

Choosing an After School Program Checklist

How do you determine which program is best for you and your family? Bringing this checklist along when visiting programs may help you. We also encourage families to ask child care programs whether they have earned or are working toward national accreditation or BrightStars Quality Rating.

★ A Healthy and Safe Environment

- Are the indoor and outdoor spaces for children and youth safe and free of hazards?
- Are there procedures for handling emergencies?
- Do adults and children/youth wash their hands before eating or handling food and after using the bathroom?

★ A Stimulating Environment and Opportunities to Practice Emerging Skills

- Are children and youth exposed to math and reasoning, language and reading, and science or nature activities?
- Do children and youth have the opportunity to learn new skills and work on long-range projects?
- Do children and youth have frequent opportunities to be active both indoors and outdoors?

★ Low Child to Adult Ratios

- Does the program meet Rhode Island licensing standards for supervision of the children and to support the learning and development of each child? (See the *Family's Guide to Getting Started*)

★ Welcomes and Includes Families

- Does the program welcome families any time children and youth are in care?
- Does the program provide parent-staff conferences?
- Does the program make families aware of program policies and practices?

★ Trained and Qualified Staff

- Do staff have any formal education and professional preparation to work with school-age children?
- Does the program director have any formal education and professional preparation to manage the program and to work with school-age children?