

Thinking Kids' Activities

Back-to-school days are a good time to re-think kids' schedules—and yours. A new school year typically offers new opportunities, but in an effort to give children a variety of experiences, parents and children may find themselves stressed to the max. We all need down time as taking time out is like charging the battery in the car.

This year, plan to focus on a few activities that will still allow time for family members and the family as a unit. Including children in the decision-making process is advisable—it gives them some ownership in the decision-making process. Here are some tips to consider:

- Look at the schedule or notices that come home from school together;

- Talk with your child about his or her interests to narrow down the list, and
- Make a list of potential benefits and negative impacts for each activity to help in the decision-making process.

Take time to think it through before making a commitment. If a child signs up for a sport that practices until 5:30 p.m. five days a week, what else can he or she reasonably manage? Should a family sign up for an activity that meets at 6:30 p.m. when parents can't possibly get home from work before six?

Choosing a limited number of activities allows a child to explore interests, without feeling pressured to move on to the next activity.

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