



**Do you have a young athlete in the family?** Kids want our support and encouragement at games, but there are some things they don't want: they don't want you to overreact when they get hurt, yell at them when they make a mistake, or put too much pressure on them. They don't want you to fix their hair or brush off their uniform during the game.



What do they want? Someone who watches the game but doesn't take it too seriously, someone who cheers them on, someone who lets them have fun.

[www.FamilyFirst.net](http://www.FamilyFirst.net)

## Fitness for Kids Who Don't Like Sports

Even kids who once said they hated sports might like to learn team sports as their skills improve, or if they find the right sport or a league with the right level of intensity. But even if team sports never thrill your child, there's plenty a kid can do to get the recommended 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

Free play can be very important for a child who doesn't play a team sport. What's free play? It's the activity kids get when they're left to their own devices, like shooting hoops, riding bikes, playing whiffle ball, playing tag, jumping rope, or dancing.

Outside of the most common team sports, your child might want to try individual sports or other organized activities that can boost fitness, such as:

Swimming

Dance classes

Cycling

Skateboarding

Golfing

Fencing

Martial arts



Horseback riding

Inline skating

Cheerleading

Hiking

Tennis

Gymnastics

Yoga



Even if the going's tough, work with your child to find something that s/he likes. Try to remain open-minded. Maybe she is interested in an activity that is not offered at her school. If your son wants to try flag football or ice hockey, for example, help him find a local league or talk to school administrators about starting a team. You'll need to be patient if your child has difficulty choosing and sticking to an activity. It often takes several tries before finding the right fit. But when things click, you'll be glad you invested the time and effort. For your child, it's one big step toward developing active habits that can last a lifetime.

Visit [www.MomsTeam.com](http://www.MomsTeam.com) (A Safer, Saner, Less Stressful & More Inclusive Youth Sports Experience) for information, articles and video resources on youth sports from experts and professionals

## Balancing Family and Children's Activities

Too full extracurricular schedules can get in the way of family mealtimes, holidays, celebrations and vacations, faith traditions, and important rest and unstructured time. Overscheduled kids can experience stress, anxiety, eating disorders, and depression. Parents' stress can be exacerbated by the volume of their kids' commitments—which for many families includes excessive participation in sports. Even younger children are spending more time passively watching older siblings' activities... all combining for one very stressed-out family.

Strive to reach a healthy balance between busy-ness and down time for everyone in your family, and remember to include activities for the entire family when you plan your schedules. When your kids feel



connected to parents and family they are happier and healthier, and better able to move through their world with confidence and resilience.



Adults are focused on winning, and all too often make the sport experience miserable for young children. Research shows that kids drop out of sports for these five reasons:

- ✓ Lack of playing time
- ✓ Lack of success
- ✓ Lack of fun
- ✓ Competitive stress
- ✓ Too much criticism

What can you do? Build up your child, emphasize skill development, personal performance goals, and fun. **When you keep sports in perspective, you keep your kids in sports.**

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## Developing Good Sportsmanship

Help us, Lord,

to be good sports in everything we do.

When we are winners,

let us win

because we've done our best

and have dealt fairly with others.

And when we lose,

let us lose graciously

and without

feeling sorry for ourselves.



Renee Bartkowski, *Family Prayers for Daily Grace*



## Tips on Helping Your Child Succeed in School

- ☑ Ask your child what her homework is each day, and check (but not correct) her work.
- ☑ Encourage a love of reading.
- ☑ Ask him about his studies (e.g. favorite authors)
- ☑ Help teach her research skills by explaining how to use a dictionary, thesaurus, a library, and the Internet.
- ☑ Help him set realistic goals for the school year, and challenge him to raise his standards (if appropriate) later in the year.
- ☑ Assure an early bed-time the night before, and provide a healthy breakfast on test days.
- ☑ For large projects, make sure that he is on-task early, instead of waiting until the last minute. Create a calendar together with “mini deadlines” for components, and encourage him to work on the project a little bit each day.
- ☑ Divide homework into 20 or 30 minute segments. The following sequence is recommended: math, writing, nonfiction reading, science, fiction reading.



From the book *1001 More Things to Do with Your Kids* by Caryl Waller Krueger



## Raising Readers: Ten Tips

1. **Let your child see how important reading is by doing it yourself.** Have plenty of reading material around.
2. **Read to your child every day.** This is one of the most important pre-literacy activities we can do with our children.
3. **Arrange your home to encourage reading.** Make sure you have comfortable places to cuddle together with a book, and bookshelves your child can reach or baskets of books she can dig into.
4. **As children get older, read longer chapter books and poetry to them.** This builds their imagination and listening and comprehension skills as they form pictures in their minds.
5. **Help your child become an author.** Invite your child to tell a story about anything he wants while you write it down. Let him illustrate with drawings, photographs, or pictures from magazines.
6. **Make reading a family pleasure.** Set aside time as a family to read for fun. Make a bedtime story part of your day-end ritual.
7. **Make library visits a regular routine.** Don't wait for your child to go to school before introducing her to your local library. Many have story hours and other services for preschool children.
8. **Give books as gifts.** Suggest that grandparents and other relatives do the same.
9. **Select other media products that promote reading.** Choose fun computer programs that incorporate reading skills.
10. **Listen to books on tape to help pass the time on long road trips.** Reading is essential to learning as well as being a source of lifetime enjoyment, and the basic building blocks are put in place long before children enter a classroom. Use some of these tips to prepare them for a lifetime of learning and pleasure through reading.



MediaWise® With Dr. Dave at [www.MediaWise.org](http://www.MediaWise.org)

## Developing Good Homework and Study Habits

- ♦ Create an environment that is conducive to doing homework (such as a permanent work space in your child's bedroom or another part of the home) that is free from distraction.
- ♦ Set aside ample time to complete assignments.
- ♦ Establish a household rule that the TV, computer, and cell phones stay off during homework time.
- ♦ Be available to answer questions and offer assistance, but do not do your child's homework for him.
- ♦ Encourage children to take a break for 10 minutes every hour to help alleviate eye and neck fatigue.
- ♦ If your child is struggling with a particular subject and you aren't able to help, a tutor can be a good solution. Talk it over with your child's teacher first.



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**Having a hard time getting your kids to read?** If your kids are past the “read to me” stage, you'll need to try a different approach. One way is to set “minute milestones.” Set up a chart and have your kids record how many minutes they read each day—you might want to set a 10-minute daily minimum. Then, each time they hit the 100-minute mark do something special or give them a reward. You can also apply this approach to the number of books they read. *Set a goal and a deadline. Agree on a reward for reaching the mark, and let the reading begin!*



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**Want to increase your child's memory?** Then enroll her in music lessons! According to research, children who learn a musical instrument fare better in memory recall than children with no musical training. In fact, a child's brain wiring starts to change after taking music lessons for just one year. You may even find that your musical children improve in literacy, math, and general IQ level. So look for a music teacher or community music program in your area. *And don't worry whether your children have natural talent or not—they don't have to be Beethoven to reap the benefits of learning music.*



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