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NYC

More than a dozen family friendly things to do in the Big Apple

BY DEBORAH ABRAMS KAPLAN

New York is certainly a big city with a myriad activities. But if you've taken the kids there before, the usual tourist spots just won't cut it. Been there, done that? Read on to see what's new in the Big Apple for families this spring - or even what's new to you.

The Addams Family and the Miracle Worker on Broadway: Your kids may think their family is weird, but that's nothing compared with the Addams Family. What happens when daughter Wednesday tells her family that she's in love? Find out in this musical starring Nathan Lane and Bebe Neuwirth. Previews for the Broadway show begin in March. Tickets start at \$51.50. Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St.; 877-250-2929; theaddamsfamilymusical.com. Your kids probably know the story of Helen Keller. Now they can see the inspirational classic, the Miracle Worker, on Broadway starting in March, with familiar faces Abigail Breslin, Matthew Modine, and Alison Pill. Tickets start at \$117. Circle in the Square Theatre, 235 W. 50th St.; 212-239-6200; miracleworkeronbroadway.com

The Awesome 80s Prom: The glitz and glamour of Broadway are well-publicized, but off-Broadway shows are worth exploring. In the style of *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*, the interactive *Awesome 80s Prom* gets you on the dance floor - maybe even slam dancing with Wanaget High's prom king or queen. Dress the part (pull that Gunne Sax dress out of the attic), and you might win the costume contest. Kids are welcome, but can't drink. Tickets start at \$49.99. Webster Hall,

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125 E. 11th St.; 877-723-7766; awesome80sprom.com

Circle Line Downtown: You may think of the Circle Line cruise as a bus tour on water. But at 35 mph, you and the kiddos' hearts will race and your hair will tangle, while still taking in the New York skyline. The Shark Speedboat Thrill Ride includes a funny, half-hour narrated tour. As for the sights, you'll whiz by Battery Park, jet under the Brooklyn Bridge, and slow down for photos near the Statue of Liberty. The Shark operates May through October, from the South Street Seaport. Tickets \$16-\$23. Pier 16, South Street Seaport; 212-742-1969, ext. 233; circlelinedowntown.com

Dewey's Candy Store: Move over Dylan's - there's a new store in town. Since opening in January, this Brooklyn candy shop is making quite a splash. If you're looking for a Mr. Goodbar (or wax bottles, Pop Rocks, jawbreakers, or Big Hunks), you'll find it here. The store's white walls, shelves, and ceilings provide the perfect backdrop for large, brightly swirled lollipops hanging from the beams, and old-fashioned penny-candy glass jars stuffed with colorful treats. Look for Dewey's in DUMBO, a Brooklyn neighborhood near the Manhattan Bridge. 141 Front St., Brooklyn; 718-422-1333

Federal Reserve gold vaults: With gold at historic highs, how exciting would it be to have \$240 billion in gold bullion at your fingertips? In this hour-long tour, you'll descend to Manhattan bedrock, 50 feet below sea level, to see the stash of 27-pound gold bricks (mostly belonging to foreign countries). Many locals don't even know the gold is stored at location three blocks from Wall Street. The tour is free. 33 Liberty St.; 212-720-6130; newyorkfed.org/aboutthefed/ny_tours.html

Lola Staar's Dreamland Roller Rink: Even if you didn't grow up in its heyday, the Coney Island Boardwalk has a special mystique. Beachside carnival rides, sideshows, and Nathan's hot dogs. The glamour from the early days is back, with the launch of Dreamland Roller Rink. Inside a more than 80-year-old city landmark, the Childs Restaurant building, you'll find retro skating events like John Hughes' roller skating marathons (skate to movies like *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and *Pretty in Pink*), and *Saturday Night Fever* parties. Like Coney Island, the roller rink is open seasonally, starting about Easter. Join in the fun for \$8-\$12 admission, \$5 skate rental. 3052 W. 21st St., Brooklyn; 800-362-5116; dreamlandrollerrink.com

Museum of Modern Art Free Teen Nights: Take the kids where the local kids go on Friday afternoon - the Museum of Modern Art. The MOMA reaches out to teens with free classes and art programs - which have included digital video projects, creating 3-D characters, watching and discussing art films, and seeing gallery exhibits with teen docents. Stop by on Friday afternoons at 4 - no reservation necessary, and it's free. 4 W. 53rd St.; 212-708-9828; moma.org/learn/programs/teens

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Nightlife for the younger set: You wouldn't be thrilled to have your kids hit the New York bar scene, but there are legitimate evening entertainment options for those under age. Hit the Brooklyn Museum's Target First Saturday (every month except September), where you and the family will get free admission to evening performances, gallery talks, films, and a dance party. 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; 718-638-5000; brooklynmuseum.org. Also in Brooklyn, live music fans flock to the famed Knitting Factory. Kids under 18 are welcome, if accompanied by an adult. Tickets vary from free to more than \$20 depending on the show. 361 Metropolitan Ave., Brooklyn; 347-529-6696; bk.knittingfactory.com

On Location tours: Star tours in Los Angeles are de rigueur, but do you know how many movie and television locations you can see in one afternoon in Manhattan? Focus on one show (like *Sex and the City*, the *Sopranos*, or *Gossip Girl*), or a general tour covering a range of shows. In the 3-1/2-hour New York TV and Movie Sites tour, you'll see 40 shooting locations, including the Times Square manhole cover from *Enchanted*, the *Friends* apartment building, and Al's Soup Kitchen from *Seinfeld*. Tickets \$20-\$46. Each tour meets in a different location. 212-209-3370; screentours.com

Scavenger hunt: Museums and sightseeing can get boring for kids. But add a puzzle and competition and you've just made it fun. Sign on for a family scavenger hunt with Watson Adventures, and you'll be putting your heads together for events like "Grand Central Scramble," "Fright at the Museum," and "Ghosts of Greenwich Village." You'll use your brains while bonding as a team. During the two-hour hunt, your group searches for clues and answers tricky questions, garnering you points (and newfound knowledge). You may even win a prize! Tickets start at \$18 for non-museum tours. 877-946-4868; watsonadventures.com

Sony Wonder Technology Lab: This hip hands-on tech facility excites kids with interactive exhibits focusing on fun activities like making movies, designing computer games, programming robots, and performing virtual surgery. Several times a month, the lab also offers high-definition film screenings. The four-story facility, which focuses on technology and entertainment, is free. To guarantee admission, call at least a week in advance for tickets. 550 Madison Ave.; 212-833-8100; sonywindertechlab.com

Trump-SoHo New York: Trump forges into new territory in the South of Houston area. Opening in April, this luxury hotel features one- and two-bedroom suites, plus 10 penthouse suites. Take advantage of the Trump Kids program, in which an attaché makes sure that young guests (and their parents) get whatever they want or need. Perhaps that's a specialized spa treatment like a "cookies and milk" pedicure or teen massage, or a room stocked with kids' books, board games, or diapers. 246 Spring St.; 212-842-5500; trumpsohohotel.com

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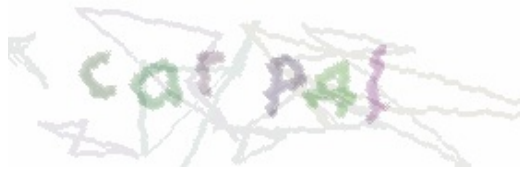
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