19 Questions to Ask About Afterschool Programs

1. What's the staff-to-student ratio? (The ideal is at least one adult for each 15 students.)

2. How many kids in the program are the same age as my child? What's the age range for the entire program?

3. Does your staff have a background in education, child development or learning and attention issues?

4. How do you handle discipline? How are kids encouraged to resolve conflicts?

5. If the program is school-based: Does the schedule include transition time between school and afterschool? Is there time for socializing and physical activity?

6. Is there a gym or playground, and will kids be supervised at all times?

7. What balance of academic and social activities does the program offer?

8. Do the program activities change often enough that the routine doesn't get boring for kids?

9. How are kids encouraged to try new activities and build new skills? Will my child be learning something new every day?
10. Are there quiet places set aside for when a child needs to do homework or just needs to be away from the larger group?

11. Is there someone available to help children with their homework?

12. If my child uses assistive technology or accommodations, will they be available to him when he does homework?

13. Is there computer/Internet access if kids need it for homework?

14. If the program is school-based: Does the program connect with the school’s teachers or align itself with the curriculum? If so, how does this work?

15. If necessary, could the staff talk to my child’s teachers, or will I need to be the go-between?

16. How will staff provide feedback on my child’s development? How often?

17. What are the hours of the program? What happens if I’m delayed at work?

18. Is there a nurse or another adult certified in CPR and first aid?

19. Will food and snacks be provided? If so, what kind?