

Finding Quality Youth Programs Is As Easy As 1-2-3-4



You already know that it's important to find quality after-school and summer programs for the young people in your life. But how do you know quality when you see it?

First, visit www.SprocketsSaintPaul.org and use the Program Finder to discover programs and activities near your home or school. Then, look and ask for these top four signs of quality:

WELCOMING STAFF Look for upbeat staff members who encourage young people to learn new skills – or strengthen existing ones – by helping youth take on tasks that build confidence and self-esteem. Ask • What are your staff's qualifications? • How far in advance are activities planned?

SPARK Look for young people having fun. Whether it's through physical movement, private reflection or small-group teamwork, participants should be energized, focused, eager and on task. Laughter is a great sign! Ask • Are the activities hands-on? • Do the participants help choose or plan the activities?

BELONGING Look for welcoming, sociable interactions among all the participants. Smiles, eye contact and friendly conversation are good indicators of positive peer relationships. Ask • How are conflicts addressed? • How do you maintain communication and connections between participants, parents/guardians and staff?

SAFETY Look for a clean space with drinking fountains and bathroom facilities nearby, safety equipment (fire extinguishers, first aid kit, emergency phone) readily available and enough room to safely conduct the activities. Ask • Is there an emergency plan? • Are background checks conducted on all staff and others who have access to the space? • Are staff CPR certified? • How do you manage drop off and pick up times?

