

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

After School: Active Part Of A Kid's Day, With Clothes To Match

(NAPSA)—According to the Afterschool Alliance, children spend less than 20 percent of their waking hours in school; what happens in the other 80 percent of their time is critical to children's development.

"When school is out and books are closed, it's really easy for kids to fall into the TV trap of spending too much time in front of the tube," explains iVillage parenting expert Michelle Borba. "The fact is, the more kids watch that tube, the more time is lost that could be spent nurturing creativity, learning sports or hobbies, playing outdoors, practicing social skills, reading or just finding ways to entertain and enjoy themselves."

After-school programs are educationally valuable, socially responsible and incredibly positive for America's youth. These programs build self-esteem, enhance social skills, teach sportsmanship and provide exposure to other cultures and people. After-school activities also provide a wide array of benefits to families, schools and the whole community. These programs:

- Keep children of all ages safe and out of trouble;
- Connect learning to more relaxed and enriching activities, thereby improving academic performance as well;
- Offer safe havens where children can learn, take part in supervised recreation and build strong, positive relationships with responsible, caring adults and peers;
- Contribute to raising chil-



Durable, easy-fitting clothes are a key part of after-school activities.

dren's self-confidence as well as academic performance. Both teachers and parents report that children who participate in after-school programs develop better social skills and learn to handle conflicts in more socially acceptable ways; and

- Tackle and reverse the epidemic of obesity in America. By providing physical activity and healthy snacks, kids can have a safe place to play and socialize after school. After-school activities range across the spectrum of youngsters' interests and include outdoor recreation, arts and crafts, sports practice (soccer, basketball, baseball, tennis, football, hockey, etc.), gymnastics, music class, dance, cooking and reading clubs. Because of this, parents should:

- Pick appropriate activities based on their children's interests, age, abilities and how the activities will fit into their schedule;
- Always be conscious of dress-

ing kids comfortably;

- Be sure to expose children to different activities that will broaden their interests and expose them to various activities and other children;

- Equip children properly for activities. For example, if they are playing baseball, be sure they have a glove and cleats; should they be enrolled in arts and crafts, dress them properly so that their clothes are paint and glue friendly; and

- Allow kids to wind down when they get home from school and after-school activities. One popular option for after-school clothing is a brand-new line that has been designed specifically to take kids through their entire day, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The brand is trend right, fresh and kid friendly. It has an energetic spirit and surprising value and can suit any child's needs for the busy and dynamic lifestyle. Crazy 8 cleverly combines incredible value with stylish, kid-appropriate outfits for boys' and girls' around-the-clock, active lifestyles in an elevated yet inviting kid-focused environment. The company's active lines are durable, comfortable and affordable enough so parents don't mind getting them dirty. In addition, the designers have spent a lot of time ensuring that the clothes are not only rugged and durable, but they are also incredibly comfortable and easy for kids to put on.

Crazy 8 fashions are available at Crazy 8 stores and online at www.crazy8.com.