

Daddy's day out



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This weekend, mums can chill out while dads bond with their kids over mud forts, Kho Kho and a string puppet show at a father-child fun fest



Guests on a bicycle trail at an earlier edition of the festival



Kids can participate in a tyre race that's part of the grassroots games plan



A Lezim performance at an earlier edition

TWO years ago, close to 1,800 guests turned up at Mahim's Maharashtra Nature Park for the first edition of Under The Peepal Tree, a father-child festival organised by Grooming Babies, a city-based platform founded in 2010 by a group of moms, who ditched their corporate careers to make family a priority and support involved parenting. "We introduced the festival with the belief that dads need to bond with as much intensity as mums with their kids. The festival provides an opportunity for dads to engage in activities that stimulate the multiple intelligences of children," shares Oindrila Purohit, founder-director, now geared up to host the third edition of the festival, scheduled over the weekend at the same venue. "Since we deal with kids, who prefer lesser crowded and more physical space, this time, we've restricted the participation to 300 families a day," she adds.

What's in store?

Open to kids between two to nine years, the festival will house eight activity zones corresponding with different intelligences as stated in Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Theory. These include linguistic, visual, logical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and musical. "Up to nine years is an age where the brain is developing rapidly and learning is at its peak. Some of the most significant social and emotional milestones that shape personality in grown up years are actually achieved early," informs

Purohit, whose team works closely with child care professionals and counsellors and conducts workshops, ed-dramas, parent-child bonding festivals as well as imparts training on parenting challenges to corporate employees.

With state culture as the theme, the activities have been inspired by folk traditions of Maharashtra. These include a puppet show presented by the artistes of the Thakar Adivasi tribe of Sindhudurg, a workshop on traditional dance and percussion instruments of the state, games like Gilli Danda, Lagori and Kho Kho along with activities like mud fort building and archery. "We've curated the itinerary based on the fact that largely, men, while engaging with children, prefer a lesser degree of structure and activities that involve gross motor skills rather than fine ones. We've avoided elements like shopping stalls, intricate craft activities, sit-down sessions and classroom set-ups and have instead, focused on mud play, construction of a clay fort, archery, banking simulation, team-building activities and energetic performances," informs Purohit

Mommies allowed too

"They may either be cheerleaders for their families, unwind in the Mommy Corner or participate in workshops especially designed for them. They can also double-up as a father figure and engage with their child," she says.

ON February 20 and 21,
10 am to 4 pm **AT** Maharashtra
Nature Park, near Dharavi Bus
Depot, Sion-Bandra Link Road,
Dharavi. **CALL** 9819554496
COST ₹650 (for child),
₹150 (for parent)

What you should catch

- **STRING PUPPET SHOW:** The artistes of Thakar Adivasi tribe of Sindhudurg will present episodes from Ramayana through a traditional string puppet show known as Kalasutri Bahulya.
- **GRASSROOTS GAMES:** Fathers can reminisce their childhood with games like Kho Kho, marbles, Gilli Danda and Lagori.
- **CHITRAKATHI STORYTELLING:** Folk artiste Parshuram Vishram Gangavane and his family from Maharashtra's Pinguli village will narrate stories from Indian mythology depicted on paintings created on handmade paper, using natural colours, followed by art workshops for father-child, and one for mother-child too.