

Expand Your Child's World with Activities

Lessons in sports, music, drama and art help children develop skills for life and school. Classes help them learn talents. To prepare your pre-school or school-age child for classes or sports teams, expose her to a variety of activities.

- Encourage your child to run, skip and freely dance to music.
- Watch with interest as your child plays “make believe” or creates and organizes plays. Join in the fun.
- Toss balls to your child. Play a game of catch. Do jumping jacks. Go swimming.
- Provide art supplies — crayons, markers, paper, glue and age-appropriate scissors. Encourage your child to create art. Display your child’s art in a special place in the home.
- Play music at home and in your car.

As your child gets older, enroll him in classes or sports you think he might enjoy. If you see him excel in a certain activity, formal classes may help him reach a greater potential. Classes may also help a child who *lacks* certain skills. A child who is shy or has trouble making friends needs activities.

Age does not always indicate that a child is ready for formal training. A child also needs emotional maturity to handle group activities. Activities are great, but they should not cause stress to the child.



When Is A Child Ready?

- **Swimming** (around age 3). Swimming is a valuable life skill. It also helps with coordination and provides great exercise.
- **Music lessons** (around age 4). Research shows that music helps with brain development. Rhythms, reading notes and counting beats helps with math and reading skills. Patterns of playing songs and memorizing songs help with memory skills.
- **Art lessons** (at age 4). Studies show that art helps children with reading and writing. Art tells a story. Creating art also helps children improve their fine motor skills.
- **Recreational sports like T-ball** (around ages 4–7) and **Competitive sports** (around age 8). Sports help children learn to work together toward a common goal. With the help of loving parents, sports enable children to learn to share the glory that comes with good plays. For children who are socially withdrawn, sports can offer a chance for them to learn how to make friends.
- **Theater classes** (around age 6). Theatre can be helpful for shy kids. Like sports, theater helps children learn to share the spotlight and special attention that comes with playing leading roles. It is a great outlet for children who are creative.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
or log onto www.parenthelpline.org