



Fun Things & Some **FREE** Things to Do With Kids in Madera County and Yosemite National Park

Childhood RULES in Madera County & Yosemite National Park! There are many places to visit and activities to do with kids of all ages from 2 to 92...



MaderaMammoths.org

The Fossil Discovery Center

Kids love dirt. Kids love old bones. What better place than for them to explore Chowchilla's **Fossil Discovery Center** of Madera County? From Columbian Mammoths to Short-Faced Bears to Sabre-Toothed Cats and even Camels, kids can get up-close-and-personal with the skeletons of the creatures who walked the very earth where the Fossil Discovery Center sits during the Pleistocene Era (over 780,000 years ago). Budding scientists can even crawl into a mock dig where they experience first-hand what it means to be a paleontologist.



Historic Museums

Imagine going back in time to many fine museums representing the history of Eastern Madera County, from the First Inhabitants (**Sierra Mono Museum** in North Fork) to the colorful Gold Rush era at the **Coarsegold Historic Museum**. **Fresno Flats Historic Village and Park** honors the origins of Oakhurst, which was founded in 1873 and serves as another site for children of all ages to explore and expand their knowledge of a part of California's history.

SierraMonoMuseum.org / CoarsegoldHistoricSociety.org / FresnoFlatsMuseum.org



The Talking Bear

Oakhurst's unofficial mascot resides at the corner of Road 426 and Highway 41 – the **World Famous Talking Bear**. It was originally constructed in 1923 in an attempt to draw interest from the International Olympic Site Committee and got a major refresh in 2013. Kids can have fun getting the bear to growl and talk. It's a great place to take a souvenir picture.

Become one of the Talking Bear's many fans at Facebook.com/talkingbear



Nedler Grove of Giant Sequoias

Wrap your arms around a giant sequoia, one of the largest living things on earth, in the **Nedler Grove of Giant Sequoias**. The grove is located a few miles northeast of Oakhurst, and there are both easy and moderate trails that take visitors past several large specimens of the gentle giants. There are nearly 100 mature Giant Sequoias here as well as with a number of smaller trees along the trails, as well. The best part is that Nedler Grove is less visited than the Giant Sequoia groves in the national parks. Kids and their folks can take their time and often enjoy a bit of solitude. If kids travel with their favorite canines, dogs can enjoy Nedler Grove as well, as long as they're leashed. NelderGrove.org



Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad

From the beginning of rail travel, trains have fascinated young and old. The Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, located in Fish Camp just before the southern gate of Yosemite, satisfies that craving for all ages with its two Shay Locomotives, one built in 1927 and the other 1913. Ride the Logger back in time to when men harvested lumber from these forests to fuel the industrial revolution. In the **Thornberry Museum**, see the very tools used by loggers more than 100 years ago along the mountain. Kids can learn to pan for gold and discover

the efforts the '49ers made to eke out a living for themselves and their families. While kids explore the trains and other activities, parents can explore the lovely gift shop and bookstore on-site. Dogs are welcome, too. YosemiteSteamTrains.com



Beautiful Bass Lake!

Kids love to play in water. What better way to spend your time at the lake than to enjoy the water to the fullest! Sparkling blue waters surrounded by the Sierra National Forest make Bass Lake a beautiful vacation spot year round and it is only 19 miles from Yosemite National Park's south entrance. Bass Lake offers plenty of activities for the family including swimming, water sports, boating, fishing, mountain bike trails and hiking. Bring or rent boats and fishing gear from one of the three marinas on the lake. There are

many lodging options in and around Bass Lake including three full-service resorts that bring you back to the retro-summer-camp feel to campgrounds, an RV Resort and many vacation home rentals.

BassLakeChamber.com



Family Fun at Tenaya Lodge

Tenaya Lodge's newest kid-friendly feature is the Kids Adventure Course, a fun aerial trekking park comprised of a collection of challenge courses. The course has six different elements including bridges, swinging logs and rope challenges. At approximately five feet off the ground, it's perfect for little ones who want a thrill without being too scary!

In addition to the Kid's Adventure Course, younger guests can get their first taste of rock-climbing at Tenaya's 18-foot climbing wall or train to become the Robin Hood of Sierra National Forest with archery lessons for children ages five and up. Then, after a day of active adventuring, kids can kick back in Tenaya's newly enhanced game room or take a dip in one of their indoor and outdoor pools.

TenayaLodge.com



Yosemite National Park – Be a Junior Ranger (ages 7-13) or a Little Cub (ages 3-6)

All kids can become Yosemite Junior Rangers or Little Cubs by purchasing a self-guided booklet published by the Yosemite Conservancy. This booklet is sold for \$3.50 plus tax at Oakhurst's visitor center at Visit Yosemite | Madera County and many locations throughout Yosemite. In order to earn a Junior Ranger patch, a candidate must complete the booklet, collect a bag of trash and attend a guided program. The Junior Ranger &

Little Cub programs encourage our young visitors and their families to discover Yosemite's wonders and natural resources. <https://www.nps.gov/yose/learn/kidsyouth/beajuniorranger.htm>