



# Family Hike Recommendations

There are some great nearby hiking trails just waiting to be explored! To get your family started on the right foot, REI employees have selected some of their favorites below.

**Be sure to bring these necessities along in your daypack:**

- Drinking water
- Lunch or snacks
- Extra clothing layers
- Map and compass
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Insect repellent
- Whistle
- Headlamp or flashlight



For a complete day hiking checklist, visit [Expert Advice](#) on REI.com.

## Here Are Five of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Hikes

Hike One: **Sagehen Creek Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **5 miles roundtrip, 225' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** It offers nice views of Stampede Reservoir. In the spring and early summer, it also delivers one of the most astounding displays of wildflowers you're likely to find anywhere.

**Hike Description:** The trail parallels Sagehen Creek on the north side, passing through a coniferous forest. In season, along the creek, you'll see nature's definition of a riot of color as the wildflowers bloom. Two miles from the trailhead you enter a grassy clearing, cross a small rivulet and emerge onto a broad meadow that borders Stampede Reservoir. It's a nice place for a picnic before you make the return trek to your car.

**Driving Directions:** From Reno, drive west on I-80 until you reach the junction with Hwy. 89 near the town of Truckee, California. Turn right (north) on Hwy. 89 and go 6.8 miles. Look for the highway bridge over Sagehen Creek. The trailhead is just past the bridge, on the right. There is a dirt parking area here. Parking is free.

**Tips:** There are no amenities on this trail. If you plan a picnic, be sure to bring a blanket. Don't drink water from Sagehen Creek without treating it first. Better yet, bring your own water.

Hike Two: **Spooner Lake Loop**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1.8-mile roundtrip, no elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** Spooner Lake is a family-friendly, handicapped-accessible loop trail with interpretive signs, benches and great scenery.

**Hike Description:** From the parking lot, follow the signs to the lake. Along the way, interpretive signs describe the flora and fauna. They also provide interesting accounts of local history. As you walk around the lake, you'll cross several bridges and pass through stands of Jeffrey pine and groves of aspen. Other native vegetation includes sagebrush, bitterbrush, mule ears and some willows. Farther out, the lake is surrounded by mountains and a thick conifer forest. Alternative: If you park at the Tahoe Rim trailhead on Hwy. 50, an easy trail leads you to Spooner Lake as well.

**Driving Directions:** From Carson City, take Hwy. 50 west over Spooner Summit. Take the Hwy. 28 turnoff north toward Incline Village. The entrance to Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park will come up on your right in about a mile. Or if you're coming from Incline Village, head south on Hwy. 28. The park entrance will be on your left, about one mile before you reach the Hwy. 50 junction.

Pay the \$5 state park entrance fee and park in the lot. Or, save the fee by parking at the Tahoe Rim trailhead on the north side of Hwy. 50, west of Spooner Summit, and take the easy trail from there.

**Tips:** There's a visitor center for souvenirs and necessities. Picnic areas abound throughout the park. For young anglers, catch-and-release fishing is permitted. If they're patient, kids might see a bald eagle or two. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Three: **Huffaker Hills Trails**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **2.5 miles total, 150' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** The trails are right in Reno, they're well marked and they offer good views of the city and Sierra Nevadas.

**Hike Description:** There are actually three trails here: two loops, and one out-and-back that leads to Twin Peaks and a panoramic view of Truckee Meadows. These easy-to-follow trails meander over and around some low hills, which accounts for the slight elevation gain/loss. Keep your eyes open for hawks high above, and for wild horses or coyotes on the sage- and bitterbrush-covered hillsides. The open spaces and great views of the city and surrounding area provide a relaxing getaway that doesn't require going much distance to get there.

**Driving Directions:** From South Virginia St. in Reno, take S. McCarran Blvd. east just past Longley Lane. Turn right on Mira Loma (the next paved street heading south) and follow it up to the Huffaker Hills trailhead sign and parking lot. Parking is free.

**Tips:** Bring binoculars to get closer views of the wildlife. And bring a wind jacket. It's often windy here, especially in the late afternoon, and it's subject to the famous Washoe Zephyr (as immortalized by Mark Twain). There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Four: **Chickadee Ridge**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **3 miles roundtrip, 380' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** A comfortable stroll through alpine meadows and forest leads to amazing views of Lake Tahoe. In the winter, I've had the birds for which the ridge is named feed from my hand!

**Hike Description:** If you're addicted to spectacular views, this is the hike for you. From the south edge of Tahoe Meadows, follow the trail in a southerly direction across the meadow into the pine forest. Once in the forest, the ascent begins as an easy uphill that increases to a moderate climb as you approach the ridge. Through the trees you'll get an occasional glimpse of Lake Tahoe. But when you summit the ridge you get the whole "Wow Effect": an unobstructed view of the lake, Tahoe Meadows and Mt. Rose. Sunsets are particularly compelling here. If you do a sunset hike, you'll need headlamps or flashlights on the way back. But the trail isn't hard to follow. It's also a fun snowshoe trip in winter with older kids. If you do that, bring some birdseed (no human food, please). As mentioned, the chickadees will eat right out of your hand!

**Driving Directions:** The Tahoe Meadows trailhead is about 35 minutes southwest of Reno. It's located 0.4 miles west of the Mt. Rose Hwy. (SR-431) summit. Coming from Lake Tahoe, it's about 7.75 miles east of the junction with Hwy. 28 in Incline Village. Park in the turnout and parking lot on the south side of SR-431. Parking is free.

**Tips:** The trailhead is above 8,500', so weather can change dramatically and quickly. Bring protective clothing for wind, rain and possibly snow (even in summer). There's no water on the trail, so be sure to carry plenty of your own. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Five: **Bartley Ranch Regional Park**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **2+ miles roundtrip, 75' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** The easily accessible loop offers scenic views of the city. There are also lots of other fun activities in the park

**Hike Description:** Winding through the regional park, this loop trail takes you by several interpretive signs describing native plants and wildlife. At the top of the hill, you'll get a panoramic view of the Washoe Valley. It's such an impressive spot that motorists frequently pull over on the road up there to enjoy the view themselves. The park hosts a number of events during the year—everything from musical concerts to art shows to a pumpkin-patch carnival. So, to get the most out of your family day, you can combine a hike with a cultural event. And while you're here, be sure to tour the Western Heritage Interpretive Center and the historic, one-room Huffaker Schoolhouse.

**Driving Directions:** The park is at 6000 Bartley Ranch Road in Reno. From S. Virginia St., head west on S. McCarran Blvd. Turn left on Lakeside Drive, and then left onto Bartley Ranch Road. You'll cross an old covered wooden bridge to enter the park. Parking is free.

**Tips:** Throughout the year, the park hosts numerous events and performances that kids find irresistible (check the newspapers). There are restrooms at the trailhead.



REI's PEAK program uses a fun presentation filled with hands-on activities and games to teach kids ages 6 through 12 about taking care of the outdoors.

Ask an REI team member about scheduling a free PEAK presentation for your classroom or youth group, or visit [www.rei.com/PEAK](http://www.rei.com/PEAK) for more information.



**First Saturday in June** The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, sponsored by REI, is a nationwide celebration of trails. Celebrate with your family by taking a hike, or volunteering for a trail clean-up project. Ask an REI team member about how to get involved, or visit [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) for more information.