

SUPPORTING YOUR LITTLE'S PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: THE IMPORTANCE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME ACTIVITIES



As a mentor, one of the most powerful ways you can support your Little's growth and development is by encouraging and guiding them to participate in extracurricular activities. These activities, which occur outside of the regular school day, provide valuable opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and building meaningful relationships.

Here's why getting involved in extracurricular activities is so important and how you can help your Little thrive in them:

1 Builds Confidence and Self-Esteem

Extracurricular activities allow kids to try new things and push themselves outside of their comfort zones. Whether it's joining a sports team, learning an instrument, or participating in a theater production, these experiences help Littles develop a sense of achievement. As they master new skills, they gain confidence and a stronger belief in their abilities, which can positively impact other areas of their life.

2 Fosters Social Skills and Friendship Building

Participating in activities outside of school provides Littles with the chance to meet new people and form friendships with peers who share similar interests. These social connections can help Littles feel a sense of belonging and support, which is essential for their emotional well-being. Working together on group projects, collaborating in team sports, or participating in after-school clubs teaches valuable social skills like communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution.

3 Encourages Responsibility and Time Management

Extracurriculars often involve a regular commitment—whether it's attending practice, rehearsals, or meetings. By being involved, Littles learn how to manage their time effectively and balance their academic responsibilities with their personal interests.

They begin to understand the importance of being responsible and punctual, skills that will serve them well in school, future jobs, and personal relationships.



4 Enhances Academic Performance

Research shows that students who participate in extracurricular activities tend to perform better academically. These activities can provide a break from the pressures of school, helping Littles recharge and develop a well-rounded sense of self. Furthermore, many activities require critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, which can directly enhance their academic performance. For example, a Little involved in a science club or robotics team may develop stronger skills in STEM subjects.

5 Teaches Persistence and Goal Setting

Whether it's learning to play an instrument or preparing for a competition, extracurricular activities often require perseverance and dedication. Littles learn that success takes time, effort, and practice. This teaches them the value of setting goals, working toward them, and overcoming setbacks along the way. The resilience they develop in these activities can help them tackle challenges in other areas of their life, including academics and personal relationships.

6 Offers Exposure to New Interests and Career Pathways

Extracurricular activities provide Littles with the opportunity to explore a wide range of interests they may not have encountered otherwise. From sports to arts, science clubs to coding workshops, these activities open doors to potential passions and career interests. Introducing Littles to different fields helps them think about their future in new ways and can inspire them to pursue paths they might not have considered before.

How You Can Support Your Little's Participation in Extracurricular Activities:

- 1. Help Identify Their Interests:** Engage in conversations with your Little to explore what activities they might be interested in. They may not know where to start, so helping them identify their passions—whether it's art, music, sports, or technology—can give them a sense of direction.
- 2. Provide Access and Opportunities:** Help your Little find extracurricular programs in their community or school. You can help research local clubs, sports teams, arts classes, or after-school programs that align with their interests. Sometimes financial barriers or transportation can be an issue, so see if you can find scholarships, funding, or carpooling options to make participation easier.
- 3. Attend Events and Support Their Involvement:** Be present at performances, games, or competitions. Your involvement shows your Little that you are invested in their success and appreciate their efforts. Celebrating their achievements—big or small—boosts their confidence and strengthens your mentoring relationship.
- 4. Encourage Regular Commitment:** While it's important to have fun, extracurricular activities also require commitment. Help your Little stay motivated and on track by encouraging regular attendance and punctuality. Offer positive reinforcement when they show dedication and effort.
- 5. Model Positive Attitudes Toward Extracurriculars:** Share your own experiences and passion for activities outside of work or school. Whether it's volunteering, reading, or participating in a hobby, showing enthusiasm for your own extracurricular involvement can inspire your Little to adopt a similar attitude toward their own activities.

Extracurricular activities provide Littles with the chance to explore new interests, make friends, develop life skills, and enhance their academic performance. As a mentor, you play an important role in guiding them to find activities that excite and challenge them. By supporting your Little's participation in out-of-school time activities, you're not only helping them grow into well-rounded, responsible individuals but also encouraging them to pursue their passions and build a brighter future. **Remember, it's not just about winning trophies or awards—it's about the experiences and growth that come from participating.**

Here is a list of out-of-school time (OST) opportunities, programs, and organizations in the greater San Antonio area that your Little can participate in. These programs offer a variety of activities—from sports and arts to science and leadership development—that can help them explore new interests, build skills, and foster personal growth.



Out-of-School Time (OST) Opportunities in San Antonio:

1. San Antonio Parks and Recreation - Youth Programs

a. **What They Offer:** Sports leagues, after-school programs, summer camps, arts, and recreational activities for youth.

i. Website: <https://www.sanantonio.gov/parksandrec>

2. The Boys & Girls Clubs of San Antonio

a. **What They Offer:** After-school programs, tutoring, sports, leadership development, and mentorship for kids and teens.

i. Website: <https://www.bgcsatx.org/>

3. San Antonio Youth Literacy

a. **What They Offer:** Free tutoring services to help children develop their reading skills. They focus on improving literacy and promoting a love of reading.

i. Website: <https://www.sayn.org/>

4. The San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) - Youth Programs

a. **What They Offer:** After-school programs, reading challenges, and creative workshops for children and teens.

i. Website: <https://www.sapl.org/>

5. Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) - Youth Leadership Programs

a. **What They Offer:** Youth leadership programs that include mentorship, community service opportunities, and skill-building activities.

i. Website: <https://www.aacog.com/>

6. San Antonio Robotics & STEM Programs (e.g., Alamo Area Robotics)

a. **What They Offer:** Robotics, coding, and STEM-focused after-school programs and competitions that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving.

i. Website: <https://www.alamoarearobotics.com/>

7. The San Antonio Youth Orchestra (SAYO)

a. **What They Offer:** After-school and weekend programs for young musicians, including training in orchestra playing, music theory, and more.

i. Website: <https://www.sayo.org/>

8. Kerrville Hill Country Youth Leadership

a. **What They Offer:** Leadership development programs that focus on community service, building life skills, and preparing young people for college and careers.

i. Website: <https://www.hcyl.org/>

9. The San Antonio Museum of Art - Youth Programs

a. **What They Offer:** Art classes, workshops, and summer camps that allow kids to explore their creativity.

i. Website: <https://www.samuseum.org/>

10. Mendez Middle School - Youth Basketball and After-School Sports

a. **What They Offer:** After-school sports leagues and activities that build teamwork and athletic skills.

i. Website: <https://www.saisd.net/>

11. **San Antonio Public Library - Summer Reading Program**

a. **What They Offer:** Special summer reading programs that help kids stay engaged with books during the summer months.

i. Website: <https://www.sapl.org/summer-readin>

12. **La Familia Cortez - Youth Art Programs**

a. **What They Offer:** Art programs for kids that explore painting, sculpture, and other artistic endeavors.

i. Website: <https://www.lafamiliacortez.com/>

13. **Youth Code Jam**

a. **What They Offer:** Free coding classes for kids, designed to teach computer science and programming skills.

i. Website: <https://youthcodejam.org/>

14. **Texas Youth Leadership Foundation**

a. **What They Offer:** Leadership development, team-building, and community service projects for youth in the San Antonio area.

i. Website: <https://www.tylyf.org/>

15. **San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology (SAMSAT)**

a. **What They Offer:** Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workshops for kids and teens, including space exploration and robotics.

i. Website: <https://www.samsat.org/>

16. **Youth Orchestras of San Antonio (YOSA)**

a. **What They Offer:** Music programs and performance opportunities for young musicians of all skill levels.

i. Website: <https://www.yosa.org/>

17. **The DoSeum - San Antonio's Museum for Kids**

a. **What They Offer:** Hands-on, interactive exhibits focused on education, creativity, and play, along with summer camps and special events.

i. Website: <https://www.thedoseum.org/>

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LITTLE'S PARTICIPATION:

Encourage your Little to explore these opportunities by

- **Researching Together:** Sit down with your Little and explore these programs to find the ones that align with their interests.
- **Navigating Registration:** Help with the registration process if needed, whether it's filling out forms or figuring out transportation options.
- **Being Supportive:** Attend events or performances when possible to cheer them on. Show interest in their progress and celebrate milestones.
- **Encouraging Consistency:** Help them stay committed by setting regular reminders for practice or meetings, ensuring they maintain their involvement..

By supporting your Little's participation in these activities, you are giving them the chance to grow, discover new talents, and connect with peers—helping to set them up for success both inside and outside of the classroom

