



Grandparents Corner

August 2014

After School Activities - How Much is Too Much?

The new school season has started and that means a return to extracurricular activities for many children. Schools and communities have an abundance of choices for children to be involved in. Football, dance, gymnastics, art and drama are just a few of the options available.

We all want our children to be well-rounded, successful, and enjoy their brief time as school children. Enrolling them in these activities seems harmless and it usually is; however, moderation is the key. Children need time to concentrate on their homework, socialize with friends, spend time with family, and just relax.

Below are six signs that it's time to cut back on after-school activities:

1. **Change in child's behavior or emotions.** When a child is overwhelmed, they show stress through their behaviors. The former happy-go-lucky child now bursts into tears for seemingly no apparent reason.
2. **They no longer seem to enjoy the activity.** They may want to miss the activity or may become argumentative on the day of the activity. They may be afraid to tell you that they want to quit the activity.
3. **Child seems exhausted.** This could be signs that their activities are in the way of their rest:
 - Falling asleep at mealtime
 - Difficulty waking up in the morning
 - Napping on the way to activities
 - Nodding off in class
 - General sluggishness
4. **Their grades have dropped.** Make sure you keep a close look at grades. Sometimes, children need time to figure out how to balance their new schedule.
5. **You can visibly see worry.** They become panicked about having enough time to study and do homework, especially when involved in too many activities at one time.
6. **The activities begin to impact the rest of the family.** Are you exhausted and overwhelmed? You do a lot of running to meetings and practices during the school year, especially if you have more than one child. If you are cranky and bitter that you never have time to accomplish tasks or spend quality time with your kids, re-evaluate your family activities. Everyone needs to be comfortable with the schedule, including you.

Take a moment and think about your child's life. If it's hectic, sit down together and decide where you can cut back. It is important for parents to step back and make sure the kids aren't burning out. Choose activities with a child's age, temperament, interest and abilities in mind.

Falls can result in hip fractures, broken bones and head injuries. Even falls without a major injury can cause an older adult to become fearful or depressed, making it difficult for them to stay active. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. *You cannot reduce the risk of tripping and falling by modifying the environment. T F*
2. *Changes in balance and coordination, combined with poor memory, can make it difficult for a person with AD to move from one place to another and avoid hazardous objects at the same time. T F*
3. *Getting up from a fall too quickly or in the wrong way could make an injury worse. T F*
4. *People with Alzheimer's are not at an especially high risk of falling. T F*
5. *Any amount of exercise helps reduce the risk of falling. T F*
6. *The doctor can assess whether a medical issue or other cause of the fall needs to be addressed in order to help prevent future falls. T F*
7. *After a fall, if the person cannot move or use the injured limb, it is important to keep it from moving and not to try to straighten a deformed arm or leg. T F*
8. *A person with AD, even in the early stages, may have subtle changes in walking ability that will become more severe as time goes on. T F*
9. *A person with AD may not be able to call 911 in an emergency. T F*
10. *In the U.S., falls are the leading cause of injury for people over 65. T F*

KEY: 1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. T