

RESILIENT KIDS

NEWSLETTER by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

Involving kids in something EXTRA!

How children spend their time influences their personal and social development. Time spent in community-based activities and groups helps foster children's interests and broaden their social networks. These social networks help insulate them against difficulties that they may experience at school.

Research maintains that self-initiated leisure is essential for good mental health and emotional well being in adolescents. Teenagers who have an interest outside of school or their normal range of 'work' have a tremendous insulator against stress, anxiety and depression. These interests are usually fostered in childhood.

Children within the same family can have such diverse attributes, skills and interests. One child may enjoy sports, while a sibling may prefer creative performance endeavours. A third child may be an all-rounder showing interest in many fields. Children should be exposed to a broad range of activities during childhood so that they can find their areas of interest and excellence.

Some children change activities from year to year while others stick at their hobbies gaining more expertise over time. It can be frustrating for a parent when a child continually changes activities but it takes experimentation for some children to find either the activity or social group that they feel comfortable with.

Parents need to help children balance their extra-curricular activities with school and family

requirements, as well as their personal wellbeing. There may be occasions where children must prioritise and choose between leisure pursuits. Good time managers know instinctively that they can't achieve everything and that, at times, some activities are put on hold.

There are some children who need a great deal of encouragement to join in extra-curricular activities. Their reluctance to participate is due to either lack of skill or confidence, or attributed to lifestyle reasons. Parents may need to actively encourage children to participate in at least one weekly creative, community or sporting activity.

Encourage don't push

It's easy to become so wound up in children's activities and excited by their individual and team performances that parents forget children become involved for social and participation reasons. The key for parents is to take an active interest in their activities and to encourage them to enjoy and participate rather than push and prod children to excel. 'Pushy' parents can spoil the fun for kids, which can lead to less participation in out of school activities.



TRY THIS...

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

To promote involvement in extra-curricular activities:

1. **Introduce** children to activities that you are passionate about. Some children want to emulate their parents and are motivated to follow their parents' interests.
2. Take an **interest** in children's interests. Be available to take them to their activities at least some of the time. Also, you may become involved either as a coach or lending your assistance in some other way.
3. Have **your own** interests outside work and family. This sends the message about a balanced, healthy lifestyle to children.
4. Get a **list** of activities available in your area from your local council or even the local school that your children can be involved in.

ACTION PLAN

First Step . . .

Next Step . . .

For more ideas about promoting resilience in children visit www.parentingideas.com.au

QUOTE

'A man's interest in the world is only an overflow from his interest in himself.'

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

WHAT'S YOUR ATTITUDE LIKE?

DO YOU HAVE A HEALTHY ATTITUDE TO YOUR CHILD'S OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES?

DO YOU:

1. Focus on enjoyment and participation rather than high performance or winning when you talk about extra-curricular activities?
Yes [2] No [0]
2. Model a healthy lifestyle with at least one leisure activity of your own? Yes [2] No [0]
3. Keep your child as busy as possible, filling all his spare time with activities?
Yes [0] No [2]

4. Involve yourself in community activities or organisations? Yes [2] No [0]
5. Encourage him to practise for his extracurricular activities if required? Yes [2] No [0]

SCORE:

- 10: A healthy attitude. Your child must have a good balance.
6-8: Do you need to change anything?
0-4: Maybe a readjustment needed somewhere.