



WHAT ARE KIDS DOING AFTER SCHOOL?

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Did you know that children spend less than 20% of their waking hours in school? The hours before and after school, summer vacation and other vacations make up the rest of their time. This is time when they could be getting in trouble without adult supervision. The other choice is to get them involved in something positive, where they can gain skills and learn. Quality after-school programs help your pre-teen and teen grow socially, emotionally and academically; they can support young peoples' learning and help them do better in school; teens are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs and engage in criminal activity.

Where to start:

- Talk to your kids about what they want to do after school and explore all the options. Check community centers, the school and extracurricular activities.
- Look for programs that support their interests and hobbies.
- Know where they are and whom they are with. Know they are with an adult you trust and you know how to get in touch with them.
- If your child has a job, make sure he/she works less than 20 hours per week.

How do you find an after-school program?

- Contact the YMCA, YWCA or Boys and Girls Clubs
- Contact groups such as 4-H, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts
- Ask the school
- Look for notices in the local newspaper, or in one of the parent newsletters
- Ask your child's friends, their parents, and other parents
- Look for flyers at the library, grocery store, health clinic, social service center or place of worship

How do you know an after-school program is a good one? Ask questions!

Visit the program while it is in operation. How does it look? Ask some kids questions. Ask the program director questions, such as:

- Are the kids involved in positive activities? What?
- Are there a variety of activities? Such as?
- Are there opportunities to do homework and get help, if needed?
- Do the kids seem interested and content?
- Are they having fun and learning?
- Are they encouraged to try new challenges or learn new skills?
- Are there clear rules? What are they?
- Are the rules enforced consistently?
- Are there enough staff members (at least 1 adult for every 13 young people)?
- Do the staff members seem warm and supportive?
- Is the facility safe and clean?
- Is there enough space for different activities?
- Is there enough good equipment?
- Are there nutritious snacks? Such as?
- Does the program coordinate learning with the school?
- Is the program flexible enough for you and your child's schedule?