

NWT HEALTHY COMMUNITIES Toolkit

*Keep Kids Busy ...
and out of trouble!*

After the school day ends, is when most extracurricular activities take place. Times and program lengths vary, but one thing that remains consistent is that an involved kid is a busy kid. The busier the schedule, the less time there is to engage in trouble.

If a kid is going to get into trouble, they will most likely do so between the time school ends and the time parents arrive home from work. Simply put, filling this unsupervised time with extra-curricular activities gives kids something constructive to do.



Keep Kids Busy...

BUSIER SCHEDULES KEEP KIDS OUT OF TROUBLE!



Aklavik: Lack of Youth in Justice

It was a simple solution for a small community of 600 people located on the Peel channel of the MacKenzie River Delta 113 km south of the Arctic Coast. **“Keep the Kids Busy...and out of Justice.”**

By keeping the kids in the community “really busy” and introducing new activities, it would keep their mind off going to break into someone’s house, or off doing any criminal activity.

The community also credits the participation of the RCMP to the

success of not having to refer any Aklavik children to the local community justice committee in the past 6 months.

By having positive role models, creating new activities, and the revival of Aboriginal Games the children of Aklavik have set new goals and sights on life.

The saying goes “it takes a village” but in this case a community to come together for the children of the future.



Consideration of Extracurricular Activities

Age Matters: The supervision that extracurricular activities provide is just as relevant as the activities themselves. Since kids begin to form their own decisions about right and wrong between the ages of nine and sixteen, the more adult guidance they have during this time, the better. Participation in after-school programs enriches kids and strengthens their self-esteem, making it easier for them to resist dangerous temptations. A kid that focuses all of their energy on baseball and school has little time to engage in drug and alcohol use or run with a gang.

Academics: Focus on academics is an important part of any extracurricular program. Just because kids are throwing a ball around or playing their favorite instruments, doesn't mean that their learning is on the back burner. For instance, many schools only allow students to participate in extracurricular if they pass their core studies and display appropriate behavior in the school environment. Thus, kids place more emphasis on good behavior and making the grade, than they do roaming the streets and looking for trouble.

Balance: There is such a thing as being too busy and the participation in after-school activities can be overwhelming to some kids. This is especially true for students who engage in more activities than they can handle. Activity overload can actually undo all of the good that extracurricular programs provide if a kid has no time for homework or studying. A healthy balance between home, school and after-school programs is essential.





RCMP Const. Sebastian Andrews, who is currently stationed in Fort McPherson, N.W.T., turned heads during a spring carnival festival in Tsiigehtchic, when he participated in virtually every event of the festival.

Jayneta Pascal...

Aklavik's Justice Coordinator, says when it came to preventing youth from committing crimes, Pascal came up with a simple but effective solution: just keep the kids really busy!

Pascal explains that it helped to reach out early to youth to ask them what activities they'd like to take part in.



Find Your Community Champion

Community Champion: RCMP Constable Sebastian Andrews

Const. Sebastian Andrews has been in the North for almost 5 years. Andrews made a name for himself during his prior posting in Tuktoyaktuk.

There, with the sponsorship of Gatorade, he launched an after school fitness program called **Tuk Power**, which regularly attracted groups of 15 to 20 kids in the back of the RCMP garage.

Andrews thinks the program even helped Tuktoyaktuk achieve its zero youth crime rate during his stint.

Andrews says that his approach by policing is partly shaped by his own childhood experience and luckily the RCMP were very supportive - **"that I wanted to give back to the youth."**

Tap in to the Champions or Volunteers in your Community...

1. Motives: Champions or volunteers in your community no doubt have good hearts and believe in your organization's work. But most volunteers have additional reasons for volunteering. Ask volunteers what they'd like to get from their experience, and look for ways to satisfy that.

2. Make Volunteering Convenient: Be willing to work around schedules.

3. Make Volunteering Fun: Ensuring the volunteers get an opportunity to share and be part of the big picture which are likely to include their own motives.

4. Show Appreciation: Every volunteer wants to know that he or she is making a difference and advancing the cause.