

The Secrets to Seattle Center - ParentMap

Saturday, July 2 2016, 1:02 PM

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The Secrets to Seattle Center

An insider's guide to the everyday magic of our ever-evolving, 54-year-old regional treasure

By [Cecilia Alexander](#)



It's a warm Monday evening in June, and Seattle Center's grounds are buzzing. A dozen or so kids splash and run around [the International Fountain](#), trying to predict when the supershooter jets will douse them, while a 20-something man pedals lazily around it on a unicycle. North of the fountain, a 4-year-old girl coasts on her push bike down [August Wilson Way](#). A short walk east, the [Artists at Play playground](#) ripples with music and activity: Toddlers bang out notes on the Trimpin-designed sound fence, grade schoolers climb the tower and scream down the slides, tweens lounge on the play mounds. Above, a floatplane swings by the [Space Needle](#).

The new Seattle Center snuck up on us. Sure, it's always had appeal for families — arts, museums, fountains, a day of playing tourist. But memories of huge concerts and teeming crowds have led most of us to mentally file the 74-acre public

Win prizes!

space under “Special Events, Kids Optional.”

Not anymore. Leading up to its 50th anniversary in 2012, guided by its [Century 21 Master Plan](#), Seattle Center started a

transformation. The Center House was revamped and rebranded as the Art Museum; the old Fremont Fun Forest was replaced with a glass museum and stunningly inventive playground; and innovative organizations, from public radio station [KEXP to the Gates Foundation Visitor Center](#), have made their home there.

The result is an ever-evolving public space with more entry points than ever for families, offering play, discovery and learning — much of it available at no cost — on any day of the week. So here, just in time for summer, is our ultimate insider’s guide to the old-new regional treasure that has it all.

Follow [these 3 simple](#)

[steps](#) to win big this July in

our Seattle Center-inspired

[Instagram photo contest](#)

Secrets to Seattle Center: The Ultimate Guide

- [Best Things to Do at Seattle Center by Age](#) — a tots-to-teens guide to top attractions
- [The Quiet Side of Seattle Center](#) — 6 pockets of green space, history and art to discover
- [Sky High? How to Do the Space Needle Right](#) — Make the most of your pricey elevator ride
- [Seattle Center Stories](#) — A KEXP DJ, playground designer, gardener, engineer and pedicab driver tell the stories behind the center
- [James Whetzel, Seattle Center's Music Man](#) — Did you know Seattle Center International Fountain has its own DJ?
- [Festál: Seattle Center's Window on the World](#) — Behind the scenes at the extraordinary 19-year-old cultural festival series that is Festál
- [A Summer Day in the Life of Seattle Center](#) — And you think *you're* busy

July 1, 2016