

The Trickle Down Effect

Description



He really does play soccer, but not golf.

We all know kids who, with help from their well-meaning parents, bolster their resumes before they apply to college. Teens are starting non-profits, developing apps, founding companies, volunteering in remote parts of the world and more. It's the big push to get into college. I get it.

At lunch with a friend recently, the talk turned to middle school admissions for her private elementary school daughter. My friend doesn't think her daughter is involved in enough activities, even though she plays on two club sports teams. My friend told her daughter she needed to sign up for several of their Westside school's clubs. When her daughter resisted, she told her kid, "It will look good on your middle school applications."

When we applied to middle schools last year, we didn't feel the need to sign up for a bunch of activities my daughter wasn't really interested in and had no intention of pursuing, even for a short time. Her activities reflect her true interests and don't include competitive sports. Still, I saw parents putting their kids on sports teams (cross country running is popular), adding violin lessons at the last minute and all kinds of other stuff to ensure their kids seem well rounded, team players who are likely to succeed. Of course, one kid we know got to middle school and immediately dropped the big activity (tennis) he had used throughout his application to help him get in. He lost interest, he told his embarrassed parents and the coach.

I encourage my kids to try new things, but the quick sign up for the sole purpose of getting into secondary schools feels very inauthentic.

It also seems to work.

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

Tags

1. applying for private middle school
2. Beyond The Brochure
3. Christina Simon
4. extracurricular activities
5. private school activities

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Author

admin