



## Help Your Child Learn with After-school and Summer Programs

Children's ability to learn in school can be helped in a number of ways by how they spend time out of school. As a parent, you can choose the after-school and summer programming that helps your child most and works best for your family. You can make the best choice possible for everyone when you know why out-of-school programming is useful, how it helps children, as well as what makes the program itself high quality.

### Why After-school and Summer Programs?

There can be many benefits when your child takes part in after-school and summer activities. These include:

#### Academics

- Higher grades and test scores
- Improved performance and completion of homework
- Better behavior and graduate rates
- Stronger engagement in learning, school, and plans for future schooling

#### Social/Emotional

- Increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and belief in abilities
- Lower levels of anxiety and depression
- Improved relations with peers, family, teachers, and school

#### Health and Wellness

- Stronger knowledge of health and nutrition
- Improved food choices, exercise, body image, and health

### Why Your Child Benefits

Programs that take place outside the school day give your child the chance to use fun and engaging activities and hands-on learning to build skills and knowledge. These approaches can reinforce what is taught in school by presenting information in different ways. Your child may also see how certain skills and knowledge are used in the real world and experience things he or she normally wouldn't during a typical school day.

Even when programs are non-academic, your child can strengthen his or her attitudes and behaviors that help classroom success. He or she can learn to stick with challenging activities, manage time, rely on personal abilities and communicate with adults in charge. All of these behaviors and skills are essential to making progress in the classroom, too.



### Free Tutoring from Supplemental Education Services (SES)

When schools meet learning goals, they are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Supplemental Education Service provides free tutoring to students in Title I schools not making AYP. Schools notify parents when this option is available to children. As a parent, you are responsible for choosing the SES provider, and notifying the school of your choice. Use the guidelines outlined in this article to help you choose the best SES provider for your child and family. Look for features that point to high quality and strong relationships with the school and family. The stronger the partnerships between the SES provider and schools and families, the better the result will be for children in meeting academic goals.

## What Can I Do to Help?

You can make sure your child has the opportunity to strengthen skills and behaviors tied to classroom success by finding programs that are high quality. Cost or location of a program does not guarantee high quality, but certain features do. Look for:

- Programs your child can continue to participate in over time. The longer the involvement, the stronger the benefits.
- Programs that include:
  - Appropriate, safe supervision and structure of the group

- Caring relationships with child, staff, and family
- Intentional, focused goals, such as listening during group time, mastering ball-handling skills, or learning multiplication facts
- Clear, respectful expectations of participants and staff

- Strong partnerships developed with families, school, and community

Studies show that children who experience these characteristics in out-of-school programming tend to develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards education. These attitudes and behaviors carry over to the work done in the classroom as well.

Please call the Minnesota Parent Center at (952) 838-9000 / (800) 537-2237 toll free if you have questions about this article.

### Frequently Asked Question

**Parent's Question: I have my child in after-school care until I pick her up after work. Can this kind of programming help her in school, too?**



This can be a good opportunity for your daughter to build study skills. Working with the staff, you can help your daughter establish a routine for completing homework at the program. Then you can check your daughter's progress and talk about her day when you pick her up. Having a routine for homework helps students be successful in elementary, middle, high school, and beyond.

Any out-of-school programming can help your child if it provides a few key features. Make sure the staff has a warm and supportive relationship with the children – and you, too. Does your child know what to expect and feel safe while she's there? Does the program encourage and expect responsible behaviors from the children? Do staff make activities interesting and fun? Do staff connect what they're doing to the world in some way, either with the skills themselves or in the behaviors they support? If you like what you see, you can feel confident that your daughter's out-of-school programming is helping her in school as well!

**MINNESOTA PARENT CENTER | MN PIRC**  
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