



SCHOOL'S OUT

Challenges and Solutions for School-Age Programs

TRACY GALUSKI, PhD, AND ARLENE RIDER, PhD

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ExtendedEDNotes
Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom

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Published by ExtendedED Notes,
an imprint of Gryphon House, Inc.

PO Box 10, Lewisville, NC 27023

800.638.0928; 877.638.7576 [fax]

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2020933590

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Dedication

Tracy Galuski

This book is dedicated to my children, Genevieve and Erik, who are the most amazing school-agers I know. Each chapter was written with them in mind, as I thought about what type of program would meet their unique, funny, and very individual needs. It is also dedicated to my husband, Larry, who kept them busy on more than one occasion so I could write. I'd like to recognize my children's 4-H leaders, who provided such great examples of the type of activities that children enjoy in out-of-school environments. Through making sushi and baking apple pies, sewing and crafts, and building rockets, lamps, and birdhouses, these leaders generously shared their time and talent with me and my kids. Lastly, I'd like to thank Arlene for being such a supportive and engaged partner in this project. I continue to enjoy our regular meetings to discuss the book content and share stories about work and life in general.

Arlene Rider

This book is dedicated to many special people in my life. Without my husband, Donald's, support and encouragement, this entire process would not have been accomplished. I also dedicate this book to my children, Tony, Gina, Amanda, and Scott, and my grandchildren, Lola, J. J., Anthony, Matthew, Lucas, Lydia, Cameron, Audrey, Logan, and Liam, who all supported my journey and creatively vied for computer time, babysitting time, or time with their "Mima." In addition, this book is dedicated to my sister, Sandy, niece Becky, and aunt Marisa, who provided the emotional support, and to Tracy, whose dedication and perseverance made my longtime dream of writing this book a reality.

Together, we especially dedicate this book to all the professionals working with children in before- and after-school care, summer camps, and youth programs. They are generous with their time with children and steadfast in their commitment to provide quality programming. We recognize all the technical-assistance agency professionals, directors, mentors, and school-age credential instructors and advisors who encourage and inspire. All these professionals are wonderful gifts to our nation's children, and they work very hard to honor the precious gift they have been given: time to get to know some really amazing kids.

Acknowledgements

School's Out: Challenges and Solutions for School-Age Programs was written to be a resource to those working in the field of before- and after-school care, summer camps, and other youth services. The book is organized into twelve chapters that address topics of interests in working with children, families, and colleagues and in providing quality programming.

Several individuals contributed to the development of this book. Erin Broderick, capacity-building director, New York State Network for Youth Success, recognized the importance of providing a resource that includes challenges and solutions for those working in the field. Erin reviewed and gave extensive feedback that enriched the content in several chapters. Darla Fulmer, school-age child care registrar and professional development coordinator for the Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam Counties, New York, provided regulation information and national recommendations for the health and safety portion of our book.

Acknowledgement must be given to all the New York State school-age credential candidates whom Arlene advised over the past eighteen years. They taught her so much, including but not limited to how programs on a budget encourage children to make wonderful art from recyclable items and how small programs with only one staff member learn to optimally supervise children while allowing freedom within structure. They all shared the struggles they endured as they worked toward offering quality programming. Learning about these challenges and experiences helped Arlene to understand how professionals working in this field work tirelessly—and often with few available materials or resources—to nurture and support children's development, to encourage children to fully explore their interests, and to build confidence and competence in all children.

We wish to thank all the men and women working with children in this field who continue to share their experiences, challenges, solutions, and love of working with children so others in the field may grow. Thank you, Candace Thompson and Sara Rickan from the Child Care Resource Network in Buffalo, New York. This book is our hope and vision that those working in the field will gain knowledge and will develop new skills and ideas that will allow them to continue to provide quality programming.

Be generous with your time and your resources and with giving credit and, especially, with your words. It's so much easier to be a critic than a celebrator. Always remember there is a human being on the other end of every exchange and behind every cultural artifact being critiqued. To understand and be understood, those are among life's greatest gifts, and every interaction is an opportunity to exchange them.

—Maria Popova, writer and literary critic

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Introduction

There are a multitude of programs for school-age children across the country that serve various needs in each community, from offering affordable care for working families to building and supporting academic success, health, and fitness to providing recreational activities and enrichment opportunities that nurture all the development of children. Each program is staffed by a wide variety of professionals, including the mom of three who is returning to work after her children have grown and the retiree who is hoping to give back to the community by working with youth.

This book is designed for practitioners who serve children in licensed school-age child-care programs. However, it's important to note that school-age care is a segment of a much larger field that includes before- and after-school programs, summer programming, as well as development and enrichment programs for youth from ages five to eighteen and for children with special needs up to age twenty-one.

Each chapter begins with a scenario that outlines a challenge often experienced by practitioners from a wide variety of programs. We will offer tips, suggestions, and solutions through practical examples and professional recommendations. We particularly want to provide guidance for those who will be starting a school-age care program. The book is divided into three major sections.

- In the first section, we define high-quality school-age care, including the role of the administrator, and explore how to develop safe, high-quality school-age programming and curricula based on the interests, skills, and needs of the individual children.
- In the second section, we review the developmental characteristics of children, including physical development, social and emotional learning, and cognitive development, and how these characteristics affect a program.
- The final section highlights opportunities for creating a comprehensive program, including building behavior skills, developing family partnerships, and providing summer camps.

While our goal is to provide an overview of school-age care and the challenging aspects of caring for children, this book is not intended as a complete resource guide and cannot cover every situation that practitioners are likely to face. Practitioners will need additional hands-on training, support, and resources to succeed.

Welcome to the rewarding field of school-age care!



SCHOOL'S OUT, BUT ARE YOU READY?

You may have noticed out-of-school-time care is burgeoning. As more families have two working parents, states and school districts are swooping in to provide supervision of children before and after school, during school breaks, and during the summer. And, as these programs grow, they continue to adapt to new approaches of out-of-school learning. Gone are the days of dodge ball and swing sets!

School's Out: Challenges and Solutions for School-Age Programs will cover all bases of creating a quality program:

- What quality school-age care looks like
- Forms of out-of-school-time care
- Standards, credentials, accreditation—what they are, and how to get them
- Licensing, regulations, health, safety, risk management, supervision, and nutrition
- Roles of the teachers and administrators
- Creating child-friendly spaces
- Planning a vibrant, engaging curriculum
- Family engagement
- Common issues experienced by school-age care providers, including behavior and conflict management

THE LEARNING DOESN'T STOP JUST BECAUSE SCHOOL IS OUT!



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GH 15969

U.S. \$34.95

ISBN 9780917505294

53495 >



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