

## School based after-school programs

In an effort to keep children motivated and safe, the U.S. Government sets aside a good amount of fund for financing after school programs every year. A report by the U.S. Department of Education and Justice points out that after school programs are very effective and is in the interests of the society as a whole. Interestingly, it was found that Americans liked providing school-based after school-programs in their community.

Other than safety, boredom and loneliness, the poor performance of many students also led to the need for after-school programs that are based on the school curriculum. Children coming from low-income families were found to lag behind in reading and grammar after a long break in the summer. Statistics prove that if school-going children are left unsupervised after their school, the chances of poor grades and drop out are considerably higher. The funds provided by the Government will allow rural and inner-city schools to provide activities during the summer, over the weekends and after school. These activities will take place in a drug-free, safe and supervised environment.

Positive augmentation of critical skills is the prime focus of these school-based after school activities. Thus they enhance the skill level of the child. Most school-based programs offer assistance in math tutoring, reading, comprehension and problem solving. Many programs provide engaging activities that seek to prepare the students for college. Hands-on experience is provided for children who want to invest in a career in teaching. Access to telecommunication and technology and involvement in music and art are other benefits of these programs. This becomes invaluable, especially in low-income sectors where such activities are considered to be a luxury.

As far as children are concerned, the snacks provided in after school programs are an added incentive. School sponsored after school programs are entitled to receive funds for snacks. The National School Lunch Program is designed to do just this. Free or reduced price snacks will be provided for children from schools that apply for it. The CACFP reimburses expenditure depending upon the child's income status. But this is applicable only till the age of 13. The funding that schools get depends upon the area in which they are situated. A low-income area gets more funding. Supper can be served to children below the age of 19. Longer programs can provide both supper and a snack. With the participation of non-profit private organization, it is possible to feed deserving school children breakfast, supper and a snack.

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