

Free after-school program offered to school children in Regina ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

As a working parent, Kristen Ardell is constantly working around her children's schedule.

"I think a lot of people struggle with the cost of daycare," Ardell said. "Especially those initial hours right after school when parents are working until the evening."

Finding the perfect fit when it comes to cost, location and programming for after-school care can be challenging for many parents in Saskatchewan.

After-school programs for school-aged children can cost upwards of \$500 per month in Regina, but the city is trying to alleviate some of those financial constraints.

Recreate YQR is a free, drop-in program designed to offer an adult-supervised place for school-aged children to play and interact with other students after school.

"Parents are quite grateful that they're able to send their child to this program and they don't have to worry about covering the cost," said Hayley Schnell, community consultant for social inclusion with the City of Regina.

The program, which is modelled off the city's summer program PlayEscapes, allows children to play, learn and keep active in a safe environment that fosters creativity and inclusiveness.

"We've had a lot of success with our summer programs," Schnell said. "We really wanted to offer something that was similar to that over the course of the school year."

Organizers say the pilot program has been well-received with dozens of children attending the drop-in programs.

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