

3 fantastic dates with your Chicago kid this winter

 chicagoparent.com/magazines/web-only/2017-february/kid-dates



Sure, it's the dead of winter, but that doesn't mean all semblance of activity with your kid has to flatline! Here are three of our favorite parent/offspring "dates" for the colder months; ones that'll keep the fun alive and kicking well into the springtime.

The Art in Your Heart Date

Looking to enrich your child's life with more of the arts? You can't possibly start on an empty stomach! Take the Red Line up to the Howard stop and sit a bit at Sol Café; part bistro, part gallery, and all Rogers Park. Known for their striking installations, they also make a mean bowl of hash.

1615 W. Howard St., Chicago

www.solcafechi.com

After lunch, head back to Howard and take the Purple Line up to the Noyes Cultural Arts Center and witness Quest, a thrilling addition to the Actors Gymnasium's Annual Winter Circus. A blend of slapstick, music, songs and physical artistry, Quest is loosely based on Tolstoy's parable "The Three Questions." (Maybe take some tips and tricks from the show to stretch up and pat yourself on the back; look at all that culture!)

927 Noyes St., Evanston

actorsgymnasium.org

The Urban Literati Date

There's something pretty great about strolling through a neighborhood and indulging in a li'l literary self-comfort. Good habits start young--and affordably--at any of our city's neighborhood library branches; one of our favorites is the gigantic Conrad Sulzer Regional Library, with plenty of sunny nooks, a welcoming children's section and even a spot for your kid to (ahem) school you at chess. Make the day a "grown-up" affair by signing your child up for their very own library card. (Bonus: It doubles the amount of checked out books, DVDs, and museum passes you can grab at one go!)

4455 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago

www.chipublib.org

After loading up on your next three week's worth of reads, grab a prime table at nearby Julius Meinl. If you've yet to visit this superb Viennese coffee shop, you're in luck; there are only four locations in America, and they're all in Chicago. My 5-year-old's pro tip? The monkey bread is always a sure bet, as is the knowledge that any requests for hot chocolate while reading to each other will always be met with enthusiastic affirmatives.

4363 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago

<http://www.meinlus.com/locations-1/>

The 'Greens Everywhere' Date

Whether you're raising the outdoorsy type (even in the most shiver-inducing temps) or looking for an affordable way to travel in a pack (parents of multiples: we see you), you can't go wrong with a little volunteering mixed with plenty of fresh air. Head to Beaubien Woods--part of the Forest Preserve of Cook County--and help the Field Museum preserve and protect this richly diverse part of Illinois' ecology while beautifying new trails! Meeting on the first Saturday of each month, this is a fantastic way to encourage green-mindedness in Chicago's next generation of citizens.

13400 S. Doty Ave., Chicago

<https://www.fieldmuseum.org/at-the-field/calendar/restoring-beaubien-woods-0>

If all that greenery works up an appetite--and a conversation about sustainable eating habits--head to the nearby 'burb of Phoenix to indulge in a little vegan soul food (which yes, is absolutely a thing). Folks go bonkers for Daisy Catering Cafe's overstuffed avocado wraps, but those decadent smoothies and freshly made juices are worth the drive as well. (Peanut butter surge, anyone?)

15417 Vincennes Road, Phoenix

<https://www.facebook.com/Daisys-Catering-Cafe-433315993366810/>

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See more of Keely's stories [here](#).

