

HOW PARENTS SHOULD SUPPORT THEIR CHILDRENS ENDEAVORS

Your child will pursue many passions in his young life. Here's how to support his [extracurricular endeavors](#) - without succumbing to stage-mom status.

- **Identify skills early on.** If your child wants to participate in sports, be realistic about his ability. If he is just within the age requirement, make sure that he is able to physically handle himself.
- **Allow her to follow her own interests.** Don't discourage your child if she is more interested in playing soccer than [practicing the piano](#). Making her own choices helps her forge her identity.
- **Don't blame yourself for your child's choices, talents, or failures.** Disappointment may stem from your own youthful dreams or your sense of personal responsibility. Remember, you are not the direct cause of your child's missed goal or failed audition. Encourage him to try his best and support him when even that isn't good enough. Sometimes the only way to do that is by lending a sympathetic ear. Later, offer to help him practice his skills.
- **Discourage activity-hopping.** Does your child want to quit the school band or swim team after only a few weeks? Set a "wait and see" period before allowing her to give it up. Help her determine why she wants to leave the activity. Is it too challenging? Too boring? Too time-consuming? Maybe she doesn't click with the other kids or the coach. Once you know, you can work to remedy the situation - or move on.
- **Prevent [burnout](#).** If basketball practice starts to get in the way of schoolwork, then it may be time for your child to scale back or take a break. Ask your child if he's too tired or if the coach is working him too hard. Discuss your concerns with the coach, and help your child set priorities.
- **Stay positive.** Don't be hard on your child if she loses a game or flubs a recital performance. She's bound to have her bad days, no matter how often she practices. Focus on her efforts, not the final outcome.
- **Set a good example.** Good sportsmanship starts with you. If your child spots you kicking and screaming on the sidelines, he learns that it's acceptable for him to do so too.
- **Let kids be kids.** Your child needs time to socialize. [Unstructured activities with her peers](#) give her time to recuperate from the pressures of extracurricular activities and school.