

## **Review your child's activities to avoid overscheduling, stress**

She has dance on Tuesday and Thursday. Her computer class is on Monday. Basketball is Wednesday and Saturday.

Her parents may think they're preparing her for success in later life. But this kind of overscheduling can lead to problems.

Brain researchers have learned that too much of anything—even activities like these—can make kids feel stressed out. As a result, they don't do as well in school and are more likely to get sick.

Ask yourself these four questions:

1. Does my child have time to play with friends? Do not count practices that are planned and run by adults. Kids need time for relaxation and just "hanging out."
2. When does my child do homework? Does she work on math in the car as you drive from one activity to the next? School work takes concentration, and that takes time.
3. Why is my child in these activities? Sometimes, parents are the ones who want their child in a class or a sport.
4. Does my child get enough sleep? Kids need between nine and ten hours of sleep each day. Without that sleep, kids don't learn as well. And they may have problems remembering what they have learned.

Remember—school is your child's most important job. If too many activities are getting in the way, ask your child to choose only one or two. She'll be happier and healthier—and she'll do better in school.

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