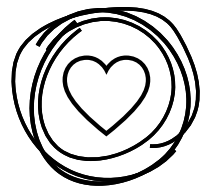


Overscheduled and Stressed

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Benefits of Structured Activities

- Exposure to variety of activities/hobbies
- Opportunity for enrichment, enjoyment, pleasure
- Potential for increased social network/relationships
- Exercise or mental/creative stimulation
- Time away from screens
- Child care, supervision
- Opportunity to build skills



Soccer Legos Piano
Swimming Ceramics Scouts Gymnastics Hockey
Cooking Karate Coding
Theatre Science Camp

Expose to a variety of low commitment, low investment activities with developmentally appropriate expectations and instruction...



Over time, priorities will develop and unfold, some activities filter out and child is left with a few to focus on.

Scouts

Piano

Gymnastics

Hahahaha

- Your kid likes everything/nothing
- Friends, emails, organizations with “opportunities”
- Parental fears, worries, guilt, hopes, dreams
 - Yours AND your partner’s
- Logistics
- Tutoring, therapies, appointments
- Finances
- Bad/Good experiences



There Isn't One Right Way!

I can't tell you
THE way to
decide

Decisions now
aren't necessarily
forever

What works for
some, may not
work for all

But Here Are Some Ways

- Identify values and goals (for your family, for yourself, for your child)
- Consider strengths, weaknesses, patterns
 - Identify your child's tendencies
 - Under what conditions does your child seem at their best? Worst?
- Be realistic (about logistics, time/timing, expense)
- Develop guiding "rules"
- Day view and week view
- Now and later
 - Zoom in and out
 - Remember now is reality and later is possibility (not a guarantee)

Before You Say “Yes”

- Ask “what’s the point?”
- Ask “why are we saying ‘yes’ to this particular activity?”
- Ask “does saying ‘yes’ to this mean we have to say ‘no’ to something else?”
- Which of our values and priorities does this activity line up with?
- Is this activity in conflict with any of our priorities/values?
- What are the benefits and costs of saying “yes” to this?



When to Say “No”

- If the answers to the previous questions make “no” the obvious choice
- If there is an alternative offered that lines up better with values, priorities, strengths, tendencies



When The Answer Isn't Clear

- Should I push my child? Should I let them quit?
 - Signing up again vs quitting mid-commitment
 - Tantrums, struggles – what's the underlying reason (anxiety vs not fun vs transition)
- It seems like I don't have a choice here - I don't want to say "yes," but saying "no" comes with consequences
 - Break it apart
 - Communicate, set expectations
 - Accept consequences
 - Remind yourself, your child of your decisions
 - Re-evaluate as needed

Parental Stuff

- Worries/fears – recognize what they are, put them on them table
- Hopes/dreams – same AND...who are these hopes and dreams for? Can you break that apart, generalize it, or turn a piece of it into a value?
- Guilt – break that apart and be honest about the pieces of it; take what's important information and filter out the rest that's not helpful; center yourself by remembering your values and goals and the realities of the situation
- Social media, comparisons – how does this impact your stuff? Bring your focus back to you and your family (your values, priorities, realities)



Questions??

- How do you help children narrow down their interests and also help children realize where their strengths lie?
 - Kid wants to sign up for everything – music, multiple sports, every after school club – it's too much for the calendar, can't be in all of these places at once. Doesn't want to practice instrument and get better. Likes sports because of friends but isn't very good. Seems to show the most potential in swimming, but friends play soccer and kid is just not any good at soccer. You offer to help them practice so they can get better, you don't want them to be embarrassed or hurt if not one of the better players. They don't care about putting the time in to get better.



My Questions

- What are this kids' strengths?
 - Be careful about confusing "strengths" with aptitude for a specific skill
 - Be careful about using other people's definitions and measurement of success
- What can the parents ask themselves?
- Don't underestimate development!
- Be careful about making judgments about "best use of time"
- Don't underestimate natural consequences...and don't try to shield from natural consequences

Answers

- Reinforce strengths and positives: “We love that you are willing to try so many activities and that you enjoy being with your friends.”
- Reiterate your values and goals: “We think it’s important that you find activities that feel fun to do, help you learn about working with others, challenge you, and give your body and brain workouts.”
- Be open and honest about the realities: “Our schedules have gotten a little too busy now and it’s hard for us to do all of other things that are important to us, too, like eat dinner at home together, have time to play outside, and get to bed on time.”
- If you made a decision, share it: “We decided it makes sense to take a break from _____”

Answers, cont.

- Or, if you need to decide and want your child's involvement: "We want to figure out with you which activities make sense to keep doing and which we can take a break from..."
- Be flexible and reassuring: "if you realize you really miss __ while we're taking a break, then we can figure out a new plan."

More Questions?
