



Busy and Balanced

Soccer practice. Piano lessons. Cub Scout meetings. Is your kid overscheduled? According to a recent University of Maryland at College Park study, the answer is probably no. What researchers found when they tracked the activities of 9- to 12-year-olds and measured their stress levels:

25% were "hurried"—doing three or more things, or busy at least four hours in two days

58% were "balanced"—with a few activities

17% were not involved in any activities outside of school

Both "balanced" and "hurried" kids were less stressed, the most socially mature, and had the highest self-esteem, says study author Sandra L. Hofferth, Ph.D. But the mix of activities matters. Playing two sports in the same season appears to stress kids out, while a combo of sports, lessons, and clubs works well. Watch for signs of trouble: being tired or anxious, or having frequent headaches or meltdowns.

Need-To-Know news

1 Get your game on
Help your child get more out of playing time with Sportskool's new free OnDemand TV series titled *Coaches and Parents: It's More Than a Game*. The 13 episodes feature actor Sean Astin and top experts on challenges like dealing with coaches and referees, game-day motivation, and sportsmanship. Learn more at Sportskool.com.

2 Sticking together
Having a child with autism can put a lot of stress on a marriage, and an oft-cited statistic puts the rate of divorce for these families at 80 percent. But research from the Center for Autism and Related Disorders at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore found that, in reality, parents with an autistic kid are no more likely to split than other couples.

3 Are two moms better than one?
Just maybe. In a 17-year national study following the children of lesbian mothers, the teenagers with the same-sex parents scored higher on questions aimed at determining their social skills and academic competence than a control group of kids who had opposite-sex parents.

Cool cover-up! Having a broken bone can be a bummer. Add fun and style to the experience with these fabric sleeves that prevent snagging and scratching, in loads of designs for every size and type of limb! \$15.99 to \$29.99; castcoverz.com

