

Positive+Parent™ Newsletter

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DOES YOUR CHILD SIT OUT GROUP ACTIVITIES

"I visualize things in my mind before I have to do them. It's like having a mental workshop."

- Jack Youngblood

Little Brian brings home a flier from kindergarten that there would be a basketball league for 5 year-olds. As soon as he gets home he give it to you and asks if you can go right away. You have to explain that he will have to wait a few days because the event will be on Saturday and today is only Tuesday. Brian practically sleeps with his basketball the rest of the week.

Finally, you get there on Saturday morning and, all of a sudden Brian clings to your leg so tightly that you practically lose circulation to your toes! He just will not let go. What the heck happened??

Brian may have been very enamored with the idea of basketball but simply did not realize everything that went along with it. He didn't think of the 100 other kids that would be there, the chaos and commotion that would be happening and simply was not prepared to deal with it all. So he shutdown, clung to you and would not listen to any words of reason.

The worst part is that you know that he would enjoy himself. How can you help him get over this shyness or crowd aversion so that he can enjoy himself?

Firstly, realize that it may be Brian's personality that he simply will never be okay with crowds. But that would be VERY very unusual. Most kids will do fine. But kids like Brian need a little help.



Brian was probably a little shocked by the commotion. Perhaps if you had sat Brian down beforehand and told him there would be lots of kids and lots of commotion, he may have been able to deal with it. Perhaps it was only the shock and a little preparation may have been enough.

Going just a little further up the scale, perhaps Brian needed a little more preparation. You might tell him that all great athletes visualize situations beforehand. Perhaps if you would have done a visualization with Brian beforehand, he would have been okay. You would ask Brian to close his eyes and picture a big gym with 100 kids in the gym. There are 20 basketballs being bounced. There are parents screaming to kids from the sideline. Kids are screaming to each other on the court. While Brian is visualizing this, ask him how he feels. If he feels stressed during the visualization, you can be sure he will be stressed when you get there. You might want to help him to visualize staying calm and sticking with it. You might help him to visualize dribbling the ball, passing it to teammate or making a basket. The more you prepare him beforehand, the easier time he will have when he gets there.

So the way to make sure that your child takes part in activities is to help him or her prepare as much as possible beforehand. Talking about it might be enough or you might have to do a full blown visualization. But take the time, because this skill will serve your child for a lifetime!