

newsworthy trends

Studying After-School Programs

(NAPSA)—The right after-school activities may help your child do better during the school day. Yet research shows most teens go straight from the classroom to the TV room. The average teen in the United States is home alone after school at least two days per week. A large number of those teens spend an average of five hours daily in front of the TV, on the computer or playing video games, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

In addition, a recent survey by Kelton Research found that nearly 75 percent of American college graduates believe today's teenagers have far less supervision than previous generations. When asked what they thought today's teens were doing after school, 60 percent of adults agreed that kids were engaged in non-social activities such as playing video games, watching TV or surfing the Internet. So what can working parents do? Experts recommend looking into after-school programs.

After-school Programs

Nine out of 10 adults (89 percent) agree that getting teens involved in an after-school program will help them become more creative, responsible and happier as they mature. Also, studies have shown that the majority of teens would watch less TV and play fewer video games if they had other options after school.

"We know that teens are happier, more successful and better



After-school programs provide teens with a positive alternative to watching TV and other non-social activities.

adjusted when they have the opportunity to interact with others after school in a positive, supervised environment," says Emil Brolick, president of the Taco Bell Foundation.

Through its partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Foundation has provided more than \$15 million toward teen after-school programs nationwide—helping more than a million teens since 1995. The Foundation has created 400 teen centers and supports more than 1,000 leadership and development groups for youth ages 14 to 18. The groups, called Keystone Clubs, elect officers, choose their own activities and implement community service projects.

It is hoped such programs will help today's teens avoid being identified with a term that is older than they are: "latchkey kids."

For more information, visit www.teensupreme.org.