

Need for after school activities

When children are literally up to their gills with the learning and sport activities in school, it may seem superfluous to enroll them for after school activities. In spite of this, after school programs are sprouting up in large numbers and most of these are booked full. This shows that there is a real need for after school activities.

The unavailability of parental supervision is the leading cause for the surge in after school programs. It is seen that many children spend about 20-25 hours a week unsupervised and alone at home. And as the saying goes, "An idle mind is a devil's workshop". Children who are left alone to contend with too much free time invariably fall into the wrong company. Drug abuse, alcohol, tobacco and crime come knocking at their doors sooner rather than later. Parents enroll children to various after school programs to keep them occupied in a productive manner. This way, the kids are free to enjoy themselves in a supervised activity.

Crime is considered to be at its peak during the after school hours, between 3- 4 p.m. During such a time, children need protection. Getting the children together under one roof and encouraging them to participate in a group activity is protection enough. It diverts the children from ennui too.

Obesity is a matter of growing concern in this country. It is noticed that more and more children are becoming couch potatoes. After school, many of them relax on the sofa with packets of chips, cool drinks or chocolates while they watch T.V. 30 % of the kids below the age of 19 are considered overweight, and about 15% of these are obese. An after school program ensures that the child shakes off his lethargy and keeps himself busy. This also helps to reduce the child's fascination for T.V and computer games.

After school activities that promote social awareness develop the individual's sense of social responsibility. It is seen that these sorts of programs not only keep kids out of trouble, but also help to produce responsible citizens. To that extent, they are valuable building blocks in a child's personality.

Times are changing and parents want their children to excel in academics as well as in other activities. This may be a reflection of the parent's unfulfilled desire to excel - a remnant from his own childhood. Whatever the reason, parents today encourage their children to enroll themselves

in various programs and develop the various facets of their individuality. Children too seem to be comfortable learning many things at the same time, and gain satisfaction from this.

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