



ACTIVITY FINDER

A guide to help your child discover real-world activities they actually love from the **Generation Real** Project



✓ How to use this guide

Follow your child's lead. The goal is not to find the activity your child is best at or will look good on a resume. It's to find ones that help them feel engaged, capable, and more fully themselves.

Kids don't always know what they love until they've had the chance to try it. The Activity Finder is a simple way to open some doors, follow your child's curiosity, and discover the experiences that help them feel connected and confident. Rather than asking 'What is my child good at?' observe their reactions.

What you're looking for:  **Curiosity**  **Connection**  **Growth**  **Joy**  **Contribution**

STEP 1: Dream Wide

Build a broad, judgment-free list of things your child might try. You aren't choosing yet, you're just exploring. Think across four developmental domains. A good list draws from all four, not because your child needs to try everything, but to give yourself real, diverse options.

Physical

Sport, movement, water, outdoor challenge. Builds the confidence that comes from learning what a body can do and teaches that effort produces results, falling down is survivable, and showing up matters.

*Sports leagues • Swimming • Hiking
Martial arts • Gymnastics*

Ages 3+*

*Swim as young as 4mos

Artistic

Music, theatre, visual art, creative writing. Builds the courage that comes from being seen by teaching how to take risks in front of other people, work toward a performance, and find a personal creative voice.

*Performance-Based Music • Drama
Dance • Painting • Pottery*

Ages 2+

Intellectual

Activities involving thinking, debating, building, and problem-solving alongside peers. Teaches intelligence is active, not passive, and that working through disagreement with others is a skill worth developing.

*Robotics • Math Enrichment • Chess
Debate • Lego & Maker Programs*

Ages 5+

Social

Activities primarily about belonging, contribution, and connection. Teaches children that being part of something larger than themselves is one of the most satisfying experiences available.

*Scouting • Cooking • Mentorship
Community Service • Animal Care*

All Ages

What to prioritize when building your list

Group over solo

Character is built in contact with other people. Prioritize activities where your child is in a room with other kids.

Passion over prestige

Is this on the list because your child might love it or because it would look good? Honest answer matters.

Fun over rankings

An activity your child dreads is not building confidence. It's most important that they want to come back.

Accessible & realistic

Prioritize activities your child can actually get to, you can afford, and you both can sustain across a season.



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Keep the list wide. Keep the introduction narrow.

 **PARENT TIP** → The big list is for YOU. When you talk with your child, offer only a few options at a time.

AGES 3–8 • up to 3 choices | AGES 9–17 • up to 6 choices

STEP 2: Follow the Spark

Find a time to sit down with your child in an informal setting and share options from the list. Go through each activity together. Your job is not to convince them or guide toward the right answer. It's to listen for genuine reactions and notice what draws them in.



Useful prompts to open the conversation:

"If you could try anything on this list for just one day, what would it be?"

"Is there anything on this list you've always been curious about but never tried?"

"What sounds most fun to you?"

"Is there anything on this list that a friend does that you've ever thought about trying?"

RESPONSES TO LOOK FOR:

Eyes lighting up

Even a small flash of excitement is worth noting.

Questions

Asking follow-ups shows genuine interest.

Strong negatives

An emphatic 'no' clarifies what they actually value.

Polite enthusiasm

Watch out — they may just be trying to please you.

How to spot your child's strengths

ENERGY: What leaves your child energized rather than depleted?

ATTENTION: What holds their focus?

CURIOSITY: What do they ask questions about or talk about on their own?

PERSISTENCE: What are they willing to struggle with because the activity itself matters to them?

INITIATIVE: What do they begin without being asked?

CONNECTION: In what settings (big or small) are they most comfortable and socially engaged?

CONTRIBUTION: When do they enjoy organizing, creating, or making something better for someone else?

AUTHENTICITY: When are they least concerned with impressing others and most free to be themselves?



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PARENT TIP → Try one activity at a time with low pressure. **Watch and repeat.**

STEP 3-6: Find the Fit

03 Introduce the activity

Consider a low stakes entry point such as a trial class, beginner session, or camp. Something they can walk away from without embarrassment if it doesn't click. Ideally, you should give it real time to take hold.

Most activities take 3-5 sessions before a child knows how they feel.



04 What to watch for

They're connecting

- + Can we go again?
- + They mention people.
- + They practice on their own.
- + They leave more relaxed or energized.

It may not be a fit

- Consistent dread.
- Flat reactions.
- No connection to the people.
- Relief when it's cancelled.

05 Measure confidence & joy



Confidence shows up as...

- Willingness to try harder things
- Less catastrophizing when something goes wrong
- Growing sense of capability beyond this activity
- Recovering from a bad session faster

Joy shows up as...

- Genuine anticipation before sessions
- Spontaneous engagement between sessions
- The desire to bring you into their experience
- Laughter

06 When they want to quit

Almost every child will want to quit at some point. Before responding, it helps to know which kind of quitting this is: quitting from avoidance or from self-knowledge. Something can be hard, frustrating or uncomfortable and still be worth doing. The question is whether your child is struggling with the activity or simply doesn't want to be there.

Difficulty ≠ Dislike

To tell them apart, ask:

- "Is there something specific that happened?"
- "If that changed, would you still quit?"
- "Is it the activity? Or how it feels right now?"

The goal isn't just mastery. It's discovery.

Real childhood isn't built overnight. It's built one try at a time.