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Modern Pinball: NYC Kids Can Become Pinball Wizards at this Cool New Arcade

FEB 5 2014 BY STEPHANIE OGOZALEK



My son learning the tricks of the trade from pinball wizard and co-owner, Steve Zahler

New York City is filled with great [indoor places for kids to play](#). However, many drop-in indoor romping spots like [play spaces](#) and [kiddie gyms](#) cater to really young kids. Now that my son is almost nine, he's aged out of most of them, which always leaves us scrambling to find age-appropriate indoor fun (we can only go to the [Museum of Natural History](#) so many times).

That's why I was so excited when Modern Pinball opened near me in Kips Bay. A massive pinball showroom, Modern Pinball doubles as an arcade where visitors of all ages can play on more than 30 different machines, both new releases and restored vintage games. It's a total nostalgia trip for parents and introduces the analog wonders of pinball to a new generation. Judging from how much my son loved going to Modern Pinball, it's particularly fun for hard-to-please tweens, who are stuck in that weird phase where they're either too old or too young for so many activities. Bonus: No quarters required. You can train to be a pinball wizard all day for a flat fee.

During our visit to [Modern Pinball](#), owners Steve Epstein (former proprietor of NYC's famous [Broadway Arcade](#)) and Steve Zahler (a [highly ranked pinball pro](#)) talked about the many virtues of pinball playing for children, and why these [machines](#) shouldn't be lumped in with video games. In fact, a little bit of pinball is the perfect antidote for [too much screen time](#). Up to four people can play at once, making it a social affair. It's more physically engaging than most video games and helps kids hone their eye-hand coordination. Plus the games are open-ended and nonviolent (take

that *Skylanders!*). While different pinball machines have unique features, there isn't a steep learning curve—just pull the plunger and play. My son, who had never played pinball before, figured it out right away and improved quickly. Now he's begging to go back.

While Modern Pinball is a showroom that [sells machines to clients](#), there's no pressure to purchase. (Could you imagine? That would be some impulse buy!) It is truly an arcade that's super-kid friendly. There are step stools for kids who need them, the staff is always happy to help and Modern Pinball even hosts [children's birthday parties](#) and one-on-one lessons.

Unlike a [typical arcade](#), you don't have to keep stuffing the machines with quarters or swiping a game card. Modern Pinball charges in increments: [one hour, three hours or all day](#), and game play is free with admission. Parents don't even have to pay if they don't intend to play (but after a few minutes there, you'll probably want to). Need to break for lunch? Show your Modern Pinball wristband at the [Mad Hatter Pub & Eatery](#) next door and you'll save 10% off your check.

[Modern Pinball](#) is located at 362 Third Avenue between 26th and 27th Streets. Admission is \$12 per hour, \$19 for three hours, \$29 for the whole day. Students save 10% and children ages 3-7 pay \$10 per hour, \$15 for three hours, \$19 for the whole day.