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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**After-School Tips for Parents:
Supporting Your Child's Growth Beyond the Classroom**

The school day may end in the afternoon but learning and development continue long after the final bell rings. As a parent, your role in supporting your child's after-school routine can make a big difference in their academic success, emotional well-being, and overall growth. Here are some practical tips to help you make the most of those crucial after-school hours.

1. Create a Consistent Routine - Children thrive on structure. Establish a predictable after-school schedule that includes time for:

A healthy snack

Homework or study time

Physical activity

Free play or creative time

Dinner and family time

A calming bedtime routine

Consistency helps children feel secure and teaches time management skills.

2. Offer Nutritious Snacks - After a long day at school, kids need fuel to recharge. Choose snacks that combine protein, fiber, and healthy fats—like apple slices with peanut butter, yogurt with granola, or whole-grain crackers with cheese. Avoid sugary treats that can lead to energy crashes.

3. Encourage Physical Activity - Whether it's playing outside, joining a sports team, or dancing in the living room, physical movement helps children release energy, improve focus, and boost mood. Aim for at least 30 minutes of active play each day.

4. Designate a Homework Zone - Set up a quiet, well-lit space for homework that's free from distractions. Be available to answer questions but encourage independence. Praise effort, not just results, to build confidence and resilience.

5. Limit Screen Time - While technology can be educational, it's important to set boundaries. Establish screen-free zones or times—especially during homework, meals, and bedtime. Use parental controls and talk openly about responsible digital habits.

6. Stay Connected - Ask open-ended questions about your child's day:

“What was something fun you did today?”

“Did anything surprise you?”

“Is there anything you'd like help with?”

Listening without judgment builds trust and helps you stay in tune with your child's emotional needs.

7. Explore Enrichment Opportunities - After-school programs, clubs, and community activities can spark new interests and friendships. Look for options that align with your child's passions—whether it's art, science, music, or volunteering.

8. Make Time for Family - Evenings are a great time to reconnect. Share meals, play games, read together, or simply talk. These moments strengthen family bonds and provide a sense of belonging.

This article is written by Markaye Russell, Nutrition and Community Health Agent, Ouachita, and Union Parishes. This article is referenced by LSU AgCenter.