Extracurriculars Are Key To Student Success

Students who participate in extracurricular activities are less likely to skip class or miss school. They are more likely to have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and score well on math and reading assessments. Extracurricular activities have other benefits, too:

- **Activities teach universal lessons.** Students learn the value of practice, how to apply themselves to a task, and the satisfaction that comes from achievement. Students involved in multiple activities learn how to manage and plan their time, a key skill for success.

- **Activities build confidence.** Students who struggle in the classroom may begin to doubt their own abilities and skills. Success in an outside activity can create a sense of confidence that translates into more confident classroom performance. It helps struggling students earn esteem among their peers.

- **Activities build relationships.** Sports, theater, music, and other achievement-focused activities increase opportunities for strong adult relationships, mentoring, and positive peer associations.

- **Activities keep students in a safe, monitored place.** By extending the school day, activities can help keep kids out of trouble and help to reduce working parents’ anxiety about their children.

**Did You Know?**

Extracurriculars also play a part when students apply to colleges. Most college applications ask about activities. That's because what people do with their free time reveals a lot about them - in ways that grades and test scores can't.
**Myth Buster**

**MYTH:** Children don’t need their parents as much in middle school.

**REALITY:** Some parents think they don’t need to be as involved because their kids know all about the school routine by middle school. But the evidence says otherwise. Even at the middle level, parents still play an important role.

Research from Harvard University’s Family Research Project shows that the children of involved parents tend to do better in school across a number of measures, including GPA, test scores, and likelihood of enrolling in college.

Engaged parents can also reduce the effects of negative peer pressure that often push kids to become unmotivated in school.

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**Student Checklist**

- Ask your friends what groups they belong to.
- Check your school’s bulletin boards or website.
- Talk to your school counselor or your teachers about activities.
- Find an activity that will help you explore your interests.

**Family Checklist**

- Explore interests with your child and encourage involvement. Talk to your teen about what kinds of activities seem interesting - it doesn’t have to be sports or an academically-related club. Consider potential careers and try to find activities related to those fields. Think about activities outside of school as well in your community.
- Remind your teen that school still comes first. Extracurricular activities are important - but doing well in classes trumps sports or clubs. Make sure your child understands your expectations for good grades.

Visit [readysetgrad.org](http://readysetgrad.org) to learn more and access resources to help your child make a plan.