



**10 WAYS TO
ENCOURAGE
YOUR KIDS
TO TRY A
NEW SPORT
OR HOBBY**

**BLUE
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Deaf
Children
Australia.

Sports and hobbies help kids make friends and learn life skills. If your child is reluctant, here are 10 ways you can encourage them to join a club or group activity.

Getting involved in a club or group-based activity can boost your child's physical, mental and social wellbeing. Taking up a sport or hobby is a great way for kids to make friends, build resilience, and develop important life skills.

But joining these activities comes more naturally to some children than others. While some jump at the chance to meet people and try something new, others might feel anxious. If your child is hesitant about trying out an activity, here are 10 ways you can encourage them.

Start with a trial session

Remind your child that trying something new does not mean making a long-term commitment to it. Clubs and groups typically allow kids to try out an activity to make sure they like it. Encourage them to have a go. If they decide not to continue after a session or two, you can always try something else.

Join with a friend

Having a familiar person by their side can give kids the confidence they need to join a new activity. Why not invite one of your child's friends to come along with them to the first session. Even if their friend does not continue, your child may feel ready to return on their own.

Meet club staff or members beforehand

If you can, arrange to meet with the coach, instructor or a club volunteer in advance. That way, there will be a familiar face around on the first day. Use that meeting to explain your child's needs. You might like to share some of our resources on how to become an inclusive, deaf-friendly club.

Remind them of past successes

This is probably not the first time your child has had to overcome something. Remind them of times they've moved forward in spite of reluctance. For example, they may have been nervous about starting school or visiting a new healthcare professional, but they did it. You might like to start an 'adventure diary' to keep a record of things they've tried.

Do a practise run

If your child is anxious about the situation, you could do a practise run at home beforehand. For example, you could play the role of the coach or teammates so your child can practise approaching you and introducing themselves. You could even practise what to do in awkward situations, such as a miscommunication. This will help your child feel better prepared and more confident.

“ My mum let my teachers and coaches know about speaking to me so I can read their lips and also to speak a little louder, but apart from that just not treating me differently from others.”

EJ, DEAF TENNIS PLAYER

Ask questions

There may be a good reason why your child is nervous about starting something new. Here are some questions you could ask to find out.

Can you think of something you used to find scary or difficult that's easier for you now?

What's the worst thing that could happen if you have a go?

How likely do you think that is?

What is more likely to happen?

What would you say if a friend felt the way you do?

Listen to their answers and talk through them to help your child confront any fears.

Stay with them if necessary

Your child will be relying on you to take the lead, especially if they are younger. They might find it reassuring to know you'll be there throughout the session. As they get more comfortable with the place and people, you may be able to drop them off and pick them up afterwards.

Try different activities

Just like adults, kids figure out what they like (and do not like) by trying things out. You probably have plenty of ideas about activities your child might enjoy, but you won't know for sure until they give something a go. Encouraging them to try things they wouldn't normally do can help expand their life skills and build resilience.

Reward their efforts

Kids can be nervous about trying new things for many reasons, such as their temperament or a past experience. You can support them by celebrating each effort they make. Rewarding effort helps kids learn that the process is just as important as the outcome. It shows them success can mean a lot of things, including willingness to try.

Create an adventurous family culture

You can lead by example by building an adventurous culture at home. This does not have to involve anything expensive or fancy. For example, you could try a different fruit or vegetable each week or try a new activity together. This will teach your kids that it's normal and safe to do unfamiliar things. Over time, they will get more confident to do this on their own.

“

I've tried other groups, but I found this one helped me the most. They were the most accepting and they just made me feel included.”

EWEN, DEAF SEA SCOUT



DID YOU KNOW?

Around 95% of DHH children are born into hearing families, who often feel isolated and confused. We help them navigate their new world.

Blueprint isn't just for sports clubs. If you offer activities or programs for children or young people, we'd love to have you on our side!

For further information about Deaf Children Australia.

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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.
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