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## Blast off at the Renovated Rocketship Park

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3...2...1... BLASTOFF! If your little space cadets want a place to fly to the moon, there's no better playground than Torrance's Los Arboles "Rocketship" Park, where a 28-foot-tall rocket towers on top of the hillside. The park recently underwent a big renovation that left its 52-year-old namesake retro-rocket intact but added a slew of new play elements making it a modern blast for young rocketeers.



### A Rocket with a View

You don't have to climb the rocket ship's two tiers of internal ladders to get a good view. Views from the top *and* bottom of this iconic structure stretch from the Santa Monica Bay to the San Gabriel Mountains. Of course, the higher the better, and those who want to maximize their view (or play astronaut) can climb to the top of the rocket and peer out at

the world below. A metal slide from the second floor whisks space explorers out and onto the sandy floor below.

*Parent Tip: Younger tots or those with a fear of heights might be a little nervous when they reach the rocket's top (on really windy days, you might even feel a slight sway up there); and parents should be ready to wriggle up and retrieve any hesitant climbers.*

Prefer to stay a little closer to the ground? Climb aboard the nearby space rover, the only other remnant of the park's 1960s beginnings.



*photo: Melissa Heckscher*

### **Climb, Bounce and Whirl**

Now that you've blasted off, it's time to explore what's new at the 6.3 acre park. Which is pretty much everything else. In June, the entire playground (except the rocket and rover) was torn out and replaced with new, colorful climbing structures for kids of all ages. Older kids will want to try out the giant whirler, a merry-go-round, of sorts, which

lets kids hang, stand, or sit on a round metal bar while they spin their way to dizziness.



*photo: Melissa Heckscher*

### **Toddler-Approved**

If whirling and heights are perfect for big adventurers, there's something for mini-nauts, too. Just across from the main play structure sits a similar, smaller-scaled one for kids ages 2-5. Here is where your intrepid toddler can hone her rock-climbing skills and zip down one of three small slides. All with a view, of course.



### **Go for a Spin**

Speaking of that view, how about trying to catch a glimpse while spinning in a whirling

space pod? Give it a try. Enough time here and your aspiring astronaut will be ready for [Space Camp some summer](#).



*photo: Melissa Heckscher*

### **Room to Run...And Roll**

Got kites, picnic blankets, or toddlers who want to run free? Park yourself in the middle of the adjacent field and let your kids go. Scootering or bicycling tots can do laps on the surrounding pavement, and it's easy to keep a steady eye on them from the grass (plus, the park is in a quiet residential area, so there are no busy streets in the vicinity). There are a few picnic tables and a water fountain here, so if you've packed a meal, this is a good place to set up camp.



*photo: Melissa Heckscher*

### **Be Camera and Jacket Ready**

These views are made for pictures, so be sure you snap a few while you're there. And bring layers (a kite, too!); it's almost always windy up here, and it can get cold, even in the summertime.



*photo: Erin Harris*

### **After the Moon, Come Back to Earth**

Done playing space explorer? Now's your chance to explore the gorgeous and pristine Palos Verdes coastline. Our recommendation: Drive to the coast and head south on Palos Verdes Drive to [Terranea Resort](#), a luxury resort surrounded by miles of public hiking trails, including a route that lets you explore tide pools and [sea caves](#). (Note: The tide pool hike is recommended for kids ages 5 & up.) Or if your intrepid explorers are all tuckered out, [just enjoy a lunch with some perfect views of Earth.](#)

### **Los Arboles “Rocketship” Park**

5101 Calle de Ricardo  
Torrance

What's your [favorite themed park](#) in the city? Let us know in the comment section!

—Melissa Heckscher

