

## Silly, Random Fun: Split Second Improv's Family Show - ParentMap

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## Silly, Random Fun: Split Second Improv's Family Show

Kids love a show whose motto is "If we suck, it's your fault!"

By Gemma Alexander



I love stretching the limits of the term "family friendly," but before seeing [Split Second Improv's family-friendly show at Redmond Town Center](#), I really wasn't sure improv would work for an all-ages audience. Would PG improv be funny? Wouldn't input from a grade-school audience turn any performance into a series of fart jokes?

Fortunately, my fears were ungrounded. As I found out, Split Second's short-form improvisations are the **perfect introduction to live comedy for kids and equally enjoyable for adults**.

Improv is silly and random. Plot is irrelevant. Even the **antsiest kid can stay focused on its short, game-based scenes filled with sudden changes in direction** (the show consists of a series of audience-driven games, as popularized on Drew Carey's *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*). As the master of ceremonies announced at the beginning of the show, "If we suck, it's your fault!" He was only half joking; a lot of the humor comes from the absurdity of the audience's directions to the performers. In one charades-like game, **an actor had to guess that she was late for work because a dinosaur gave birth on the highway**.

Children in the audience were delighted to have permission to shout "Die!" at adult performers when they failed to live up to the promise of rapid-fire improv, but got so involved in the performance they often forgot to do so. The MC made very specific requests of the audience ("Name a dangerous job," "What's your favorite movie?") that ensured that inappropriate comments from the tween-nut gallery were never a problem. When he asked for volunteers to come on stage, **even my super-shy 5-year-old waved her hand enthusiastically**.

My kids (ages 10 and 5) did take a little while to get used to shouting answers without having to raise their hands. But once they got the hang of it, **seeing their suggestions used on stage was a bigger thrill** than whatever funny thing the performers might have done with them.

A bit of background: The 16-year-old SecondStory Repertory, housed in Redmond's Town Center, is one of the most active theater groups in the Northwest, offering full seasons of both adult and children's theater and improv each year as well as stand-up comedy and burlesque for adults only. Many of Split Second's improvisers are parents, and they wanted to offer a show their whole families could enjoy. **Split Second introduced its family-friendly version of improv three years ago**.

When Redmond Town Center lost its independent cinema, SecondStory expanded into the vacant 150-seat luxury theater space. Performances at the SecondStory Hideaway began in October. With a bar in the works (liquor license pending) the Hideaway is set up to be a perfect home for the Repertory's variety of programming.

### Parents should know

Split Second Improv offers two performances each Saturday. Families should attend *Sweet Saturdays at Seven* when all of the action is PG. Except for passing nods to *Sponge Bob* and *Frozen*, the performance wasn't particularly aimed at kids, but **the performers kept the show scrupulously clean**, even veering away from the kind of mature jokes that would go over kids' heads.

Because of the length of the show and time it's offered, I'd **recommend it for kids ages 5 and up**.

### Kid quote

"Pick me! Pick me!"

### Parent tips

- The theater has high-backed seats that may block shorter kids' view. They don't have booster seats, so **plan to bring a cushion or arrive early** to get front row seats if you are bringing small children.
- For now, **concessions are limited to bottled drinks and packaged treats** like Skittles and Twix. Eventually, the venue will offer a full bar.
- **Performances last 90 minutes**, with a 10-minute intermission in the middle.
- The performers do a good job of explaining how things work during the performance, and **kids don't have to sit quietly during the show**, so families don't really need to do much to prepare.
- Parents should be prepared for kids to want to **try some of the games at home after the show**.

### If you go...

**Where and when:** SecondStory Hideaway, Redmond Town Center

**Tickets:** \$20. Buy online at [Brown Paper Tickets](#), by phone 425-881-6777, or at the box office (hours are Tuesday–Saturday 2–6 p.m. and two hours prior to every performance).

**Parking:** Covered parking is free at Redmond Town Center

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