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# TODAY

UPPER & CLAIR



# Extended Day Services:



## Time Well Spent for USC Kids



Making friends—  
Olivia Nagel, Kelsey McCown, and Eliza Harrison

Once upon a time, children spent their after-school hours riding bikes in the neighborhood or at a friend's house, all under the watchful eye of someone's mom. Now, with most parents—about 60% of all two-parent families—working away from home, that three-to-four-hour gap between school dismissal and dinnertime can remain wide open and unfilled.



A beautiful day on the playground—left to right, standing: Kayli Fusarini, Sydney Oravetz, Zach Dudas, Jacquelynn Ross, Rachael Mazzie, Jaelyn Petrichevich, Kevin Chrissis; sitting: Rohith Krishnan, Katelyn Sitar, Richie Watzlaff

But thanks to Extended Day Services, working parents of school age kids in Upper St. Clair, Peters Township, and South Fayette know the peace of mind that comes from having their children busy and engaged before and after school hours with supervised indoor and outdoor play, art projects, and old-fashioned fun. "It's the next best thing since the invention of the automobile," says parent Susan March. "It's so nice not to have to worry about your child while you are at work."

Extended Day Services (EDS) is a corporation founded in 1991 by Upper St. Clair residents Burton and Jennifer (Henderson) Roberts, who met at Carnegie Mellon University while completing their MBAs. In 1991, Jennifer, a life-long USC resident and mother of five, took an interest in an *Almanac* story about a parent group petitioning the Upper St. Clair School District for before- and after-school care. She developed a business proposal addressing their concerns and presented it to the school district in March. The following fall, Extended Day Services opened as a pilot program at Streams Elementary, with an enrollment of 15 students. By 1995, EDS had expanded into the Peters Township School District, and in 2000, South Fayette climbed on board. Last year, more than 600 children from the three districts participated in programs run by EDS.



Circle time at Baker Elementary School's K-Plus program with teacher Maggie Nottingham

EDS has centers for children at Baker, Streams, and Eisenhower elementary schools in Upper St. Clair. The cost for before- and after-school care during the school year is about \$75 per week, with tuition reductions offered to siblings in the program.

The majority of EDS staff—about 28 teachers, including seven full-time and 21 part-time—have bachelor's degrees in education or other human services fields, and many have worked as elementary school teachers, including EDS's director Kelly Chaney. A graduate of California University of Pennsylvania, former teacher, and mother of a 16-year-old son, she has been with EDS from the outset, and knows firsthand the benefits of a solid after-school program. "The biggest benefit is that children are able to socialize with supervision. It's important to our parents to know that their children are in a safe, caring environment where they can work on homework, play, and enjoy friends."

Many members of the EDS staff either have their master's degrees, like Maggie Nottingham, who teaches the K-Plus program at Baker, or are in the process of completing their master's in education, like Brendan Lang and Eric Williams, who teach at the Extended Day program at Eisenhower.

The program takes children full-time, part-time, or just a few days a week. "Our program's flexibility is one of the best things about it," says Chaney. "We can accommodate a variety of parents' schedules."



Craft time at Baker Elementary School's K-Plus program—Olivia Nagel, Lexy Wirth, and Pih-Ha Masse

### K-Plus

Kindergarten-age children enrolled in EDS's K-Plus program, which runs opposite the regular kindergarten session, have a busy roster of activities to ensure a full day of creative learning. The K-Plus program follows the district's curriculum, providing early learners with hands-on activities that enhance their lessons in reading, math, science, and social studies. Teachers Maggie Nottingham and Lynne Thompson at Baker Elementary's K-Plus site spent one snowy afternoon focusing on the wonders of the winter season—listing winter foods, clothes, and activities, like sledding, skating, and snowman-making. "The K-Plus program is a great way for kids to transition from preschool to kindergarten, and to make new friends," says Chaney.

### Extending the Day

Every afternoon at Eisenhower's Extended Day program, 80 to 100 elementary-age children begin the after-school day with a snack and socializing.

After a period of recharging, some kids head over to the gym for activity time, where three teachers are running an old-fashioned relay race. EDS teacher Annessa Troutwine passes a blue rubber ball to a pair of giggling girls, who do their best to hop the length of the gym and back again with the ball pressed



Gym time at Extended Day—left to right: Luke Everett, Katie Tyrrell, Ben Haus, Josh Kane, Chris Oravetz

between their backs. Between wild cheering for the jumpers, and the line of kids waiting their turn, the scene looks like a giant Fourth of July picnic—indoors. But when the outdoor temperature goes above 32 degrees, the staff and kids head outside for field games and playground tag. Mt. Lebanon teacher Margie DiGiorno's twin sons, Kenny and Billy, 11, and Joey, age six, especially love a round of touch football. "I love picking them up afterwards when I know they've played hard and had a good time," she says.



A game of playground tag, anyone?—Kevin Muck and Josh Kane

Children enrolled in the Extended Day program choose one of two "tracks" of activities that change every two weeks from blacktop games to team sports, from wiffleball to woodworking, and badminton to beading projects—all at no extra fee.

Extended Day is open on school in-service days and takes full advantage of the opportunity to take field trips to such action-packed locations as the Children's Museum, Fun Fore All, or the Pittsburgh Zoo.

### Summer Camp

When school lets out in June, EDS kids don't have to say goodbye to their friends for the summer. EDS Summer Camp operates daily from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and costs about \$155 per week. It's a whirlwind season, with the same variety of activities offered during the school year, including team sports, cooking classes, arts and crafts, and weekly splash-downs to Scott Township pool and field trips on alternate Fridays to favorite locations like the Carnegie Science Center, Wildwood Highlands, and Fun Fest.



Sidewalk chalk murals at the Extended Day Program—Maddie Groninger and Sydney Oravetz

During the school year, Extended Day Services welcomes children of differing abilities—and their support providers—to all of their programs. In the summer, EDS Summer Camp extends the same welcome to children from the Watson Institute's summer program, Camp WISP, ([www.thewatsoninstitute.org](http://www.thewatsoninstitute.org)) a model inclusive therapeutic summer camp program for children with autism, Down syndrome, and related disorders. Each year, a small group of Watson kids come to experience a typical camp with typical campers. The experience has been a great success on both sides notes Chaney. "The kids are quick to make allowances for the "different-ness" (of the Watson kids) and go out of their way to make them feel more comfortable," she says. "It's been an incredible experience for everyone."

One father put it this way: "Our son looks forward to spending time with his friends at EDS. When we see a smile on his face as he gets ready to go to, or is coming home from the program, it reassures us that the time he has been away from us has been well spent." ■

For additional information about Extended Day Services, contact Kelly Chaney at 412-221-1980 or visit their website at [www.ExtendedDay.com](http://www.ExtendedDay.com).



Creating pretzel-marshmallow masterpieces—Jacquelyn Ross, Will McVay, Alec Miller