9 beaches that are perfect for families

By Kristin Hansen • Published May 25, 2015 • FoxNews.com

Parents with young children crave a different beach than their rowdy peers, one that can include a swim in the ocean, drinking and loud music.

From Hawaii’s stunning North Shore to Kennebunk, Me., here are nine family-friendly beaches that offer playgrounds, ice cream cones, nature centers and boardwalks. A day at the beach never looked so good.

1. Kuilima Cove, North Shore, Hawaii

Turtle Bay, a secluded, family-friendly resort, sits along a 5-mile stretch of beach on Oahu’s North Shore that’s convenient to Honolulu International Airport but far from bustling Waikiki Beach. Families who stay here need never leave. There are seven restaurants (plus a Sunday-night poolside luau) and daily activities from Blue N’ Swoosh and Sunset yoga classes to stand-up paddle-boarding for the whole family. Or go on a guided hike of Kahana Point, where kids will ooh and ahh at Hawaiian monk seals and green sea turtles.

2. Huntington Beach City Beach, Calif.

Huntington Beach attracts many local surfers, but it’s all good, family-friendly fun on this stretch of sand just off of Highway 1 Pacific Coast Highway. Downtown Huntington Beach’s restaurants and shops – plus

Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort and Spa, with firepits for roasting marshmallows and in – are all across the street. Kids and adults can even take a lesson in the art of the pop-up (surf-talk for jumping up on the board) from Bender Surf School.

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3. Mother’s Beach, Kennebunk, Maine

When kids tire of playing in the sand, point them to the new playground at Mother’s Beach. Budding scientists might like the tidal pools at this beach, which is short and wide but easy to access from the parking lot, so little feet don’t get tired. Or hop on the town’s trolley for easy pick-up and drop-off as a group. For a smart lodging option on a weekend trip, look to The Lodge on the Cove, a five-minute drive from the beach that features lawn and pingpong games, plus retro ice cream bars.

4. Clearwater Beach, Fla.

Clearwater Beach is on a barrier island over the causeway from Clearwater and 25 miles from downtown Tampa along the Gulf Coast. Pier 60 hosts a playground and snack shack, while all ages can enjoy free “Sunsets at Pier 60” nightly shows with musicians and street performers. Hop on the Clearwater Jolly Trolley, which travels along the shore between North Clearwater Beach and Indian Key. With a kids’ club on-site (Camp Rolliey), families can look forward to built-in programming at the Sandpearl Resort, snug on the white sand beach.

5. Cooper’s Beach, Southampton, N.Y.

Forget what you know about the Hamptons party scene. Families love the chill vibes of 7-mile-long Coopers Beach in the village of Southampton. And, thanks to a $40 parking fee, it’s rarely teeming. There are beach chairs and umbrellas for rent, a concession stand that sells burgers and hot dogs, and access to showers and bathrooms.