

BESTLIFE

Family & Fatherhood

The 100 Best Places to Raise a Family

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Find out which cities in America are the best—and the worst—for you and your brood

Television executives seized the idea long ago: American families value where they plant their roots. The Cosbys had Brooklyn. The Cunninghams, Milwaukee. The Simpsons, Springfield. But fathers face reality when they're not in prime time. They want to raise their children somewhere safe, where they can attend good schools with favorable student-teacher ratios, above-average test scores, and respectable budgets. Plenty of museums, parks, and pediatricians also contribute to a good quality of life, whereas multihour commutes, expensive houses, and divorcing friends and neighbors do not. *Best Life* editors used these categories and data from the U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, FBI, American Association of Museums, National Center for Health Statistics, and American Bar Association to evaluate 257 cities. Here are the best—and worst—places to raise a family.

1 Honolulu, Hawaii Schools spend almost \$9,000 per pupil, unemployment ranks less than half the national average, and you can play on the island of O'ahu's 125 beaches.

2 Virginia Beach, Virginia

3 Billings, Montana

4 Columbus, Georgia

5 San Diego, California

6 Des Moines, Iowa

7 Minneapolis, Minnesota

8 Madison, Wisconsin Madison has a high number of pediatricians per capita.

9 Colorado Springs, Colorado

10 Santa Rosa, California

11 Wichita, Kansas

12 Los Angeles, California

13 Corona, California

14 Austin, Texas

15 Stamford, Connecticut

16 Omaha, Nebraska

17 Naperville, Illinois

18 Fort Wayne, Indiana

19 Springfield, Illinois

20 Boise, Idaho

21 Manchester, New Hampshire

22 South Bay Area, California

23 New York, New York

24 Fontana, California

25 Louisville, Kentucky

26 Plano, Texas

27 Oceanside, California

28 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

29 Sacramento, California

30 Ann Arbor, Michigan

31 Reno, Nevada

32 Las Vegas, Nevada

33 Lincoln, Nebraska

34 San Bernardino, California

35 Grand Rapids, Michigan

36 Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina Median value of a home: \$202,733

37 Kansas City, Kansas

38 Fremont, California

39 Buffalo, New York

40 Berkeley, California



- 41 Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 42 Kansas City, Missouri
- 43 Waterbury, Connecticut
- 44 Syracuse, New York
- 45 Phoenix, Arizona
- 46 Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 47 Akron, Ohio
- 48 Boston, Massachusetts
- 49 Escondido, California
- 50 Fairfield, California
- 51 Antioch, California
- 52 Elgin, Illinois
- 53 Rochester, New York
- 54 **Seattle, Washington** Residents spend \$266 per person annually to maintain the city's parks.
- 55 Tucson, Arizona
- 56 Santa Clarita, California
- 57 Denver, Colorado
- 58 Indianapolis, Indiana
- 59 Glendale, Arizona
- 60 Chicago, Illinois
- 61 Atlanta, Georgia
- 62 San Antonio, Texas
- 63 Mobile, Alabama
- 64 Concord, California
- 65 Denton, Texas
- 66 Coral Springs, Florida
- 67 San Francisco, California
- 68 Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- 69 **El Paso, Texas** Classrooms average fewer than 16 students for every teacher.
- 70 San Buenaventura, California
- 71 Worcester, Massachusetts
- 72 Baltimore, Maryland
- 73 Richmond, California
- 74 Lowell, Massachusetts
- 75 Portland, Oregon
- 76 Jacksonville, Florida
- 77 Fort Collins, Colorado
- 78 Orlando, Florida
- 79 Modesto, California
- 80 Montgomery, Alabama
- 81 Tampa, Florida
- 82 Salinas, California
- 83 Newport News, Virginia
- 84 Oakland, California
- 85 Augusta, Georgia
- 86 Fort Worth, Texas
- 87 Washington, D.C.
- 88 **Tulsa, Oklahoma** Residents spend just 17 minutes commuting to work.
- 89 Bellevue, Washington
- 90 Cincinnati, Ohio
- 91 McKinney, Texas
- 92 St. Louis, Missouri
- 93 Hayward, California
- 94 Midland, Texas
- 95 Sterling Heights, Michigan
- 96 Greensboro, North Carolina
- 97 Arlington, Texas
- 98 Alexandria, Virginia
- 99 Winston-Salem, North Carolina
- 100 Lexington, Kentucky

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