

## Winter Break Option: The Children's Museum on Christmas Eve

By [Shawnta S. Barnes](#) - December 22, 2017



Arguably the roughest weeks for teachers are the weeks between Thanksgiving break and winter break. When the school bell rings on the last day before break, students have two weeks to spend at home with their parents. For parents, the thought of having their children at home for two weeks might bring anxiety. Yes, parents want to spend time with their kids, but when they are at school, there is a nice schedule of activities for them to complete and topics to learn. When children are at home, the responsibility of scheduling the day falls to parents. Before and throughout winter break, I plan to highlight options, free and for a fee, parents can take advantage of during winter break with their children.

One winter break activity my children enjoy is going to The Children's Museum of Indianapolis on Christmas Eve. From November 24, 2017 – January 7, 2018, part of the museum is transformed for its annual Jolly Days Winter Wonderland. Why go on December 24? It's free! According to the museum Plan-Ahead Pricing FAQs page on their website, they schedule four free days each year: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents Day, El Día de los Niños, and Christmas Eve.

We have one of the best children's museum, so when it is free or entry is \$5.00 on the first Thursday of each month, you should expect a crowd. You should also have a plan when you are attending a crowded event especially when the crowd is full of children. Below, I have included some tips to help you survive and enjoy this free, fun and educational experience during break.

### **Eat before you go**

Although I feed my children before we go, I'm not suggesting there is anything wrong with the food in the museum cafe. When I take my kids to a free event, I try not to buy anything especially when it is crowded. We all know one of the longest waits in life as a parent is trying to keep a hungry child calm while waiting for food.

### **Bring only what you need**

Don't bring unnecessary items that you will have to lug around. It's tricky enough navigating through a crowd, but it is easier if you aren't carrying a lot of items with you.

### **Limit cell phone usage**

I can't tell you how many times I have seen parents engaged on their phones and then they look up and have no clue where their child is. Don't be that parent. Snap a few photos with your phone, but watch your child. Even better, put your phone in your pocket and join your child in the fun. I have learned much reading the signs, watching video clips and exploring activities at the museum.

## Go down the Yule Slide

My children enjoy ice skating in their socks, crawling through the ice castle and participating in a snowball fight, but their favorite activity is the two-story Yule Slide. Yes, the line will be long, but it's worth it. You should definitely go down the slide with your children.

## Explore other exhibits



JB in the Take Me There: China exhibit at The Children's Museum

Only part of the museum is converted for Jolly Days, so there are many other engaging exhibits to explore. My children's favorite exhibits are: Beyond

Spaceship Earth, Take Me There: China, Dinosphere and Treasures of the Earth.

### **Focus on a few exhibits**

You can't see everything on a day like this. Honestly, the museum has so many nuggets and wonderful activities; you can't interact with everything on a regular day. I tell my children that we might have to miss an exhibit or if they really want to visit an exhibit, they might have to wait. I'll say, "Do you want to wait for this exhibit or maybe try back later?"

From our boys:

*JJ: I liked going inside the ice castle and when I came out I could skate all around in my socks. I love sliding around because I can go super fast and I'm not allowed to do that anywhere else. I enjoy everything else too especially using the canoe at the huge water table.*

*JB: I love going down the big, big slide. It's fast and fun. When you go there, you see lots of dinosaur bones and I love looking at dinosaur bones.*

The Children's Museum of Indianapolis is a great place to learn right alongside your child. If you haven't been before on Christmas Eve, this year you should start a new tradition.

If you read my previous Winter Break Option piece, you know I mentioned my son loves to dance. Below is a super short clip of him dancing at The Children's Museum.

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