

After School

After-school activities benefit your preteen

Middle schoolers often have access to after-school programs either at school or in the community. Many such programs are academic. Others help your child do better in school in other ways. Regular attendance in such programs may be worthwhile.

In fact, research shows that regular attendance in after-school programs promotes:

- Better social skills. This includes the ability to communicate and solve problems.
- Better performance in school. That includes higher grades and more completion of homework. Also seen: Not dropping out and more attachment to school.
- Healthier habits. That includes less cigarette and drug use.

To help your child get these benefits:

- Find safe transportation. Some after-school programs include bus transportation. If not, your child may be able to get home in a car pool or community bus.
- Consider home schedules. Of course your child has responsibilities at home. Try adjusting these perhaps twice a week so your child can attend a program.
- Enlist other adults. A program run by adults your child knows and trusts is ideal. But if not, find an adult leader he can respect.
- Look for a program that interests your child. At the least, ask him to give it a chance.

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