

The Family Support Group is a student-led group created to foster a support network for medical students' significant others and children. The group plans quarterly events designed to build stronger relationships among those involved. Planned events include potlucks, family get togethers, and seasonally oriented activities. Other suggestions are always welcome! Additionally, the group acts as a resource to assist those moving to Charlottesville and applicants considering attending UVA. For questions, suggestions, or to become involved with the group, please contact Kelly Denhard, Class of 2026, at [jqv2dk@virginia.edu](mailto:jqv2dk@virginia.edu). This resource was created by the group in July 2023.

## **Family Friendly Activities**

### **In Charlottesville**

#### *Outdoor Activities*

- Charlottesville Parks and Rec Locator Map:  
[www.charlottesville.gov/Facilities](http://www.charlottesville.gov/Facilities)
- Hiking: all doable with toddlers
  - Nature trails at Ivy Creek
    - Close to town
    - Not great for running or biking
  - Paved river trail at Riverview Park
    - Stroller friendly
    - Dog friendly
    - Has playground
    - Water access safe for kids
  - Pleasant Grove Park
    - Butterfly garden
    - Dog friendly
  - River trail at Pen Park
  - Monticello-Saunders Trail
    - Stroller friendly with offshoot unpaved trails that are not
      - Dogs are not allowed on boardwalks, but are fine to be on unpaved trails
    - Awesome downed tree trunk from Monticello that kids can climb in
    - Blackberries abound along the trail from June-July
    - Griffin Discovery Room at top in Woodland Pavilion near visitor center
  - Ragged Mountain Reservoir
    - No dogs
    - Big loop trail around a lake
  - Beaver Creek Reservoir
    - Trails around a small lake

- Biking
  - UVA Observatory Hill
  - UVA Research Park
    - Great on Sundays
    - Let the kids ride bikes in a HUGE parking lot!
- Playgrounds
  - Azalea
  - Belmont
  - Darden-Towe
  - Fifeville
  - Forest Hills
  - Greenleaf
  - IX Park
  - Jordan
  - McGuffey
  - Meade
  - Northeast
  - Pen Park
  - Riverview
  - Rives
  - Tonsler
  - Washington
- Parks
  - Chris Greene
    - Lake for swimming in the summer
      - Pay for entry
    - Trails open all year long with free entry outside of summer months
  - Walnut Creek
    - Lake for swimming in the summer
      - Pay for entry
    - Trails open all year long with free entry outside of summer months
  - Splash Parks
    - Belmont
    - Forest Hills
    - Greenleaf
    - Tonsler
  - Outdoor Pools
    - Onesty Family Pool at Meade Park
    - Washington
  - Indoor Pools

- Brooks Family YMCA
      - Indoor lap pool, play pool with zero entry
      - Swim lessons
    - Smith Family Aquatic Center
      - Indoor lap pool, slides, and play pool with zero entry
      - Swim classes starting at 6mo
  - Orchards
    - Carter Mountain Orchard
      - Thursday Evening Sunset Series in the summer
      - Peaches in the summer, apples in the fall
    - Chiles Peach Orchard
      - Depending on the season - can pick strawberries, apples, nectarines, sweet cherries, or peaches

#### *Indoor Activities*

- Virginia Discovery Museum
- Storytime at Central, Gordon, Northside, and Louisa Public Libraries
  - Can also check out toys from the Toy Library through JMRL
- Bowlero - bowling alley
- Bounce Play-n-Create - separate toddler room
- Get Air Trampoline Park - weekly toddler jump hours
- Lewis & Clark Exploratory Center
- Restaurant Week twice per year

### **Outside Charlottesville**

#### *Outdoor Activities*

- Hiking/walking trails: all doable with toddlers
  - Sugar Hollow - Crozet, VA
    - Swimming hole at the end
  - Mint Springs - Crozet, VA
    - Short trail close to a lake
  - Crozet Tunnel - Crozet, VA
    - Pedestrian tunnel that is a whole mile long
    - Super fun...bring flashlights
  - Patricia Ann Byrom Trails - out 810 between Free Union and Crozet
    - Lots of trails
  - Preddy Creek - north of the airport
  - Spring Hill Church - on 29 almost to Ruckersville
    - Church that has a lake and trails around it on its property
  - Blue Ridge School - Dyke, VA
    - Tons of trails

- Great for biking!
  - Humpback Rock
  - Calf Mountain
  - Shenandoah National Park
    - Black Rock Summit
      - Huge piles of rocks everywhere
      - Snake hotels!
    - Dark Hollow Falls
      - Hike down to falls
        - Very scenic
      - Hike back up to parking lot
        - Good work out
    - Frazier Discovery Trail
      - Pretty overlook
    - Bearfence Mountain
      - Short hike to a gorgeous overlook
        - Bring 2 adults to keep eyes on kids especially during rock scramble
  - Crabtree Falls ~1.5 hours away
    - Challenging hike, but you see the waterfall the whole hike and it's great!
- Biking
  - High Bridge - Farmville, VA
  - Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail ~1 hr away
    - Flat crushed gravel
  - Capital Trail
    - Richmond to Jamestown paved trail
  - Virginia Creeper Trail - Abingdon, VA
  - Blackwater Creek - Lynchburg, VA
    - Paved
    - By the river
- Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens - Richmond, VA
  - Has splash park in summer
  - Has Thursday evening concerts over summer, sometimes dogs allowed
  - Children's Garden
- Virginia State Fair - Doswell, VA
  - Typically one week in September/October
- Kings Dominion Amusement Park - Doswell VA
  - Free preschooler passes with birth certificate - must sign up before August
- Maymont Park - Richmond, VA

- Historic estate and park, gardens and native wildlife habitats
- Petting Zoo
- Free but \$5 suggested donation/admission
- Frontier Culture Museum
  - Pay to get in, children under 6 are free
  - Some animals, time period structures and actors
- Massanutten Resort & Water Park
  - Located in McGaheysville (1-2hr drive from Cville)
  - Indoor water park open year round
  - Skiing in the winter
- Virginia Safari Park
  - Drive through and walking options

### *Indoor Activities*

- Children's Museum of Richmond
  - Locations in Downtown Richmond and Chesterfield
- Explore More Discovery Museum
  - Located in Harrisonburg
  - First Fridays are free from 5-7pm
- Grand Caverns in Grottoes, VA
  - Closest caverns to Charlottesville, ~1 hr away
  - Reservations are required for tours
  - Children under 3 are not allowed on tours
- Luray Caverns in Luray, VA
  - Children under 5 are free with adult

### **Events**

- "Thursday Evening Sunset Series" at Carter Mountain Orchard over the summer
- "Fridays After 5" free concerts at Ting Pavilion at the end of the Downtown Mall over the summer
- Live music at Blue Mountain Brewery Wednesday and Friday nights during the summer and during Oktoberfest
- UVA Cavman's Crew for kids
  - <http://www.cavmanscrew.com/>
  - 2 General Admission digital tickets to select Olympic Sports
- Holiday Specific
  - Fourth of July Naturalization Ceremony at Monticello
    - Free for everyone
  - Trick or Treating on the Lawn on Halloween
  - Liberty Mills Corn Maze

- Blue Ridge Mountain Corn Maze
- Christmas Tree Lighting on the Downtown Mall

### **Family Friendly Eating Locales**

- All have abundant onsite parking available unless otherwise mentioned
- Dairy Market
  - Multiple restaurants - variety of cuisine options
  - Ample indoor and outdoor seating, high chairs available
  - Live music some nights
- Three Notch'd Brewing Company
  - Kids indoor play section next to tables
  - Right by IX Park
- Brazos Tacos
  - Has kids tables/ample high chairs
  - Locations at IX Park and Barracks Rd
- Kardinal Hall
  - Has indoor and outdoor play items for kids all next to tables
  - Great board game selection
- Blue Mountain Brewery
  - Outdoor eating
  - Beautiful views
  - Plenty of room for kids to run around
- Roots
  - Free kids meals
  - Recommended over the summer when the undergrads are gone, otherwise pre order for pickup (lines can be long)
- Cville Coffee
  - Play area for kids
  - Kids menu
- Ace Biscuit and Barbecue
  - Really good BBQ
  - Friendly service towards kids
  - Small, eat in or takeout, but faster food than dine-in

### **Camps/Discounted Passes**

- Brooks YMCA
  - Discounted needs-based passes based on previous year's W-2
  - Childcare included while working out
  - Kids lessons: swimming, soccer
  - Seasonal sports offerings

- Summer sports camps
- Charlottesville Parks & Recreation
  - Discounted needs-based annual passes based on previous year's W-2
    - <https://www.charlottesville.gov/950/Scholarships#:~:text=The%20Charlottesville%20Parks%20%26%20Recreation%20scholarship,annual%20income%20and%20household%20size.>
- Charlottesville City Public Schools
  - Costs for non-residents based on income
  - Preschool Program
    - [https://charlottesvilleschools.org/13636\\_3](https://charlottesvilleschools.org/13636_3)
- Albemarle County Public Schools
  - Preschool Program
    - <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-departments/instruction/preschool>
- YMCA After School Program
  - <https://piedmontymca.org/ymca-after-school-ccs>

### **Daycare/Babysitting/Lessons**

- There are several Facebook groups in the area with ample listings of sitters, contact us for details
- Sittercity.com or care.com
- Pet sitter
  - Rover.com
  - Students also have a lot of success using class GroupMe or listservs to help with pet sitting too!
- Preschool lessons
  - Charlottesville Parks and Rec (gymnastics, dance, art, gym, swimming, outdoor rec, sports, etc.)
  - YMCA (swimming, sports)
  - Libraries (literacy, arts & crafts)
  - Dance schools/classes (Wilson, BRIMS, Gryphon Gymnastics)
  - Gymnastics (Classics Gymnastics, Gryphon Gymnastics)
  - Music (Blue Ridge Music Together, The Front Porch, Musicology)
  - Local churches (daycare, bible camps, preschool lessons)