

How to help students choose an extracurricular activity

Extracurricular activities can benefit students in various ways. Academic clubs, sports and volunteer organizations provide students with opportunities to grow as people and make new friends while also teaching kids skills they will use for the rest of their lives.

Many parents are aware that extracurricular activities can help students improve their chances of gaining admission to university. But students who choose

the right extracurricular activities will benefit in greater ways than simply strengthening their applications. The following are a handful of ways parents can help their sons and daughters choose extracurricular activities they can benefit from for years to come.

- Ask kids to jot down their interests. Students are more likely to enjoy and excel at extracurricular activities that align with their existing interests. Ask kids to jot down a list of

their interests or anything they might want to try. Youngsters might want to learn a musical instrument even if they have never before taken a course on music. Once kids have listed their interests, look for activities that allow them to further explore those interests. Chances are there is a school-sponsored or community-based club or organization that will align with at least one thing on your child's list.

- Encourage kids to have fun. Kids are more likely to enjoy and fully commit to an activity if they find it fun. While extracurricular activities can help kids grow as people and improve their image in the eyes of college admissions officers, kids will get even more out of an activity if they enjoy doing it.
- Look for something that won't interfere with schoolwork. Extracurricular activities can look great on a university application down the line, but that benefit is lost if the activity interferes with a student's academic performance. Some activities, including sports, demand more of students' time than others, but make sure kids know that school always comes first.
- Ask around. Ask neighbours or school officials for recommendations to help kids who have tried but failed to find the right fit with regard to extracurricular activities. Sometimes it takes a little trial and error



before a child finds an activity he or she is comfortable with. Fellow parents can make great resources, and school officials likely know of a host of clubs and organizations that kids may be interested in.

• Sign up with your kids. If kids are hesitant to sign up for an activity because they are shy, sign up with them. Volunteer organizations are typically family-friendly, and kids might

be more likely to come out of their shells if they sign up with their parents or siblings. As kids grow more comfortable with an activity, they will want to get more involved even if mom and dad don't have the time.

Parents can employ various strategies to help kids find activities they can be passionate about for years to come.

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