

YMCA OF GREATER SEATTLE

SCHOOL AGE CARE HOMEWORK PROGRAM

In a recent local survey, the majority of families whose children are currently enrolled in the YMCA school age care programs identified homework support as a high priority. This reflects the findings of a 2004 national survey that determined that more than 1 in 3 parents say they'd go out of their way to find an after-school program that provides supervised homework time. By extremely wide margins, low-income and minority parents are considerably more likely to want activities and program that emphasize homework and learning. And surprisingly, about 3/10 youth say they would very much like an after-school program that provides homework help!

We now know that a structured homework program supports the building of developmental assets in children. It specifically boosts a commitment to learning, teaches positive values and bolsters positive identity. Studies have shown that in fact, that the number of developmental assets a youth possesses appears to have as much or more influence on a youth's academic achievement as other demographic factors and school reform strategies. For over 125 years, the YMCA of Greater Seattle's commitment to a single mission has required that we continually respond to community needs. In keeping with this tradition, the YMCA of Greater Seattle has developed a structured *Homework Program* has four major areas of focus:

1. Assist children with their homework in a safe, quiet and supervised environment
2. Assist children in the development of a commitment to learning through engaging in homework daily
3. Partner with parents and teachers to promote the core value of responsibility and the development of good study skills.

Program Description:

- The *Homework Program* will take place daily after school at every YMCA school age program.
- The program will be scheduled for a period of time from 30-45 minutes. The length of time should be determined by the individual characteristics of the children being served. For example, programs with young school age children (5-7 year olds) may have the homework program scheduled for less time than a program serving primarily older school age children (8-12 year olds).
- Basic supplies for completing homework should be made available to all children. Basic supplies may include pencils, notebook paper and calculators and a dictionary.
- Staff will be actively engaged with homework support and focus on teaching children responsibility for their work and good study skills. Staff may assist a child in learning how to use a calculator, look up a word in a dictionary or

teaching the process to arrive at an answer. Staff should not simply give a child the answer to a problem.

- If a child is experiencing difficulty with an assignment, the staff member is expected to communicate this information to the child's parent. In some cases, YMCA may be able to communicate directly with school personnel with concerns. In all cases, YMCA staff should be aware of family preferences for their child's the use of this time and communicate any requested information.
- The *Homework Program* encourages each child to make responsible choices for their time. When a child does not have school work or completes their work quickly, a minimum of 2 additional choices that support academic learning will be available. Examples of these choices are; creative writing, journal writing, "Question of the Day" activities; mindbenders, quiet reading. These choices should be planned in advance and, at a minimum, rotated weekly.

Example of school age care **Homework Program**

(This is a guide only. Each program will need to customize their specific schedule to accommodate school dismissal times, program closing times, facility/playground usage availability and other factors.)

3:00-3:20 Children arrive, snack is served. Table activities/interest areas available for children as they arrive; finish snack

3:20-3:30 Transition to Homework Program; describe available daily choices and emphasize responsibility and fun of learning, organization of homework materials

3:30-4:15 Homework Program

Choice A: Completion of individual homework assignments

Choice B: Quiet literacy activity; silent reading, listening to tapes

Choice C: "Word Learn": Activity sheet with words that children are related to the theme. For example, if you were studying "Indians of the Northwest", words could be yew, buckskin, totem, smelt, or harpoon.

Other possible activities: crossword puzzles, logic puzzles, mini-mysteries, math fact drills and math challenges.

4:15-4:40 Physical Fitness and Activities

4:40-5:40 Afternoon Discussion and Project

5:45-6:00 Literacy activity