



AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

FOREST PARK • SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025 AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Program Dates:
October 28, 2024 – May 2025

Monday – Thursday
3:30 PM – 5:50 PM

Late Pick-Up will result in disciplinary action

The Afterschool Enrichment Program will be
CLOSED one Wednesday Bimonthly.



Table of Contents

	Page Number
Welcome; Who We Serve; Days and Hours of Operation; Sign-in Procedures; Attendance and Participation	3
Program Contact Information; Dismissal Policy; Pick-Up Policy; Early Pick-Up Policy	4
Sign-Out Procedures, Walking Policy, Late Pick-Up Policy, Late Pick-Up Disciplinary Action Policy	5
Program Closing; What to Wear	6
What NOT to Wear; What to Bring; What NOT to Bring; Food; Transportation; Fund Reporting Requirements; Parent/Guardian Contact Information; Medical Information	7
Mandated Reporter; Program Cancellation; Afterschool Enrichment Programming (PBL); Homework and Reading; Enrichment Activities; Program Partners; Homework and Reading Time Guidelines	8
Behavior Management	9
Behavior Management Strategies; Bullying Policy; Parent Suggestions	10

Welcome

Thank you for registering your child in the Springfield Parks and Recreation Afterschool Enrichment Programs. We are committed to providing innovative programs, and learning experiences for participating children. The Afterschool Enrichment Programs are designed to introduce children to a number of new opportunities and activities that build upon the skills they learn throughout the school year. With this in mind, our programs have been carefully planned and developed for your children.

Parents and guardians should note that this program is not a drop-in program, but rather an enrichment program with a specific schedule and sequential activities planned for the school year.

When families and staff build positive, trusting, working relationships and communicate regularly, children benefit. We hope that this *Family Handbook* will help build an understanding between you and our staff. Most importantly, there needs to be good two-way communication between us. We will keep you informed about your child's experiences, achievements, new skills, and any special concerns or problems. We welcome your feedback and involvement in your child's Afterschool Enrichment Program for their benefit.

Who We Serve

The Parks and Recreation Afterschool Enrichment Program is open to children in grades 1st-5th. Children must attend the school at which the program takes place. We are unable to accept kindergartners or children who attend other schools into our program.

There is no registration or participation fee to enroll in the Afterschool Enrichment Program. Registrations are accepted on a rolling basis until all spots are filled.

Days and Hours of Operation

The Afterschool Program will begin on Monday, October 21st, 2024

The program runs **Monday through Thursday from 3:30 PM to 5:50 PM.**

The last day of the program will be May/June 2025 (exact date dependent upon funding)

Sign-in Procedures

The Afterschool Program begins at 3:30 PM.

Children are dismissed from their classrooms to the Program's designated meeting area, which varies by site. Children should report directly to the Afterschool Program to sign in with the staff.

If a child is absent from school or leaves school prior to dismissal and does not return to school during the school day, they are not permitted to participate in the program that day.

Attendance and Participation

Children are expected to attend the Afterschool Enrichment Program every day. All programs are thematic and include sequential activities; therefore, if participants are absent for a week or more, they will not fully benefit from the program. If a participant must be absent, program staff must be notified in advance in writing.

If a participant does not meet the attendance requirements, they may be dropped from the program.

We encourage all children to take part in every aspect of the program. It is our belief they will grow from the experience. No child will be forced to participate but he/she must attend and be respectful of those who choose to participate.

Program Contact Information

Please use the numbers below if you need to contact the Afterschool Enrichment Program.

Bowles Elementary School Site Cell: (413) 335-5381 Address: 24 Bowles Park, Springfield, MA 01104	Carmen Melendez, Program Coordinator Cell: (413) 426-5639 Email: CMelendez@springfieldcityhall.com
Pottenger School Site Cell: (413) 335-2097 Address: 1435 Carew Street Springfield, MA, 01104	Angela Parisi, Program Coordinator Cell: (413) 355-6229 Email: aparisi@springfieldcityhall.com
DeBerry School Site Cell: (413) 313-6333 Address: 670 Union Street Springfield, MA, 01109	Lena Cisero, Program Coordinator Cell: (413) 313-5457 Email: lcisero@springfieldcityhall.com

If you cannot reach your Program Coordinator, please call the Educational Coordinator:

Chiarina Sarno
Educational Coordinator
Cell: (413) 313-1355
Email: csarno@springfieldcityhall.com

Other Contact Information:

Randy Piteo
Assistant Director of Parks, Buildings and Recreation Management
Phone: (413) 750-2711
Email: rpiteo@springfieldcityhall.com

Website: <http://www.springfield-ma.gov/park/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/City-of-Springfield-Parks-Recreation-Afterschool-Program>

Dismissal Policies

Due to the nature of our programming, we ask parents/guardians to be punctual and follow the pickup times. **Dismissal from the Afterschool Program is from 5:30 PM to 5:50 PM.**

Pick Up Policies

5:30 PM – 5:50 PM

- Dismissal takes place at each site between 5:30 PM – 5:50 PM.
- Children **MUST** be picked up no later than 5:50 PM.
- Children should not be picked up prior to 5:30 PM.
- Dismissal policies are strictly enforced and there will be disciplinary action for late pick-up.
- Detailed late pick-up disciplinary action policy on page 5-6

Early Pick-up Policy

Children should not be picked up prior to 5:30 PM.

In certain situations, early pick-up may be necessary for a child (such as doctor appointments). In these situations, the parent/guardian must provide written documentation in advance, or in extenuating circumstances the parent or guardian calls the site cell phone and speaks to the Site Supervisor to notify them of the need for an earlier pick-up time.

Parents/guardians should note that during specific activities an early pick-up disrupts programming

Sign-Out Procedures

On the first day of program parents/guardians will be notified of the pick-up procedures for their program site. **Please note: At many of our sites the main entrance to the building is not used by our program, so it is important to check in with the site staff on the first day to identify the pick-up area.**

Individuals picking up children must report to the designated pick-up area at dismissal time (5:30 PM -5:50 PM) each day and signed out by a program staff member.

During dismissal (5:30 PM -5:50 PM) **children will only be released to individuals identified on their registration form**, which is signed and authorized by a parent/guardian. **Said individual must be age 18 or older and must present a valid picture I.D. Staff must be informed in writing of any changes to children's pick-up information.**

Walking Policy

Children are not permitted to walk home from the Afterschool Enrichment Program unless with an adult. All participants must be signed out by an adult listed on their registration form.

Late Pick-Up Policy

All participants must be picked up no later than 5:50 PM each day. If a child remains in the program after 5:50 PM the site staff will contact the parents/guardians listed on the registration form. If the site staff is unable to get a hold of the parents/guardians the site staff will contact the emergency contact and the authorized pick-up individuals. It is of the utmost importance that parents/guardians provide current contact information for themselves, emergency contacts, and pick-up contacts and that the site staff is able to get a hold of someone and ensure the child will be picked up from the program.

If the parent has not been reached after a 30-minute window, the Department of Children and Family will be notified that the child has not been picked up.

Late Pick-Up – Disciplinary Action Policy

There will be a 'Three-Strike' Late Pick-Up Disciplinary Action Policy for any child picked up after the dismissal time of 5:50 PM. Individuals picking up children must report to the designated pick-up area at dismissal time (5:30 PM -5:50 PM). All participants must be picked up no later than 5:50 PM each day, as we reserve the right to hold staff meetings at 5:50 PM. **Parents/guardians, who routinely violate the pick-up time policy, will jeopardize their child's continued participation in the program.** Written documentation of each occurrence will be provided upon request.

1st Offense	Written Warning by the Site Supervisor or Program Coordinator. Warning will be documented including the date and nature of the offense and placed in the participant's file.
2nd Offense	Written One Day Suspension by the Site Supervisor or Program Coordinator. The written suspension document will be placed in the participant's file.
3rd Offense	Written Dismissal from Program by the Site Supervisor or Program Coordinator. The dismissal from program form will be placed in the participant's file.

Written Warning

A Written Warning is the first step in discipline. Written warnings will be dispensed to the parent, guardian and/or pick-up agent upon the time of late pick-up. The written warning serves as an initial strike (first of three) and jeopardizes the participant's attendance in the DPBRM Afterschool Enrichment Program. It serves as a reminder for the next steps in the late pick-up disciplinary action policy. The Site Supervisor or Program Coordinator will complete a warning form. Written warnings will be recorded in the participant's file.

Suspension

After the initial 1st Written Warning a subsequent Written Warning enforcing a One-Day Suspension of the participant(s) from the DPBRM Afterschool Enrichment Program will be administered to the parent, guardian and/or pick-up agent at the time of late pick-up. This Suspension will serve as a second strike (second of three). The Site Supervisor or Program Coordinator will complete a Written One Day Suspension Form. The Written One Day Suspension Form will be recorded in the participant's file.

Dismissal

The third and final step of discipline is a Written Dismissal from the DPBRM Afterschool Enrichment Program. Permanent Dismissal of the participant(s) from the DPBRM Afterschool Enrichment Program will be administered to the parent, guardian and/or pick-up agent at the time of late pick-up. This Dismissal will serve as the third and final strike (third of three) as the previous disciplinary actions have been exhausted, and due to the frequency of late pick-ups, the participant(s) will not be welcomed back to this year's DPBRM Afterschool Enrichment Program. The Site Supervisor or Program Coordinator will complete a Written Dismissal from Program Form. The Written Dismissal from Program Form will be recorded in the participant's file.

Appeals

The parent and/or guardian of the participant(s) wishing to appeal disciplinary action may submit a request in writing for a hearing to the Director of Recreation. Appeals will be forwarded to the Executive Director of the DPBRM for review.

Once Every Other Month the Afterschool Enrichment Program will be CLOSED

The Afterschool Enrichment Program will be closed one Wednesday every other month. This allows our staff to meet for professional development and training. Parents/guardians will be notified and reminded of the exact dates via the program calendar and flyers.

When the program is closed the Parks and Recreation Department staff will not be at the site to supervise children or arrange for transportation for the children. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to arrange for alternate pick-up or afterschool care for children on days when the Afterschool Enrichment Program is closed. Violation of this policy will jeopardize the child's continued participation in the program and could result in pick-up fees as determined by the Parks and Recreation Department.

What to Wear

All children need to wear their standard school uniform and athletic shoes to the Afterschool Program. **Children should wear sneakers** or bring sneakers with them, in their backpacks, to the program each day. Children who do not have proper footwear will be unable to participate in certain activities, including activities taking place in the gym. Some activities take place outside. Children should also bring a jacket or sweater appropriate for the weather. All items brought to the program should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

What NOT to Wear

Hats (permitted outside only), sandals, flip-flops, and open-toe shoes.

What to Bring

Children should bring their homework, and reading books each day. Children should also bring a sweater or jacket appropriate for outdoor activities and sneakers or athletic shoes if they do not wear them to school.

What NOT to Bring

Children should not bring expensive items to the Afterschool Enrichment Program. This includes cell phones, toys, iPods, iPads, hand-held game systems, and jewelry. **We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

Food

Snacks will be provided at all sites. **No outside food is allowed in the program** unless the child has food allergies or special dietary needs (must be noted on the registration form).

Transportation

There is no transportation provided for the Afterschool Enrichment Programs.

Fund Reporting Requirements

In order to offer the Parks and Recreation Enrichment Programs, we have to meet state requirements, including a Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (SAYO) of students by their teachers and program staff. These assessments will not become part of your child's school record; they will be considered privileged and confidential information. They will be used to help individualize the Afterschool Enrichment program to better meet the needs of individual children and to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Parent/Guardian Contact Information

Parents/guardians **must provide working phone numbers** for themselves and emergency contacts which include cell phone numbers. The numbers provided must be for someone who is **18 years of age or older** and can be reached **immediately** in the event of an emergency or to pick the child up from the program.

Parents/guardians **must also provide working phone** numbers for the authorized pick-up individuals listed on the registration form. These individuals will be contacted in the event the child is not picked up during the designated dismissal time. Failure to provide working phone numbers could result in the child's removal from the program.

Medical Information & Medications

The Afterschool Enrichment Program does not have access to school medical records or medication information. Parents/guardians must provide Afterschool Enrichment staff with all necessary medical information about the child and complete the required paperwork for the child to self-administer medication.

The DPBRM is not equipped or staffed to administer medication to children. Children must be able to administer their own medication and the medication must be in its original bottle with the original label that includes the child's name. During registration parents/guardians must complete a permission form to self-administer medication for any medication the child needs to have during the program day. Please see the Program Coordinator regarding medication storage.

Mandated Reporter

All staff are mandated reporters as determined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are legally bound to report any incidents in which we have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of any child under the age of 18.

Program Cancellations

In the event of an emergency or inclement weather, program cancellations will be posted on TV 22 News, and on the Recreation Division's office phone at 787-6434.

When school is closed there is no Afterschool Enrichment Program. Additionally, if the school closes early due to inclement weather the program will also be closed.

AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING

Project Based Learning (PBL)

The Afterschool Enrichment Programs offer fun-filled, challenging, hands-on, project-based enrichment activities. The Enrichment staff follows a PBL curriculum that is based on the interests and abilities of the children in the group. PBL themes include art, science, sports, health and wellness, reading, literacy, and more. Children are engaged in active and inquiry based-learning through hands-on identification and response to a question. In all of our themes, literacy is an important focus area.

Homework and Reading

At each Afterschool Enrichment Program site, approximately 30-45 minutes of homework time is offered each day. During homework time our site staff will be available to assist children with their homework, however, keep in mind that we are not a tutoring or homework help program with enough staffing to provide one-on-one homework help.

If children do not have homework to complete, they will have the option to read during this time. We have a variety of books offered at each site for children of all reading levels. Children are also encouraged to bring books from home.

Enrichment Activities

Other activities offered during the Afterschool Enrichment Program include team-building, games, athletics, arts, social-emotional skill-building, and literacy.

Program Partners

The Afterschool Enrichment Programs partner with a variety of local agencies and programs to enhance enrichment activities. Partners may visit programs to lead activities, support literacy efforts, or present on a topic of interest to the children. All partners are supervised by our program staff and must adhere to Afterschool Enrichment Program policies and expectations.

Afterschool Enrichment Program

Homework and Reading Time Guidelines

The Parks and Recreation's Afterschool Enrichment Program is a program focused on project-based learning. The majority of your child's time in our program will be spent learning through hands-on projects and activities. We will offer approximately 30 minutes of homework help and reading time per day.

1. The focus of the Afterschool Enrichment Program is project-based learning.
2. During this time children can opt to complete homework or read.
3. The purpose of homework help is to get your child started with homework, not to complete all assignments.

4. During homework help time staff will assist your child with the homework assignment selected by your child. Staff will help your child prioritize their assignments for that day.
5. Children may miss some homework help or reading sessions due to project-based learning activities, which is the focus of our program.
6. Pencils, erasers, lined paper, markers, crayons, glue, and scissors will be available for children to use to complete their homework assignments. Children should return supplies at the end of homework help. If your child needs additional materials to complete their homework it is their responsibility to bring those materials.
7. Children are expected to follow program policies and norms during homework and reading time. Children who do not follow these policies will face consequences as outlined in our Behavior Management Plan.
8. The Afterschool Enrichment Program is unable to provide one-on-one tutoring and academic support. Our staff will assist children with homework directions, provide examples, and review completed work. Staff will not provide your child with answers.
9. Children will sign in and out of homework help. Parents/guardians can review this sign-in/out during dismissal.

Behavior Management

As outlined by the Department of Public Health: *“Discipline and guidance shall be consistent and based upon an understanding of the individual needs of the child.... staff shall direct discipline to the goal of maximizing growth and development of the child and for protecting the group and the individuals within it”.*

The Parks and Recreation Afterschool Enrichment Program Behavior Management Plan is set in place to provide all participants with a positive experience. In order to ensure the quality of this program and the safety of participants and staff, **we expect all participants** to adhere to and follow all program rules and norms.

The behavior management system is in place to protect each participant’s freedom to learn and have fun as a valued member of our Afterschool Enrichment Program.

Please note we are a separate entity from Springfield Public Schools and do not have access to any medical or behavioral records. **Parents/guardians should share any information that will be helpful in providing programming for your child.** This includes strategies for behavior management and redirection for the child. While we are not staffed or equipped to provide one-on-one programming and behavior management, we will make every attempt to work with the parent and child, within our program limits, to address and redirect unacceptable behavior.

Parents/guardians should also inform the staff if their child is having difficulty at the program. If your child is not following the norms, rules, or limits established for the program, the Site Supervisor and staff need your input. Let them know if changes are occurring at home that may affect your child’s mood or behavior. Do not let potential problems arise and grow.

At each site, children will participate in the creation of site norms, rules, and limits, which will be clearly explained to the children frequently so that they understand them and feel secure that the adults care enough about their safety to enforce them. Appropriate methods of behavior management will be used in dealing with unacceptable behavior.

The following procedures (on the next page) will be implemented when children misbehave or do not follow program rules and limits. The Parks and Recreation Afterschool Enrichment Program staff reserves the right to bypass one or more steps in the process if a situation warrants.

Behavior Management Strategies

- Gentle reminders, re-direction, and offered acceptable choices.
- Time away from the situation with a staff member to discuss what unacceptable behavior was demonstrated and identify alternate appropriate behaviors.
- “Think Sheet” to help the child reflect on their behavior and the consequences of their actions.
- After repeated reminders and discussions with a staff member the child will lose privilege in the program. The occurrence will be documented and requires a signature acknowledging notification from the parent/guardian.
- Repeated defiance of rules and behavior that threatens the physical and/or emotional safety of the child, other children, or staff (i.e., hitting, biting, kicking, throwing objects, or pushing) will result in **suspension (typically 1-4 days) or termination from the program**. The occurrence will be documented and requires a signature acknowledging notification from the parent/guardian.
- **Extremely violent/threatening behavior, housing a weapon, or a child being seriously injured or property being damaged will result in immediate termination** from the program. The occurrence will be documented and requires a signature acknowledging notification from the parent/guardian.

At no time will a behavior incident be dealt with in a demoralizing, humiliating, abusive manner. No child will be subject to neglect, cruel, unusual, severe, or corporal punishment including verbal abuse, ridicule, humiliation, or denial of food. **No staff member will be subject to verbal or physical abuse by a child enrolled in the program. This includes foul language.**

Bullying Policy

The Afterschool Enrichment Program does not tolerate bullying of any kind between participants and/or staff. Many of our participants attend the Afterschool Enrichment Program to help build their social skills and friendships. However, this community building is to be conducted in a positive way and will not include taunts, threats, or physical violence of any kind.

Parent Suggestions

Your questions, suggestions, and concerns are important to the success of the Afterschool Enrichment Program. If your child enjoyed a particular event or activity or you appreciate something special at the program, please tell the staff. Parents/guardians should also notify the staff of any questions or concerns they have. They can notify staff by calling or emailing the Program Coordinator.

We appreciate your suggestions and feedback and look forward to working collaboratively to make this a positive experience for your child.