



EVERY KID IN A PARK

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Every Kid in a Park program?

As part of the nation's commitment to protect our nation's unique outdoor spaces and ensure that every American has the opportunity to visit and enjoy them, an multi-agency team launched the "Every Kid in a Park" program to provide all fourth grade students and their families with free admission to national parks and other federal lands and waters for a full year starting every September 1. The pass is valid from September 1 to August 31 of the following year and grants free entry for fourth graders and three accompanying adults (or an entire car for drive-in parks) at more than 2,000 federally managed sites.

2. Why do we need the Every Kid in a Park program?

Today, more than 80 percent of American families live in urban areas, and many lack easy access to safe outdoor spaces. At the same time, kids are spending more hours than ever before in front of screens instead of outside. The Every Kid in a Park program encourages valuable opportunities to explore, learn, and play in the spectacular places that belong to us all and aims to inspire stewardship of these places for future generations.

3. What are the goals of the Every Kid in a Park program?

From sea to shining sea, our country is home to inspiring landscapes, vibrant waterways, and historic treasures that all Americans can enjoy. The goal of the Every Kid in a Park program is to inspire fourth graders nationwide to visit our federal lands and waters, whether it is a backyard city park or a national forest, seashore, or marine sanctuary. By targeting fourth graders year after year, the program works to ensure every child in the U.S. has the opportunity to visit and enjoy their federal lands and waters by the time he or she is 11 years old.

4. Why fourth graders?

Research shows that children ages 9-11 are at a unique developmental stage in their learning where they begin to understand how the world around them works in more concrete ways. At this stage, they are receptive to new ideas and most likely to hold positive attitudes towards nature and the environment.

5. Who is running the Every Kid in a Park program?

Every Kid in a Park is an interagency effort supported by the U.S. Department of the Interior (which includes the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

6. How can a fourth grader obtain fee-free access to federal lands and waters?

Starting every September 1, fourth graders (including home-schooled students) can obtain a paper pass for free entry into all federal lands and waters by visiting the Every Kid in a Park website at www.everykidinapark.gov. Students participate in an educational activity and receive a paper pass to print and bring with them to visit public lands. At certain participating sites, fourth graders can exchange the paper pass for a durable plastic Interagency Annual 4th Grade Pass. Fourth graders must be present for free entry into parks and to exchange the paper pass for a plastic pass. The fourth grader can use either the paper pass or the durable pass for fee-free entry for them and their family, and both are valid from September 1 through August 31 of the following year. Please note that fourth graders must be present at entry.

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7. How can educators obtain the fee-free access for their fourth graders?

Educators can visit the Every Kid in a Park website and enter the section for educators, where they can obtain paper passes for each of their students. Please note that each pass contains a unique bar code; duplicates or photocopies will not be valid. Educators will also find activities aligned with educational standards that can be used to introduce fourth graders to topics surrounding federal lands and waters in the classroom or on field trips.

8. Who qualifies as an “educator?”

Educators include teachers, youth group leaders, religious group leaders, camp directors, afterschool programs, leaders of homeschoolers and more.

9. Who can accompany the fourth grader?

The Every Kid in a Park pass admits the fourth grader and any accompanying passengers in a private, non-commercial vehicle at per vehicle fee areas, or the pass owner and up to three accompanying adults at sites that charge per person. If the child and his or her family are riding bikes, up to three adults are included. Please note that fourth graders must be present at entry.

10. What does the fee-free entry include?

Both the paper pass and the durable pass include fee-free access for one year to all federal lands and waters. The pass does not cover expanded amenity fees such as camping, boat launching, parking, special tours, special permits, or ferries. In addition, at certain locations, private concessionaires and resorts manage some facilities and activities; the pass is not valid for these services. For questions about pass acceptance and fees at specific locations, please contact the site directly.

11. How does a fourth grader receive fee-free entry at an unstaffed federal land or water site?

At unstaffed federal lands and waters sites, the pass should be displayed in the dashboard area of your vehicle. If the fourth grader has a durable plastic pass, it should be displayed from the rear view mirror using an available hangtag. If the fourth grader has a paper pass, it should be placed on the car dashboard with the bar code showing.

12. What happens if a pass is lost?

If a pass is lost, the student can go back to the Every Kid in a Park website and follow the same steps to obtain a new pass to use or trade in for another plastic pass. A digital copy or a photocopy is not valid.

13. How will you ensure only fourth graders and their families use the pass?

Our design team has worked to minimize the possibility of fraud and misuse while ensuring that any personal information needed to process the pass is collected in accordance with applicable laws. Fourth graders are required to self-verify their student status during the application activity and at entrance stations to federal lands and waters.

14. How can I find federal lands or waters to visit?

Basic trip planning information is available on the Every Kid in a Park website at www.everykidinapark.gov. For more detailed information, please visit the website of the park or other federal site you plan to visit.

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15. Will transportation support be offered?

Transportation can be one of the biggest barriers that prevent youth—especially those from underserved communities—from visiting our national treasures. As an integral component of this effort, the National Park Foundation (NPF)—the congressionally chartered foundation of the National Park Service—will award Every Kid in a Park transportation grants, focusing on youth from underserved communities, to federal agencies hosting fourth graders at their parks, public lands, and waters. For more information, visit www.nationalparks.org.

16. How will you track usage and success?

An evaluation team will track website visitors, the number of passes obtained and redeemed, and the level of engagement on social media. This data will help inform the development of the program in future years.

17. What role might civic organizations and non-profit partners play in the initiative?

Educators and partners can support the Every Kid in a Park program by spreading the word about the program, supporting field trips to federal lands and waters in their local communities, and participating in the conversation by connecting to Every Kid in a Park's social media channels: on Twitter @everykidinapark, on Facebook, on Instagram, and Youtube.

18. Can a local federal site offer passes to a field trip group?

Sites should encourage field trip groups to visit the educators section of the Every Kid in a Park website in order to obtain passes for their group before arriving at the site. The durable plastic pass can only be issued in exchange for a valid Every Kid in a Park paper pass at certain federal site locations when the fourth grader (the pass owner) is present.

19. Where can I find out more about this initiative?

Visit www.everykidinapark.gov to obtain the latest updates on the initiative.

20. How long will the Every Kid in a Park program continue?

The Every Kid in a Park program is intended to be an ongoing commitment and investment in our nation's youth to foster crucial connections to and future stewardship of America's unparalleled public lands. Students who will be fourth graders for the upcoming school year can get their passes starting each September.