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# Family-Friendly Music Festivals

Outdoor music and nature fests you and your kids will love

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER (/AUTHOR/GEMMA-ALEXANDER) |

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PHOTO: Credit: Pickathon.com

## Outdoor summer music fests the whole family will love

For a while there, it seemed like Puget Sound-area families could find a music festival on any given weekend. But the pandemic put a screeching halt to that kind of huge public gathering. Now that we're emerging from the era of virtual everything, it's time to survey the new festivals.

landscape. Despite the heavy blows suffered by the arts community, family-friendly summer music festival options are surprisingly strong this year. This summer you can find a safe, festival to match whatever drumbeat your family likes best.

**Up first:** [Northwest Folklife Festival \(https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-festivals-families-kids-seattle/2#page-](https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-festivals-families-kids-seattle/2#page-)

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PHOTO: Crowds playing in the foundation at Folk Life Credit: flickr/Shutterbug Fotos

## Northwest Folklife Festival

Dates: May 26–29

Cost: Free

One of the family-friendliest options, [Northwest Folklife Festival](https://nwfolklife.org/festival/home.html) (<https://nwfolklife.org/festival/home.html>) has kicked off the summer festival season on Memorial Day weekend for more than 50 years. It doesn't require travel or camping, and there's no entrance fee (Folklife is funded by donations). The theme for the 52nd annual Northwest Folklife Festival is "Lagom," a Scandinavian word that relates to the idea of maintaining balance. With the tagline "Not too much, not too little, just right," could any festival be more attuned to what families need? Folklife's folk- and world-music programming hardly needs an introduction, but new developments beyond music this year include a makerspace and activities related to themes of fashion as a folk art, and food justice and sovereignty.

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**Up next:** [Timber! Outdoor Music Festival](https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-festivals-families-kids-seattle/3#page-1) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-festivals-families-kids-seattle/3#page-1>)

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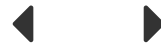
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PHOTO: Campfire stage at Timber! Credit: Bryan John Appleby

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## Timber! Outdoor Music Festival, Carnation

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**Cost:** Kids 12 and younger free; \$65–\$95 per day or \$150 for a weekend pass; camping, parking, \$20. Prices go up June 1.

One of several festivals hosted by the folks at Artist Home, [Timber!](https://summer.timbermusicfest.com/) (<https://summer.timbermusicfest.com/>) is the easiest for families. You can camp or con see the lineup of primarily local indie artists, such as Jeff Tweedy and Black Belt Eagle S augmented with kid-focused sets from The Not-Its! and the 8-Bit Brass Band. There are t and paid special activities for all ages; kids will love the craft times and story hours, and whole family can enjoy stargazing and swimming at Tolt River Beach.

**Up next:** [BLASTFEST](https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-music-festivals-kids-seattle/4#pager-) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-music-festivals-kids-seattle/4#pager->

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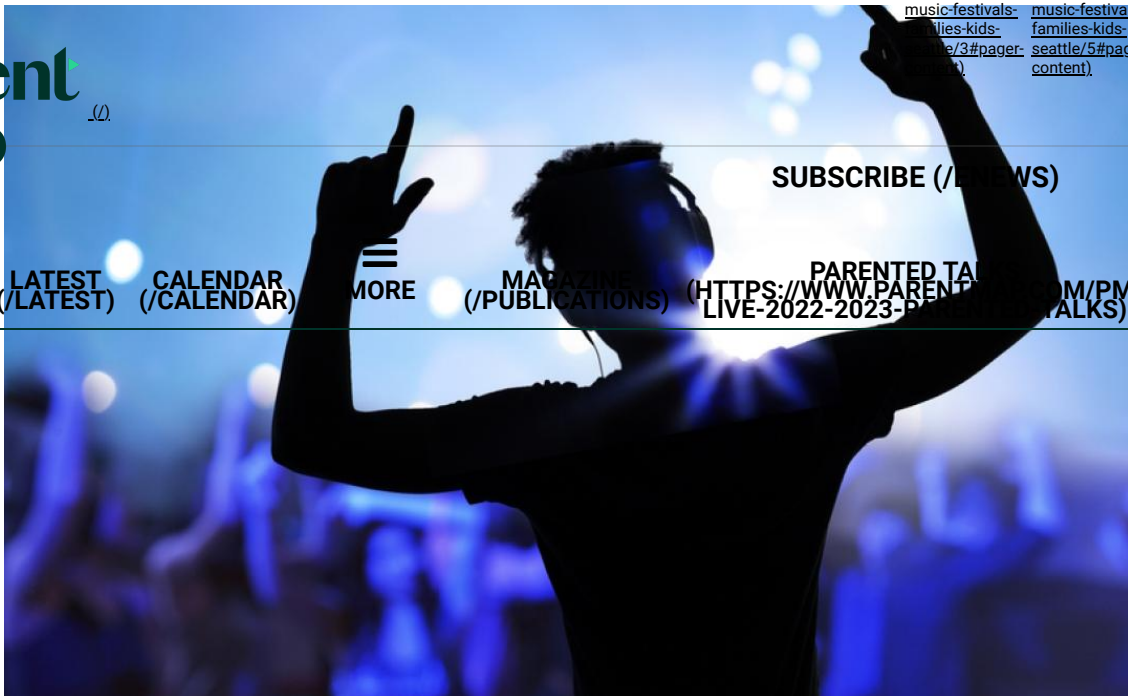
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## BLASTFEST, Seattle Center

Dates: July 29

Cost: \$70 for general admission ticket

This Afrobeats festival celebrates music, culture and diversity and has an impressive line of artists, including Asake, Kizz Daniel, Focalistic and DJ BLAST. [BLASTFEST \(https://blastmusicfest.com/\)](https://blastmusicfest.com/) hopes to inspire unity by showcasing Afrobeats music and culture. In addition to great music, you'll find food vendors, free water stations, sponsors with giveaways and a beer garden (for the 21-and-older crowd).

**Up next:** [Pickathon \(https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-music-festivals-family-seattle/5#page-](https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-music-festivals-family-seattle/5#page-)

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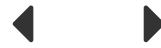
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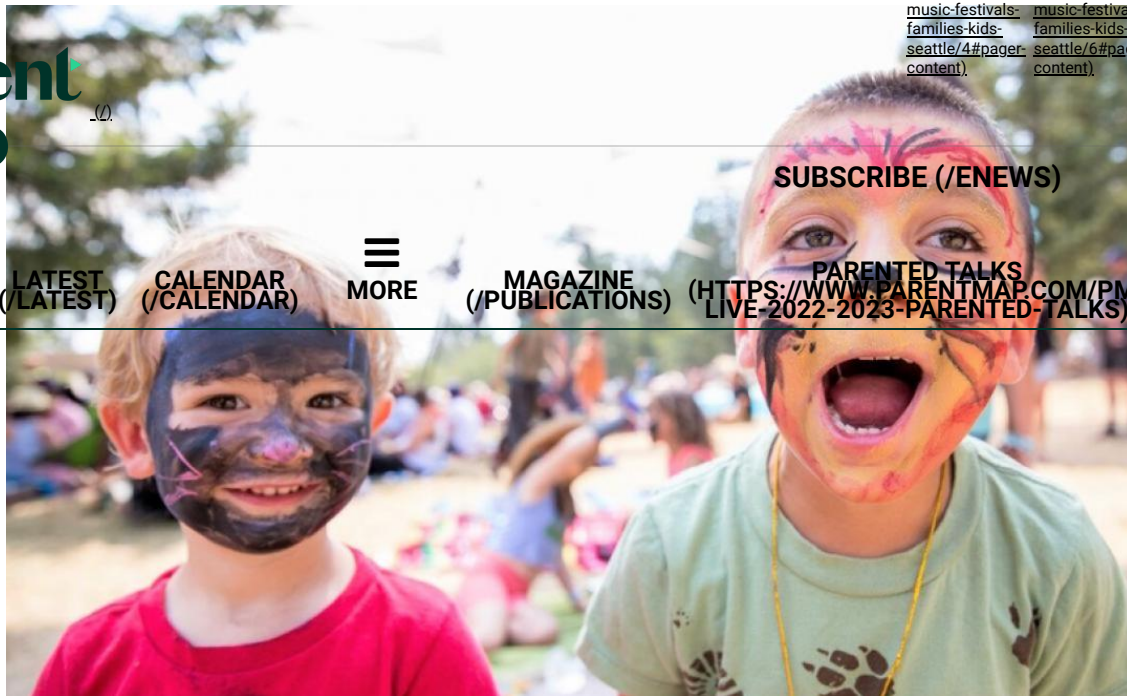
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PHOTO: Kids at Pickathon. Credit: Alec Carrier

## Pickathon, Happy Valley, Oregon

Dates: Aug. 3–6

Cost: Kids 12 and younger free; teen (ages 13–16) weekend pass, \$195; adult weekend pass, \$390; camping included in pass price; parking, \$105

Post-pandemic [Pickathon](https://pickathon.com/) (<https://pickathon.com/>) revamped its programming, moving from its bluegrass roots to emphasize music discovery by emerging artists across multiple genres. This year's lineup includes indie-roots powerhouse Watchhouse, old-school soul Fields, alt-glam band Dehd, indie-folk darling Madison Cunningham and Zambian psych rockers W.I.T.C.H., along with your new favorite band you haven't heard of yet. However much the festival has expanded, the unmatched festival experience of stages and artworks scattered through the fields and woods of Pendarvis Farm hasn't changed. Besides music, expect amazing fan programs (my kids built their own cigar-box guitars there once) and elevated food choices courtesy of Portland's celebrated food trucks.

**Up next:** [Thing, Port Townsend](https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-music-families-kids-seattle/6#page=1) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-music-families-kids-seattle/6#page=1>)

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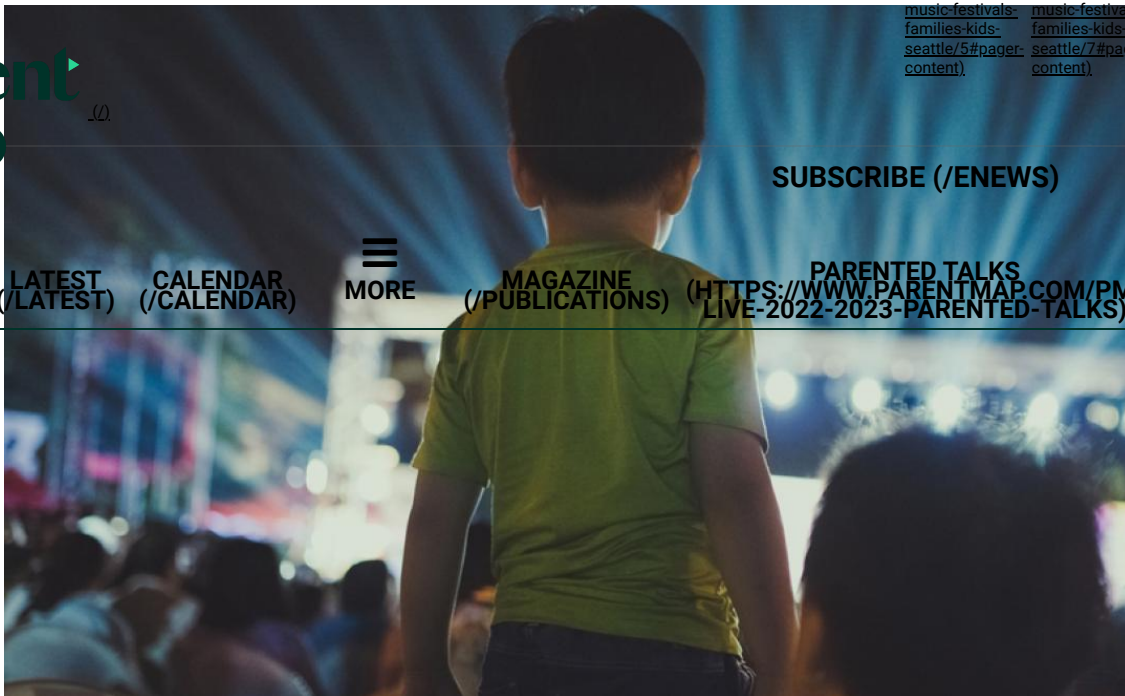


PHOTO: Music at CHOMP! Courtesy CHOMP! Festival

## Thing, Port Townsend

Dates: Aug. 25–27

Cost: \$130 per day or \$350 weekend pass; camping, \$150; parking, \$35

Thing's (<https://thingnw.org/>), packed lineup is eclectic, featuring artists both local and international, emerging and classic. From Grace Love to Laufey, Y La Bamba to Digable F Fleet Foxes to the Budos Band, there's something for everyone, however diverse your fan musical tastes. Besides bands, there will be free community workshops, interactive art installations, paper lantern parades, plus downtime on Fort Worden's local beaches and 1 Unlike many fests, Thing has in-and-out privileges, so you can take the free shuttle to exp downtown Port Townsend when you need a change of scenery. (Consult our [insider's guide more family-friendly fun in Port Townsend](https://www.parentmap.com/article/port-tow-with-kids-best-things-to-do) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/port-tow-with-kids-best-things-to-do>)).)

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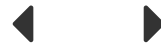
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## Bumbershoot Arts & Music Festival, Seattle Center

Dates: Sep. 2-3

Cost: Kids 10 and younger free; single-day pass, \$65; weekend pass, \$110

In the past, generations of Seattleites bookended summer with Folklife and Bumbershoot. In recent years, Bumbershoot priced out too many families as it chased Coachella-like homogeneity. Now [Bumbershoot](https://www.bumbershoot.com) (<https://www.bumbershoot.com>) is back for its 50th iteration with more-affordable tickets and a lineup that emphasizes local favorites, including Sleater-Kinney and Sunny Day Real Estate. It's not just hometown heroes, though. There are also international acts like Bomba Estéreo and new artists like Uncle Waffles. Besides music, you'll find "free-range artists" performing dance, wrestling (!) and roller-skating demos, and even art.

**Up next:** [Your neighborhood stage](https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-festivals-families-kids-seattle/8#page-1) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/summer-festivals-families-kids-seattle/8#page-1>)

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# Family-Friendly Music Festivals

Outdoor music and nature fests you and your kids will love

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER (/AUTHOR/GEMMA-ALEXANDER) |

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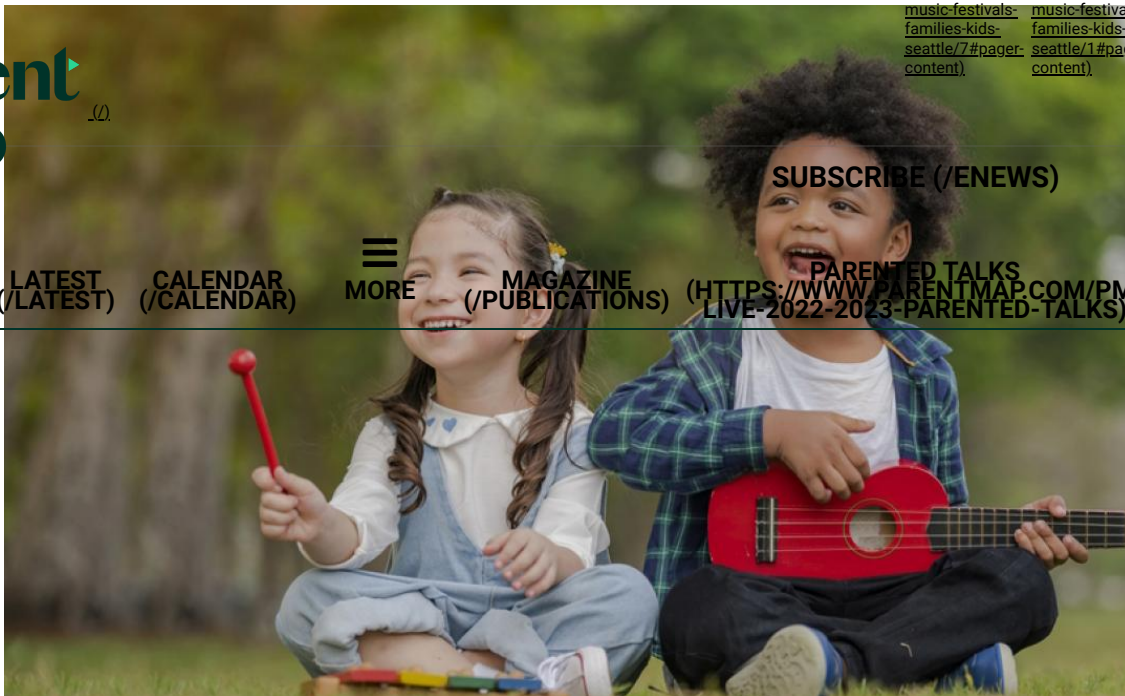
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## Your neighborhood stage

**Dates:** Dates and locations vary

**Cost:** Usually free

When you've got kids in tow, sometimes the smaller festivals are better. Puget Sound—our summers are filled with neighborhood festivals that include live music staged adjacent to play zones and food booths. Some of them simply celebrate summer, while others have specific focus, but they all deliver a good time. The [Bothell Redfellow Music Festival](https://allevents.in/bothell/redfellow-music-festival-2023/10000501046542697) (https://allevents.in/bothell/redfellow-music-festival-2023/10000501046542697) fits 10 bands into a single day. Keep an eye out for unexpectedly incredible lineups at events such as [Chomp!](https://www.chomplocal.org/) (https://www.chomplocal.org/), a food and sustainable living festival at Marymoor Park; [West Seattle Summer Fest](https://westseattlesummerfest.com/) (https://westseattlesummerfest.com/) at the Junction; [Ballar SeafoodFest](https://www.seafoodfest.org/) (https://www.seafoodfest.org/); the [South Lake Union Block Party](https://slublockparty.com/) (https://slublockparty.com/) in Seattle; and [Renton River Days](https://www.rentonwa.gov/cms/one.aspx?pageId=12048431) (https://www.rentonwa.gov/cms/one.aspx?pageId=12048431).

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