

Safe kids • Healthy kids • Happy kids

Activities: Is Quitting OK?

Studies estimate that 83% of kids age 6 – 17 are in an extra activity. Forty-two percent play sports. About 72% of kids quit youth sports by the time they are 14.

What do parents do when their child wants to quit an activity? Push her to continue? Let her quit? Many fear quitting will become a lifelong pattern.



Experts tell us that children often quit activities because they:

- Fear failure.
- Believe the activity is beyond their ability.
- Feel too much pressure to perform.
- Are bored.
- Have not improved.
- Give in to peer pressure.
- Find too many activities leave no time to “hang-out” with friends.
- Realize the activity is no longer fun.
- Get little play time.
- Want to try other activities.

David Elkind, *The Hurried Child*, advises parents. Children ages 9 and under do not have a clear idea of activities they will like. When they want to quit, most likely they are not having fun. The activity is “not for them”.



He assures parents that quitting an activity does not start a pattern of quitting.

If your child asks to quit – stay calm. Gather your facts.

- Talk with your child. Ask questions.
- Listen; really listen to what your child says. Try to find the cause for wanting to quit. Is she having a problem?
- Ask other parents if their children are having problems.
- Attend practices, games and events. Observe the coach, your child and other kids.
- Is the activity beyond your child’s ability?
- Think about why your child signed up for the activity. Was it her idea? Was it your idea?
- What is the purpose of the activity? Is it to learn or improve a skill? Is it for fun or for safety — such as swimming?
- Observe your child. Is she so stressed she has a change in her behavior?

Do not give in too quickly. Children lack problem-solving skills. Help your child problem-solve. (*Visit the Parent Help Line web page to learn more about skill-building.*)

Give praise and encouragement. Talk about future goals. If the activity does not work for your child – together make the decision to quit. Then, try a new activity.

Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John’s Children’s Hospital



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

