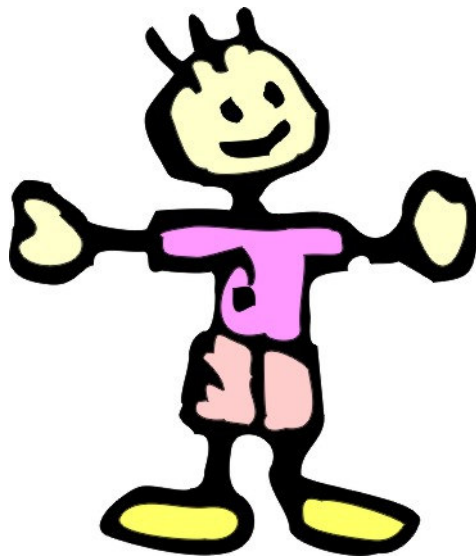


# STUFF FOR KIDS around Harvard



First edition – May 2006

Edited by Hanna Siurua  
for Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association

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# Foreword

This booklet contains ideas and information for parents in Cambridge, Boston, and surrounding communities. It was compiled on the basis of suggestions and recommendations from parents who have tried out and enjoyed the listed activities with their own children. However, the listings should be taken as tips, not gospel: schedules change, stores shut down, prices go up, and tastes differ.

This project relies entirely on the generosity of parents who have shared their experiences and ideas: Bénédicte Charles, Lydia Diamond, Ines Martin, Joanne Nicklas, Dawn Palmer, Riikka Steinberg, Akiko Sugaya, Titia Tops, Angeline UyHam, and Caroline Waltz Knutti. I offer them my heartfelt thanks, and hope that they will keep the suggestions coming. :)

“Stuff for Kids around Harvard” may be copied and distributed freely; commercial reproduction is prohibited. It is a work in progress, and we are always happy to receive tips and suggestions for future editions. Please e-mail your contributions to me at [hio\\_hsspa@harvard.edu](mailto:hio_hsspa@harvard.edu).

Enjoy!

Hanna Siurua, editor

## **\*\*\* Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association \*\*\***

“Stuff for Kids around Harvard” is produced under the auspices of Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association (HSSPA), a great resource for all Harvard families. Since 1896, HSSPA has provided a way for the spouses, partners, and children of Harvard students to make friends, find intellectual stimulation, and feel a sense of belonging within the University. HSSPA organizes a variety of subsidized outings, activities, and social events throughout the year, as well as a weekly support group. Sign up for e-mail updates by sending an e-mail to [hio\\_hsspa@harvard.edu](mailto:hio_hsspa@harvard.edu), or check the HSSPA website at [www.hsspa.harvard.edu](http://www.hsspa.harvard.edu) for information on upcoming events.

# 1. Places to go

## 1.1 Parks, walks, and playgrounds

- **Cooper playground, Hancock Street, Cambridge**  
(5 minutes from Central Square)  
A quiet, nice little playground with lots of toys to play with and a spray pool in the summer.
- **Corporal Burns playground, Flagg Street, Cambridge**  
(near Peabody Terrace, off Memorial Drive)  
Also has hockey and basketball courts near the playground where kids can bike or play ball.
- **Maple Avenue playground, Maple Avenue, Cambridge**  
(off Cambridge Street near Inman Square)  
Especially good for smaller kids.
- **Bergin playground, Haskell Street/Pemberton Street, Cambridge**  
(10 minutes from Porter Square)  
For toddlers as well as older kids, with ride-on toys, merry-go-round, and a huge see-saw; also has some grassy space and a spray pool in the summer.
- **Raymond Street playground, Cambridge**  
(10 minutes from Porter Square)  
A nice, spacious playground with a large grass field for picnics.
- **Alexander Kemp playground, Cambridge**  
(on northern edge of Cambridge Common park)  
Central and easily accessible, with a nice combination of different slides etc. for all ages; but fairly small, and can get crowded.
- **Clarendon Avenue playground, Cambridge**  
(off Massachusetts Avenue near the Cambridge/Arlington border)  
Has lots of toys to play with, especially ride-on and construction toys. A huge sandpit, but no swings.
- **Memorial Drive tot lot, Cambridge**  
(between Memorial Drive and Mt Auburn Street, near Mt Auburn Hospital)  
Small, but great for younger kids.

The City of Cambridge website has a detailed PDF map and full listings of all parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities in Cambridge (including those mentioned above). The map can be found at: [www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/cp/parks/osmap.pdf](http://www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/cp/parks/osmap.pdf).

- **Mount Auburn Cemetery, 580 Mount Auburn St., Cambridge** ([www.mountauburn.org](http://www.mountauburn.org))  
More of a park than a graveyard, this large, hilly, wooded area offers beautiful walks at any time of year. The tower in the center has great views of Boston. Particularly popular with birdwatchers; guide leaflets available at the gate.
- **Minuteman Bikeway** ([www.minutemanbikeway.org](http://www.minutemanbikeway.org))  
A scenic, paved 11-mile path that runs from Alewife in Cambridge through Arlington and Lexington and ends in Bedford. Great for cycling, jogging, skating, walking, skiing... At the Alewife end it connects with another bike path that runs through north Cambridge into Somerville.
- **Tufts Park, Main Street, Medford**  
Big and sunny, with a large grass field and playground; next to Tufts Pool.
- **Tufts Pool, Medford**  
Opens in June; for information contact Medford Department of Recreation at 781-393-2486. Unfortunately, there is no shade.
- **Tufts University campus, Medford**  
Nice area for a walk, and has great hills for sledding in the winter.
- **Trapelo Road playground, Belmont**  
Very good in summer as there is an excellent spray pool, plus a large park for picnics as well as a stream that is perfect for playing “pooh sticks” or throwing stones into the water.
- **Belmont KidSpace, 365 Belmont Street** ([www.belmontkidspace.org](http://www.belmontkidspace.org))  
A great indoor playground with lots to do for kids of all ages (climbing structures, toys, dress-up clothes, crawling area...). Open several days a week throughout the winter. Requires a small annual payment and a few hours of volunteer work. The 73 bus stops almost at the door.
- **Boston Common**  
A great place for a walk and some squirrel-chasing; also has a nice playground, the Frog Pond (ice skating in winter, wading pool in summer) and some hills for sledding in the winter. Nearest T stop: Park Street on the Red and Green Lines.
- **Boston Public Garden**  
Next to the Boston Common. Go for a waterside walk and duck-spotting, or take a slow cruise around the Lagoon in a “swan boat.” Home to life-size statues of Mrs. Mallard and the ducklings (characters from a popular Boston children’s story).

- **Christian Science Center Garden**  
Avenue of the Arts, 175 Huntington Ave between Massachusetts Ave and West Newton St. At the center of the beautiful grounds is a huge reflecting pool, surrounded by colorful flower beds, a linden tree arcade, and a spray fountain that is particularly popular with kids. Always open (lit at night); no admission charge. Take the Green Line T to the Hynes Convention Center stop.
- **Southwest Corridor Park** ([www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/southwestCorr.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/southwestCorr.htm))  
A 4.7-mile stretch of parkland that runs through South End, Back Bay, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain. There are 11 playgrounds, 2 spray pools, and 6 miles of biking and walking paths. Get there on the Orange Line T (any stop between Back Bay and Forest Hills).
- **Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain** ([www.arboretum.harvard.edu](http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu))  
Harvard's natural paradise, with over 4,000 different kinds of living plants in a huge, landscaped park. Great for running around and woodland adventures. Open from sunrise to sunset year-round, with no admission charge. Maps and brochures are available at the Visitor Center in the Hunnewell Building near the main gate, which is about a 10-minute walk from the Forest Hills T stop on the Orange Line. There are also tours, and occasional special events.

## 1.2 Libraries

It is free to join the public library of the town in which you live; just bring proof of identity and proof of address to any branch of your town's library to get a library card. With your card, you can borrow books, CDs, DVDs, and videos, usually for free. (See also information on free museum passes on the next page.) However, there are often charges for late returns.

- **Cambridge Public Library** ([www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/cpl](http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/cpl))  
Main Library temporarily located at Longfellow School, 359 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139 (phone 617-349-4040) due to construction work at the permanent Harvard Square site; expected to relocate back to Harvard Square in fall 2008. Six other branches in different parts of Cambridge. The Main Library has a large children's section, as does the Central Square branch, with toys and drawing materials in addition to books.
- **Somerville Public Library** ([www.somervillepubliclibrary.org](http://www.somervillepubliclibrary.org))  
Central Library: 79 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143  
West Branch: 40 College Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144 (Davis Square)  
East Branch: 115 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145 (Sullivan Square)
- **Medford Public Library** ([www.medfordlibrary.org](http://www.medfordlibrary.org))  
111 High Street, Medford, MA 02155; phone 781-395-7950

- **Belmont Public Library** ([www.belmont.lib.ma.us](http://www.belmont.lib.ma.us))  
336 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA 02478; phone 617-489-2000
- **Boston Public Library** ([www.bpl.org](http://www.bpl.org))  
25 branches, and lots of special events for all ages.
- **Brookline Public Library** ([www.town.brookline.ma.us/library](http://www.town.brookline.ma.us/library))  
Main Library: 61 Washington Street, Brookline, MA 02445; phone 617-730-2370  
Also branches at Coolidge Corner and Putterham.

## 1.3 Museums, zoos, and other attractions

**HSSPA** ([www.hsspa.harvard.edu](http://www.hsspa.harvard.edu)): The Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association organizes regular subsidized outings to popular attractions in and around Boston. Past destinations have included the Children's Museum, the Aquarium, Fenway Park, Skywalk Observatory, Duck Tours, the Museum of Fine Arts, and many others. See the beginning of this booklet for contact information.

**Outings and Innings:** This Harvard service is available to faculty and staff only, and offers discounted tickets to movies, museums, concerts, sporting events, etc. The office is located at 9 Holyoke Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; phone 617-495-2828; e-mail [outings\\_innings@harvard.edu](mailto:outings_innings@harvard.edu). Tickets can also be bought online via the Harvard employee intranet at [www.harvie.harvard.edu](http://www.harvie.harvard.edu).

**Free museum passes:** Public libraries offer free passes or coupons for museums and other attractions in the area; see library websites (listed above) for details. Passes are available to all library card holders on a first-come, first-served basis, and may often be reserved online. Most passes are date-specific—you reserve them for particular dates and must return them to the library afterwards. Coupons usually do not need to be returned.

- **Harvard Museum of Natural History** ([www.hmnh.harvard.edu](http://www.hmnh.harvard.edu))  
26 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; phone 617-495-3045  
Great for kids of all ages, with hundreds of stuffed animals and birds, amazingly realistic glass flowers, and rocks and fossils galore. Entrance is free on Wednesday afternoons (Sept-May) and Sunday mornings (year-round). Frequent special programs and events available mainly for older kids (4 and up). A short walk from Harvard Square through Harvard Yard, close to the Law School campus.
- **Boston Children's Museum** ([www.bostonkids.org](http://www.bostonkids.org))  
300 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210; phone 617-426-8855  
Hours of play and exploration for all ages, with lots events and activities every day. There is a nice “sing a story” session on Thursdays at 11:00 am. Accessible by public transportation: take the T to South Station and walk 5 minutes across the bridge. Admission is generally rather expensive, though cheap on Fridays after 5 pm; for frequent visits, membership makes sense (e.g. \$90 per year covers unlimited visits for up to 4 people). *Tip:* The Boston

Children's Museum is part of a national network of science museums; membership in any of them gives free access to all, and many offer cheaper memberships than the Boston museum. You can call and pay with a credit card.

- **Children's Discovery Museum and Science Discovery Museum, Acton** ([www.discoverymuseums.org](http://www.discoverymuseums.org))  
177 Main Street (Route 27), Acton, MA 01720; phone 978-264-4200  
Two great museums side by side, maybe half an hour's drive from Cambridge (you will need a car to get there). The Children's Discovery Museum is for younger kids: a big old house full of themed rooms (safari, diner, colors, maritime...) for playing and exploring. The Science Discovery Museum lets older kids experiment with things like electricity, water, music, and carpentry.
- **Museum of Science, Boston** ([www.mos.org](http://www.mos.org))  
Science Park, Boston, MA 02114; phone 617-723-2500  
Lots of interesting exhibits, a nice toddler room, IMAX theater, Planetarium, and a recently opened 3-D cinema: you could easily stay the whole day... and probably feel like you should, since the admission price is so steep—especially if you want to see one or more of the extra shows in addition to the regular exhibits. A membership pass for 5 currently costs \$89. The nearest T station is Science Park on the Green Line, but Lechmere, Charles/MGH, and North Station are also reasonably close.
- **MIT Museum** ([web.mit.edu/museum](http://web.mit.edu/museum))  
265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139; phone 617-258-9118  
Smaller, less known, and much cheaper than the Museum of Science, the MIT museum has some really fascinating permanent exhibits (holography, strobe light photography, “gestural sculptures”...) as well as a number of changing exhibits. Not explicitly geared towards children, but there is plenty to interest them too. About a 10-minute walk from Central Square, 15 minutes from Kendall Square; both are served by the Red Line.
- **New England Aquarium, Boston** ([www.neaq.org](http://www.neaq.org))  
Central Wharf, Boston, MA 02110; phone 617-973-5200  
Plenty of weird and wonderful marine life to marvel at, from penguins to sharks to jellyfish; but admission is expensive. Membership gives free entrance as well as other discounts; family membership currently costs \$90. *Tip:* a family membership could “unofficially” be shared between a couple of families... Get there with the T: Aquarium stop on the Blue Line is closest, but Downtown Crossing on the Red Line and Government Center on the Green Line are also not far.
- **Franklin Park Zoo, Dorchester** ([www.franklinparkzoo.org](http://www.franklinparkzoo.org))  
1 Franklin Park Road, Dorchester, MA 02121; phone 617-541-5466  
Home to hundreds of exotic animals including lions, giraffes, gorillas, and kangaroos, as well as more familiar farm animals. Accessible by public transport via a combination of subway and bus; by car, about a half-hour drive from Cambridge. *Tip:* Admission is half price on the first Saturday of each month from 10 am to noon.



- **Stone Zoo, Stoneham** ([www.stonezoo.org](http://www.stonezoo.org))  
149 Pond Street, Stoneham, MA 02180  
Smaller (and cheaper) than Franklin Park Zoo, but with plenty to see, including jaguars, flamingos, reindeer, and barnyard favorites. There is also a good playground opposite the zoo. You will need a car to get there; the drive from Cambridge takes less than half an hour.

## 1.4 Restaurants and cafes

- **Full Moon Café, 344 Huron Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138**  
An excellent place to eat with kids: play area with toys and books, sippy cups on the menu, lots of noise to drown out any that your child might make, and even the food is good. About a half-hour walk from Harvard Square, or you can take the 72 or 75 bus.
- **O'Naturals, 187 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144** (between Porter and Davis Squares)  
An “all-natural” café with some food too. There is a popular train table and books for kids, and popular wireless internet access for grown-ups.
- **Deluxe Town Diner, 627 Mt Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472**  
([www.deluxetowndiner.com](http://www.deluxetowndiner.com))  
Child-friendly, with a huge selection of good, inexpensive dishes. Get there with the 71 bus.
- **Rosie's Bakery, 1796 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140** (near Porter Square)  
A small (no bathrooms!) but cozy café with good coffee, sweets, and sandwiches; has a kids' menu and a high chair. There is a second location at Inman Square.

## 1.5 Gyms with child care

- **YMCA**  
At least some YMCA gyms offer child care. Check the YMCA website at [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net) to find your local YMCA.
- **Healthworks Fitness for Women** ([www.healthworksfitness.com](http://www.healthworksfitness.com))  
Porter Square Shopping Center, 35 White Street, Cambridge; phone 617-497-4454
- **Wellbridge Athletic Club** ([www.wellbridgeac.com](http://www.wellbridgeac.com))  
135 Wells Avenue, Newton, MA 02459; phone 617-928-2000  
Also offers (pricey) swimming classes for babies and older kids at all branches; there is another location in the Charles Hotel at Harvard Square.

## 1.6 Day trips and holidays

West of Boston:

- **Drumlin Farm** ([www.massaudubon.org/drumlin](http://www.massaudubon.org/drumlin))  
208 South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773; phone 781-259-2200  
A great Wildlife Sanctuary with lots of farmyard animals (pigs, sheep, cows, chickens...) as well as forest trails for walking.
- **Codman Community Farm** ([www.codmanfarm.org](http://www.codmanfarm.org))  
58 Codman Road, Lincoln, MA 01773; phone 781-259-0456  
A working farm with animals and activities; also has organic meat and eggs for sale.
- **Walden Pond** ([www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/northeast/wldn.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/northeast/wldn.htm))  
915 Walden St., Concord (off Route 2 West); phone 978-369-3254  
Has two nice beaches in the summer (one with a lifeguard), and walking trails around the Pond year-round. A wonderful, refreshing place for swimming. Gets crowded at peak times (weekends).
- **Gropius House** ([www.spnea.org/visit/homes/gropius.htm](http://www.spnea.org/visit/homes/gropius.htm))  
68 Baker Bridge Road, Lincoln, MA 01773; phone 781-259-8098  
Designed by Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus movement in modern architecture. Not best-suited for energetic toddlers.
- **De Cordova Museum and Sculpture Park** ([www.decordova.org](http://www.decordova.org))  
Dozens of weird and wonderful sculptures set in beautiful woodland grounds, plus an interesting art museum with changing exhibits. Picnicking is encouraged!

North of Boston:

- **Crane Beach, Ipswich** ([www.thetrustees.org/pages/294\\_crane\\_beach.cfm](http://www.thetrustees.org/pages/294_crane_beach.cfm))  
A lovely, long sandy beach about a 45-minute drive from Cambridge. Also has interesting tidal pools and some walking trails among the dunes. There are changing rooms and a snack stand, and cookouts are possible with a permit. Admission is paid by car and prices go up in the summer season (May-Sept); it gets cheaper after 3pm. Also nice for out-of-season beach walks.
- **Plum Island**  
Home of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge ([www.fws.gov/northeast/parkerriver](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/parkerriver)) and a big beach; quite wild and not that good for swimming, but has nice tidal pools that host lots of birds.

- **Cape Ann**  
Explore the seaside town of Rockport, the Rocky Neck Art Colony off Gloucester, and the Paper House (literally, a house made of paper) in Pigeon Cove near Rockport.
- **Newburyport**  
A quaint, lively town with some unusual shops and a nice harborfront.
- **Pick your own fruit** (offered at lots of farms and orchards surrounding the Boston area)  
Very popular in the fall. Drive out towards Stowe and follow any of the many signs for “pick-your-own.”
- **Mount Snow Valley, Vermont**  
The beautiful Mount Snow Valley in Vermont offers skiing in the winter and hiking year-round. The Weathervane Lodge ([www.weathervanelodge.com](http://www.weathervanelodge.com)) in the lovely old town of West Dover is run by a friendly Swiss cook and her family; it promises “European charm with New England hospitality”—with excellent Swiss cuisine. It’s a four-hour drive from Cambridge, but worth the journey.

East of Boston:

- **Boston Harbor Islands** ([www.bostonislands.org](http://www.bostonislands.org))  
A short ferry ride from downtown Boston (one pier up from the Aquarium). 13 individual islands, with varying mixes of amenities like visitor centers, beaches, camping areas, walking trails, and restrooms. A good “mini-trip” out of the city!

South of Boston:

- **World’s End, Hingham** ([www.thetrustees.org/pages/393\\_world\\_s\\_end.cfm](http://www.thetrustees.org/pages/393_world_s_end.cfm))  
Less than an hour’s drive from Cambridge, a beautiful nature reservation with the sea on either side. Offers plenty of walking trails and amazing views of Boston and the Harbor Islands.
- **Cranberry harvest in September-October**  
An impressive sight. Several locations in and on the way to Cape Cod; the best place to go is around Carver. Nearby Plymouth is home to “Cranberry World,” a free museum sponsored by Ocean Spray with cranberry-themed exhibits, activities, and food samples. Located at 225 Water Street, Plymouth, MA 02360; phone 508-747-2350.
- **Provincetown, Cape Cod**  
At the tip of the Cape Cod peninsula, “P-town” is pretty and lively, though not primarily family-oriented. It is easy to get to by ferry from Boston ([boston-ptown.com](http://boston-ptown.com)); the journey takes about an hour and a half. In P-town, Surfside Hotel ([www.surfsideinn.cc](http://www.surfsideinn.cc)) is a basic but decent and kid-friendly hotel right on the beach, with really cheap specials and off-season rates. There is also a nice campground, Dunes’ Edge ([www.dunes-edge.com](http://www.dunes-edge.com)). In addition to the beaches, the Cape Cod National Seashore ([www.nps.gov/caco](http://www.nps.gov/caco)) offers several nature

trails for biking or walking. **Note:** You can rent bicycles and bike trailers in P-town, but not child seats for bikes!

- **New York**

Doubletree Guest Suites (1568 Broadway, New York, NY 10036; phone 1-212-719-1600; [www.doubletree.com/en/dt/hotels/index.jhtml?ctyhocn=LGASFDT](http://www.doubletree.com/en/dt/hotels/index.jhtml?ctyhocn=LGASFDT)) is a good place to stay if you're going to New York with e.g. visiting family: the two-room suites sleep up to 6 people and come with microwaves and refrigerators. They also provide cribs. The hotel is clean, friendly, and right on Times Square.

All around Massachusetts:

- **Massachusetts Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuaries** ([www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org))  
A network of 43 wildlife sanctuaries of different sizes and types, many of them close to Boston. Admission prices vary widely; free for members. Frequent special events.
- **Historic New England** ([www.historicnewengland.org](http://www.historicnewengland.org))  
A regional preservation organization that maintains a network of historic sites and buildings, and offers frequent events such as walking tours, workshops, and “Farm Friends” activities for kids. Some events are free, others are not; members get discounts.

## 1.7 When you really gotta go: places to change a diaper

Cambridge/Harvard Square:

- Ladies' room in the basement of Boylston Hall
- Ladies' room in the basement of Memorial Church
- Restroom in the basement of Harvard Coop (must see clerk for a key)
- Ladies' room in the basement of Dudley House/Lehman Hall (does not have an actual changing table, but a wide counter in the locker room)
- Ladies' room in Harkness Commons (Law School cafeteria)
- Ladies' (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) and men's (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) restrooms in Longfellow Hall, School of Education

Cambridge/Porter Square:

- Restroom in Burlington Coat Factory

Brookline/Coolidge Corner:

- Restroom in Magic Beans

## 2. Things to do

### 2.1 Singalongs and story times

- **Public Libraries:** Most public libraries offer free weekly story hours, singalongs, and other events for various age groups; check the library websites listed under “Libraries” above for full schedules. Some examples (not necessarily year-round!):
  - **Cambridge Library:** *Toddler singalong* Mondays at 11:00 am (Main Library), *Toddler/Preschool story time* Wednesdays and Thursdays 10:30 am (Central Square Branch), *Stories and crafts for preschoolers* Thursdays 3:30 pm (O’Connell Branch)
  - **Somerville Library:** *Songs and stories for babies* Tuesdays at 10:30 am (Central Library), *Babygarten* Thursdays at 11:00 am (West Branch), *Preschool story time* Mondays 11:00 am (East Branch)
  - **Medford Library:** *Toddler story time* Tuesdays at 10:15 am, *Pajama story time* Tuesdays 7:00 pm
  - **Belmont Library:** *Story time for under-2’s* Wednesdays at 10:30 am, *Story time for 2 and 3-year-olds* Tuesdays 10:30 am
- **Singalong at Finagle a Bagel** (various locations)  
Several Finagle a Bagel restaurants apparently host a free children’s singalong once a week; the Harvard Square location (on JFK Street) used to have a very popular singalong on Fridays at 10:00 am, but it has been suspended due to renovation work.
- **Singalong at Stella Bella Toys**  
1360 Cambridge Street, Cambridge (Inman Square); phone 617-491-6290  
Free singalong Saturday mornings 11:00 am-12:00 noon. Also other classes and activities (see below), as well as a great selection of quality toys.
- **Story times at Barefoot Books** ([www.barefootbooks.com](http://www.barefootbooks.com))  
1771 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, between Porter and Harvard Squares  
Free, themed story hours on Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30 am, as well as lots of other great events; visit store or website for full monthly calendar, or sign up for e-mail updates. The book shop is beautiful and inviting, with a cozy reading corner and play area; browsing is welcome. Look out for sales.
- **Story time at Porter Square Books** ([www.portersquarebooks.com](http://www.portersquarebooks.com))  
Porter Square Shopping Center, 25 White Street, Cambridge; phone 617-491-2220

Free story time on Wednesdays at 11:00 am. The store has a great little children's corner with books to read and a few toys to play with; there is also a nice café.

- **Activities for kids at Harvard University Art Museums** ([www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/events/familyprogram.html](http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/events/familyprogram.html))  
Frequent special events for mainly older children, including story telling, drawing, and arts demonstrations. Many are free with museum admission or with a Cambridge Public Library card, but advance registration is usually required. See website for current program.

## 2.2 Play groups, mom and baby groups

- **Infants and toddlers playgroup at Harvard Neighbors** ([www.neighbors.harvard.edu](http://www.neighbors.harvard.edu))  
“Where it all began...!” Monday mornings, 10:00-11:30 am, Loeb House basement (17 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138); for kids up to about 3. There is a small annual fee for Harvard Neighbors membership, which permits participation in all HN interest groups.  
**Note:** Officially, HN membership is open only to faculty, staff, and their families.
- **Mom and baby groups at Stella Bella Toys**  
1360 Cambridge Street, Cambridge (Inman Square); phone 617-491-6290  
Several groups and activities, including a group for new parents on Fridays at 10:30 am; for babies from 7 months to 1.5 years on Tuesdays at 10:00 am; and for toddlers (1.5 to 2.5 years) on Wednesdays at 4:00 pm. There is a charge of \$5 per session.
- **Mom and baby group at the Doula Program, Cambridge**  
(blue house next to the Cambridge Birth Center at Cambridge Hospital)  
Free, friendly group for moms and infants on Wednesdays, 10:00 am-12:00 noon.
- **“The Nurturing Room”—a group for moms, babies, and toddlers**  
Youville House at Youville Hospital, 1573 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02138  
Wednesdays 2:30-4:30 pm, in the second floor lounge, with residents of the assisted living facility and Georgiana, who is a doula as well as the group's coordinator. This free program is run by the Jewish Family and Children's Service (see below).
- **Jewish Family and Children's Service** ([www.jfcsboston.org/fcs](http://www.jfcsboston.org/fcs))  
A great organization that offers a variety of support services for new mothers and children, from home visits to consultation on feeding, sleep, premature birth, pregnancy loss, etc; also lots of workshops and regular support groups in various locations in the greater Boston area. Some services/groups are free, others carry a charge.
- **Cambridge Center for Families** ([www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/families.cfm](http://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/families.cfm))  
Lots of great free programs in several locations around Cambridge! For example: drop-in playgroups for ages birth to 5 years with toys, activities, singing, and snacks; parent-infant groups for babies up to 14 months; “Dads' Morning Out” and Moms' Discussion groups

(with free childcare); and frequent workshops and family events. A bimonthly newsletter with details of upcoming events as well as other useful information is available on the website or by calling the Center at 617-349-3002.

- **Somerville Family Network**  
([www.somerville.k12.ma.us/education/dept/dept.php?sectionid=57](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/education/dept/dept.php?sectionid=57))  
1060 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144; phone 617-629-2948  
Free playgroups for different ages (registration required; call for details). Also other events, workshops, and outings.
- **Isis Maternity** (see below)

## 2.3 Classes and courses

- **Isis Maternity** ([www.isismaternity.com](http://www.isismaternity.com))  
Branches in Brookline, Arlington, and Needham.  
A community for new and expectant parents, with a welcoming atmosphere and dozens of classes, groups, and workshops—childbirth preparation, fitness, mom and baby groups, water play, baby massage, breastfeeding support, and lots more. Some tried and recommended classes: Childbirth Education, Sign and Sing, Kindermusik, and Social Butterflies. There is a fairly hefty charge for the classes (with a discount for members), but a free demo session is usually available.
- **Mommy and baby yoga at Grace Church**  
56 Magazine Street, Cambridge, MA 02139; phone 617-491-3753 (at Central Square)  
Run by Carol Faulkner, who also runs other yoga classes; laid-back and friendly.
- **Family Music Makers at the First Parish Church** ([www.familymusicmakers.com](http://www.familymusicmakers.com))  
3 Church Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 (at Harvard Square)  
A ten-week course of singing, dancing, and playing instruments for parents and 0 to 5-year-old kids. There is a charge, but a free sample session is available. Also other locations.

## 3. Resources

### 3.1 Websites and publications

- **[www.bostoncentral.com](http://www.bostoncentral.com)**  
“The Center for Boston Area Families”  
Detailed listings of kid-related offerings (from shows to stores to singalongs) in all communities in and around Boston. You can subscribe to a free weekly newsletter of events.
- **[www.gocitykids.com](http://www.gocitykids.com)**  
“The City Guide for Parents”  
As above: comprehensive listings of both indoor and outdoor activities around town, plus restaurants, stores, lodging, and child care resources. A free weekly newsletter is available.
- **[boston.craigslist.org](http://boston.craigslist.org)**  
Hundreds of local ads from people offering anything and everything for sale, mostly to be picked up; great bargains. Also announcements of yard sales, babysitters, apartments for rent, etc.
- **[www.hbspartnersclub.org/crimsonkids.html](http://www.hbspartnersclub.org/crimsonkids.html)**  
Harvard Business School Partners’ Club  
Information on outings, playgrounds, classes, and other activities, as well as on childcare, preschools, and schools.
- **Boston Parents’ Paper** (monthly) and **Boston Family Phone Book** (annual publication by the Boston Parents’ Paper)  
A free magazine that can be picked up at libraries, supermarkets, baby stores, bookstores, etc.; has news and articles on parenting, product reviews, lots of tips, and listings of local events and attractions for kids. Also available online at [www.bostonparentspaper.com](http://www.bostonparentspaper.com).
- ***Fun with the Family in Massachusetts* by Marcia Glassman-Jaffe**  
Stuff for kids... beyond Harvard: a personal guide to amusement parks, recreation trails, zoos, children’s museums, festivals, performing arts, and other family-friendly things to do in the Bay State.
- ***The Toddler’s Busy Book* by Trish Kuffner**  
365 fun, creative games and activities to engage one-and-a-half- to three-year-olds using things found around the house. Great for both new and veteran parents and caregivers.



- **Harvard International Office information leaflets**  
The Harvard International Office, located on the eighth floor of the Holyoke Center at Harvard Square, has produced a number of free leaflets with tips on locating cheap clothing and furniture, ethnic groceries and entertainment, school and child care information, and other basics. Pick them up at the International Office. Especially useful for newcomers, though the details may be out of date.

## 3.2 Stores

- **The Construction Site**  
200 Moody Street, Waltham; phone 781-899-7900  
Lots of Lego and other construction toys, train sets and accessories, board games, and Haba German wooden toys.
- **Concord Toy Shoppe**  
4 Walden Street, Concord; phone 978-369-2553  
Toys, costumes, puzzles, dollhouses, and oodles of nostalgia.
- **Magic Beans**  
312 Harvard Street, Brookline; phone 617-264-2326  
Great toys, a good selection of quality baby gear, and an inviting indoor play space.
- **Children's Orchard**  
807 Boylston Street (Route 9), Brookline; phone 617-277-3006  
A good place to find used kids' stuff—toys, clothes, and other items.
- **Sloanes Stride Rite**  
1349 Beacon Street, Brookline; phone 617-739-0582  
Stride Rite, Keds, Hush Puppies, and other quality children's shoes. Knowledgeable, helpful staff will ensure the right fit.
- **Kohls**  
Meadow Glen Mall, Medford  
Good, cheap children's clothes and shoes.
- **The Children's Place**  
Nearby locations at Cambridge Galleria (Cambridge), Downtown Crossing (Boston), Meadow Glen Mall (Medford), and Arsenal Marketplace (Watertown, next to Arsenal Mall).
- **Burlington Coat Factory**  
Porter Square Shopping Center, 37 White Street, Cambridge; phone 617-354-7314  
Discounted children's clothes and books; also has a changing table in the restroom.

- **TJ Maxx**  
Cheap kids' clothes, toys, and books. The branch at Fresh Pond Mall (Alewife) has a good children's section, as does the branch at Assembly Square Mall.
- **Bambini Design**  
82 Boylston Street (Route 9), Brookline; phone 617.730.4114  
Mainly imported European baby products—furniture, strollers, toys...
- **IKEA**  
1 IKEA Way, Stoughton, MA 02072; phone 781-344-4532  
Worth a day trip, with cheap, cheerful furniture; cute toys; nifty home accessories; and of course those delicious meatballs!
- **[www.oompa.com](http://www.oompa.com)**  
European wooden toys, including Haba.
- **[www.onestepahead.com](http://www.onestepahead.com)**  
Toys, clothes, gear, and gadgets galore, for every imaginable need.
- **[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)**
- **[www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)**

See also store listings above under “Singalongs and story times.”

### 3.3 Products

- **Exercise/yoga ball**  
A great way to bounce a newborn to sleep without breaking your back (also doubles as a gentle workout). You can get one at any sports store or at Target, K-mart, Whole Foods Market...
- ***Goodnight Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann**  
A wonderful bedtime book (works in any language!).
- ***Cars and Trucks and Things That Go* by Richard Scarry**  
For kids who are into cars.
- **Infant Stimobile by Manhattan Toys**  
A bright, age-appropriate crib mobile for newborns to 5 months.
- **Magna-Doodle by Fisher-Price**  
Allows kids to draw picture after picture after picture with easy erasing and no mess.

- **Adjustable Fleece Pouch Sling by Kangaroo Korner** ([www.kangarookorner.com](http://www.kangarookorner.com))  
A super-easy and comfortable way to carry, soothe, and keep warm your baby.
- **Baby Bjorn Active Carrier**  
Standard Baby Bjorn front baby carrier, but with an extra back support panel.
- **Soho Sport (or similar models) foldable stroller by Combi**  
A light and affordable (\$60) collapsible stroller with some extras: storage basket, canopy, front handle bar, padded seat, and partially reclining back.

## 4. Miscellaneous tips

### 4.1 Recommendations

- **Pediatrician:** Dr Jill Kasper at Somerville Pediatrics (617-284-7000; [www.challiance.org](http://www.challiance.org))
- **Pediatrician:** Dr Rajee Joyce at Arlington Pediatrics (5 Water St., Arlington, MA 02476; phone 781-641-5800)
- **Dentist:** Dr Karen Bright at Bright Dental (435 Washington St, Somerville, MA 02143; phone 617-491-2829; [www.brightdental.com](http://www.brightdental.com))
- **Health insurance plan:** Harvard Pilgrim ([www.harvardpilgrim.org](http://www.harvardpilgrim.org))
- **Day care center:** Little Bear Family Day Care, 118 Harvard Street, Medford, MA 02155; phone 781-396-0124. Run by Clara Reyes. Space for 10 kids between 8 months and 4 years. \$20 for 2 hours, \$50 for full day (8 am-5 pm). Clean basement location, small playground, healthy home-made food.

### 4.2 Good to know

- If your child needs emergency care, don't immediately head out to the Children's Hospital, where the wait is often very long; just go to your local hospital's emergency room.
- Poison Emergency Hotline: 1-800-222-1222
- Typical pay rate for babysitters: around \$10, up to \$13, for one child.