



Connect with Kids

# After the Bell

## Fact Sheet

### WHAT WE KNOW

According to the experts, the peak hours for juvenile crime are between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. Those are the after school hours when as many as 14 million children are left unsupervised by parents or other responsible adults. This means that not only are young people the victims of crimes, they are also perpetrating the crimes. Unsupervised time leaves plenty of room for trying new things such as smoking, drugs and sex.

Studies show that after school programs can teach children of all ages the skills they need to succeed in life and can seriously curb dangerous risk taking during the “crime prime time hours.” They teach kids how to take initiative in addressing challenges, working in teams, recognizing and developing their emotions, self-motivation, and becoming independent.

### WHAT WE CAN DO

Schools, community centers, religious centers and various community groups need to develop and offer places and programs during the afternoons for students of all ages. Quality after school or youth development programs can turn those challenging hours into a time for academic achievement, enrichment, community service time and one of the best things of all – fun. A strong after school program should have the following characteristics:

- Frequent interaction with adults, both in group settings and as individuals
- Quiet areas as well as areas where noise is accepted
- Clear responsibilities (such as setting up and cleaning up)

- Projects that extend the school day academic curriculum
- Opportunities for projects in science, math, arts, etc.
- Physical activity, especially for non-competitive games as well as competitive sports
- The arts — visual, music, dance and drama
- Multi-cultural experiences
- Connections to real world experiences
- Opportunities to teach younger children
- Problem solving and reasoning skills practice
- Time for discussion groups, and expressing feelings
- Community service opportunities

### RESOURCES

*Afterschool Now,*  
[www.afterschool.org](http://www.afterschool.org)

*Child Trends Data Bank,*  
[www.childtrendsdatabank.org](http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org)

*Fight Crime: Invest in Kids,*  
[www.fightcrime.org](http://www.fightcrime.org)

*William T. Grant Foundation,*  
<http://web.aces.uiuc.edu>