

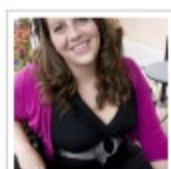
Best Kid-Friendly Hotels for Families in Chicago



10 Omni Chicago Hotel

FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOTELS

Photo courtesy of Omni Chicago Hotel



By **Dawn Reiss**

SAVE TO MY LISTS



Traveling with kids can be difficult. Finding the right hotel can make all the difference. Don't let the idea of a family vacation time intimidate you. It's important for the entire family to have fun, especially the parents.

To make things easier, many hotels offer welcome bags to help keep kids entertained or offer discounts to local museums. More importantly, every family-friendly Chicago hotel on this list, except for Hotel Lincoln—which is near Lake Michigan and North Avenue Beach—has a pool to help tire the kids out.

If you are looking for luxury, try the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, Trump International Hotel & Tower or the Ritz-Carlton Chicago. For five-star amenities for three-star prices, consider the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel, which offers an unheard of 25-lap outdoor pool with twin version indoors. The boutique-style Hotel Palomar means kids get a goldfish in their room and other unusual extras. If you're more budget conscious, the Residence Inn Chicago Downtown/River North, Embassy Suites Chicago-Downtown, Hampton Inn & Suites Chicago Downtown or Omni Chicago Hotel might be better bets.

Here are some kid-friendly hotel recommendations from local parents who have stayed in downtown Chicago and other city experts.

10 Omni Chicago Hotel

Families love this all-suite hotel that offers spacious two-room suites with wet bars (and mini-fridges upon request). For larger families, request a superior corner or premium suite, which have a sleeper sofa in the separate living area. Rollaway beds and cribs are available free of charge. At check-in, kids receive free milk and cookies the first night, complimentary backpack filled with crayons, coloring activity page and fun item. There are two rooftop sundecks, fitness center (5 a.m.-10:30 p.m.) and an indoor swimming pool, open 5 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Parents can request first-aid kits and outlet covers. A breakfast buffet is offered daily at its onsite 676 Restaurant.

9 Embassy Suites Hotel Chicago Downtown

This River North location is three blocks west of Michigan Avenue's Mag Mile. Parents love this hotel because no matter what room you book, you'll always get a two-room suite. That means mom and dad can send their kids to bed while they hang out in the separate lounge area. Included in the hotel price is a free cooked-to-order hot breakfast, including mad- from-scratch omelets and a complimentary reception (5:30-7 p.m.) of soft drinks, a full bar (not just beer and wine) and snacks like nachos or pretzels and dip. There's also a pool (6 a.m.-midnight), a 24-hour gym and two Italian restaurants Osteria Via Stato and Pizzeria Via Stato onsite. Tip: There is a sister location, Embassy Suites Chicago – Downtown/Lakefront which is much closer to Navy Pier.

8 Residence Inn Chicago Downtown / River North

Parents like the one bedroom apartment-style suites that include a king size bed that is in a separate room from a full kitchen and a pullout couch. There's an indoor pool and whirlpool(6 a.m.-11 p.m.), a 24-hour fitness center and families can borrow board games from the front desk. Families also rave about the complimentary buffet-style breakfast that includes hot and cold items like waffles and eggs and the happy hour (Mon-Wed, 6-7:30 p.m.) that offers dinner-style snacks like pulled pork sandwiches, tacos, soup and salad, along with beer, wine, juice, soda and water. The hotel doesn't offer valet parking, but guests can self-park at Greenway Self Park garage(60 W. Kinzie St.)for a discounted rate (\$47, with in and out privileges) and walk to the hotel that is connected through the garage. Tip: Two-bedroom suites are available but they tend to book up fast so call in advance.

7 Hampton Inn & Suites Chicago - Downtown

This is a clean, comfortable, no-frills kind of place. Located in River North this Hampton offers a pool (6 a.m.-10 p.m.), hot tub and sauna. Many parents opt for a suite, with a separate kitchen/living area. Like all Hamptons, this property includes a free hot buffet breakfast. It's four blocks from shopping on Michigan Avenue and close the Red Line's Grand stop on the "El" train. Tips: This hotel is located across from a fire station, so ask for a room that is on an upper floor facing away from Illinois Street. Corner suites have kitchens with full-size refrigerators. If you don't care about a pool or are going to see plays, consider the Hampton Majestic Theater District hotel.

6 Hotel Lincoln

Head North into Lincoln Park for this small, quaint, eclectic hotel that is steps from the Lincoln Park Zoo, the Chicago Museum, Steppenwolf Theater and Second City, Chicago's world-renown comedy and improv theatre. Rooms are on the smaller size, but many families opt for a junior suite with a king-size bed, plus a sleeper sofa, or a family suite which also includes an additional room with bunk beds and additional bathroom. There isn't a pool, but it's only a 10 minute walk to North Avenue beach on Lake Michigan and is close to Wrigley Field. (The hotel offers complimentary bike rentals.) Parents love the rooftop bar (J Parker) known for its view, Perennial Virant, a farm-to-table restaurant and Elaine's Coffee Call, which offers pastries, salads, wraps, coffee, wine and beer.

5 Hotel Palomar Chicago

Want to rent a fish? Here's the place to do it. Kids love the "Guppy Love Program" where a goldfish is delivered and cared for during your stay. At check-in, kids also received a draw-string bag with items like a coloring book, towel and beach ball, depending on the time of year. The modern boutique Kimpton hotel in River North is close to Michigan Avenue shopping and offers complimentary bike rentals, pint-size animal print bathrobes for younger kids and a yoga mat in every room. There's a 24-hour fitness center and 17th floor indoor pool (open 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m.) with a sundeck. Parents like the complimentary wine hour (5-6 p.m.) and Sable Kitchen & Bar, the onsite gastro-lounge.

4 Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel

This modern hotel located near Millennium Park is a hidden gem, especially for sport enthusiasts. (Think 5-star amenities for 3-star prices.) There's an 8,000 square foot fitness facility that includes a half basketball court and 25-yard lap pool. Outdoors, there's a 80,000 square foot rooftop deck, 25-foot outdoor lap pool and a wading pool for kids (open Memorial Day to Labor Day), plus a hot tub, 1/5 mile running track, sundeck, fire pits, cabanas and a dedicated yoga space. The location is also ideal for biking along Lake Michigan. Many parents will book suites with two connecting rooms (king connecting to two queens). Dogs are allowed (up to 60 lbs.) three-hour express laundry, free Wi-Fi, an onsite spa and a private movie theater room. Tip: Book a room on a Business Class floor--for a small upcharge, families have access to a free hot breakfast, snacks and refreshments.

3 The Ritz-Carlton Chicago

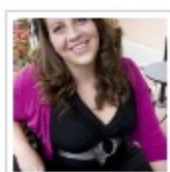
Located in Water Tower Place on Michigan Avenue, this Four Seasons is located in the heart of upscale shopping, including the American Girl Place. Families looking for luxury love the four lane indoor lap pool (specific children's hours, 12-and-under: Mon-Fri 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat-Sun 8 a.m.-8 p.m.) and the 24-hour fitness centre that offers a variety of classes including yoga, pilates and water aerobics. Parents can have "the Candy Man" visit their room between 4-6 p.m., and have their kids pick out a few pieces of candy. Kids 5-and-up can take a cookie making class, (4 p.m. daily, \$15, per child) and bake cookie with hotel chef. At check-in, children can "pick up a friend" from a wagon filled with toys for their stay. Parents like the spacious rooms with great views of the city and lake.

2 Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago

With its location on the Chicago River and close proximity to Michigan Avenue, Trump Tower has one of the best views of Chicago's skyline. At check-in, kids get a "welcome pack," that includes age-appropriate goodies like a stuffed animal, coloring book or hat. Other pluses include kiddie cocktails, no-tear bath products and a kids menu at Sixteen, a two star Michelin rated restaurant located on the 16th floor. Parents of newborns like the diaper genie service that is changed twice a day by housekeeping staff and cribs with plush linens. Families also enjoy 75-foot by 25-foot heated indoor pool (5:30 a.m.-10 p.m.) with a sauna and steam room, and can book swim lessons for a fee. Tip: Ask for a room facing the river for the best views.

1 Four Seasons Hotel Chicago

This top-rated Chicago hotel offers luxury that is hard to find. There's a 50-foot indoor swimming pool (open 6 a.m.-11 p.m.; adults only 9-11 p.m.) plus a whirlpool, saunas and steam rooms. Parents love the Kids Clubroom (9 a.m.-9 p.m., daily) where adults can supervise and play foosball, board and video games, or do arts and craft project. The hotel even has its own complimentary "Ice Cream Man" that brings a cart to your room for make-your own sundaes. Teens can take a complimentary pizza-making class. Or pay for spa services geared towards teens. There's also an extensive art collection including pieces by Andy Warhol and Henri Matisse, a 24-hour, 2,300 square foot fitness facility, free Wi-Fi and onsite spa. Parents can call the concierge at least 24 hours in advance to arrange for a babysitter.



About Dawn Reiss

Dawn Reiss is an award-winning journalist who spent two years covering the trial of former Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich for TIME magazine/Time.com. Her work has been published in 30+ outlets including: Travel + Leisure, USA Today, Chicago Tribune, AAA Living and Plate magazine. For assignments, she has eaten crickets in Cambodia, gone dog sledding in Alaska, written about estate plan essentials, iPhone apps and interviewed the likes of Maya Angelou, Justin Bieber and Bob Costas. Although she started her career as a sports reporter at the Dallas Morning News and St. Petersburg Times, she still likes the competitive nature of any industry.

Read more about Dawn Reiss [here](#).

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