



## Tips for a Perfect Pickathon



*What I learned last year about making the most of your family's Pickathon experience.*

The [Pickathon](#) music festival at Pendarvis Farm outside Portland turns 21 this year, but it's still as family-friendly as ever. In fact, nearly 1000 kids under the age of 12 attend the festival for free every year, and one in eight attendees are under 18. It's hard *not* to have fun at this laid-back fest, but these Pickathon tips can make the difference between a good time and a great one.



Photo courtesy of Pickathon

### Kids Are Free

Did I mention kids are free? It doesn't matter how child-focused an event is if you can't afford tickets. While \$325 is a fair price for a three-day camping festival ticket, it's still a lot of money for a family on a budget. Fortunately, children 12 and under attend the entire festival (including Thursday) for free, and teens 13-16 are close to half-off with \$165 tickets.



Art installation at Pickathon

Photo: Gemma Alexander

### Early Thursday

Pickathon officially starts on Friday, but it's worth putting the money you save on kids' tickets towards the Thursday Early Entry pass. This \$90 add-on to the full weekend pass gets you in a day early. Since camping is not preassigned, arriving on Thursday gives you the best choice of spots to pitch a tent, and getting settled in before the crowds arrive makes the whole weekend easier. Plus, there are extra performances on Thursday night – these are some of the most laid back, intimate shows of the festival.

### Workshops

Sometimes parents can feel like more energy goes to watching the kids than watching the bands. Give you and your kids a break by signing them up for Pickathon's free workshops on everything from making poi to building a functional cigar box guitar.



Kids making a cigar box guitar

Photo: Gemma Alexander

## Stay Put

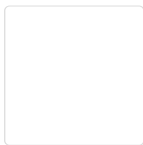
Pickathon is spread across multiple stages, which means a lot of choices. But lugging water bottles, picnic blankets, toys, etc. between stages on a hot day isn't much fun. Avoid physical labor and numerous bag searches by picking one spot to spend most of your day. Whether your kids enjoy playing on the big field near the Mt. Hood stage, hunting for empty hammocks at the Woods stage, or watching the shows on TVs outside the intimate, indoor (and often sweltering) Galaxy and Lucky Barns, make yourself comfortable and stay put.



Photo: Gemma Alexander

### Use Protection

Ear protection, that is. Whether you're drawn to Pickathon for the rock bands or the bluegrass, all the music is amplified. And amplification can cause irreversible ear damage. Bring plenty of earplugs and model wearing them. Infants and kids who are too young for earplugs can wear over-the-ear hearing protectors. Teach your kids to protect their ears so they can enjoy the music this year and when they are even older than you are now.



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