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# GET CAMPING

*WNC's premier guide*

# The littlest campers



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO WNC PARENT

**Little day campers at Kindermusik have fun with a beach ball and a parachute.**

By Stephanie Jadrnicek  
WNC Parent contributor

Summer camps aren't just for big kids.

From music and art to gymnastics and nature hikes, there are a lot of options for little campers, too. But when does camp become camp and not just baby-sitting?

Debra Huff, owner of Kindermusik in Mars Hill, says her classes differ from baby-sitting because of their structure.

"There's not one minute of down time or immobilization," Huff said. "It's a completely planned lesson and we move from one activity to the next. It doesn't give the child time to be idle."

The classes do include quiet time, though, when children get the opportunity to sit and reflect on the day's activities. But Huff said she believes this is an important habit to create within children. "They need to learn to give themselves time to recuperate."

## Music camp

Emma Randall, 4, first attended Kindermusik summer day camp when she was 18 months old. Since then she hasn't missed a summer session of Kindermusik. Her mother, Christine Randall,



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thinks the program has been a vital tool in Emma's development.

"We were thrilled to have Emma start early in the Kindermusik program, not only because she has a strong love for music but mostly because she has Down Syndrome. My husband and I knew that it would benefit her to be around her peers and to be motivated by their skills and friendship," Randall said. "Her participation in Kindermusik has surpassed our expectations. Emma started out as a 'baby' participant and now she has become a veteran — sometimes taking on a leadership position."

The Kindermusik curriculum focuses on music and movement while introducing instruments to kids. Huff teaches classes for children ages 1-3 1/2 years old. Parents are required to stay and participate. Using instruments as guides, they demonstrate movements, such as twirling fast and slow or dancing forward and backward, to teach their kids basic movement concepts.

"The program's designed for the full holistic development of the child and focuses on six domains of the brain," said Huff. "They're working on developing their fine motor skills and muscle tone. And by playing the instruments with both hands they're using both sides of their brain and helping to develop their vestibular system."

This year, Huff will teach two summer sessions.

## Art camp

If music isn't your child's thing, then you might want to check out Roots + Wings School of Art, which meets at The Cathedral of All Souls in Asheville's Biltmore Village. For ages 3-6, the camp offers kids an opportunity to develop visual arts skills through art forms such as clay, painting, drawing, printmaking and creating collages.

Ginger Huebner, founding director of Roots + Wings School of Art, says its camps foster creativity and promote early development in problem solving, critical thinking and social interaction through art-making.

"A camp becomes a camp and not just baby-sitting when the children are truly engaged in their work and focused on the project at hand," she said. "In provid-



Little day campers get engrossed in their art projects at Roots + Wings School of Art, which meets in Biltmore Village at All Souls church.

ing an atmosphere of structured freedom, students are encouraged to view art as a means of self-expression and learning, and it is an amazing process to be a part of."

## Nature camps

As a mother of two little ones, Molly Pritchard looks for several characteristics in days camps — affordability, organization, interesting activities, a safe environment and, of course, lots of fun.

Her children Paxton, 5, and Bridges, 3, have both attended camps at the N.C. Arboretum. "I went to both camps with my children and had a great time learning right beside them," Prichard said.

## A FEW OPTIONS FOR YOUNG CAMPERS

### Hahn's Gymnastics

Summer Adventures run June 14-Aug. 20. Visit [hahngymnastics.com](http://hahngymnastics.com)

### Kindermusik

The five-week camp will take place on Fridays, May 21-June 18, and a weeklong camp will run July 19-23. All classes are 10-11 a.m. Contact Debra Huff at 206-3145 or [dhuff@mhc.edu](mailto:dhuff@mhc.edu)

### N.C. Arboretum

"Curious Critters" is June 7-11; "Gone Buggy" is July 5-9. Both classes are 9:30-11:30 a.m. Visit [ncarboretum.org](http://ncarboretum.org).

### Roots + Wings

#### School of Art

Classes are 9 a.m.-noon, July 21-23, July 5-7 and July 19-21. Visit [rootsandwingsarts.com](http://rootsandwingsarts.com).

The N.C. Arboretum offers two summer day camps for ages 2-4.

"Curious Critters" is a wildlife based camp designed to teach younger children about animals in Western North Carolina. Kids learn how to identify certain types of lizards, salamanders and birds. "Gone Buggy" focuses on invertebrate animals such as butterflies, dragonflies and insects that live underwater.

"Our programs are definitely not baby-sitting, they have an academic focus," said Jonathan Marchal, Discovery Camp coordinator for the N.C. Arboretum. "The best thing about our camps is that they get kids outside and physical at

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# Experiences for littlest campers

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an early age. The programs also help to develop a stronger environmental ethic within the kids."

The property at the N.C. Arboretum easily caters to younger campers. With so many different types of habitat in close range to the building, little hikers don't have to walk too far.

## Gymnastics camp

If your little day-camper likes physical activity, he or she may enjoy Summer Adventures at Hahn's Gymnastics in Arden. The camps run Monday-Friday for 11 weeks, June 14-Aug. 20.

Summer Adventures keeps kids busy and active by providing activities such as gymnastics, trampoline, parachute games, nature exploration, water play, dancing, sports, outdoor games, and arts and crafts.

"Camp is about the experiences the camper can't have anywhere else — like making a giant mud puddle, having a watercolor water fight or sitting next to your camp friends at lunch," said Vicki Hahn, owner of Hahn's Gymnastics.

"A camp becomes a camp when your child is begging you not to pick them up or can't wait to see their new friends the next day."



Campers at "Curious Critters" at the N.C. Arboretum look under rocks for insects.