

## Benefits of a good after school program

Children grow up in a society that demands expertise in everything. You really cannot sit back and decide that learning from textbooks is enough for the overall development of your child. It's the age of specialization and your child cannot afford to miss out on this window of opportunity. So, scour your locality for the most advantageous programs and enroll them for the ones you think are the best.

After school programs are basically designed to develop a talent or a skill that is ignored by regular schools. These programs could be educational or recreational in nature. Whatever type they are, they basically aim to keep the child active and interested.

The most important advantage of a good after school program is that it widens your child's area of interests. He or she is introduced to new things, sometimes interesting, sometimes challenging. Mastering a new art form or a new skill increases the child's self-esteem. It also allows you to introduce your child to new career options. A child attending a music class may decide that she likes it so much that she wants to make a career out of it in the long run.

Socialization is another great advantage of after school programs. Children get to meet others who share their interests and make new friendships. An acting class or a soccer class can be lots of fun. Many of these programs coach children for performances or matches. Performing on stage or playing a match can be a great experience for a young child.

After school programs keep your teenager busy. He or she thus has some amount of protection from destructive habits like drugs and alcohol. Surveys indicate that children who are kept busy through diverse absorbing activities are less prone to abuse, depression and burnout. Significant increase in achievement and attendance and a reduction in drop out rates are other advantages of a good after school programs.

Most after school programs have children interacting with one or more adult. This allows them to benefit from positive relationships with adults. Children often find it difficult to confide in parents and teachers, but may open up with other adults.

Many children are put into recreational after school programs so that they reduce weight and remain healthy. A newly emerging trend shows that about 15% children below the age of 16 are obese. Parents who cannot put their

children on a strict diet resort to sports and games to burn fat. With cases of child diabetes on the increase, this has become a prime focus of many after school programs.

A good after school program has many benefits. It keeps the child entertained as well as busy, and thus prevents children from becoming addicted to TVs and PCs. By giving them ways to burn up their excess energy and explore their creativity, after school programs help to shape the overall personality of the child.

(word count 484)

PPPPP