

Chicago for the whole family

How does one manage a vacation with four kids? Easygoing Associate Art Director John Meek, whose brood ranges in age from 1 to 11, says, "There's got to be something for everybody."

PERFECT GETAWAY For John and his wife, Molly, Chicago, where they lived for nearly 15 years, fills the bill. Within walking distance or quick cab rides of each other in the area around North Michigan Avenue, the city offers shopping, top museums, almost every sort of restaurant, dozens of hotels and Navy Pier with the Chicago Children's Museum and an amusement park. The kids love American Girl Place and The Lego Store. Lincoln Park Zoo is another favorite. "It's free, and it's pretty compact. You can easily do it in half a day," John says.

A Cubs game also leads the agenda. And for the kids, the

train ride to northside Wrigley Field is an adventure. John and Molly might sample one of the city's many art fairs, particularly in the Gold Coast or Old Town neighborhoods. On the way home, the Meeks hit Ikea, the monster home goods store in Schaumburg, a northwestern suburb. John says, "The kids actually enjoy it as much as we do."

INSIDE TIPS Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Chicago Downtown has a rooftop pool. CityPass, for reduced admission to museums and attractions. Twin Anchors in Old Town near Lincoln Park for great ribs. For king crab legs, Half Shell on Diversey Parkway. Chicago Pizza and Oven Grinder Co. in Lincoln Park for a tasty oddity—pizza potpie. Chicago Office of Tourism (877/244-2246; www.877chicago.com).

