



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Charity Eleson 284-0580 x. 302
Linda Kleinschmidt 284-0580 x. 306
Julie Laudrie 284-0580 x. 303

***Schools Out!* Report Released on After-School**

Madison –After school programs can be an effective tool to help close the achievement gap and provide safe and constructive environments for children while their parents are working, according to a report released today by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF). The ***School's Out!*** report provides an overview of effective after-school models, research on the results of after-school, particularly for at-risk children, and information on the availability of after-school programs in communities around Wisconsin.

“Numerous studies have recently shown the achievement gap in Wisconsin schools is one of the most significant in the nation,” said Charity Eleson, WCCF executive director. “Quality after-school programs have been shown to improve school performance, work habits and school attendance. This evidence underscores the importance of making more extensive public and private investments in after-school programs in Wisconsin.”

The ***School's Out!*** report cites Wisconsin’s relatively high rate of parents with children in the workforce: 71 percent in contrast to the national average of 61 percent. According to the report, supervision of middle-school aged students by after-school programs the likelihood that those students will smoke, drink or abuse drugs by half, when compared to their peers not in after-school programs. Further, after-school programs play an important role in helping close the achievement gap between low-income and higher income children, according to the report.

“The difference between the school week and a parent’s work week can be as much as 25 hours,” said Eleson. “Supporting working families and meeting the needs of their children in a safe, supportive and challenging environment is the objective of after-school programs.”

While after-school programs help support the current workforce by providing a safe and constructive environment for children, they are also helping develop the future workforce by inspiring children to be more confident learners, according to the report.

“After-school programs help keep kids safe. Between 3 to 6 PM, children are more likely to be victims of crime or engage in high risk activity. For middle school children, being supervised after-school reduces by half the risk that they will smoke, drink, or abuse drugs,” said Stan Kocos, chief professional officer, Boys and Girls Club of Fond du Lac. “Providing a safe place to go, grow, and learn is our goal – after-school helps us achieve this for our kids.”

The release of the ***School's Out!*** report is concurrent with the national and Wisconsin celebration of the “Lights On After-School” event held today promoting the critical importance of quality after-school programs in the lives of children, their families and their communities.

View the full ***School's Out!*** report at: <http://www.wccf.org/pdf/schoolsout.pdf>
For information on “Lights On” events in Wisconsin visit: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>

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