



FINDING AFTERSCHOOL CARE

Options

If you have a neighbor or relative willing to care for your child until you get home from work, wonderful! If you don't, there are several options that vary in cost and activities:

- LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTERS OR ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE YMCA OR BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS, IN WHICH THE STUDENTS ARE BUSED TO THE OFF-SITE LOCATION
- SCHOOL-BASED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE SCHOOL
- AFTERSCHOOL CARE PROVIDED BY AN OUTSOURCED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
- SPECIALIZED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS THAT FOCUS ON SCIENCE, THE ARTS, OR A PARTICULAR SPORT

Like many working parents, you probably breathed a big sigh of relief when you stopped paying daycare tuition for your preschooler. But don't put that checkbook away so quickly.

Public school is in session until about 2:30 or 3 p.m. Unless your work schedule coincides with school hours, you will need a childcare solution to bridge the time gap.

Evaluating afterschool care

Would you like the program to be highly or loosely structured? An afterschool care facility that allows children independent play for three hours is different from one that allocates time for homework, tutoring, or lessons.

Consider the personality of your child. Some children need more stimulation, while others may be tired at the end of the school day and prefer a slower-paced curriculum.

Some questions you might ask:

- What activities are offered? Are they age-appropriate?
- If the location is off-site, is transportation provided to and from the off-site location?
- If the location is off-site, how far is the facility from home?
- Are the caregivers licensed?
- Do the programs charge fees for late pickups?
- Will my child be around children he or she already knows?
- Is the facility open when school is canceled or closed?

Chances are you're already familiar with hunting for care if your child spent his or her preschool days in daycare. At least this time you don't have to worry about diapers!