No one can deny the benefits of extra curricular activities. Studies show that youth who participate in extra curricular activities are more likely to complete high school and earn more. There are many different choices of extra curricular activities from sports to art to language. Studies also show however that youth are becoming more stressed out. An alarming study recently found that youth aged 13-24 reported being twice as stressed as adults in 2006. Youth now have schedules filled with activities from after school to bedtime and all weekend long.

A balance needs to be achieved in activities for youth.

Playtime is disappearing.

How many youth go outside after school and just play? Creative playtime is important for the development of critical and creative thinking, and many psychologists are becoming worried that today's youth will not develop the ability to creatively think that is necessary for development. However many parents keep their children constantly busy for the same reason. In a world filled with drugs, gangs, and shootings, many parents believe activities will keep their children out of trouble.

But should a youth really have a "tough schedule?" These were all things we considered while framing our Scout Programs. We keep a balance between structured activities and unstructured free play.

Our Scouts get plenty of time to interact as a team and make friends. Our Scouts take part in many activities from building and launching rockets to backpacking trips together. However, we also make sure our Scouts have plenty of free play time to invent their own games, play pretend, and come up with their own activities. If our Scouts are on a camping trip and just want to sit by a stream and listen to it go by, that is okay too.

The most important thing is that our Scouts safely have FUN.