



Parents with High Expectations

Help Your Child Learn with After-school and Summer Programs

Children's ability to learn in school can be helped by how they spend time out of school. 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, and what makes the program high quality.

Any out-of-school programming can help your child if it provides a few key features:

- The staff has a warm, caring, and supportive relationship with the children and parents.
- Your child knows what to expect and feels safe while there.
- The program encourages and expects responsible behaviors from the children.
- The program has appropriate, safe supervision and structure of the group.
- Staff make activities interesting and fun.
- Staff connect what they're doing to the world in some way, either with the skills themselves or in the behaviors they support.
- It provides programs your child can continue to participate in over time: the longer the involvement, the stronger the benefits.
- It has focused goals, such as listening during group time, improving ball handling skills or learning multiplication.
- The program has developed strong partnerships with families, school, and the community.

If you like what you see, you can feel confident that your child's out-of-school programming will help him or her in school as well. 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.

The benefits your child receives when he or she takes part in after-school and summer activities may include:

Academic

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

Social and emotional

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

Health and wellness

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

Reinforced learning

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
- communicate with adults

All of these behaviors and skills are essential to making progress in the classroom, too.

Questions?

Do you have questions about out-of-school programming? You can talk to your child's principal or teacher about what options the school district provides. You also can call PACER Center at (952) 838-9000 and ask to speak with PACER staff who work on the **Parents with High Expectations Project**.

PACER is a Minnesota nonprofit organization. It supports the educational rights of children with and without disabilities. It offers workshops, individual assistance, written information, and more.