BEST IN SHOW
From seasonal outdoor stages to year-round theaters, here are some of the area's top kid-friendly venues.—AA
See the entertainment guide for more information.

DISCOVERY THEATER
Travelers often begin their D.C. exploration at the museums along the National Mall. But the vast collections can be overwhelming for little kids. A good place to get oriented is the Smithsonian's intimate Discovery Theater. "We are a gateway experience to the stories told here at the Mall," says director Gasbarre. That could mean plays about the wonder of science or the fun of percussion, all of them interactive.
- June 2-3: "Anansi Tales with Barefoot Puppets" (ages 4-8); June 29-July 1: "Rainforest Alive!" (4-12)
discoverytheater.org

IMAGINATION STAGE
The largest children's theater organization in the Mid-Atlantic, this venue is worth the trip from downtown D.C. to Bethesda, Md., for its year-round high-quality productions on two stages. Shows include adaptations of cherished books, premiers and new spins on traditional stories—"Cinderella: The Remix" gave the princess some hip-hop grooves. Imagination Stage caters to the youngest audiences, too, with interactive shows for ages 1-5 that brim with theater magic.
- June 22-Aug. 14: "The Little Mermaid" (ages 5+); June 25-July 31: "Inside Out" (1-5)
imaginationstage.org

KENNEDY CENTER
The "nation's stage" offers a full slate of programming that includes family-friendly musicals, free nightly shows on the Millennium Stage and kids' concerts with the National Symphony Orchestra. But the center also has a dedicated Family Theater presenting a season of both new commissioned plays ("Oliverio!" put a Brazilian twist on the beloved Dickens classic) and touring productions.
- Through June 5: Ireland 100 Festival (all ages); June 25: Robert Post Comedy Theatre for Kids (8+)
kennedy-center.org

ADVENTURE THEATRE
Located in a former amusement park with a historic carousel, the theater presents takes on popular books, as well as new commissioned work, such as "Bob Marley's Three Little Birds," adapted by director Bobbitt. "We want kids to have such an amazing experience," he says, "that when they're 45, they remember it and take their own children to a show."
- June 17-Aug. 28: "Jumari" (ages 4+); adventuretheatre-mtc.org

NATIONAL THEATRE
Just steps from the White House, this historic theater presents Broadway productions, such as "Jersey Boys" and "The Wizard of Oz," and most Saturday mornings, special family-friendly shows that range from plays and concerts to ballet and cultural dance. Best of all, they're free! (But reserve tickets ahead of time.)
- June 4: "Monkey Tales" (ages 4-10); June 11: "The Barker of Seville"; June 18: Groovy Nate (both all ages)
thenationaldc.org

WOLF TRAP
At America's only national park for the performing arts, Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods brings a packed roster of summer performances to its amphitheater stage nestled amid trees. Shows range from music to puppets, plays and dance.
- June 22: David Engel: "Pirate School!" (ages 4+); June 24-25: Josh & the Jamtones (2-8); and many more
wolftrap.org