



TO THE POINTE

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Spring into a Something New: Developing Hobbies and Interests

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This time last year many people were finding more time to spend on their hobbies or were motivated to try new things while being 'stuck' at home. Activities such as gardening, cooking, and baking became more popular than ever before. When so many areas of our lives were changed so suddenly and dramatically it is not surprising that many people coped with those difficulties by putting their energy into a hobby. As we have learned, hobbies can have so many positive benefits and those benefits are especially important during the developmental years of childhood.

Developing a hobby for a child or teenager can have long lasting impacts on their self-esteem, social skills, academic achievement, and overall wellness. When a child is able to express their interests and talents it will help them build a sense of accomplishment that is critical to creating a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. All children need to know that they have strengths and have opportunities to share those abilities with others in a meaningful way.

Following their hobbies gives children a chance to practice learning, exploring, and questioning in a way that is both personal and fulfilling to them. Children who practice a hobby have been found to have improved organizational skills, better problem solving skills, greater attention to detail, and a clearer understanding of goal setting and achievement.

Finding a group of peers and feeling like you in is 'fit in' is all too important during childhood and especially

adolescence. Joining a science or drama club, playing on a sports team, being part of a robotics team or basically finding anyway to be part of a community will help that child become more social, meet new and different people, and form deeper connections. Families that share common interests and practice hobbies together find that their relationships, communication, and trust improve.

Now more than ever before we need to focus on the importance of wellness. Taking a break from your problems and stressors in a healthy way by relaxing with a favorite hobby can help create a life-long ability to cope with life's challenges. We can all use a reminder that enjoying time 'doing nothing' other than reading a book, listening to music, painting a picture, or walking through nature are just as important as our fulfilling our other daily obligations.

Now that we can all hopefully agree on the significance of supporting hobbies, you might be wondering how to get started. First, think about what your child enjoys doing and where they excel. Ask them what areas of interest and strengths they see in themselves and what they might want to learn more about. Make a list of activities and create a plan of how to get involved. Check with your school about joining clubs or teams and check with 211 for ideas about interest focused summer camps or lessons. Many local organizations offer scholarships so don't be afraid to check! Many hobbies can be free or very low cost as well. We have put together a list to get you started with some fun ideas to try out together.

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