

**PARTNERING IN
COMMUNITIES
PARTNERS**

Iowa State University
Extension

Community! Youth
Concepts

John R. Grubb YMCA

Children & Families
Urban Ministries

Employee & Family
Resources

Making Connections

**PROVEN
PARENTING
PRACTICES**

Good nutrition helps
kids learn

Physical activity helps
kids learn

Sleep helps kids learn

Routines at home help
kids learn

Learning at home
helps kids learn at
school

Setting limits with
love helps kids learn
at school

Community programs
help kids learn at
school

Dare to Excel: Good Enrichment

APRIL 2011

DES MOINES COMMUNITY

Enrichment Activities are Important

Even though a child's time at school is essential, there are some equally important lessons for children to learn outside of the classroom.

When children become involved in activities beyond school, it can **promote positive youth development** and improve a child's overall sense of well-being.

Enrichment activities offer children the opportunity to learn more about themselves and their world; give them a place for emotional support from caring adults; show them new ways to learn responsibilities; help them to feel important; and guide them to become successful and productive adults.



Childhood involvement in organized enrichment activities can help a child want to stay in school.



Here are some family enrichment tips for parents:

- Parents can call local community centers and talk with other parents to find out what is being offered in their area.
- Once a child has decided on an activity, allow them to have 6 weeks to warm up to a new group or leader.
- Parents are the single most influential factor in a child's life. Believing in their abilities helps teach them to believe in themselves and try new things.

Resources and Information



Iowa 4-H Center Summer Camp works to empower youth to meet their full potential. The center has created a fun and interactive environment that spans over a 1,100 acre estate in the Des Moines River Valley for either day or week long camp activities. Their phone number is (515) 795-3338. For more information visit their website at www.extension.iastate.edu/4hcenter/summercamp/index.php. Through the Iowa 4-H Foundation, families can gain financial assistance for kids to attend camp. Registration **deadline is May 1st**. **Apply today!** Please see this website for more information: <http://www.iowa4hfoundation.org/financial/applications>



Living History Farms Day Camp opportunities feature a wide variety of fun indoor and outdoor adventures on 500 acres. They are located 10 miles NW of downtown Des Moines off of Hickman Road. Their phone number is (515) 278-5286. For more information visit their website at www.lhf.org/daycamp.html



Jester Park Equestrian Center has a variety of horse activities for children and families. They offer riding lessons, trail rides, birthday parties and camps among many other horse related activities. They are located at 11171 NW 103 Court near Granger, IA. Their phone number is (515) 999-2818. For more information visit their website at www.jesterparkec.com

Enrichment Opportunities



- **Plan** a trip to the Zoo.
- **Set up** a trail ride on horseback from one of your local camps.
- **Plan** a family game day.
- **Try out** a new musical instrument.
- **Sign up** for dance lessons.
- **Join** a book club.
- **Take** swimming lessons.
- **Visit** the Science Center.
- **Join** a school club.
- **Try out** for a sports team.
- **Take** gymnastics.
- **Join** a scouts club.
- **Volunteer** in your local community.
- **Join** an after school program.
- **Visit** a local museum or art center.
- **Go** on a tour of the Capital Building.

Enrichment Activities can improve your child's grades.



Attending an after school program on a regular basis is linked to positive outcomes for children.

Impact of After School Programs

Benefits for children who attend after school programs:

- Gives children the opportunity to stimulate their brains, develop self-confidence and strengthen their belief that they can accomplish goals.
- Promotes personal and social skills.
- Improves a child's ability to handle emotions and have good relationships with others.
- Lowers a child's risk of developing problem behaviors and drug use.
- Enhances a child's bond to their school and academic performance.
- Increases the likelihood that a child will participate in school and complete homework.

What After School Programs can do for parents:

- Provide a safe environment for children to be if parents work late.
- Give the security that your child will be in a structured and supervised environment.
- Offers your child new learning opportunities that can improve their overall attitudes and how they to conduct themselves.

The Balance of Not Over-Scheduling

Although, enrichment programs are important for children, it can also be valuable to recognize that children also need some time that is not scheduled.

- Children can become overwhelmed and depressed if they have too many responsibilities and activities.
- Research suggests no more that a child should spend no more than 6-9 hours per week doing extracurricular activities per week.
- Making a schedule can help children and parents feel more relaxed and less stressed.
- Remember to plan time for homework and playtime!



For More Information:
 Marc Peterson
 (515) 957-5780
 marc@iastate.edu

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
 University Extension



Iowa State University Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.

Content developed by Sarah Bickelhaupt, ISU Human Development & Family Studies and Marc Peterson, 4-H Youth Development

DARE TO EXCEL: GOOD ENRICHMENT