

School-age children need quality care and guidance both before and after school hours. Programs should have trained supervisors and other staff who understand the particular needs of the school-age child. It is important that your child will be well-cared for in a safe and enriching environment. When visiting a program, speak to the supervisor about any questions or concerns that you may have.



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United Way of
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Selecting
Before and
Afterschool
Programs

Before and after school care programs are offered in a variety of locations. Some are in your child's school and others are in out of school locations like the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs or community centers. Many programs are free or subsidized, while others charge tuition. Some programs are small and focus on a set of specific activities like sports or the arts, while others provide a wide choice of activities. The New Jersey Office of Licensing inspects and licenses most school-age programs; check to see if your child's program is licensed.



Adapted from NJSACC: The Statewide Network for New Jersey's Afterschool Communities. www.njsacc.org

When selecting a program here's what to look for:

Health and Safety

- Are staff members responsive to individual health and dietary needs of children?
- Does the program provide healthy snacks and/or meals?
- Is the play equipment safe?
- What are the procedures for administering medication?
- Do they know each child's interests, personality, culture and home language?
- Do they treat children with respect and listen to what they have to say? Do they appear to be happy?
- Do they assist students with homework? Is completion of homework part of the daily schedule?
- Do they use positive techniques to guide children's behavior? Do you agree with the program's discipline policy?
- Are children well supervised during indoor and outdoor play? Is the staff to student ratio between 1:10 and 1:15 for children six and up?
- Is the program supervisor knowledgeable about working with school-age children?
- Do staff members receive training and have experience working with school-age children?
- Is there a program supervisor on-site for both before and afterschool programs?

Learning Environment

- Are the facilities clean and have adequate heat, ventilation, and light?
- Does the facility have space for large group activities and quiet space to read or study?



- Is there a balance between planned and self-chosen activities?
- Is there comfortable furniture for relaxing?
- Do the children have a chance to play outdoors? Is outdoor play supervised at all times?
- Is there a variety of outdoor play equipment?
- Are there interesting, age-appropriate activities? Are there plenty of supplies for each activity?

Administration

- Is the program open during school vacations and on early release days?
- Does the program operate full days in the summer?
- Do staff members communicate with parents regularly? How?
- If the children will be picked up by a bus or van, will there be someone other than the driver to provide supervision?
- How is staff screened? Are references checked for all staff who have access to children, including people like custodians, aides and bus drivers?
- Has the program achieved accreditation through the National School-Age Care Alliance?