



Fall Coat Weather Is Here

Colder temperatures and jacket weather is here. Kids tend to be



Jackets or long sleeves are needed when the temperature is below 60 degrees.

more active when playing outside and don't feel that they need a jacket.

At AFTER SCHOOL if it's 60 degrees or colder children are required to wear their jackets. The 60 degree rule comes from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF).

When the snow falls and sledding becomes an outdoor play activity, we require kids to wear boots and snow pants along with their jackets, mittens and hats.

Is Your Child Growing Up Too Fast?

If you're worried about your child's exposure to sexual and violent content and images in popular culture, there is help. Educator, author and activist Diane Levin has written "So Sexy So Soon: the New Sexualized Childhood and What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Kids."

Levin points out the ways children are harmed by sexualized messages from the media and popular culture—increased gender stereotyping, increased violent content linked to products targeting boys and an increased use of sexual content and imagery to sell products to girls.

What can parents do?

- Make good decisions about the toys you buy or allow your children to play with.
- Create rules about TV shows,

movies, web sites or video games that your children are allowed to see.

- Help children develop a broad range of interests, skills and behaviors that get beyond gender stereotypes.

Levin spoke to AFTER SCHOOL staff and other youth workers at the Goodman Center in September.



Wisconsin Youth Company Executive Director Kay Stevens, left, with author Diane Levin.

We're All About Families

Dictionaries define a family as everything from "a fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children" to "a locally independent organized crime unit." Oh boy. That's a mouthful. At AFTER SCHOOL we don't attempt to define families. We just make sure they are all welcome.

I was at Muir AFTER SCHOOL last month taking pictures at their fall family gathering. It was a Halloween party theme so the kids were in costumes. The kids helped set up for the party and there was a place where you could read scary books next to a pretend campfire; there was a table where you could build and decorate a gingerbread-style house out of graham crackers and frosting and another table where you could get your face painted with a pumpkin or a bat. Pizza and punch were available too so families could eat dinner together.

All our AFTER SCHOOL

sites have fall family gatherings. It's a tradition. Like a family cookout, picnic or holiday, we gather, eat together, play games, tell jokes and exchange news. It's so wonderfully ordinary that you almost don't notice what else is happening.

There is warmth in the exchanges between parents and staff; between staff and children and from child to child. There is a sense of connection. Muir families belong to Muir AFTER SCHOOL and Muir AFTER SCHOOL belongs to the AFTER SCHOOL family.

Family means a lot of different things to different people. At AFTER SCHOOL it simply means all of you folks and your kids. You're family. You're why we're here.

Jinny Phillips
Communications Director



Staff Learn About Inclusion

Dane Region AFTER SCHOOL staff are learning more about inclusion through KIT, Kids Included Together, a national online training resource. Staff take four core modules--Introduction to Inclusion, Respectful Accommodations, Supporting Positive Behavior and Partnering with Families.

"Inclusion isn't just about working with kids of differing

abilities," said AFTER SCHOOL Division Director Nora Bergeon-Capps. "It's about the community you create."

Staff learn specific strategies and techniques for managing behavior that can be applied to all children. KIT offers individual training as well as organizational training. For more information visit www.kitonline.org.