After School Programs in the 21ˢᵗ Century: Their Potential and What It Takes to Achieve It

An Issues and Opportunities in
Out-of School Time Evaluation
Research Brief From

Harvard Family Research Project

Priscilla M.D. Little, Christopher Wimer, & Heather B. Weiss

November 2007

**Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education**

A Decade of Investments in Learning What Works in After School Programs

Introduction

The country is now engaged in public discussions about how to best expand time and opportunities for children and youth in and out of school in order to actively and effectively support their learning and development across the day, throughout the year, and from kindergarten through high school. With leadership from the C.S. Mott Foundation's Time, Learning, and Afterschool Task Force, as well as from other national efforts—including Harvard Family Research Project's complementary learning framework, the Annenberg Smart Education Systems, Edmund Gordon's work on supplemental education, and the Center for American Progress' research on extending the school day and year, to name only a few—*educators, researchers advocates, and policymakers alike are in the process of rethinking how to best educate our nation's young people and prepare them to be productive citizens and family members in the 21st century.*

Debate continues about the range of academic, social, and other types of knowledge and skills that children and youth will need to succeed as workers, citizens, and family and community members in a global world. However, most would agree that this list of knowledge and skills includes the kinds of outcomes that research suggests can be achieved through *sustained participation in well-structured and well-implemented after school programs and activities.* There is much to be harvested from the past decade of research about what works in after school, and this knowledge can inform discussions about rethinking time, learning, and after school in the 21st century.

In the past 10 years, as funding for and participation in after school programs has steadily grown, there has been substantial discourse about the relative purposes of and benefits from participation in after school programs. Are programs supposed to enhance academic performance and promote socio-emotional growth and social skill development? Prevent risky behaviors and keep children safe? Prevent obesity and promote healthy behaviors? Fortunately, after school has grown up in an era of outcomes and accountability, and therefore, 10 years of growth in after school funding has been accompanied by 10 years of investments in increasingly sophisticated and nuanced research and evaluation studies and syntheses. These investments provide a reasonable basis on which to both assess after school programs' potential to achieve positive results and identify promising program practices and conditions likely to maximize those results across a range of outcome domains.

Well-implemented programs can have a positive impact on a range of academic, social, prevention, and other outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children and youth. However, that is not the end of the story. Not all research and evaluation studies have shown benefits, and this has provoked much useful discussion and research inquiry about the conditions necessary to deliver effective services that improve educational, social, prevention, and health outcomes.

Furthermore, flagship evaluations and reviews such as *The After School Corporation of New York* (TASC) evaluation; ongoing evaluations of *LA's BEST, Citizens Schools*, and the *New York Department of Youth and Community Development*-sponsored after school programs; *The Study of Promising Afterschool Programs*; and *Durlak and Weisberg's meta-analysis*, to name a few—as well as

Harvard Family Research Project's Out-of-School Time Program Research and Evaluation Database—are building the capacity of the field to learn from credible research and evaluation data and to use this data to strengthen and inform after school practices. As it matures, the after school field is using the emerging knowledge about what is necessary for quality programming to guide efforts to go to—and achieve positive results at—greater scale.

The 411 on After School: Who, What, When, Where?

Who? National estimates suggest that *about 6.5 million children and youth, in kindergarten through 12th grade,* participate in after school programs nationwide. Nearly one million of these children participate in *21st Century Community Learning Center* programs in 9,634 school- and community-based centers.

What? "After school" is the general term used to describe *an array of safe, structured programs that provide children and youth ages kindergarten through high school with a range of supervised activities intentionally designed to encourage learning and development outside of the typical school day.* The terms "school-age care," "out-of-school time," and "expanded learning opportunities" are sometimes used interchangeably with the term "after school."

After school programs can support working families by keeping children and youth engaged and safe while parents work. After school as we know it today has grown out of three interrelated traditions of school-age child care, youth development, and school-based after school programs. These three traditions carry critical concepts in after school—safety, positive youth development, and academic enrichment and support—and these converging traditions are responsible for a diverse range of after school program goals, such as improved self-image and self confidence, improved academic performance, and improved engagement in learning.

Given the broad range of program goals, it follows that activities offered in after school programs vary widely. They include academic enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, homework help, arts (music, theater, and drama), technology, science, reading, math, civic engagement and involvement, and activities to support and promote healthy social/emotional development.

When? After school programs occur *before and after school, on the weekends, during school holidays, and in the summer.* With the exception of weekend, holiday, and summer programming, most after school programs run for approximately 2–3 hours per day, 4–5 days per week. However, it is important to note that the number of hours the doors are open does not equate to the number of hours children and youth actually attend programs. In fact, *sustained participation is a key challenge facing the field*.

Where? *After school programs occur in a variety of settings*, including schools, museums, libraries, parks districts, faith-based organizations, youth service agencies, county health agencies, and community-based organizations.

About This Brief

Harvard Family Research Project has developed and maintains an accessible national database of after school program evaluations, and this narrative review draws from that set, as well as from recent meta-analyses and syntheses of after school evaluations. While hundreds of after school evaluations have been conducted in the past 10 years and are included in the HFRP database, this review is based on the subset of seminal research and evaluation studies employing an experimental or quasi-experimental design to determine effects. Studies included in this set are evaluations of large multisite and single site after school programs; evaluations of school- and community-based models; evaluations assessing a narrow to a broad range of outcomes; key developmental research studies; and key meta-analyses and research syntheses.[1]

The brief draws on these seminal research and evaluation studies to address two primary questions: (a) Does participation in after school programs make a difference, and if so, (b) what conditions appear to be necessary to achieve positive results? The review concludes with a set of questions to spur conversation about the evolving role of after school in efforts to expand time and opportunities for children and youth in the 21st century.

Does Participation in After School Programs Make a Difference?

The short answer is yes. (A longer answer follows in the section below.) A decade of research and evaluation studies, as well as large-scale, rigorously conducted syntheses looking across many research and evaluation studies, confirms that children and youth who participate in after school programs can reap a host of positive benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas—academic, social/emotional, prevention, and health and wellness. Highlights from seminal studies are arrayed below under key outcomes domains that researchers have examined.

Academic Performance

After school programs are impacting academic performance in a number of ways, including moving the needle on academic achievement test scores. Some after school programs have demonstrated the capacity to do just that. For example:

- A two-year longitudinal *Study of Promising After-School Programs* examined the effects of participation in quality after school programs among almost 3,000 youth in 35 elementary and middle school after school programs located in 14 cities and 8 states. New findings from that study indicate that elementary and middle school students who participated in high-quality after school programs, alone or in combination with other activities, across two years demonstrated significant gains in standardized math test scores, when compared to their peers who were regularly unsupervised after school. Further, regular participation in after school programs was associated with improvements in work habits and task persistence.[2]

- A recent *meta-analysis combined the results of 35 quasi-experimental and experimental studies of after school programs for at-risk youth* and found that programs demonstrated positive effects on both reading and math achievement.[3]

- Evaluations of the school-based *TASC* programs in New York, which emphasize academic enrichment, homework assistance, the arts, and recreation, have demonstrated that participants outperform similar nonparticipants on math test scores and high school Regents Examination scores, as well as high school credits earned and school attendance rates.[4]

- *Foundations, Inc.* operates extended-day enrichment programs before school, after school, and during the summer. Its evaluation of 19 elementary school after school programs in three states found highly statistically significant improvements in both reading and math scores between pretest and posttest.[5]

- The *national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center* (CCLC) *programs* did not detect statistically significant effects of participation on achievement test scores at either the elementary or middle school levels. However, in the random assignment elementary school study, social studies grades were higher by a statistically significant margin. Grades in other subjects generally appeared higher for treatment students, but the differences were not statistically significant. In middle school, participants exhibited a statistically significant improvement in school attendance compared to comparison group members. [6]

Several other studies confirm this message: After school programs *can* improve academic achievement. However, *dozens of studies of after school programs and initiatives repeatedly underscore the powerful impact of supporting a range of positive learning outcomes, including academic achievement, by affording children and youth opportunities to learn and practice new skills through hands-on, experiential learning in project-based after school programs*. For example:

- Evaluations of *Citizen Schools*, which provides hands-on apprenticeships, academic skill-building activities, leadership skills development, and homework help found that participants outperformed comparable nonparticipants on many measures of academic success, such as selecting higher quality high schools, school attendance, promotion rates, lower suspension rates, and some measures of grades and test scores. [7]

> **Academic Outcomes**
>
> Academic outcomes associated with participation in after school programs include:
>
> - better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations
> - higher school attendance rates and less tardiness
> - less disciplinary action (e.g., suspension)
> - lower dropout rates
> - better performance in school, as measured by achievement test scores and grades
> - greater on-time promotion
> - improved homework completion
> - engagement in learning

- Evaluations of *LA's BEST*, a multicomponent school-based after school program serving over 19,000 students, consistently demonstrate that participation in LA's BEST programs improves school-day attendance. Participants report higher aspirations regarding graduation and postsecondary experiences than nonparticipants.[8] A longitudinal study that examined the dropout rates of former LA's BEST participants revealed that participation in LA's BEST for at least one year in grades 2 through 5 had a positive impact on high school dropout rates, and even greater participation resulted in a further reduction of dropout rates. These findings were particularly salient for low-income children.[9]

- In addition to focused academic content, the *TASC* evaluation revealed that including a broad variety of enrichment activities, in addition to activities devoted to developing skill building and mastery, was one of the primary common features of high-performing programs.[10]

- A review of academic achievement programs conducted by *Child Trends*, as well as first year findings from an *evaluation of 550 out-of-school time programs sponsored by New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development* (DYCD), conclude that developing a highly focused academic component aligned with academic goals may be important for producing good outcomes. However, an all-encompassing and exclusive focus on academics may be detrimental. In other words, the more multifaceted after school programs are likely to reap the biggest academic gains.[11]

- A *meta-analysis of 93 studies of summer school programs* found that they led to increases in participants' knowledge and skills. In particular, programs aimed at remediation of learning deficiencies and programs focused on learning acceleration both produced positive impacts on youth's knowledge and skills.[12]

It is important to note that the common thread among all these studies is not just that the programs intentionally tried to improve academic performance and therefore offered academic support, but that they combined it with other enrichment activities to achieve positive academic outcomes. Thus, extra time for academics by itself may be necessary but may not be sufficient to improve academic outcomes. Balancing academic support with a variety of engaging, fun, and structured extracurricular or cocurricular activities that promote youth development in a variety of real-world contexts appears to support and improve academic performance.

Additionally, programs that expect to impact academic outcomes need to be intentional about doing so and align their programming accordingly. *This finding points to the importance of moving beyond outcomes evaluations to examine the conditions under which positive outcomes are best achieved.*

It should also be noted that not all after school programs do (or even should) increase youth academic performance. Indeed, the sections that follow point to the many nonacademic impacts of after school participation.

Social/Emotional Development

Beyond academics, numerous after school programs focus on improving youth's social and developmental outcomes, such as social skills, self-esteem and self-concept, initiative, and leadership skills. For example:

- A random-assignment evaluation of the *Go Grrrls* program in Arizona, which provides girls with structured group sessions built around tasks considered critical for the healthy psychosocial development of early adolescent girls in contemporary society, found that the program improved girls' body image, assertiveness, self-efficacy, self-liking, and competence.[13]

- The *Siblings of Children With Developmental Disabilities After School Support Program*, which combines group discussion, structured and unstructured recreation, and homework help, found positive impact on participants in outcome areas like lower depression, lower anxiety, and increased self-esteem.[14]

> **Social/Emotional Outcomes**
>
> Social/emotional outcomes associated with participation in after school programs include:
>
> - decreased behavioral problems
> - improved social and communication skills and/or relationships with others (peers, parents, teachers)
> - increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy
> - lower levels of depression and anxiety
> - development of initiative
> - improved feelings and attitudes toward self and school

- Evaluations of mentoring programs also reveal that participation in programs primarily targeted at supporting student academic performance actually can significantly impact social/emotional development. For example, *Across Ages* pairs older mentors (age 55 and older) with middle school youth in and out of school, and couples the mentoring component with community service, a life skills curriculum, and family activities. An evaluation of Across Ages revealed that youth in the mentor group reported significantly higher self-control and self-confidence levels than youth who participated in other components but not mentoring.[15]

- In addition to these individual studies, a recent *meta-analysis of over 70 after school programs that attempted to promote personal and social skills* found that across studies, after school programs could improve youth self-esteem and self-confidence, particularly in programs with a strong intentional focus on improving social and personal skills.[16] This is a particularly important finding: It speaks to the need for strong program design with an intentional focus on the desired outcomes, regardless of what those outcomes might be.

Crime, Drug, and Sex Prevention

The hours from 3 to 6 p.m. present several potential hazards to a young person's development. These are the hours associated with the peak time for juvenile crime and juvenile victimization and the hours when teens ages 16–17 are most likely to be in or cause a car crash.[17] Furthermore, based on a survey of 2,000 high school students that looked at the relationship between after school supervision and sexual activity, the American Academy of Pediatrics found that 56% of youth surveyed reported being home for 4 or more hours unsupervised after school. Youth who were unsupervised for 30 or more hours per week were more likely to be sexually active than those who were left alone for 5 hours a week or less. In addition, those left unsupervised for more than 5 hours per week had more sexually transmitted diseases, particularly among boys.[18] At a minimum, then, participation in an after school program gets children and youth off the streets and under supervision and potentially prevents some risky behaviors. Beyond a safe haven, however, research and evaluation studies have demonstrated the positive impact of participation in after school programs on a range of prevention outcomes. For example:

> **Prevention Outcomes**
>
> Prevention outcomes associated with participation in after school programs include:
>
> - avoidance of drug and alcohol use
> - decreases in delinquency and violent behavior
> - increased knowledge of safe sex
> - avoidance of sexual activity
> - reduction in juvenile crime

- The *Children's Aid Society Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program* showed positive impacts on reducing pregnancies, teen sex, and boys' marijuana usage.[19]

- *Girls Inc.'s Friendly PEERsuasion* program, which provides girls with a structured curriculum of fun activities focused on preventing substance use, found that participants showed positive benefits on outcomes such as delaying the onset of alcohol use and avoiding situations where alcohol was present.[20]

- *Project Venture*, which provides skill-building, community service, and leadership opportunities and outdoor experiential learning activities, reduced youth's increasing substance use over time. [21]

- A *longitudinal study of the effect of participation in LA's BEST programs on juvenile crime* tracked students from 1994 through 2003, comparing LA's BEST participants to two matched groups of students who either attended LA's BEST schools but not LA's BEST programs, or attended schools that did not have an LA's BEST program. Results indicate that participation in LA's BEST was significantly related to lower incidences of juvenile crime. Researchers estimate that this translates into an average savings to society of $2.50 for every dollar invested in the program.[22] While participation rates were a key factor in crime reduction (see discussion of participation below), this is powerful evidence of the potential long-term effects of and benefits to society from after school programs.

Promoting Health and Wellness

After school programs are viewed as one of many places that can tackle the growing problem of obesity among our nation's children and youth. Startling new statistics reveal that, by 2010, almost 50% of America's children will be obese; furthermore, almost two thirds of American children get little or no physical activity.[23] Can after school programs promise to reduce body mass index (the common measure for obesity)? Probably not, although some evaluations have demonstrated improvements on this measure. Similar to impact on academic achievement test scores, it takes more

> **Health and Wellness Outcomes**
>
> Health and wellness outcomes associated with participation in after school programs include:
>
> - better food choices
> - increased physical activity
> - increased knowledge of nutrition and health practices
> - reduction in BMI
> - improved blood pressure
> - improved body image

than a few hours a week of after school participation to move the needle on significant markers of change. But after school programs can contribute to healthy lifestyles and increased knowledge about nutrition and exercise. For example:

- An experimental study of the *Girlfriends for KEEPS* program in Minnesota, which includes fun skill-building activities and physical activity, showed benefits to girls' intentions to maintain healthy behaviors, knowledge about proper diet practices, and preferences for physical activity.[24]

- The experimental study of the *Cooke Middle School After School Recreation Program* found increases in participants' time spent on strength-training activities.[25]

- The experimental study of the *Medical College of Georgia's FitKid program*, which combines academic enrichment, healthy snacks, and physical activity, found that participants benefited from the program in terms of their percentage of body fat and cardiovascular fitness. [26]

- The *Yale Study of Children's After School Time,* a longitudinal study of over 650 youth at 25 after school programs in Connecticut, found that youth who participated in after school programs were more likely than nonparticipants to experience reductions in obesity, after accounting for a variety of differences between participants and nonparticipants. This was true even after controlling for youth's initial BMI status at the beginning of the study, as well as demographic factors like poverty, race, and ethnicity.[27]

Together, these studies point to after school programs' potential power to promote the general health, fitness, and wellness of young people by keeping them active, promoting the importance of healthy behaviors, and providing healthy snacks.

While it is true that after school programs have the *potential* to impact a range of positive learning and developmental outcomes, the reality is that some programs are not maximizing this potential. Research and evaluation point to three primary and interrelated factors that are critical for creating positive settings that can achieve positive youth outcomes: (a) access to and sustained participation in the program; (b) quality programming and staffing; and (c) promoting strong partnerships among the program and the other places where students are learning, such as their schools, their families, and other community institutions. When these three factors are successfully addressed, after school programs are most likely to be able to realize their goals and achieve successful outcomes for youth.

> **What Does It Take to Get Positive Outcomes?**
>
> Three Messages From the Research:
>
> 1. Access to and sustained participation in programs
>
> 2. Quality programming, particularly:
>   - Appropriate supervision and structure
>   - Well-prepared staff
>   - Intentional programming
>
> 3. Partnerships with families, other community organizations, and schools

Access to and Sustained Participation in Programs

Participation in after school activities reveals a consistent pattern of "winners" and "losers," with significant demographic differences in activity participation across a range of nonschool supports, including sports, school clubs, and school-based and community-based after school programs.[28] Highlights from analyses of two nationally representative data sets reveal that children and youth whose families have higher income and more education are the "winners," and their less-advantaged peers are the "losers."

Specifically, children and youth whose families have higher incomes and more education:

- are more likely to participate in after school activities.
- do so with greater frequency during the week.
- participate in a greater number of different activities within a week or a month
- are more likely to participate in enrichment programs, while their disadvantaged peers are more likely to participate in tutoring programs, thus not reaping the benefits associated with enrichment experiences

> **Sustained Participation**
>
> Sustained participation in after school programs can be cultivated in a number of ways. *Chapin Hall's study of 99 tenth-grade students in four Chicago Public Schools* revealed that tailoring programs to youth interests, needs, and schedules, as well as providing a wide variety of enriching opportunities for youth to be exposed to new ideas, new challenges, and new people, has been found to be an important factor for promoting sustained participation.*
>
> * Chaskin, R. J., & Baker, S. (2006). *Negotiating among opportunity and constraint: The participation of young people in out-of-school-time activities.* Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children.

These findings are particularly troublesome given the many studies and research syntheses—such as those from *Child Trends*, *American Youth Policy Forum*, and *Harvard Family Research Project*—which conclude that youth experience greater gains across a wide variety of outcomes if they participate with greater frequency (more days per week) in a more sustained manner (over a number of years).[29]

- For instance, in the *After School Matters* program in Chicago, which lets older youth become paid apprentices or club members in arts, sports, technology, and communications programs, youth who participated at the highest levels tended to demonstrate the fewest course failures and also higher graduation rates than similar youth who did not participate in the program. Moreover, benefits to academic performance appeared to dissipate after youth stopped their attendance, indicating the importance of sustained participation over time.[30]

- Similarly, an *evaluation of Louisiana's 21st CCLC program* found academic gains significantly related to levels of participation. Compared to nonparticipants, participants exhibited significantly more academic growth on the ITBS reading test, with moderate attendance (60 days) related to a slightly larger impact score, and higher attendance (90 days) related to a stronger impact score.[31]

- Following up on students with long-term involvement (at least four years) in the *LA's BEST* program revealed that greater participation was significantly related to positive achievement on standardized tests of mathematics, reading, and language arts, when the influence of gender, ethnicity, income, and language status was controlled for.[32]

- *Teach Baltimore* is a summer academic program that proactively addresses the problem of summer learning loss by helping students develop and practice literacy skills over the summer vacation in a safe and fun environment. A randomized three-year field trial explored the effects of a multiyear summer school program in preventing the cumulative effect of summer learning losses, and promoting longitudinal achievement growth, for a total treatment group of 438 students from high-poverty schools. Results from the study indicate that students who participated at high levels for at least two of the three summers demonstrated statistically significant effects on learning across all three literacy domains tested.[33]

Quality Programming

Emerging research on after school program quality and its relationship to outcomes indicates that in addition to ensuring adequate physical and psychological safety and effective management practices, quality after school programs also share the following features: appropriate supervision and structure, well-prepared staff; intentional programming with opportunities for autonomy and choice, and strong partnerships among the various settings in which program participants spend their day—schools, after school programs, and families.

Unlike research on outcomes, research on after school program *quality* is largely descriptive, with only a handful of rigorously designed studies. Evidence regarding the characteristics of program quality is largely dependent on correlational studies and expert opinion. However, a small but powerful set of studies provides an

emerging picture of some of the key elements of after school program quality and how they affect a range of developmental outcomes. The conclusions from these studies are summarized below.

Appropriate Structure and Supervision

Without the structure and supervision of focused and intentional programming, youth participants in after school programs, at best, can fail to achieve positive outcomes and, at worst, can begin to perform worse than their peers.[34] In fact, some research finds that when youth are concentrated together without appropriate structure and supervision, problematic behavior follows, suggesting that focused, intentional activities with appropriate structure and supervision are necessary to keep youth on an upward trajectory and out of trouble.[35]

- One of the primary conclusions of the *Study of Promising After-School Programs* was that, as compared to nonparticipants, children and youth benefit from an array of after school experiences which include quality after school programs *as well as* other structured school and community based activities supervised by adults. Specifically, researchers found that in comparison to a less-supervised group, school-age children who frequently attended high-quality after school programs, alone and in combination with other supervised activities,[36] displayed better work habits, task persistence, social skills, prosocial behaviors, and academic performance, and less aggressive behavior at the end of the school year.[37]

> **Key Features of Quality Associated With Sustained Participation**
>
> Analysis of participation patterns among 13,000 New York City youth in 176 *Department of Youth and Community Development*-sponsored after school programs revealed that programs with higher rates of youth retention over two years of operation differed from programs with lower retention rates in the following ways:
>
> - Higher director salaries
> - More advanced education credentials
> - Parent liaison on staff
> - Youth reported a greater sense of belonging
> - More positive interactions between youth and staff
> - Higher academic self-esteem
> - Strong academic or arts focus
> - Improved academic performance through enrichment*
>
> * Russell, C. A., Reisner, E. R., Pearson, L. M., Afolabi, K. P., Miller, T. D., & Mielke, M. B. (2006). *Evaluation of DYCD's Out-of-School Time Initiative: Report on the first year*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc. Available at http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/OST.html

Well-Prepared Staff

Time and again, the bottom line of many after school studies is that one of the most critical features of high-quality programs necessary for achieving positive outcomes is the quality of a program's staff. Youth are more likely to realize the benefits of programs if they develop positive relationships with the program's staff, and staff can only build these relationships through positive, quality interactions with youth. Research and evaluation efforts are beginning to identify how high-quality staffing and relationships can be achieved. For example:

- A follow-up study of the *TASC* evaluation found that specific staff practices lent themselves to the development of positive relationships between staff and youth. Looking across program sites for middle schoolers, evaluators found that positive relationships were found in sites where staff a) modeled positive behavior, b) actively promoted student mastery of the skills or concepts presented in activities, c) listened attentively to participants, d) frequently provided individualized feedback and guidance during activities, and e) established clear expectations for mature, respectful peer interactions.[38]

- In a similar vein, both a *comparative case study of two urban after school programs* and the *Maryland Afterschool Community Grants Program* evaluation found that low-quality programs had staff who engaged in very negative and punitive interactions with youth rather than engaging in supportive behavior and practicing positive behavior management techniques.[39]

- Staff and youth surveys and observations were recently conducted at five of Philadelphia's *Beacon Centers* (school-based community centers that include a range of after school opportunities) to address three questions: a) What conditions lead youth to want to attend an activity, b) what aspects of an after school activity lead youth to be highly engaged, and c) what conditions lead youth to feel that they have learned as a result of an activity? Based on the responses of 402 youth surveys, 45 staff surveys, and 50 activity observations, two staff practices emerge as critical to youth engagement: *effective group management* to ensure that youth feel respected by both the adults and the other youth and *positive support for youth and their learning process.*[40]

- A new study from *LA's BEST* examines the relationship between perceptions of staff–participant relationships and educational values, future aspirations, and engagement of program participants. The findings suggest that students who feel supported and encouraged by staff are also more likely to place a higher value on education and have higher aspirations for their futures. Furthermore, staff members who were caring and encouraging fostered values of education. Their students appreciated school more, found it more relevant to their own lives, and, ultimately, were more engaged both in the after school program and in school.[41]

Intentional Programming

Though it may seem obvious, programs work better in promoting positive outcomes when they are explicitly focused and targeted to specific outcomes. Intentional, focused programming entails a clear vision and goals for the program from the start, as well as strong, directed leadership and sustained training and support to staff.

- In their *meta-analysis of 73 after school programs' impacts*, Durlak and Weisberg found that positive impacts on academic, prevention, and developmental outcomes were concentrated in the programs that utilized strategies characterized as *sequenced* (using a sequenced set of activities designed to achieve skill development objectives), *active* (using active forms of learning to help youth develop skills), *focused* (program components devoted to developing personal or social skills), and *explicit* (targeting of specific personal or social skills). Moreover, the researchers found that, as a group, programs missing *any* of these four characteristics did not achieve positive results. This

points to the importance of targeting specific goals, and designing activities around those goals intentionally.[42]

- For example, across program sites in the *Maryland After School Community Grants Program* initiative, programs that provided more hours of structured social skills training and more hours of focused academic content achieved better outcomes than programs that spent more time providing unstructured recreation time.[43]

- Programs can better implement intentional, focused programming by promoting high levels of organization within program activities. For instance, in the evaluation of the *CORAL Initiative*, researchers at Public/Private Ventures found that the highest quality activities were achieved when staff provided youth with clear instructions, gave organized lessons, employed specific strategies designed to motivate and challenge youth, and had activities prepared for youth who finished activities before others. Having systems in place to manage youth behavior was also key.[44]

- The *Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study*, which collected data on over 4,000 children and youth attending 78 after school programs, found that well-organized activities with clear routines can promote both staff and youth engagement, and thereby facilitate high-quality learning opportunities.[45]

Taken together, these findings suggest that developing programs intentionally, with a focus on promoting targeted outcomes through well-organized and engaging activities, is a critical component of achieving high quality in after school settings.

Strong Partnerships

Programs are more likely to exhibit high quality when they effectively develop, utilize, and leverage partnerships with a variety of stakeholders like families, schools, and communities. However, strong partnerships are more than a component of program quality; they are becoming a nonnegotiable element of supporting learning and development across all the contexts in which children learn and develop.

A March 2007 report from the Study of Promising Practices states that "*when all parties with responsibility for and interests in the welfare of youth, especially disadvantaged youth, unite to engage them in high-quality after school experiences, they are more likely to succeed in promoting positive development for the highest number of children at risk.*" This conclusion, based on a two-year quasi-experimental study of after school program quality, echoes previous research and evaluation on partnerships and points to promising new directions and possibilities for after school programs to partner with families, other community-based institutions, and schools.[46]

Partnering With Families

For most full-time employed parents, the gap between the end of the school day and the time they arrive home from work adds up to about 20–25 hours per week. Thus, many parents look to after school programs to satisfy their desire for safe, enriching experiences for their children while they are working. Research from Brandeis University, which looked at parents' levels of concern for their children's welfare after school ("parents' after school stress," or PASS) and its impact on parents' psychological well being, reveals that PASS negatively affects the psychological

health of employed parents of school-age children and points to the continued need to provide and improve after school options for children of working parents.[47] In addition to potentially alleviating PASS, numerous studies have shown the benefits of engaging family members in after school programs. For example:

- Involving families can contribute to programs' ability to improve youth outcomes. For instance, participants whose families participated in a *YMCA 21ˢᵗ CCLC family program in New York City's Chinatown*, which provided ESL, adult education, computer courses, and karate activities, were more successful in improving homework completion, school attendance, and other indicators of academic performance.[48]

- The *Transition to Success Pilot Project* (TSPP) in Boston coordinated after school services with intensive academic tutoring and a range of family and support services. Its quasi-experimental evaluation revealed that three quarters of parents of TSPP students declared that the program helped them connect with their child's teachers and that their involvement in their child's school increased because of their child's involvement in this after school program.[49]

- The *evaluation of the National 21ˢᵗ CCLC program* revealed similar impact on family involvement. At the middle school level, participation in 21ˢᵗ CCLC programs was associated with increased parent involvement at their child's school. Parents of program participants were more likely to volunteer at their child's school and attend open houses or parent–teacher organization meetings three or more times per year.[50]

- Despite the potential benefits, the *Family Participation in After-School Study*, which reviewed family involvement practices in 21ˢᵗ CCLC programs, revealed that many programs struggle with how to best engage youth's families.[51] Existing research points to a variety of promising strategies, such as supporting families and meeting their needs; communicating and building trusting relationships; hiring and developing family-focused staff; building linkages across individuals and organizations.[52]

Partnering With Other Community Institutions

It can also be advantageous for programs to partner with other community entities, such as community-based organizations, businesses, and individual community members. For example:

- One popular approach is to develop community service opportunities for youth in order to build program engagement and contribute to youth learning and development. In fact, the *Child Trends synthesis of civic engagement* suggests that combining regular programming with a focus on community service opportunities helps boost youth engagement and bolsters educational and civic developmental outcomes.[53]

- The *Study of Promising Programs* found that, especially as youth age, their interests diversify, and they begin to participate in a wide variety of experiences. This means that developing systems of partnerships between various community

supports can help ensure that youth stay engaged, motivated, and continuously learning across a wide variety of contexts.[54]

- An evaluation of the *San Francisco Beacons Initiative* found that community residents and neighborhood adults can also prove to be an important resource, as they can contribute valued expertise in providing unique program activities, and also serve as safety and support staff. Developing effective partnerships with families, schools, and communities can therefore strengthen programs by allowing them to leverage additional resources for supporting youth, thereby amplifying the potential of individual programs to promote positive outcomes.[55]

> **Effective Partnerships**
>
> Effective partnerships among families, schools, community-based organizations, and after school programs can be critical to sustained participation. The large-scale evaluation of *New York's Department of Youth and Community Development* programs found that after school programs that also offer summer services are more likely to be able to retain youth, suggesting that continuities of service and developing systems of supports around youth may be critical. These entities already work with many youth, so they can be a source of referrals and of contact with youth that can be leveraged to promote sustained participation.*
>
> * Russell, C. A., Reisner, E. R., Pearson, L. M., Afolabi, K. P., Miller, T. D., & Mielke, M. B. (2006). *Evaluation of DYCD's Out-of-School Time Initiative: Report on the first year.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc. Available at http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/OST.html

- A *review of over 20 years of research on Boys & Girls Clubs* found that programs benefited from partnerships with schools, probation and police officers, and community-based providers by gaining referrals and access to information on youth, such as school records. Strong partnerships can also provide programs with important resources, such as information, in-kind resources, and other sources of support that can make individual programs become more efficient in accomplishing their goals of benefiting youth.[56]

- Evaluators of the *TASC* initiative reanalyzed student performance data collected during the multiyear evaluation to identify projects where the TASC program was particularly likely to contribute to academic improvements. Across the 10 projects identified were five common features, including a strong partnership between the TASC site and its sponsoring partner.[57]

Partnering With Schools

After school–school partnerships are not new. In fact, they served as the impetus for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which call for schools to work in partnership with community-based organizations and faith-based organizations. The past 10 years have witnessed tremendous growth in expanded learning opportunity programs and initiatives aimed specifically at intentional partnerships between after school programs and schools in order to support—but not replicate—in-school learning and development. National organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Governors Association, and the National Conference of State Legislatures are working alone and in collaboration to support and promote

expanded learning opportunities and to help states and communities develop strong after school–school partnerships. Emerging evidence suggests that such partnerships are critical to the shared goal of supporting positive learning and development throughout the school years.[58] For example:

- In the *Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study*, researchers found that programs with stronger relationships with school teachers and principals were more successful at improving youth's homework completion, homework effort, positive behavior, and initiative. This may be because positive relationships with schools can foster high-quality, engaging, and challenging activities and can also promote staff engagement.[59]

- An evaluation of *Supplemental Education Services* (SES) found that program quality suffered when there were not effective partnerships between schools and SES providers. School staff were needed to help coordinate SES and identify and recruit participants; without the partnerships, SES providers were less able to align their supplementary education with in-school learning needs.[60]

After School in the 21st Century

The evidence base is clear: Well-implemented, quality after school programs have the potential to support and promote healthy learning and development. Moreover, there is a research warrant for continued public and private support for after school investments. At the same time, however, there also exists an ever-louder national cry to rethink time and learning. As national conversations turn toward reframing the traditional school day and school year, there remains much to be gleaned from 10 years of after school research and evaluation about what works to support student learning and success. The research and evaluation studies and syntheses highlighted in this brief demonstrate how complex a task it is to provide high-quality, effective supports for youth and their families, but they also provide powerful evidence that after school programs *do* work when key factors are addressed—factors of access, sustained participation, program quality, and strong partnerships.

Taken together, the results from the past decade of research and evaluation raise important questions about the future of after school and its role in a new learning day:

- Quality after school program environments foster inquiry, critical thinking, and engagement in learning, and these features can support a range of positive academic and developmental outcomes. As such, after school programs are uniquely poised to support in-school learning and development without replicating the school day.

  Moving forward, how can the research-based practices known to be effective in after school programs be adopted more broadly within after school programs and other expanded learning models?

- After school programs are not the only places where children and youth learn and grow in their nonschool hours.

  How can after school programs work with schools, families, and other community and health supports to ensure a complementary array of learning

and developmental supports across the day, the year, and the developmental continuum from kindergarten through high school?

<table>
<tr><td>Research Companion

For more information about the research studies cited in this brief, visit www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/ afterschool/resources/issuebrief10/ companion.pdf.</td></tr>
</table>

- While it is true that, in some cases, many after school programs can support academic learning, this does not equate to holding programs accountable for moving the needle on academic performance measures such as standardized tests and grades. Across research and evaluation studies, academic impact is defined broadly to include a range of outcomes, not simply improvements on standardized testing and grades.

    Moving forward, how can and should "success" of after school programs be measured, particularly as the field moves toward greater emphasis on shared responsibility and partnerships?

- Participation in after school programs is in part predicated on the choices families and young people make about how to use their time.

    How can choice be built into after school and extended day options to ensure that programs are responsive to the needs of working families and youth participants alike?

Acknowledgments

About This Series

Harvard Family Research Project's (HFRP) *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation* briefs highlight current research and evaluation work in the out-of-school time field. These documents draw on HFRP's research work in out-of-school time to provide practitioners, funders, evaluators, and policymakers with information to help them in their work. This brief looks at 10 years of research on after school programs and finds implications for the future of the after school field.

Notes

[1] From the outset, the authors recognize and underscore the limitation of the research base for after school, which is plagued with selection bias (that is, most young people self-select into programs, thus potentially biasing the results) and with very few true randomized experiments from which to draw conclusions. That said, the research for this review was selected as representative of the highest quality studies the after school field has produced in the past decade.

[2] Vandell, D., Reisner, E., & Pierce, K. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising practices*. Irvine, CA: University of California and Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. Available at http://www.gse.uci.edu/docs/PASP%20Final%20Report.pdf

[3] Lauer, P. A., Akiba, M., Wilkerson, S. B., Apthorp, H. S., Snow, D., & Martin-Glenn, M. L. (2006). Out-of-school time programs: A meta-analysis of effects for at-risk students. *Review of Educational Research, 76*, 275–313.

[4] Reisner, E. R., White, R. N., Birmingham, J., & Welsh, M. (2001). *Building quality and supporting expansion of After-School Projects: Evaluation results from the TASC After-School Program's second year*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates; White, R. N., Reisner, E. R., Welsh, M., & Russell, C. (2001). *Patterns of student-level change linked to TASC participation, based on TASC projects in Year 2*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

[5] Klein, S. P., & Bolus, R. (2002). *Improvements in math and reading scores of students who did and did not participate in the Foundations After School Enrichment Program during the 2001–2002 school year*. Santa Monica, CA: Gansk & Associates.

[6] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary. (2003). *When schools stay open late: The national evaluation of the 21st-Century Learning Centers program, first year findings*. Washington, DC: Author. Available at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/21cent/firstyear

[7] Espino, J., Fabiano, L., & Pearson, L. M. (with Kirkwood K. P., Afolabi, K., & Pasatta, K.). (2004). *Citizen Schools: Evidence from two student cohorts on the use of community resources to promote youth development. Phase II report of the Citizen Schools evaluation*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates; Fabiano, L., Pearson, L. M., & Williams, I. J. (2005). *Putting students on a pathway to academic and social success: Phase III findings of the Citizen Schools evaluation*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates; Fabiano, L., Pearson, L. M., Reisner, E. R., & Williams, I. J. (2006). *Preparing students in the middle grades to succeed in high school: Findings from Phase IV of the Citizen Schools evaluation*. Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates. Available at http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Citizen%20Schools%20Phase%20IV%20Final%20Report_12-26-06.pdf

[8] Huang, D., Gribbons, B., Kim, K. S., Lee, C., & Baker, E. L. (2000). *A decade of results: The impact of the LA's BEST after school enrichment initiative on subsequent student achievement and performance*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies; Huang, D., Kim, K. S., Marshall, A., & Perez, P. (2005). *Keeping kids in school: An LA's BEST example—A study examining the long-term impact of LA's BEST on students' dropout rates*. Los Angeles, CA: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

[9] Huang, D., Coordt, A., La Torre, D., Leon, S., Miyoshi, J., Pérez, P., et al. (2007). *The afterschool hours: Examining the relationship between afterschool staff-based social capital and student engagement in LA's BEST*. Los Angeles: UCLA/CRESST. Available at http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/reports/R712.pdf

[10] Birmingham, J., Pechman, E. M., Russell, C. A., & Mielke, M. (2005). S*hared features of high-performing after-school programs: A follow-up to the TASC evaluation*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

[11] Redd, Z., Cochran, S., Hair, E., & Moore, K. (2002). *Academic Achievement Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis*. Washington DC: Child Trends; Russell, C. A., Reisner, E.

R., Pearson, L. M., Afolabi, K. P., Miller, T. D., & Mielke, M. B. (2006). *Evaluation of DYCD's Out-of-School Time Initiative: Report on the first year*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. Available at http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/OST.html

[12] Cooper, H., Charlton, K., Valentine, J. C., & Muhlenbruck, L. (2000). Making the most of summer school: A meta-analytic and narrative review. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, *65*(1), 1–118.

[13] LeCroy, C. W. (2003). *Experimental evaluation of "Go Grrrls."* Tucson, AZ: Author.

[14] Phillips, R. S. C. (1999). Intervention with siblings of children with developmental disabilities from economically disadvantaged families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services, 80*(6), 569–577.

[15] Taylor, A., LoSciuto, L., Fox, M., & Hilbert, S. (1999). *The mentoring factor: An evaluation of Across Ages. Intergenerational program research: Understanding what we have created.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth.

[16] Durlak, R., & Weissberg, R. (2007). *The Impact of After-School Programs That Promote Personal and Social Skills.* Chicago: CASEL.

[17] Newman, S. A., Fox, J. A., Flynn, E. A., & Christeson, W. (2000). *America's afterschool choice: The prime time for juvenile crime or youth achievement and enrichment*. Washington, DC: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Available at http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/as2000.pdf

[18] Cohen, D., Farley, T., Taylor, S., Martin, D., & Schuster, M. (2002). When and where do youths have sex? The potential role of adult supervision. *Pediatrics, 110*(6), 1–6.

[19] Philliber, S., Kaye, J. W., & Herrling, S. (2001, May). *The national evaluation of the Children's Aid Society Carrera-Model Program to prevent teen pregnancy*. Accord, NY: Philliber Research Associates. Available at http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/media/general/cas-Teen_Pregnancy_Prevention.pdf; Philliber, S., Kaye, J. W., Herrling, S., & West, E. (2002). Preventing pregnancy and improving health care access among teenagers: An evaluation of the Children's Aid Society—Carrera Model. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 34*(5), 244–251. Available at http://www.agi-usa.org/pubs/journals/3424402.pdf

[20] Weiss, F. L., & Nicholson, H. J. (1998). Friendly PEERsuasion against substance use: The Girls Incorporated model and evaluation. *Drugs & Society, 12*(1/2), 7–22.

[21] Carter, S. L., Straits, K. J. E., & Hall, M. (2006, November). *Project Venture: Evaluation of a positive, culture-based approach to substance abuse prevention with American Indian youth*. Paper presented at the Symposium for Experiential Education Research, St. Paul, MN.

[22] As described in Goldschmidt, P., Huang, D., & Chinen, M. (2007). *The long-term effects of after-school programming on educational adjustment and juvenile crime: A study of the LA's BEST after-school program*. Los Angeles: UCLA/CRESST. Available at http://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/LASBEST_DOJ_Study_Brief.pdf

[23] International Journal of Pediatric Obesity (2006) and National Centers for Disease Control (2003) as cited in Afterschool Alliance. (2006). *Active hours afterschool: Childhood obesity prevention and afterschool programs.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_obesity_24.pdf

[24] Story, M., Sherwood, N. E., Himes, J. H., Davis, M., Jacobs, Jr., D. R., Cartwright, Y., et al. (2003). An after-school obesity prevention program for African-American girls: The Minnesota GEMS Pilot Study [Supplement 1]. *Ethnicity & Disease, 13*(1), 54–64.

[25] Lauver, S. C. (2002). *Assessing the benefits of an after-school program for urban youth: An impact and process evaluation.* Philadelphia: Author.

[26] Yin, Z., Gutin, B., Johnson, M., Hanes, J., Jr., Moore, J. B., Cavnar, M., et al. (2005). An environmental approach to obesity prevention in children: Medical College of Georgia FitKid Project year 1 results. *Obesity Research, 13*, 2153–2161.

[27] Mahoney, J. L., Lord, H., & Carryl, E. (2005). Afterschool program participation and the development of child obesity and peer acceptance. *Applied Developmental Science*, *9*(4), 202–215. Available at http://www.leaonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s1532480xads0904_3

[28] This information is based on research conducted by Harvard Family Research Project on the contextual predictors of participation in out-of-school time. For a complete description of

the study and its methodology, visit the HFRP website at
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/ost_participation.html

[29] Redd, Cochran, Hair, & Moore, 2002; American Youth Policy Forum. (2006). *Helping youth succeed through out-of-school time programs*. Washington, DC: Author; Simpkins-Chaput, S., Little, P. M. D., & Weiss, H. B. (2004). *Understanding and measuring attendance in out-of-school time programs*. Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation Brief No. 7. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project; Chaskin, R. J., & Baker, S. (2006). *Negotiating among opportunity and constraint: The participation of young people in out-of-school-time activities*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children; Moore, K., & Zaff, J. F. (2002). *Building a better teenager*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

[30] Goerge, R., Cusick, G. R., Wasserman, M., & Gladden, R. M. (2007). *After-school programs and academic Impact: A study of Chicago's After School Matters*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children.

[31] Jenner, E. J., & Jenner, L. W. (2004). *Academic outcomes in Louisiana's 21st Century Community Learning Centers*. Baton Rouge, LA: Policy & Research Group.

[32] Huang et al., 2007.

[33] Borman, G., Dowling, N., Fairchild, R., Boulay, M., & Kaplan, J. (2006). *The longitudinal achievement effects of multi-year summer school: Evidence from the Teach Baltimore Randomized Field Trial*. Baltimore: Center for Summer Learning.

[34] Vandell, D., Pierce, K., Brown, B., Lee, D., Bolt, D., Dadisman, K., et al. (2006, March). *Developmental outcomes associated with the afterschool contexts of low-income children and adolescents*. A paper presented at the Society for Research on Adolescence Annual Meeting, San Francisco; Pearson, L. M., Russell, C. A., & Reisner, E. R. (2007*). Evaluation of OST programs for youth: Patterns of youth retention in OST programs, 2005–06 to 2006–07*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

[35] Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2003). Are idle hands the devil's workshop? Incapacitation, concentration, and juvenile crime. *American Economic Review*, *93*, 1560–1577.

[36] Programs were rated using the Promising Practices Rating Scale which assesses eight processes: 1) supportive relations with adults, 2) supportive relations with peers, 3) student engagement in activities, 4) opportunities for cognitive growth, 5) mastery orientation, 6) appropriate program structure, 7) setting chaos, and 8) staff overcontrol.

[37] Vandell et al., 2006.

[38] Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005.

[39] Vandell, D. L., Shumow, L., & Posner, J. (2005). After-school programs for low-income children: Differences in program quality. In J. Mahoney, J. Eccles, & R. Larson (Eds.), *Organized activities as contexts for development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs* (pp. 437–456). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum; Gerstenblith, S., Soule, D., Gottfredson, D., Lu, S., Kellstrom, M., Womer, S., et al. (2005). After-school programs, antisocial behavior, and positive youth development: An exploration of the relationship between program implementation and changes in youth behavior. In J. Mahoney, J. Eccles, & R. Larson (Eds.), *Organized activities as contexts for development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs* (pp. 457–477). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

[40] Grossman, J., Campbell, M., & Raley, B. (2007). *Quality time afterschool: What instructors can do to enhance learning*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

[41] Huang et al., 2007.

[42] Durlak & Weissberg, 2007.

[43] Gerstenblith et al., 2005.

[44] Arbreton, A. J. A., Goldsmith, J., & Sheldon, J. (2005). *Launching literacy in after-school programs: Early lessons from the CORAL Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

[45] Intercultural Center for Research in Education & National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2005). *Pathways to success for youth: What works in afterschool: A report of the Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study (MARS)*. Boston: United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

[46] Reisner, E., Vandell, D., Pechman, E., Pierce, K., Brown, B., & Dolt, D. (2007). *Charting the benefits of high-quality afterschool experiences*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates and Irvine: University of California. Available at http://www.gse.uci.edu/docs/PASP%20Charting%20the%20Benefits.pdf

[47] Barnett, R. C., & Gareis, K. C. (2006). Parental after-school stress and psychological well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 68*, 101–108.

[48] Bennett, E. T. (2004). *Family involvement and school performance in the Chinatown YMCA 21st Century Community Learning Center*. Unpublished master's thesis, Fordham University, New York, NY.

[49] Massachusetts 2020. (2004). *Research report: The Transition to Success Pilot Project*. Boston: Author. Available at http://www.mass2020.org/finaltransition.pdf

[50] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, 2003.

[51] Weiss, A. R., & Brigham, R. A. (2003). *The family participation in after-school study*. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.

[52] Kakli, Z., Kreider, H., & Little, P. (2006). *Focus on families! How to build and support family-centered practices in afterschool*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project and Boston: BOSTnet.

[53] Michelsen, E., Zaff, J. F., & Hair, E. (2002). *Civic engagement programs and youth development: A synthesis.* Washington, DC: Child Trends.

[54] Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R., Pierce, K. M., Brown, B. B., Lee, D., Bolt, D., et al. (2006). *The study of promising after-school programs: Examination of longer term outcomes after two years of program experiences.* Madison: Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

[55] Walker, K. E., & Arbreton, A. J. A. (2004). *After-school pursuits: An examination of outcomes in the San Francisco Beacon Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures; Walker, K. E., & Arbreton, A. J.A. (2001). *Working together to build Beacon Centers in San Francisco: Evaluation findings from 1998–2000*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

[56] Arbreton, A. J. A., Sheldon, J., & Herrera, C. (2005). *Beyond safe havens: A synthesis of research on the Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

[57] Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005.

[58] Harvard Family Research Project. (2006, Spring). Building and evaluating out-of-school time connections. *The Evaluation Exchange*, *12*(1/2).

[59] Intercultural Center for Research in Education & National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2005.

[60] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2004). *Early implementation of supplemental educational services under the No Child Left Behind Act: Year one report*. Washington, DC: Author. Available at http://www.policystudies.com/studies/school/nclb.html; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2005). *Case studies of supplemental services under the No Child Left Behind Act: Findings from 2003–04*. Washington, DC: Author. Available at http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/supplementalyear2/index.html