



10Best: Beach resort kids clubs

by Katie Jackson, special for USA TODAY



(Photo: Blockade Runner Beach Resort)

For some families, the holy grail of getaways is a beach resort that is kid-friendly but also allows mom and dad plenty of kid-free time for adult activities. Here are a few seaside properties that go beyond offering standard babysitting services to provide their youngest guests with cool clubs and day camps designed just for them. Upon pick-up and hearing their child rave about the programming, parents will find themselves asking if they can tag along tomorrow.

1. Marriott Kid's Club, CasaMagna Marriott Cancun Resort — Cancun, Mexico

Almost every kid can boast of having built a sand castle, but graduates of the CasaMagna Kids Club can also brag about their knowledge of beach conservation and restoration, which they learn about while visiting one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. The recently renovated club now features a covered recreation area where kids can play outside while being protected from UV rays. To raise cultural awareness, staff members teach Spanish lessons and piñata-making classes. Of course, all that learning is complemented with wet and wild fun when the water balloons come out.

2. Club KZ, Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort — Miramar Beach, Fla.

From horseback riding to ghost-crab hunting, Club KZ has plenty of opportunities for kids who are fascinated by creatures big and small. Kids who



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are keen on climbing will be over the moon on Adventure Zone Thursdays when Club KZ visits nearby Baytowne Adventure Zone to take on the Baytowne Zipline, the Eurobungy, the Sky Trail Ropes Course and the Tower Climb. Other club highlights include face painting, inflatables, mini golf, spray tattoos, and tie-dyeing. Parents with dinner plans will appreciate the nighttime activities like movies, pizza parties, night walks on the beach and stargazing.

SMACKDOWN: [Florida's East Coast beaches vs. Gulf Coast beaches](#)

3. Cambi Kids Club, Andaz Peninsula Papagayo Resort — Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Animal rescue missions aren't on the average kids-club itinerary, but the setting for Cambi Kids Club on the Bay of Culebra is anything but average. Biologically-diverse Costa Rica lends itself to unique encounters with nature, so at Cambi, conventional beach club activities like limbo contests, scavenger hunts and sand-castle challenges are supplemented with arts and crafts and educational experiences designed around celebrating the surrounding wildlife.

4. Monarch Kids' Club, Bacara Resort & Spa — Santa Barbara, Calif.

The kids' club at this resort is named for the butterfly whose migration brings it to the neighboring Ellwood Butterfly Preserve. Butterfly Training Day is a highlight for most kids enrolled in Monarch, but for the little ones who aren't insect-crazy, there's always Archeology Day, Bubble Day and Magic Day. In addition to producing mini magicians, the club creates budding artists who bring home souvenirs, including ceramic sculptures, handmade fossils and Spanish tiles.

5. Clownfish Club, Reef View Hotel — Hamilton Island, Australia

There are very few places on earth where kids can hug a koala, but Hamilton Island's Clownfish Club has the hookup. In addition to bringing kids to the local wildlife park where kids can interact with all kinds of Aussie creatures, the Clownfish Club takes older kids fishing, teaches them how to cook and brings out the beloved, inflatable Bumperz. The younger set stays busy with age-appropriate fun, such as painting, puzzles and story time.

6. Camp Ridley, Sandpearl Resort — Clearwater Beach, Fla.

Every camp needs a mascot, and at the Sandpearl Resort in Clearwater Beach, kids light up when they encounter Ridley — the loveable giant Kemp's ridley sea turtle — the rarest of them all — who walks, talks and poses for photos. At Camp Ridley, kids learn about Florida's diverse ecosystems through scavenger hunts and enrichment programs such as dolphin encounters, kayaking, sailing and stargazing. After camp, families can catch up over private fire pits with the help of the resort's do-it-yourself s'mores kits.



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7. Keiki Lani Kid's Club, Fairmont Kea Lani — Maui, Hawaii

Mommy and daddy's little angel will fit right in at club Keiki Lani — meaning "heavenly children" in Hawaiian. Keiki Lani Kid's Club is a child-oriented immersion in Hawaiian culture, and activities range from creating coconut art to experimenting with homemade volcanoes and learning how to hula dance. It's not uncommon for kids to come home sharing Hawaiian folklore and speaking Hawaiian slang that they pick up in the program.

PHOTO TOUR: [See Hawaii's best beaches shore by shore](#)

8. Esperanza Kids, Esperanza, An Auberge Resort — Los Cabos, Mexico

From picking fresh produce and learning how to prepare their own meals to practicing downward dog before being pampered at the kids-only spa, Esperanza's kids are treated to a variety of age-appropriate yet adult-like activities. Painting workshops and jewelry-making classes allow up-and-coming artists to bring home their own souvenirs, and a certified nature guide is on staff to make sure that the little ones leave with an appreciation for the property's tropical flora and fauna.

9. Sandcampers, Blockade Runner Beach Resort — Wrightsville Beach, N.C.

Wrightsville Beach, located on an island between the Intracoastal Waterway and the Atlantic Ocean, is scenic on all sides, but for Sandcampers, pirate booty trumps pristine beauty. Kids have access to a selection of pirate costumes and accessories to put on before hitting the beach to search for all-natural loot. The loot, mostly sea glass and shells, is later stored in treasure chests that kids decorate during camp. Learning how to talk and sing like a pirate pays off when local pirate legend Don Juan Cortez makes a guest appearance at the resort

10. Kids Town V.I.K. Club, Grace Bay Club — Turks and Caicos

Grace Bay Club goes big and beyond the beach when it comes to catering to guests' "very important kids." On-site activities do include water sports, however, there's also (supervised) fun to be had by hanging out in the resort's new tree house. Kids Town participants can also take advantage of off-site excursions like eco-tours and underwater mermaid encounters while aboard the Undersea Explorer Semi-Submarine.