

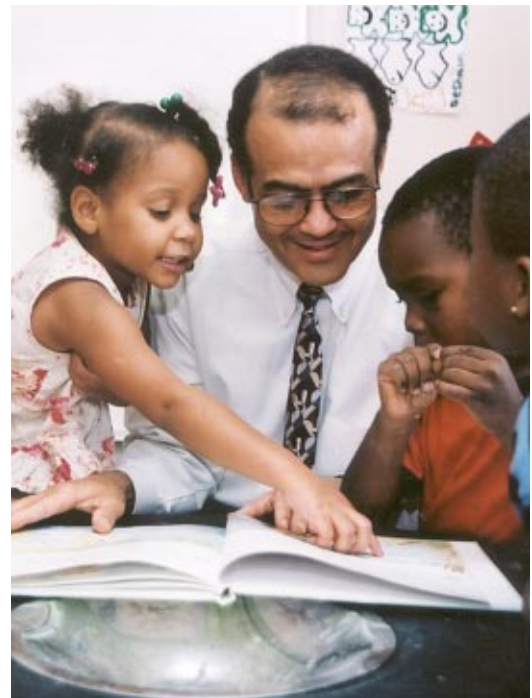
Achievement

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Caring for Children After School

With 1.1 million youth ages 5 to 14, North Carolina has an enormous need for school-age child care. At the forefront of efforts to expand and improve the quality of after-school care in North Carolina is Dr. Eddie Locklear, associate professor of 4-H Youth Development with N.C. State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

These efforts are aimed at helping address key issues of education, health and safety: Teen sexual activity resulting in pregnancies most often occurs during after-school hours, and nearly half of all teen violent crimes are committed between 2 and 8 p.m. Other risky behavior, such as drug and alcohol abuse, increases among youth who spend after-school hours unsupervised. Involved in efforts to train after-school care providers, address licensing issues and expand the availability of quality after-school care, Locklear is now sharing his experience with others across the United States as director of the national 4-H Afterschool Program. The program's goal is to generate high-quality after-school programming that meets local priorities. The Afterschool initiative, building on 4-H's strengths, means after-school programs nationally can use 4-H program materials, create 4-H clubs at after-school sites and receive child development training for after-school staff working with youth ages 5 to 18 or grades K-12. More than 4.2 million young people — most ages 5 to 14 — participate in 4-H after-school programs at more than 260,000 sites nationwide, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). Funded by JC Penney Afterschool Fund, a nonprofit organization that provides support to America's leading after-school groups, 4-H Afterschool will work with urban, suburban and rural communities.



Dr. Eddie Locklear directs the National 4-H Afterschool Program.

"4-H has been developing and expanding after-school programs for decades," Locklear said. "But this is an effort to increase our collaborations with others who are interested in youth development." 4-H Afterschool offers customized programs and technical assistance, including a series of user-friendly resource guides with learn-by-doing curricula that cover a range of high-interest topics, from team building and leadership to mechanics, aerospace and computer science. Locklear said the research-based, ready-to-use curricula help youngsters achieve social, emotional, physical and academic success. "Regardless of the type of after-school program you want to build," Locklear said, "4-H Afterschool helps you use your community's uniqueness to provide extraordinary, hands-on learning opportunities for youth to develop valuable life skills while having fun." 4-H Afterschool is a collaboration among the Cooperative Extension System — state land-grant universities, state and county governments and CSREES — and the National 4-H Council. For more about 4-H Afterschool, visit the Web site www.4hafterschool.org.

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