

## Effective after school activities

When there are so many activities on offer, and each one looks as good as the next, how do you gauge the worth and effectiveness of these activities? Sure, you want an activity that junior enjoys. But, we really cannot afford to waste time on pleasure for pleasure's sake, do we? There needs to be a grain of gold somewhere in there. Given below is a list of characteristics that any good after school activity must possess.

Clarity in objectives and goals is the first important thing. What does the course offer? How does it propose to achieve the results? How many kids make up a batch? Ask questions. After all, when you are dishing out the dough, you really need to understand what you are getting in return.

A good after school activity will provide lots of opportunities for the young to increase their level of understanding of complex concepts. This is true of recreational activities too. Learning to pitch a ball, or dance to a tune - regardless of the activity involved, the child should be encouraged to grapple with and conquer new concepts. This not only keeps boredom at bay by challenging the child, but also builds up his self-confidence. Development of academic, personal and social skills is one of the prime aims of an after school activity. As the skills develop, the child's self-esteem also increases.

After school activities are all about boosting a child's sense of competence. Good and effective after school activities promotes the resilience of youth and encourages them to grow stronger, be it mentally, emotionally or physically.

Safety is one of the first requirements of an after school activity. The staff should be qualified, adequate and alert. Never put your child in a program where safety is a matter of accident instead of a matter of priority. The staff should be friendly and should have a positive relationship with the child. Therefore, the program should have professional and trained staff that loves to interact with children. The program should maintain a cooperative and supportive attitude and a structured environment. Participation and collaboration as opposed to competition and antagonism must be encouraged.

Some programs involve the children in planning activities and making decisions. Adults often forget to get the opinion of their children. By giving the children an opportunity to voice their opinion, programs become fun activities that children are motivated to participate in. Young people

thrive when they are listened to, respected and allowed to contribute their mite.

Routine evaluations are an important part of after school programs. If the child does not benefit from a class, don't waste time being over-optimistic. Try something new.

You are now ready to look for the perfect after school activity for your child. But don't let us forget that having fun is also an important part of growing up. The child deserves a few hours of pure delight. Remember, all work and no play, .....

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