

Winter Break Camps to Book Now (They're That Good!)

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Peterson

It may seem early to start planning for winter break. But the holidays will be here before we know it, and you won't want your kids hopping around the house with nothing to do. When school's out, keep the learning going with a winter break camp. Get your first pick by signing up early (like, now!). There's everything from zoo adventures to theater games to sports training. Here are some favorites.



photo: Emerald City Theatre Company

Emerald City Theatre

Have "Frozen" fanatics in your house? Prepare to let it go at this camp themed around the Disney flick. With two age-based sessions, young thespians will play drama games, create mini plays and sing songs from the movie that they already know by heart! A "Frozen" performance takes place on the last day.

Held December 29-January 2 (no camp on January 1)

Cost: \$300/week

Ages: 3½-5 & 6-10

Athenaeum Theatre Building

2936 N. Southport Ave.

Lakeview

&

Menomonee Club
1535 N. Dayton St.
Lincoln Park
773-529-2690
Online: emeraldcitytheatre.com

The Kids' Table

We have all heard that one of the best ways to raise healthy eaters is to have them help in the kitchen. At The Kids' Table winter camps, kids prepare an entire meal from start to finish and the menus look amazing (they are staff favorites, after all). Cheesy broccoli calzones or winter wheatberry salad, anyone?

Held December 29-January 2 (no class on January 1)

Cost: \$40/class; \$145 for all four classes

Ages: 4-10

2337 W. North Ave.

Wicker Park

773-235-2665

Online: kids-table.com



photo: Lincoln Park Zoo

Lincoln Park Zoo

With a different theme every day, and the opportunity to pick one day or every day, the Zoo's camp has both variety and flexibility. Mini zoologists explore the habitats, learning about creatures big and small, young and old, and quiet and loud. Art projects, animal observation and interaction give kids an insider experience. Discover animal diversity, environmental conservation and ways the Zoo cares for animals at the zoo and conserves them in the wild. Bring your snow boots! The kiddos will go outside.

Held December 29-January 2 (no camp on January 1)

Cost: Full-day: \$67/day, Half-day: \$34/day (after care also available)

Ages: 4 yrs-kindergarten & 1st-4th grades

2001 N. Clark St.

Lincoln Park

312-742-2044

Online: lpzoo.org

The Little Gym

If they're going to bounce off the walls this winter, they might as well do it at a safe, padded gym with instructors that teach valuable skills. It's high-energy fun with gymnastics, games and crafts at the three-hour Winter Wonderland Camps (for ages 3-8). There are morning and afternoon sessions, and no two days are the same. If your little one is more of a thrill seeker, there are grade-school Skill Clinics (for ages 6-12) to take skills to the next level with a more intense three-hour program.

Held December 22-January 3

Cost: \$50/first day; \$45/second day; \$40/third day; \$35/additional days (current membership required)

Ages 3-12

3216 N. Lincoln Ave.

Lakeview

773-525-5750

Online: thelittlegym.com



photo: Kids Science Labs

Kids Science Labs

Not even a polar vortex could give kids brain freeze at this fun camp. It encourages creative and analytical

thinking with hands-on experiments. In the past, kids have learned about volcanoes, electricity, anatomy, bubbles and more. Post-lab family discussion of the day is encouraged with a takeaway card that explains what the kids learned and some additional information about the day's topic.

Held December 22-23 (South Loop campus only) & December 29-January 2

Cost: \$100 for two half-days; \$150 for two full-days; \$250 for five half-days; \$375 for five full-days

Ages 4-10

1801 S. Indiana St.

South Loop

&

1500 N. Kingsbury St.

Lincoln Park

312-846-1426

Online: kslchicago.com

Windy City Fieldhouse

Sign up for one day or every day of this sports camp that even has free childcare between sessions. Active kiddos will tire themselves out with either a dedicated soccer skills camp or a multi-sport camp that includes practicing skills for football, baseball, kickball, hockey and basketball. Little ones (ages 3-5) are introduced to soccer, basketball, t-ball, football and kickball while also learning about good sportsmanship (and who couldn't use that lesson?).

Held December 22-January 2

Cost: \$50/day

Ages: 3-13

2367 W. Logan Blvd.

Lincoln Park

Online: windycityfieldhouse.com



photo: The Actors Gymnasium

The Actors Gymnasium

Let 'em juggle, tumble, and dance their way through winter break. Budding circus performers learn to walk the tight

wire, fly on the trapeze, walk on stilts and more at this energy-boosting camp. As well as being physically fun and challenging, this camp is a good for boosting courage and self esteem.

Held December 22-26 & 29-31

Cost: \$225/session or \$399 for both sessions (single day packages also available)

Ages 9-14

927 Noyes St.

Evanston

847-328-2795

Online: actorsgymnasium.org

Bulls/Sox Academy

Whether you have a baseball fanatic, basketball enthusiast or both, these pro sports-affiliated camps get your little athlete ready for the season. Choose from baseball, basketball or a combination camp where coaches work with kids on fundamentals and fine tuning key skills. Plus, there's the chance to get individualized attention with the free private lesson included with registration.

Held December 29-30

Cost: \$115

Ages 5-14

6200 River Bend Dr.

Lisle

&

800 St. Charles Rd.

Glen Ellyn

&

536 East Ave.

La Grange

630-324-8221 (Lisle), 630-317-0150 (Glen Ellyn), 708-588-2275 (La Grange)

Online: bullssoxacademy.com



photo: DuPage Children's Museum

DuPage Children's Museum

You can almost see the imaginations growing as kids tinker and play here. In the first camp, Kids Design Engineering, kids build an object that moves across land, air, or water — all powered by a balloon! Fun With Chemistry, the second camp, takes ordinary kitchen items and turns them into chemistry experiments exploring hot and cold. It all adds up to fun.

Held December 29-30

Cost: \$115 through November 17; \$125 afterward

Ages: Grades 1-5

301 N. Washington St.

Naperville

630-637-8000

Online: dupagechildrens.org

Morton Arboretum Science Camps

Bugs. Frogs. Trees. Even worlds of make-believe. You'll encounter them all at Morton Arboretum's morning camps that introduce new themed adventures every day. December 29 is Arctic Animal Adventures, at which kids learn how winter animals find food and keep warm. December 30 is Winter Weather Watchers, a mix of seasonal crafts and science lessons about crystals and snowflakes. And December 31 is Outdoor Explorers, a morning of al fresco trekking, crafts and game playing. Kids are broken up into groups according to grade level.

Held December 29-31

Cost: \$33/day for members; \$39/day for non-members

Ages: Kindergarten-6th grade

4100 Illinois Rte. 53

Lisle

630-719-2468

Online: mortonarb.org

How will you spend winter break? Let us know in the Comments below!

— Jen Peterson

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