

SUMMER 2024

# MARSHALL COUNTY PAT

*A Program of the Marshall County FRN*



## WHAT'S NEW IN PAT?

Another successful program year is coming to a close! We want to thank all of our families that have participated over the past year. Congratulations to our program graduate, and let's get ready for another great year!



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BABY!

Wishing a happy birthday to our summer kids!

Adam – 6/5	Elijah – 7/17
Wyatt – 6/16	Karter – 7/26
Kaiden – 6/25	Scout – 8/10
Robbie – 7/14	Harper – 8/28

## IN THIS ISSUE

---

What's New in PAT?  
Happy Birthday, Baby!  
UV Safety Month  
Advice from a Ranger  
Upcoming Events

---

## Did You Know?

If you haven't signed up for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, don't wait! This program is FREE!

## UV SAFETY TIPS

### Tips for Protecting Infants and Toddlers

Everyone is susceptible to the harmful UV rays from the sun, but one particularly vulnerable population is small children. Infants' and toddlers' delicate skin require special attention when it comes to sun protection.

#### Infants Younger than Six Months

In the first 6 months of life, it's recommended that babies are completely shielded from the sun. This is the period when their skin is most sensitive to sun exposure. Protect your baby by avoiding direct sun exposure and opting for shaded paths when possible. Dress your baby in lightweight garments that cover the arms and legs completely and invest in a sun shield for your stroller and car seat, as damaging sunlight can penetrate rear car windows. A wide-brimmed hat and UV-filtering sunglasses provide additional protection.

#### Infants Older than Six Months

At 6 months old, it's appropriate to begin using a titanium dioxide and zinc oxide-based sunscreen on your child. Other active ingredients, such as oxybenzone, may irritate your child's sensitive skin. Choose a sunscreen strength of SPF 30 or higher and reapply every two hours. For maximum protection, apply the sunscreen at least 30 minutes prior to sun exposure.

#### Toddlers Older than 12 Months

The same rules apply for shading, protective clothing and sunscreen use as children get older. As kids become more mobile it can become more difficult to ensure reapplication of sunscreen throughout the day. Help to avoid this issue by instilling these sun-safety habits at a young age.

Evidence suggests sunburns and sun exposure at a young age can substantially increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Protect your child before they can protect themselves with these age-based tips.





## ADVICE FROM A RANGER: VISITING NATIONAL PARKS WITH KIDS

### **Find out what kid-friendly options a park offers**

Many parks have programs geared for kids such as story-hour gatherings, recreational trails, and other fun activities and events. A lot of these programs are free. If you are planning on attending a guided program, find one that is specifically for kids.

Two hours in a cave or 3 hours on a shuttle tour, for instance, may not be the best idea if you can't easily turn around or change course if your child has a meltdown (we've all been there). Rangers understand if you need to leave a program early because your child needs a nap, snack, or other basic necessity, but if you're participating in a program in which exiting on your own is not possible convenient, you may have to ride it out and neither you nor your child will be pleased in the end.

You want their first experiences in national parks to be pleasant. A little preparation and strategic planning will set you up for success. Most parks have a "For Kids" section on their website with specifics about what they have to offer. Start by visiting [nps.gov/kids](https://www.nps.gov/kids) and [FindYourPark.com](https://www.findyourpark.com).

### **Alter your expectations and make room for spontaneous exploration**

You may not get to see as much as you think you should and that's okay. This is about creating an experience geared toward your child.

For some parents, this might mean shifting the way you typically engage with the natural and/or cultural world.

Before I had children, hiking was all about getting from a trailhead to a postcard view. I have been hiking with my 5-year-old since he was two and I learned that for him, the postcard view is far less exciting than the rocks underfoot, the sticks on the ground, and the animals and birds all around. It's okay if you don't make it to a summit or get the perfect Instagram photo, just being outside and exploring can be the memory your child cherishes.

### **Create a fun game that teaches "Leave No Trace" and navigation**

Whatever your child is interested in – streams, bugs, rocks, trolleys, cannons, etc. – make a game out of it. Count birds, bugs, or marked trees along a trail or try to find something that begins with every letter of the alphabet in the park you are exploring.

Find a way to keep a record of what they find by letting them draw pictures, take photos, or simply by writing it down. This will allow them to pay attention to the activity and not feel the need to pick flowers, take leaves, or anything else that should remain in the park.

It can also be fun to reminisce about your visit when you get home by thumbing through your photo album or notebook. If hiking on a marked trail, let them learn to navigate by identifying trail markings and finding your location on a park map. Sometimes I like to pretend that I don't know which way we need to go so my son feels like the leader.

### **Take your baby outdoors**

There is something magical about being in nature with a baby. Staying cooped up in the house for too long can lead to cranky babies and parents. Even with approximately 12,000 toys my baby boy has to play with, he needs time daily to hear birds chirping and feel the wind on his face.

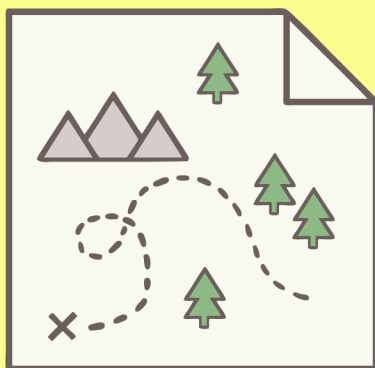
As soon as I put him in his baby carrier backpack, he is content. It doesn't matter where we go. We can go to a local park or one of the trails near my house – he just enjoys being outside and taking in all of his surroundings. Even though he is too young to communicate, we have a mutual understanding that being outside and exploring is good for both of us.

### **Don't forget the basics**

Bring a lunch, snacks, plenty of water, bug spray, sunscreen, a hat and a couple changes of clothes (including swimming gear if you will be near water) – there will be plenty of opportunities for your children to get dirty while exploring in national parks, and that is half the fun.

Visiting a park with wildlife can be a very exciting experience for children. It is always a good idea to read up about the wildlife you may encounter in a park or talk to a ranger about how to view wildlife safely.

For even more ideas on visiting parks with children, you can download the National Park Foundation's free guide, *Parks for Play: 35 National Park Adventures for Kids of All Ages*.





## UPCOMING EVENTS

Also check social media pages or websites for even more events-  
[visitmoundsville.com](http://visitmoundsville.com) has a lot of info!

- Summer Movie Night: June 29, Dusk (est. 8:45 PM), East End Park
- 4th of July Flag Hunt: July 4, 8:30-11:00 AM, Grand Vue Park
- Summer Concert Series: July 5, Cameron VFD (7:30-10:30 PM), and McMechen Riverfront (7-9 PM)
- Jefferson Friday: July 12, 6:30-10:00 PM, Jefferson Avenue
- Summer Concert Series: July 12, 7-9 PM, Glen Dale Park
- Star Watch: July 13, 8-10 PM, Grand Vue Park
- Pittsburgh Puppet Works: July 20, 11 AM - 1:30 PM, Moundsville-Marshall County Public Library
- Marshall County Fair: July 21-27, Marshall County Fairgrounds \*Children's Day is July 24\*
- Family Fun Night: July 23, 5-7 PM, Grand Vue Park
- Back to School Fun Fair: July 31, 9 AM - 12 PM, Moundsville Center
- Fridays in July: Grand Vue Park Concert Series- 6:30-8:30 PM, Hardy and Hardy Media Stage
- Saturdays through October: Marshall County Farmer's Market, Marshall County Fairgrounds, 8 AM - 12 PM



**MAKE SURE TO KEEP AN EYE ON  
OUR PAT FACEBOOK GROUP PAGE  
FOR PROGRAM UPDATES,  
PARENTING TIPS, COMMUNITY  
EVENTS, AND MORE!**



