

## Are We Over Scheduled?

By: Barbara Desmarais

I think we can all agree that participating in extra-curricular activities is part of our children's overall education. What we learn in the classroom is only a piece of the big picture. The experience of being on a team is very valuable for a variety of reasons. Having an opportunity to learn more about something we're really interested in, stretches and enriches our lives. Apart from all the skills children learn through extra-curricular activities, they are provided with another social outlet. In the early years when their personalities are forming we like to expose them to a wide range of activities so they can discover what they're good at and what they most enjoy.

Like so many of the things we do, too much of a good thing can become problematic. Hurry- up, we're going to be late!! Just eat it in the car, we have to go now! Put your book down, you need to get ready for gymnastics. Sorry, no TV right now, we need to be out the door in 5 minutes for your soccer practice. No, you can't play with your friends after school, you have dance, remember. If that sounds like your house it might be time to re-assess your priorities. Having nothing scheduled some days is exactly what we all need from time to time. It forces us to use our imagination and create. It provides us time to think, to reflect, and smell the roses. Some of my favorite times are when we're all just hanging out. When it comes to family time, what kind of memories do you want to create for your children? Sometimes when all we're doing is running from one activity to the next, everything becomes a blur when we look back.

How much fun are you to be around when you're always rushing out the door to be somewhere? It's very easy to become irritable when we're constantly feeling rushed and meeting the demands of a tight schedule. Are *you* too overscheduled yourself with your own activities? How much time do you allow yourself for down time? Does your schedule allow you for time to just pull out a board game and sit around the kitchen table with your family? If it doesn't what would life be like for you if it did? It might be time to look again at your priorities and decide if you can cut back on some of your scheduled activities. Just being together doing simple things can create some of our most lasting and treasured memories.

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