

Finding Out-of-School Activities for Your Child

Discover opportunities. Explore interests. Find a good fit for your family.

What are out-of-school activities?

Out-of-school activities are organized experiences that children and teenagers can participate in outside their regular school schedule. They may be offered by community organizations, libraries, recreation centers, businesses, cultural institutions, faith-based organizations, and independent programs.

Activities may help young people explore interests, develop skills, build relationships, and enjoy new experiences. Opportunities vary by community, age, cost, accessibility, and availability.

What types of activities can families explore?

Sports & Movement

Soccer, basketball, swimming, gymnastics, martial arts, dance, recreational leagues, and other physical activities.

Arts & Creativity

Visual arts, music, theater, photography, creative writing, crafts, and design.

STEM & Technology

Robotics, coding, engineering, science clubs, digital media, and technology workshops.

Learning & Enrichment

Reading clubs, language classes, tutoring, educational workshops, and academic enrichment programs.

Community & Leadership

Scouting, youth leadership, volunteering, mentoring, civic activities, and community service.

Nature & Exploration

Gardening, outdoor recreation, environmental programs, camps, and nature education.

Where can families find opportunities?

- Public libraries and local recreation departments
- Community centers and nonprofit youth organizations
- Museums, cultural centers, and arts organizations
- Local sports leagues, clubs, and studios
- Statewide afterschool networks and community program directories
- Summer camps, seasonal programs, and community events

Some organizations offer financial assistance, scholarships, reduced fees, or introductory sessions. Families can ask about these opportunities before registering.

What should families consider?

Your child's interests:

What activities does your child enjoy, want to try, or feel curious about? Consider their preferences and willingness to participate.

Program environment:

What are the group sizes, teaching methods, expectations, and opportunities for social interaction?

Safety and supervision:

How are staff screened and trained? What supervision, emergency, pickup, and injury-response procedures are in place?

Accessibility and inclusion:

Can the program accommodate a child's disability, communication needs, sensory preferences, health needs, or other individual circumstances? What supports can it provide?

Costs and commitments:

Consider registration fees, equipment, uniforms, supplies, transportation, attendance expectations, and cancellation policies.

Household logistics:

Review the activity's location, frequency, transportation needs, and compatibility with other family responsibilities.

Does an activity have to be competitive?

No. Programs may be recreational, introductory, skill-building, social, competitive, or exploratory. Children may enjoy different types of participation at different ages or stages.

Remember: Families can explore activities based on their interests, circumstances, and available opportunities. Participating in multiple organized programs is not a requirement for healthy development.



My Activity Exploration Worksheet

Use this worksheet to explore your child's interests, compare opportunities, and prepare for registration.

1 What would my child like to explore?

- ☐ Sports or physical activity
- ☐ Arts, music, or creativity
- ☐ Science, technology, or engineering
- ☐ Reading, learning, or languages
- ☐ Community service or leadership
- ☐ Nature or outdoor exploration
- ☐ Something new or unfamiliar
- ☐ Other: _____

Activities my child has expressed interest in:

2 Compare two opportunities

What to compare	● Activity A	◆ Activity B
Program/provider		
Location		
Days/times		
Total cost		
Age/skill requirements		
Supports or accessibility		
Notes		

3 Questions to ask before enrolling

- ☐ What is included in the registration cost?
- ☐ Are scholarships, discounts, or payment plans available?
- ☐ What experience or equipment is required?
- ☐ How are participants supervised?
- ☐ What are the safety and emergency procedures?
- ☐ Can accommodations or individualized supports be provided?
- ☐ Is a trial class or introductory session available?
- ☐ What happens if my child wants to stop participating?

My additional questions:

4 My next step

Activity or program to explore:

Organization or contact:

Website or phone:

Registration deadline:

Next action:

Explore trusted resources

Afterschool Alliance — Finding Programs and Evaluating Quality

<https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/myCommunity.cfm>

ChildCare.gov — School-Age Care and Camp Programs

<https://www.childcare.gov/consumer-education/what-are-my-child-care-options/school-age-child-care-and-camp-programs>

CDC HEADS UP — Sports and Concussion Safety

<https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/prevention/>

Explore further with OH FAMILY

Visit <https://www.ohfamilyinc.org> to discover family resources, learning opportunities, and experiences through Explore & Connect.

About this guide

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Disclosure: This guide provides general educational information and does not endorse any specific organization, activity, or provider. Program availability, fees, supervision practices, licensing requirements, accessibility, and financial assistance vary. Families should confirm current details directly with providers and consult qualified professionals when health, safety, or individual support needs require additional consideration.