

# Bumbershoot 2015 With Kids: The Good News, the Bad News and Picks and Tips for Every Age - ParentMap

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## Bumbershoot 2015 With Kids: The Good News, the Bad News and Picks and Tips for Every Age

By Gemma Alexander

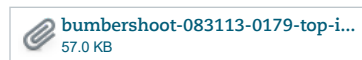


Photo credit: Will Austin

First, the bad news about Bumbershoot: For years, Seattle Center's massive [Labor Day weekend music-and-arts festival](#) has offered free admission for children 10 years and under, making it an annual end-of-summer tradition for families in Seattle.

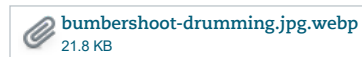
This year, though, the minimum age requiring a ticket has dropped to age 6, which means that a family like mine, with two elementary-school students, must now buy four tickets instead of two.

Why the increase? Andrew Roe, regional marketing director for Showbox Presents/AEG Live, which began partnering with the festival this year, simply says: "Other festivals like Sasquatch require a ticket for two and up, most airlines are generally two and up. Disneyland is three years and up. We also allow seniors over 70 in free." (See [The Stranger's coverage](#) for more information on recent changes at Bumbershoot.)

Ticket prices have jumped, too. A [three-day pass](#) to Bumbershoot currently runs \$189.50 plus fees; the price goes up to \$209.50 at the door. Single-day tickets are a better choice (Sunday and Monday are cheaper than Saturday, but buy now; tickets will be \$93 at the door).

Now for the good news: If your kids are still under age 6, or if you can afford the extra tickets, this year's lineup, although slightly smaller than previous years, is still an excellent, well-curated blend of rising local acts and big-draw national acts. Headliners like The Weeknd, Faith No More and Ellie Goulding will draw big crowds.

So if you can't imagine Labor Day weekend without Bumbershoot, follow these tips to get your money's worth. It's organized by age of child. The [full schedule is here](#).



Youngershoot kids' area.

### Bumbershoot with the littles: Youngershoot and beyond

The [Youngershoot Kids' Zone](#) is just for children age 10 and younger and their caregivers. Its quieter space offers kid-focused entertainment, hands-on activities and interactive performances from 1:30 p.m.–6 p.m. daily. Hands-on activities will be directed by Little Wing School of Rock, Pacific Science Center and Seattle Symphony. Curated by Seattle Children's Museum (and presented by ParentMap), Youngershoot performances vary each day and include music, theater and dance groups, often featuring young performers.



Photo credit: Morgan Keuler

"The best thing is if it's a nice summer day, you can run under the big metal thing that squirts water [International Fountain] and hear the music you like," says my 6-year-old, who started going to Bumbershoot when she was three. The worst, she says, is "when it's just music, music, music."

[KidSafe](#) is a free wristband service to help reunite lost children with their parents. Complete a registration form at any information booth to receive a numbered wristband for your child. If you become separated and your child is brought to Bumbershoot staff, they will contact you immediately.

### Bumbershoot picks for families with small children

If you've been to Youngershoot before, many of the usual suspects will be back this year. Consider a mid-afternoon break with [SIFF's Films for Families](#) shorts.



Flying Lotus. Courtesy, Bumbershoot website

- The family-friendly filter on Bumbershoot's lineup page isn't available yet, but my then-5-year-old loved local rockers [Smokey Brights](#) last year (playing Saturday this year). Also on Saturday, acoustic act [Elephant Revival](#) looks to be a safe-yet-interesting choice, and no one should miss electronic-jazz fusion act [Flying Lotus](#) (you don't have to tell your little one the new album is about death).

- On Sunday, everyone will enjoy folk-rockers [The Cave Singers](#). Little kids will identify with the androgynous glamour of local siblings [The Fame Riot](#). Punk rockabilies [Social Distortion](#) may make hard living look cool, but they're also all about rolling with the punches and never giving up.

On Monday, young local rapper [Dave B](#), has been known to give audiences lessons in rhythm, while symphonic popsters [Hey Marseilles](#) will have your little ones dancing out loud. Local artists [Sisters](#) blend of hip-hop and soul will have your family booty shaking.

### Bumbershoot tips for families with small children

- **Arrive early in the day** when the crowds are smaller. Remember, this year's opening bands are the headliners of tomorrow.
- **Strollers are permitted but discouraged**; consider using the lockers near the gates instead.

- **Earplugs are uncomfortable in tiny ears**, so plan ahead and buy over-the-head earmuffs (as little as \$14 on [Amazon](#)) before you go.
- **For a quieter fountain experience**, find the DuPen fountain in the Alki Court (this is where Youngershoot has been located for the past two years).
- Whether you use the KidSafe program or not, **teach your child to recognize Bumbershoot staff** as soon as you arrive so that they know which adults to go to for help if they get lost.



Courtesy Bumbershoot/One Reel

## For the middles: experiment with independence

For elementary-school kids, start early in the main festival, and see some bands while the crowds are thin. Visit the visual arts displays, which are always engaging and rarely crowded. Then, as your youngsters wear down, consider retreating to the Youngershoot area for kid-focused entertainment.

"It's very fun for kids because there's a lot to do besides just music. Sometimes parents can watch bands while kids play in the fountain," says my 11-year-old. She is right; parents stationed on the north lip of the International Fountain can supervise fountain play while listening to music from the Fountain Stage. Music was the main attraction for 11-year-old Elijah, who finally understood his mom's enjoyment of Red Baraat after seeing them at Bumbershoot. He says, "It's very inspiring for young musicians."

You might get a KidSafe wristband for kids in the lower grades, especially if they have a tendency to wander. For those approaching middle school, some independent experiences may be part of the plan. Daytime audiences are friendly to kids, and won't mind if they push to the front while parents watch from the back where the sound is better. You might drop your tween off at one stage while you catch a show at another before meeting them back where you left them.

### Bumbershoot picks for families with elementary-school kids and tweens

Outside of Youngershoot, any of our recommendations for younger kids (see above) will be just as interesting for older kids (and adults). Here are some more horizon-expanding picks for the kids in the middle.

- On Saturday, shake up preconceptions with [Lindsay Sterling's](#) classical violin/electronica mashup. Expose them to funk and soul with [Grace Love and the True Loves](#).
- On Sunday keep up the education with [Neko Case](#) or introduce them to the blues on Sunday with [Israel Nash](#) and then show them what kids are capable of with the [Jaden Carlson Band](#), a funk, soul, jazz, fusion and rock outfit with musical chops many bands never achieve led by 14-year-old Carlson.
- On Monday, "Because I want to see them," is plenty of reason to take your kids to [Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals](#) while [Nahko and Medicine for the People](#) has an overt message of peace and multiculturalism. If you need a break from all the education, head to see the [Grizzled Mighty](#) for some unabashed four-on-the-floor rock and roll.



Hozier. Photo courtesy Bumbershoot website

Take advantage of having grade-school kids by letting them stay up for headliners at least once: [The Weeknd](#) (Saturday), [Faith No More](#) (Sunday) or [Hozier](#) and [Ellie Goulding](#) (Monday) and they'll be the musical equivalent of well-read before school starts.

### Overall Bumbershoot tips for tweens

- **Make sure cell phone batteries are charged** and establish a meeting place as a backup.
- **Be clear about expectations and consequences** before you enter the festival.
- **Make sure kids recognize staff** in case they need help when they are on their own.
- If you are staying together, **give them some choices** about what to see next



Photo credit: Will Austin

## For teens: go your own way

Parents may opt to stay home and let teens go alone, especially when teens are willing and able to pay their own way. Maia, age 17, kept her Bumbershoot costs low last year by volunteering

with the [Vera Project](#), which features local music and comedy on a small stage. The experience also helped her get more out of the festival.

"I went for the music but ended up enjoying the art as well. There are lots of lovely shops set up around campus that have great stuff... and Flatstock is a personal favorite. SO many cool posters," she says.

Sixteen-year-old Casey splits his festival time between friends and family, so he texts after each show, but Melanie, also 16, came with friends and only managed a few texts over the course of a full day. "Make sure to have one person you're going to stick with the whole time," she recommends. Asked about the prevalence of marijuana at the festival, Melanie says, "Yeah, there are a lot of people smoking there. But it's not like people are offering it to you." Maia agrees, adding, "Alcohol is definitely well-monitored and controlled."

## Bumbershoot picks for teens (and their grown-ups)

Most teens have strong opinions about music. But if you want to make a few suggestions or you're going as a family, here are few sets where your interest might overlap with theirs.

- On Saturday beg your teen's indulgence as you get nostalgic with [Babes in Toyland](#) then laugh at their surprise when they see middle-aged women pummel an audience. Complement that with [Kacey Musgraves](#), the young woman who looks the part of manufactured Nashville star while smilingly singing lyrics that subvert country music attitudes.



The Melvins. Photo courtesy Bumbershoot website

- On Sunday, don't miss [The Melvins](#). They're obnoxious enough for any teen, and without them, none of your teen's favorite rock bands would exist today. If Macklemore is as far as you've delved into hip-hop (and I count myself a fan) you owe it to yourself to see [Chimurenga Renaissance](#), the cerebral local rappers who incorporate traditional Zimbabwean instruments to see the real possibility in the genre.

- On Monday, surprise your teen with your up-to-the-minute knowledge of rising artists by suggesting [Børns](#). [Kris Orlowski](#) is a great choice for dipping into the local indie scene. And don't forget to follow your teen's recommendations, too. After all, music discovery is what young people do best.

## Overall Bumbershoot tips for teens

- **Stay aware.**
- **Have your ride**, have a buddy, have a backup buddy.
- **Take care of your friends.**
- Drink lots of water.
- **Try new bands**, not just ones you know you want to see.
- **Make friends** with the people around you at shows.
- Enjoy the last weekend of glorious Seattle summer.

## If you go ...

**When:** September 5-7, Gate times have not been announced yet, but most years gates open at 11 daily

**Where:** Seattle Center

**Parking:** Parking lots at or near Seattle Center cost \$10-\$20 and fill quickly. For public transportation, use Metro's online Trip Planner <http://tripplanner.kingcounty.gov/>. Kids love it and it's cheaper than parking. You can also park downtown and take the monorail (adults \$2.25, kids \$1).

**Prices:** [Buy tickets online](#). Ticket prices increase as the festival approaches. Before service charges are applied, advance single-day tickets currently start at \$79, three-day passes at \$189.50. Free admission for children 5 and under.

**Planning:** Use the Youngershoot and Vera Project filters on the [Bumbershoot lineup web page](#) to find family-friendly offerings and build your schedule. Download the Bumbershoot app (once it's available) to see a map of the festival and view your schedule when you're at the festival.

### Overall tips:

- **Ear protection is for everyone.** Model and enforce safe behavior whenever there is amplified music, even if it doesn't seem that loud. Hearing loss is non-reversible.
- **Bring an empty, refillable water bottle** and use the filling stations on-site to keep hydrated.
- **In another move away from family-friendliness, outside food is no longer allowed.** So budget accordingly or contact [info@bumbershoot.com](mailto:info@bumbershoot.com) to request accommodations for patrons with medically required dietary restrictions.
- **Don't forget to bring a jacket** for the evening, sunscreen and bathing suits or dry clothes (the fountain is irresistible to children, and when it's hot you might want to get wet, too!)
- **There will be lockers near the festival gates** if you don't want to carry your extra items all day.
- **Don't forget that Bumbershoot is about more than music;** do check out the festival's offerings in other arts.

August 14, 2015