheduling a free PEAK presentation for your classroom or youth group, or visit www.rei.com/PEAK for more information.



First Saturday in June The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, sponsored by REI, is a nationwide celebration of trails. Celebrate with your family by taking a hike, or volunteering for a trail clean-up project. Ask an REI team member about how to get involved, or visit www.rei.com for more information.