

# How after school programs benefit children and their educational experience

[Family](#), [Children](#)



As societies continue to modernize and become more complicated, the pressure to work harder and to succeed also increases especially so with stiffer competition brought about globalization.

Because of this, most families have both parents working to support their financial needs. With both parents busy working, many of the studying children become susceptible to engage in unpleasant activities without adults attending or monitoring them after school.

Because they often return to an empty house, they can freely engage into any activities regardless of whether they are beneficial or dangerous to them.

And true enough, the prime time for juvenile crime during school days, where children were either the perpetrators or victims, is at its peak between from 3 PM to 6 PM. “ The crimes that occur then are serious and violent, including murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.” (Newman, et al, 2000, p2)

In response to this pressing concern and relieve parents of their worries about their children’s safety and proneness to commit crime, after school programs were designed to prevent the children away from trouble and instead engage them into more productive activities that are beneficial to their overall growth and development.

After School Programs

After-school programs are special activities conducted regularly in the hours after school designed for children to learn new skills and contribute for their development as responsible people or adults.

According to U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, after school programs can be classified under four broad categories namely: Academics & Enrichment, Community Service Projects, Field Trips and Physical Activity & Nutrition.

Academics & Enrichment refers to extra-curricular activities that are incorporated in the students' academic programs such as arts, Civics & Government, Health & Safety, Math, Science and History among others. An after school program in science for instance engages the students to television viewing of the Space program of NASA.

Community Service Projects pertains to activities that are directly linked to community service. A popular after school program under this category is Peace Corps, an independent US federal agency that sends students and other volunteer workers abroad to work in organizational entities i. e. governments, NGO's and schools in the areas of education, business, technology, environment among others.

Field Trips are excursions for students that permit them to have a first hand experience of what they learn in school. This includes a visit to Zoos, museums and parks. It affords students first hand experience of concepts, ideas and other things that helps enhance the learning experience. For one, seeing a picture of lion in the book is different from seeing a real life lion in Zoo.

Finally, Physical Activity & Nutrition refers to programs that are related to sports i. e. basketball, athletics, exercise nutrition i. e. culinary arts and cooking and health. A category in health is made to give emphasis to its importance. Human life is our highest value and the concept of health is fundamental to life. And this must start in the basic education of the youth.

### Benefits of After School Programs

It keeps children on the Right Track. The children's engagement or involvement in after school programs dissuades children from antisocial or delinquent activities and becoming victims of crime and violence, which predominantly occurs approximately during after school hours. " Latchkey" children or those who are expected to stay at home alone after school are at high risk of health hazardous behavior such as substance abuse i. e. drugs, smoking and alcoholism, because there are no adults to guide them appropriately. (Chung, 2000) " An idle mind is the devil's playground".

Children without adult guidance tend to experiment on things out of curiosity such as smoking or taking drugs which can eventually lead to vice or addiction. Being busy helps children to stay out of trouble. (Kessler, 2000, pp40-42)

After-school programs can shift the attention of children from such vices to positive and healthy alternatives. Finally, it helps in decreasing television watching thus preventing sedentary predilection that leads to obesity, or the absorption of violence that is freely accessible in the media.

It enhances Academic Achievement. After school programs serve to supplement and complement the formal learning that academic institutions provide in school. Seeing things in real life or concepts in their actual applications allow children to see the value of education thereby fostering interest of studies.

After school activities also are directly involve in skills building and developing such as reading. " Some program is intended to enhance work-study habits, social skills, social consciousness, working with peers, following instructions, and problem solving". (Fashola 2001, p28). The more enthusiastic children are on their studies and the more they are given the right skills for learning improves the quality of their academic learning and achievement

It promotes social development. The social exposure provided by after school programs help children to deal with people more appropriately. This includes improving how they conduct themselves as a person and in relation to others, which in turn boosts their self confidence.