

### Best Towns For Families

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#### **DERBY, KANSAS**

**POPULATION: 18,928**

**MEDIAN INCOME: \$67,668**

**MEDIAN HOME VALUE: \$146,807**

**HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN: 43%**

**STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO: 16:1**

Since moving to this suburb 10 miles south of Wichita, Jim Urso, 45, a director of facilities at Boeing, has been offered better-paying jobs in other cities several times. He always said no. "I can be home for lunch in 10 minutes and get back early enough to hang out with my kids after school," says Jim, dad to Alexandra, 12, Stefanie, 15, Danielle, 17, and Kristin, 23. His wife Tamie, 48, agreed with his decision to stay every time. She couldn't bear to give up the sweet, slow weekends spent sitting in lawn chairs and sipping iced tea with friends, fellow moms and neighbors. "There's absolutely no rat race around here," she says. No housing bubble, either. Derby is still highly affordable, with spacious three-bedroom ranch homes selling for as little as \$150,000. And the brightest lights in this small town are the old-fashioned Friday Night kind—those at the playing field during varsity football games. "There's only one high school, so everyone rallies around the students," says Tamie. "Rooting for our kids brings the whole community together."



**FAMILY-FRIENDLY PERK:** At Rock River Rapids water park, 2,000 kids a day get their kicks with state-of-the-art water slides, a 600-foot "lazy river" and a 50-meter lap pool.

