



Climbing mountains can be a great family activity.

Photo: Sandra Foyt, Dreamstime.com

11 Walking with Children

Children love being outdoors, and the added achievement of reaching the top of a mountain should make for an even more enjoyable day out for the family – but knowing how to keep them entertained is essential for group harmony, and for ensuring that they'll want to do it again. The key is getting them started when they're young. I've met a five-year-old and his Mum at the top of a mountain, and you'll often see babies and toddlers smiling in back carriers (usually with tired parents smiling a little less!).

I'm constantly amazed at how far young children will walk in the mountains. With the right adult support, they can tackle the biggest mountain days alongside you.

The more kids walk locally, the easier they'll find it when it comes to climbing a mountain. It's not always about how physically fit they are – it's as much about their mental attitude and that can often be the biggest challenge for parents. In the same way when children say they're hungry, it usually means they're bored; when they say they're tired it can often mean the same thing. It's amazing how much further they can go when they have an activity or task to occupy them, or a game to get them smiling.

When I'm guiding with families, I love getting kids involved with route finding. For younger children, I'll tell them what I'm expecting to see coming up (such as a path