

Field trips are both educational and entertaining, and your children do not have to be in school to enjoy them. In fact, toddlers and preschoolers enjoy field trips as much as their older siblings do. Even with your older children home from school during summer break, plan a few outings for both sets this summer.

You can arrange tours of local businesses and area attractions that your children are interested in at any time with just a phone call or two. Including your toddler's best buddy or the whole crew from playgroup will make the field trips even more fun. Not to mention, you may be able to get group discounts for some tours.

However, field trips do not have to cost money. Many local businesses will accommodate a tour for children free of charge. All you have to do is call ahead to make arrangements. Be sure to ask about any age restrictions, special instructions or rules, the contact person, and the best time to visit. Many places can be visited during the week, but some may be available on the weekends.

You may start with the typical locales for field trips. The zoo is always a favorite with children of any age. So is the library. In addition, many cities now boast children's museums that combine hands-on learning with fun activities.

However, even if your hometown does not offer a children's museum, it probably has other museums and historical sites well worth visiting with your youngster. Plus, with children in school, these places are a lot less crowded during the day.

Once you exhaust the typical field trip destinations, check out the local businesses in your area for "behind the scenes" tours. Children would be fascinated by seeing how doughnuts are decorated or by watching how their favorite hamburgers are made. Ask them what they are interested in, and start planning that next field trip.

You may want to start with these favorites from our playgroup.

- Fire Station
- Police Station
- Post Office
- Airport
- Bookstore
- Farm
- Bakery
- Fast food restaurant
- Dry cleaners
- Television station
- Radio station

Newspaper  
Hospital or other health-care facility  
Veterinarian  
Pet store  
Grocery store  
Ice cream shop  
Community artists such as painters, photographers and potters  
Zoo or petting zoo  
Movie theatre  
Museums or historical sites

Take a hint from your child's interests or just open the yellow pages of your phone book to find great field trip destinations. Wherever you decide to go for your field trip, make it age appropriate and don't forget to send a thank you card to the tour guide afterwards. Most importantly, have fun!



### **About the Author:**

Carren W. Joye is the author of *A Stay-at-Home Mom's Complete Guide to Playgroups* (ISBN 0-595-14684-8; \$13.95). A homeschooling mom of four children, she has founded five successful playgroups and helped start countless other playgroups around the world via the Internet.