

## Recreational after school programs

After school programs can be divided into 3 broad categories: academic, recreational and social. Balanced development takes place when there is compatibility between the physical, mental as well as the educational achievements of the child. As the name suggests recreational after school programs are based on a sport or recreation. Some of the more common physical activities include football, swimming and basketball. Some clubs offer programs like gymnastics, trekking and hiking. In this case, youngsters are often given a short class in first-aid class also.

Recreational after school programs offer children an opportunity to let off some steam and to destress themselves. The closed classroom atmosphere and a day full of textbooks and writing cause the child to repress his natural enthusiasm. He curbs his energy when he is required to sit quietly in class and learn. Physical activity is an all-time low during such times. This physical lethargy and inaction is countermanded by recreational activities. Growing concerns of obesity and child diabetes make it necessary for children to indulge in some strenuous exercises that will allow them to work up some sweat.

Unlike educational programs, recreational programs do not tax the mental processes. But, they do aid the learning process by making the child more active. A child who is physically active is mentally fit, and is able to focus his thoughts on the work at hand. Additionally, recreational programs teach discipline, mechanics of teamwork and fair play. These are important lessons in the growing process.

As more and more nuclear families emerge, the child faces greater isolation. Many children shuttle between their classroom and their bedrooms and do not have any meaningful relationships outside these. Recreational programs offer ample avenues for socialization. This is a place the child can go to and play even when his neighbor is not the most welcoming. The Boy / Girl Scout programs are excellent recreational after school programs. Lately, survival classes and camps have devised to combine important survival skills with sports and games to educate children on how to handle emergencies.

Like any good after school program, recreational programs are designed to give children a safe area where they can indulge in some group activities that interest them. This is one of the most effective ways to keep kids out of the streets and out of trouble. But, one has to be careful when enrolling children for recreational classes. The age of the child, his

temperament and his physical caliber has to be taken into account before you choose the right program for your child.

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