

# Finding Gear for Teens to Try Out Hobbies

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Get a group of parents of tweens and teens together and soon enough the conversation turns to how busy they all are shuttling multiple kids among multiple activities, clubs and sports. There are advantages to being part of a team, a theater group or a volunteer organization, and many young people thrive on the connections they develop there.

But having a hobby can be deeply valuable, too, and research has shown that adolescence can be a fruitful period for passions to develop.

Hobbies — creative passions pursued for their own sake — can be a way to [counterbalance](#) a culture that demands overwork and overachievement, or an [antidote](#) to technology and news-driven anxieties.

Dr. Ronald E. Dahl, director of the Center on the Developing Adolescent at the University of California, Berkeley, said that neurodevelopmental and behavioral research show that beginning in puberty, adolescents become more “sensation seeking,” drawn toward novel experiences, excitement and reward. Around this age, kids also become more sensitive to how others perceive them. This creates “the potential for kids to develop a strong passion, and for one’s identity to become woven into the activity,” Dr. Dahl said. “What happens often is that it’s not that one likes to bike, one likes to play the violin. It’s that you are a biker, you are a violinist.”