



AYS Frequently Asked Questions



About the Agency:

What does AYS stand for? At-Your-School, referring to AYS' convenient locations within school buildings. Our original name was At-Your-School Child Services, which we can still use.

How did AYS start? Three mothers, concerned with the rise in the number of "latchkey" children who went home alone after school, started an after-school program at IPS #70. The program was the first of its kind in Indianapolis.

What is AYS' mission? AYS enriches the learning and well-being of children in a safe, caring and fun environment outside of the school day.

Who does AYS serve? AYS has program sites in Marion, Hamilton, Hendricks, Montgomery and Johnson Counties. For a complete list of program sites, visit <http://www.ayskids.org/programs.html>. A child must be enrolled in the school in order to attend a program located in a school building or live in the school district for our Early Childcare programs.

What in-kind donations are of interest to AYS? AYS appreciates the donations of new or gently used office and program supplies. Check our website periodically for wish list items or ask your Program Director for donations your program may need.

How can I make a monetary donation to AYS? Donate online at <http://www.ayskids.org/donationapp.html>.

Can I serve as a volunteer for AYS? AYS volunteers must be at least a high school freshman, have their own transportation to the program sites, complete a volunteer application <http://www.ayskids.org/volunteerapp.html>, and submit a copy of a recent TB test. Volunteers 18 years old or older must also submit the results of a drug screen and complete a form allowing AYS to run a criminal background check.

About the Programs:

What are the program hours of operation? Program hours vary by location. Before-school and early childhood programs generally begin between 6:30 and 7:00 am, with before-school ending prior to the start of the regular school day. After-school programs begin immediately after the end of the school day. All programs end at 6:00 p.m. AYS programs operate Monday through Friday, excluding Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following day, Christmas Day and New Years Day, as well as other holidays depending on the school district. Many AYS programs operate on school early release days, full-days off, weather delays or closures and school breaks.

How are the programs funded? Program and registration fees fund 70% of AYS' operating costs. Additional funding comes from government subsidies, grants and donations.

What is the staff ratio? For our school age programs the child to staff ratio is 15 to 1. Our kindergarten program child to staff ratio is 12 to 1 and our early childhood program child to staff ratio is 8 to 1.

What do the children do? An AYS program provides a time for children and youth to socialize and learn together in an informal setting. Our staff members plan fun, activity-based learning experiences that support the Indiana State Standards. It is a time for children to practice and review what they learn in school and develop new skills.

Do staff members check the children's homework? No. Staff members may assist and answer questions as needed, but do not check homework daily for accuracy.

Is breakfast provided? A morning and afternoon snack is provided. The AM snack is a small serving of a breakfast item (i.e. poptart or whole-grain cereal and milk/juice). The afternoon snack is usually fruit, small snack and milk/juice.

About the Staff:

What is the hiring process for staff members? All staff members must have a two-year degree or higher and/or experience working with children. Employees undergo reference and criminal history checks, including fingerprinting, drug and TB screens and a physical. Staff members receive 30-40 hours of professional development as well as CPR and first aid, annually.

About the Fees:

When are payments due? On the Friday before the week of service if a family pays weekly. Monthly and per semester options are also available and payments should be made by the first of the month or semester as applicable.

Can I make my payment with cash? No! Cash is not accepted at our program sites. This safeguards both our parents and our Program Directors. Preferred payment methods include money order, checks and credit cards.

What does my registration fee cover and why do I pay it every year? Our registration fee assists in covering a portion of initial program supplies and set up each year and costs of processing enrollment forms.

Why do I have to pay for AYS programs regardless of attendance? AYS staffing levels are determined based on the attendance plans our families select at the beginning of a school year. Program sites must be adequately staffed in order to appropriately care for the children of our enrolled families (regardless if a child can attend on a particular day or week scheduled).

Why should I pay via credit card? Our parents that pay by credit card find it an efficient/easy way to ensure payments are made on a timely basis. One less hassle for a busy week of work.

What are the benefits of enrolling in full-time or part-time attendance plans? Semester, monthly and weekly full-time and part-time plans include attendance for fall break, early release days, morning delays, whole days and snow days.

As a voucher family, why am I required to swipe in and out daily? Payment to AYS from funding agencies is based on the times swiped in/out each day your child is in attendance. Swiping is to be done by the parent or authorized pickup or drop off representative.

Is there a limit on the number of ten-session prepaid passes I can order and use? Yes, you may purchase two a semester. This pass is intended for occasional or emergency use only.

Why does AYS require a change of plan fee and two-week notice for withdrawal? This policy helps our Program Directors know who is going to be attending each day (ahead of time), in order to appropriately plan staffing needs and make snack and supply purchases. While AYS likes to provide flexibility to our parents, the children's safety, security and the quality of our program activities are of utmost importance to us and our families.

Is there any funding available? Yes, based on need. A child must first be registered for a program and then the parent can call the main office to schedule an appointment to see if they qualify for an AYS scholarship. In order to qualify for funding, the Government guidelines state both legal guardians/parents must be working at least 20 hours per week or enrolled in school full time (and meet certain income requirements). See www.childrens-bureau.org for additional information on external funding requirements.

What are the late pick-up fees for my child? There is a late charge of \$1 per minute/per child. This is according to the AYS clock.