

momcierge newsletter

we know what's best

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Extracurricular: Being outside of the regular curriculum of a school or college. Who decided that our kids needed all these activities, anyway? We start our kids in music when they're a few months old and by the time they reach middle school they've tested out just about every activity known to mankind (and then some). Who are we kidding? We love this stuff and wish we could go back and take some of these classes right along with our kids! Now, if only we could pin down that karaoke teacher...
--Alyssa and Hilary

In another world, "after school activity" probably means you open the back door and say "Be home for dinner!" In my world, I have no back door and the West Side Highway probably isn't the best spot for my children to play. So I do what most New York parents do and we sign up our kids for all sorts of classes all over the city. Here are some fresh ideas for things to do after school or on the weekends in between soccer and piano.

Last year we had my daughter's best birthday party EVER at [A Class Act NY](#). If you recall, it was a High School Musical "re-enactment." I enjoyed myself (much to my daughter's dismay) "Bopping to the Top!" In addition to fabulous birthday parties, private acting coaching, and a slew of acting workshops and seminars, A Class Act NY has just launched 8-week ongoing classes for little stars. All classes are taught by highly-skilled working actors and Broadway veterans. The founders of A Class Act NY, Jessica and Mark, have really found a way to introduce the magic of performing arts to children in a fun and nurturing environment. We are really excited to try out one of their new classes because I really need more drama in my life--HA! "Pretend and Play" for 5-6 year-olds and "Sing Your Heart Out" for 7-8 year-olds both start next week. A Class Act is offering a \$25.00 discount for Momcierge readers for either class.

I can't say enough nice things about [Karma Kids Yoga](#). Shari, the founder, truly loves what she does and it shows. She and her instructors are inspiring and really fun. My daughter comes out of yoga class so happy and calm. She even has my not-so-zen-like son walking around going "Ommmmm, Ommmmm... shanti, shanti." I really have no idea what he means, but it's cute. Karma Kids has classes all over the city and in Brooklyn for kids of all ages...babies to teens. You can purchase a series of classes (that never expire!) or simply do drop-in classes--they're really open and flexible (no pun intended). They also have free story-time yoga three times/week at their studio with puppets and yoga poses. On October 21st at their fab, fun studio, Karma Kids will be offering "Paint a Yoga Mat." It's a really fun event where children will enjoy a yoga class then personalize their very own yoga mat with artist Melissa Diaz. Word to the wise: buy some [Mr. Clean Magic Eraser](#). When children learn to

do headstands they bang their feet on the walls and toe prints on the walls are sort of nasty.

Although there are some classes that offer cooking with kids, this one is the only one I know that completely tailors the class to each and every client. Chef Rob of [Cook with Class](#) offers in-home (no trudging around-yeah!) ongoing or one-time classes for children. The thing I like about Chef Rob is how he simplifies food for children..like carrots have tops and they don't grow in little nuggets and plastic bags. He deconstructs food, making the lesson exciting, nutritional, and cultural. Chef Rob will show up at your place fresh from the Farmer's Market and give your children a cooking lesson that not only teaches technique but the bigger picture of food, how it's grown, and seasonality. Want pizza? Want a veggie lesson? I think Chef Rob might even be able to get my son to try swiss chard. No seriously, I think he can. P.S. Chef Rob also caters and teaches grown-ups (think husbands!). *Cheers! HV*

Now that school is in full swing (well, almost) I'm busy catching up on extracurricular activities. When we were kids, maybe you took a little dance class, had a piano lesson, and if you were lucky took a tennis lesson now and again. How passŽ! Junior can take anything from sign language to sailing, from claymation to capoeira-all without leaving NYC. My ears always perk up when I hear of something new and unusual-here are a few ideas beyond the basics.

My son's been shlepped up a steep and very narrow stairway to my daughter's ballet classes for his entire life. He'd probably love to join (the ballet master told him it was a great place to meet girls!) but I just can't see him in tights. But he does love to dance and he has pretty good rhythm so one of the dance teachers suggested we check out [Hip Hop Kidz](#), a program new to NYC that offers classes for kids ages 5-17 (there are three levels: PeeWeez, Kidz, and Teenz). The classes run in short sessions so it's not a huge commitment but once your kids get involved, they're likely to be hooked. The classes are upbeat and lively and the instructors are encouraging and energetic. I've heard that their birthday parties are a blast and certainly something to consider after you've attended your zillionth party at Bowlmor Lanes.

If you have a songbird in your home, there's a well-kept secret in town: [The NYU Children's Chorus](#). My friend Ella has been raving about this for years, as both of her kids participate. Run by the music department of the university, the chorus meets once a week and is open to all young singers between the ages of 6 and 12. No auditions or experience are necessary and students are taught vocal technique, musicianship, and how to perform in a group. Okay, hold onto your hats...this program is free. F-R-E-E. The Chorus puts on concerts from time to time and they sing everything from holiday classics to show tunes.

When your kids have completed every Lego set under the sun and it's time to move on to Rube Goldberg machines, [RoboFun](#) is the spot. They have a whole host of hands-on classes and workshops in robotics, mechanical contraptions, video animation, and videogame creation. RoboFun offers after school courses, weekend courses,

school vacation courses (think Columbus Day/Veteran's Day), and summer camp. There are even a few parent/child classes for those of you who yearn for something more exciting than reconfiguring a Transformer or setting up Thomas' train tracks. Check out some of the amazing projects shown on their website and keep them in mind for birthday parties as well.

I'm off to finish the needlepoint I started two years ago--that's my extracurricular activity for this fall!

Enjoy! AS

Momcierge Member Tip o' the Week: You will need a stylish tote to cart around your chattel (ie: NY Post, People magazine, bills to pay) to and from "your" various afterschool activities. As per our very stylish friend Lori's suggestion, we recommend the [MZ Wallace](#) tote bags. We love the new patent and nylon styles (big enough for your stuff + ballet slippers, shin guards, a water bottle, and a pack or two of cookies!).

Got anything you want to add to our black book? We'll be happy to check it out! Send us your butchers, your bakers, your lampshade makers...and anything else that might be of interest to our readers. info@momcierge.com.

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