

Reading Resources

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School Age Notes. Monthly newsletter, twelve issues: \$33.95/yr. www.school-agenotes.com

Musson, Steve. *School-Age Care, Theory and Practice*. Addison-Wesley, 1999.

Together We're Better: A Practical Guide to Including Children of ALL Abilities in Out-of-School Time Programs. Kids Included, 2004.

BANANAS Resources

- Bimonthly *BANANAS* Newsletter featuring articles and events for providers and parents
- Provider workshops on topics of concern to family child care providers and center staff, some offering college credit
- Information, technical assistance and support for providers caring for children with disabilities
- Parent referrals to child care programs
- Advice on health and safety issues, program development, parent-child relationships, child development and behavior, and legislative advocacy
- Free Handouts and for-sale publications on parenting, child care and children
- A Resource Reference Library of child care books and publications and an Audio Visual Lending Library of videos and other media materials

Community Resources

- **Family Day Care Associations** offer monthly meetings for mutual support and exchange of ideas. Many also offer other services including toy lending libraries, bulk buying and group liability insurance programs. BANANAS has a list of the current Association contacts near you.
- **California School-Age Consortium** is a support network for people working in the school-age child care field. It also hosts a major conference and a number of regional conferences each year. www.calsac.org
- **The Child Care Law Center** publishes handouts and publications useful to child care providers, and offers legal education and technical assistance. www.childcarelaw.org
- **The Center for the Child Care Workforce** is an advocacy organization working to improve the wages, status and working conditions of the child care profession. www.ccw.org

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BANANAS HANDOUT

Can I Care For a School-Age Child?

A Question For Child Care Providers...



As more parents return to the work force or to school, there is a need for additional child care situations which care for school-age children after school. At BANANAS, we receive many requests from parents who need care for their school-age children. We are always looking for additional referrals and welcome new school-age providers to our files. We hope that this Handout will be useful to those of you who are thinking about caring for elementary school children....

Who Should Consider Doing School-Age Child Care?

Almost any type of child care program can offer school-age child care services including:

- **Family Child Care** – Family child care providers can serve school-age children exclusively or along with younger children.
- **Center-Based Care** – Programs for preschoolers which have additional licensable space can consider offering school-age care. Child care agencies can also contract with public or private schools to operate programs on a school site.
- **In-Home Caregivers** – Some parents are looking for in-home caregivers to care for just their own children or to offer care in the parent's home for school-age children from several families in a shared babysitting arrangement. (Contact BANANAS for our Handout on Shares available for \$3.00.)

How Can I Find Out If There Is a Need For School-Age Care In My Neighborhood?

Providers can call BANANAS, 658-7353, for information about the supply of local school-age child care programs. Some public or private schools have a number of school-age child care programs nearby, but in many neighborhoods there are very few choices for parents.

When Are Services Needed?

During the school year, children need part-time care before and/or after school. Kindergartners frequently need longer hours of care. There is also a need for full-time care during school holidays and summer vacation.

How Do The Children Get To and From Care?

Some providers walk the children to and from the school site. Others supervise the children as they walk the first few weeks and then allow older children to walk in a group. Some programs use vans to transport children to and from several school sites. How children get to and from school is always an important consideration for parents and one for which new school-age programs need to plan carefully.

What Kinds of Programs Are Offered?

The manner in which care is given varies a great deal. Some school-age child care settings may be actual extensions of school with emphasis on homework and tutoring. Others are recreational with many organized activities. Still others may be very loosely structured, allowing children to relax and “hang out.” Some are a combination of all of the above. Whatever the approach, the most important element is the adults who actually plan and provide the care.

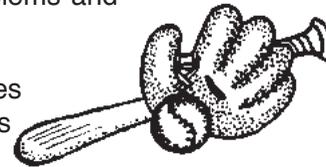
What Fees Should I Charge?

You will need to consider: the hours children are in care, whether you have extra costs or provide extra services, whether you need to hire an employee to help you provide the care and what to charge on those days when school-age children attend full-time. Providers can also call BANANAS to find out the range of fees being charged by other school-age programs in their immediate neighborhood.

Things To Consider When Planning Your Program

While caring for school-age children is still child care, it is very different from caring for younger children. You need to consider all the usual curriculum and business aspects of child care. But, you also need to pay special attention to the developmental needs of older children and to consider how you would include children with disabilities (the Americans with Disabilities Act applies to child care programs.) Call BANANAS for information and support about including children with special needs. All school-age children need:

- A reasonable amount of freedom in terms of space, time and choice of activities
- The chance to participate in planning their own rules, routines and projects
- The opportunity to work and play with other children
- The opportunity to be alone and work independently
- Support from positive adult role models
- Challenges to their creativity and imagination
- The chance to practice academic skills in a variety of ways
- Freedom from competition; a time to relax and have fun
- Encouragement to solve problems and build skills
- A varied program which includes both quiet activities and vigorous physical exercise



(Adapted with permission from a list in *Starting School Age Day Care: What Are The Considerations* by Bellis, et al. Davidson County School Age Task Force, Nashville, TN, 1978.)

*NOTE: These days school-age children are apt to want to spend a significant amount of time with electronic toys and forms of entertainment. As a quality child care provider, it is doubly important for you to work at capturing their interest and imagination with more physical and creative activities.

Additional Considerations

As a provider, you are a very important link between the child’s school and home. Setting up a system to insure that all important communications, books and projects actually get from school to home is crucial:

- Provide each child with a “cubby” or locker for storing school books and notes to parents, etc. Help the children get into the habit of taking school-related items home every day.
- Introduce yourself to each child’s teacher and the school principal and secretary. This will facilitate communication.
- Decide whether or not you will include a time to do homework as a part of your schedule. Communicate your decision to parents. If children will be working on homework while they are in care, you will need to provide a quiet space for them to work and be available to give them at least a minimum amount of assistance with their assignments.
- Post information on any special school activities such as Open Houses and holiday events on a parent bulletin board. Encourage parents to add information and events.
- Always check with the school or parent when a child does not show up at your program to make sure the child is really “absent” and not somewhere else after school.
- Make parent contracts, emergency cards, permission forms, etc. a serious part of your program. Children should not be enrolled without a signed parent contract. (See BANANAS’ Handout on Parent-Provider Contracts.)
- Prepare your neighbors and resolve any of their anxieties about noise, messy activities, increased traffic. When it’s possible, include neighbors in the plans for your program. They may have great ideas to contribute!