

## 4 Fun Kid-Friendly Museums Nearby (Crying Babies Like Art Too!)

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I'll never forget the day I walked into NYC's Frick Collection, excited to explore with my six-month-old baby sitting happily in his stroller—only to be told by the guard that children under ten are not welcome. I thought I heard wrong. How can babies and children be barred from seeing the world's greatest artistic masterpieces? Today, the policy still stands, and on The Frick's website it states that "Children under ten are not admitted to the collection." But crying babies (and children who act like children) like to experience the beauty of art too! They just appreciate it differently. Denying them access to museums like The Frick Collection puts decorum above the educational mission of one of the city's greatest art collections.

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers alike benefit greatly from the art museum experience. As young children begin to explore what the world has to offer, these museums open up lots of possibility—for observing color, shape, landscape, faces, patterns, textures, and eventually for developing language. A baby in a stroller, when faced with a Van Gogh sunflower, will stop, stare, think, and eventually offer a comment—"flower!" What starts as an observation will evolve into a deeper appreciation.

As adults, many of us take the beauty of art for granted. But this beauty is an essential part of life's curriculum—it attracts us, helps us focus, and inspires learning. Museums nurture budding thinkers, artists, mathematicians and scientists—and it all starts in the stroller. Thankfully, The Frick is isolated in its exclusion of children. Many museums in NYC welcome babies in strollers at all times, and others set aside special times and trained educators to work with parents and babies. Stroller tours, exclusively designed for moms and babies, are becoming more common in art institutions in the city and beyond. Here are four local kid-friendly museums that make the family museum experience a top priority.

**The Whitney Museum of American Art** offers a monthly stroller tour for parents with children newborn–18 months, where you can spend an hour in the gallery learning about specific exhibitions. These tours are carefully planned so that artwork is protected, educators know the age group, and children are free to be themselves.

**The Guggenheim Museum** offers a similar program to The Whitney, although it runs less frequently, so make sure to check the schedule for exact timing.

**Katonah Museum of Art** is a drive from NYC, but really worth the trip. This museum offers weekly Friday morning stroller tours from 9–10am before the museum officially opens. At just \$5 a person, the price is equally inviting and snacks are included! Often the exhibits include work created by local children, and they have a highly accessible art studio for children on site.

**Storm King** is another extremely welcoming art environment for



children. A visit to this large-scale sculptural park, with its fresh air and rolling hills, is fun for the whole family. All year long this center remains a visual feast for children and adults alike.

So if you're looking for a baby-friendly cultural experience where you won't feel embarrassed when your little one starts crying, these museum stroller tours and outdoor art spaces are just the ticket. They provide a wonderful way meet other parents and give babies a place to be inspired by all of the beauty the world has to offer.



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