

Reviews of Collections of Programs, Curricula, Practices, Policies, and Tools: Evaluated According to Evidence

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This collection originated as part of the Results for Kids: Resources library of The IDEA Partnership, which transferred early contents to NIRN in 2009.

After-School, Out-of-School Time, and Service Learning

A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents

American Journal of Community Psychology. J. A. Durlak, R. P. Weissberg, & M. Pachan.
Distributed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, Chicago, Illinois.

A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to enhance the personal and social skills of children and adolescents indicated that, compared to controls, participants demonstrated significant increases in their self-perceptions and bonding to school, positive social behaviors, school grades and levels of academic achievement, and significant reductions in problem behaviors. The presence of four recommended practices associated with previously effective skill training (SAFE: sequenced, active, focused, and explicit) moderated several program outcomes. One important implication of current findings is that ASPs should contain components to foster the personal and social skills of youth because youth can benefit in multiple ways if these components are offered. The second implication is that further research is warranted on identifying program characteristics that can help us understand why some programs are more successful than others.

[Full text – A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs](#)

A Summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs' Impact on Academics, Behavior, Safety and Family Life

Afterschool Alliance, Washington DC. (2011). Distributed by America's Promise Alliance.

"A number of different types of evaluations have been conducted over the last several years, assessing various aspects of afterschool programming. . . . Some evaluations seek to gather data on whether programs have been structured as they were originally intended, how well they have done at meeting attendance and staffing goals, how they 'fit' in the school environment and more. Others explore student outcomes: the effects afterschool programs have on the children who participate in them, their parents and even the communities at large. . . . For academics and large funders — the federal

government, state governments, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the William T. Grant Foundation or The Wallace Foundation, for example — more exacting standards and greater independence are often required. Independent evaluations commissioned by such entities are the primary subject of this document. The studies included in this backgrounder are just a few of the numerous evaluations of afterschool programs completed in recent years." Tables show descriptions, key findings, and other information on evaluations of academic programs and behavioral programs.

[Full text – A Summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs](#)

Addressing Summer Reading Setback Among Economically Disadvantaged Elementary Students: What Works Clearinghouse Quick Review

What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2010).

This "study examined whether providing summer reading books to economically disadvantaged first- and second-grade students for three consecutive summers improved reading achievement. The study analyzed data on about 1,300 students from 17 high-poverty elementary schools in two large districts in Florida. Student-level reading achievement was measured by the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test, the state-mandated reading assessment. The study compared reading scores of students randomly assigned to receive summer reading books with those of students who did not receive them. Scores were compared at the end of the third summer, at which time most students were in 4th or 5th grade. The authors examined effects for students overall as well as for the subgroup consisting of the most economically disadvantaged students—those who were eligible to receive free lunch. The study found that students who received three consecutive years of free, self-selected summer reading books had statistically significantly higher reading test scores than students who did not receive summer reading books. . . . In addition, the study found a statistically significant effect of summer reading among students who were the most economically disadvantaged, with an effect size of 0.21."

[Full text of the WWC Quick Review](#)

After-School Programs Can Pay Off

Educational Leadership. (2011). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Alexandria, Virginia.

"The vast number of after-school programs is matched by a vast array of research studies. Findings from these studies run the gamut from strong positive effects to none at all on a variety of academic and social measures. Evaluations using random assignment find few significant effects overall on student test scores and behaviors. However, such general evaluations provide little insight about program quality or which programs may work well to achieve particular goals for particular students. Some researchers, taking a different tack, have sought out after-school programs with strong reputations to document their effects on students and to discover what makes them successful." This article reviews research on a number of such studies.

[Full text – After-School Programs Can Pay Off](#)

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

Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (2008).

P. M. D. Little, C. Wimer, & H. B. Weiss.

"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. . . . The research 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." The Research Companion summarizes studies and findings on impacts in various domains (academic performance; social/emotional development; crime, drug, and sex prevention; health and wellness promotion), as well as research on State and district programs and several nationally recognized models (e.g., Citizen Schools; LA's Best).

[Full text -- After School Programs in the 21st Century: Their Potential and What It Takes to Achieve It](#)

[This page also includes a summary and a research companion]

After-School Programs and Academics: Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

Social Policy Report. (2008). Society for Research in Child Development. R. C. Granger.

"Much of the funding for after-school programs comes from education budgets and is administered by State and local education agencies. Consequently, after-school programs are often expected to incorporate academic achievement as an important goal. . . . (The author) begins by showing that after-school programs can have positive academic effects, though many do not. To understand the ingredients of an effective program, (the author) examines empirical reviews of program evaluations, observational studies, and practitioner writings. . . . The report concludes by identifying some promising approaches to program improvement and arguing that research on ways to intervene to improve program effectiveness is the highest priority."

[Full text -- See 2008, No. 2](#)

Afterschool Curriculum Choice (databases in four subject areas)

An Initiative of PEAR: The Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency at Harvard University, and the SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool. (Continuing Collection).

These four databases focus on (a) literacy, (b) math, (c) science, and (d) technology. They are "designed to help practitioners locate and make informed choices about high-quality resources to enrich their

programs. Resources were selected based on proven use in afterschool settings, and include challenging lesson plans and organized activities.” Entries include (a) design summary; (b) costs and staff training; (c) staff qualifications; (d) standards alignment; (e) research base; (f) evaluation details; and (g) overall strengths/overall challenges. You will first see the Math section; databases on the other subject areas are available at the left.

[Search Afterschool Curriculum Choice](#)

[This link opens to the math section. Click at the left for the other three sections]

Civic Engagement Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis

Child Trends, Washington DC. (2002). E. Michelsen, J. F. Zaff, & E. C. Hair.

"This synthesis of civic programs for youths provides specific information on the role that civic engagement plays in helping young people develop a broad array of strengths and capacities. It focuses on youth outcomes in four domains: (a) educational achievement and cognitive attainment, (b) health and safety, (c) social and emotional well-being, and (d) self-sufficiency. Moreover, the synthesis seeks to address the following questions: What do civic engagement programs look like? What resources do civic engagement programs provide for promoting youth development? What impacts do civic engagement programs have on youth outcomes? What characteristics of the programs seem to constitute effective civic engagement?" The authors review nine programs that have experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental evaluations.

[Full text – Civic Engagement Programs](#)

[Click under Programs for Teens Full Reports]

Critical Hours: Afterschool Programs and Educational Success

Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Quincy, Massachusetts. (2003). B. M. Miller.

The purpose of this report is "to synthesize information available from studies of afterschool programs and offer conclusions based on this assessment. The report pays special attention to the effects of afterschool programs on the academic achievement and overall development of middle school students. . . . Although the report focuses on the middle school years, a time when many students experience a marked decrease in school engagement, it is a resource to anyone who is interested in knowing why and how effective afterschool programs work. . . . (The author's) central conclusion is that afterschool programs can, indeed, make a valuable contribution to how well children perform in school."

[Full text – Critical Hours](#)

Effective and Promising Summer Learning Programs and Approaches for Economically Disadvantaged Children and Youth

Prepared by Child Trends, Washington DC. (2009). M. Terzian, K. A. Moore, & K. Hamilton.
Commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, New York City.

"Experimental studies and non-experimental studies, as well as practitioner insights, were reviewed to identify effective and promising summer learning practices. Program impacts from experimental evaluations were identified for outcomes ranging from reading achievement to an increased likelihood of employment. Drawing from a limited number of experimental evaluations, (the authors) found that reading achievement gains were achieved for a handful of programs, whereas math achievement was less often evaluated." Other results are also shown.

[Full text -- Effective and Promising Summer Learning Programs](#)

[Click on the first title and see related publications on this page]

Engaging Older Youth: Program and City-level Strategies to Support Sustained Participation in Out-of-School Time

Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (2010).

S. N. Deschenes, A. Arbreton, P. M. Little, C. Herrera, J. Baldwin Grossman, & H. B. Weiss, with D. Lee.

This report "examines the program practices and structural features of almost 200 out-of-school time (OST) programs located across six diverse cities — Chicago, Cincinnati, New York, Providence, San Francisco, and Washington, DC — and primarily serving low-income youth. The report identifies five OST program characteristics (two program practices and three structural features) that set apart the programs that were the most successful in (a) supporting high retention: (b) providing many leadership opportunities to youth in the programs: (c) having staff keep informed in several ways about youth outside programs: (d) being community-based; (e) enrolling 100 or more youth; and (f) holding regular staff meetings. An additional set of retention and recruitment practices that, while not statistically related to retention when accounting for other factors, were consistently reported as being important in engaging older youth: . . . In addition to identifying key characteristics of OST programs, this study also compares and contrasts the practices that are effective for middle school -- versus high school-aged youth. . . . (It also) details the influence of city-level OST initiatives on programs and identifies the types of city-level services that are likely to support participation."

[Full text -- Engaging Older Youth](#)

Helping Youth Succeed Through Out-of-School Time Programs

American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), Washington DC. (2006).

G. Partee, B. Brand, S. Pearson, & R. Hare.

Distributed by the Substance Abuse and MH Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"This paper (a) reviews the current research and literature on Out-of-School Time (OST) programs especially with regard to their effectiveness; (b) explores the range of OST programs and activities as employed by the various youth-serving sectors; (c) considers the untapped possibilities of OST programs to meet the needs of young people, including academic enhancement, career and college preparation, leadership development, and civic engagement; and (d) provides policy guidance on how to support and sustain high quality OST programs as part of a system of supports for older youth." Although this paper

discusses a number of local district program adoptions and initiatives, it is intended as a review of research-based practices, rather than a review of program models.

[Full text -- Helping Youth Succeed Through Out-of-School Time Programs](#)

Learning Around the Clock: Benefits of Expanded Learning Opportunities for Older Youth (middle and high school)

American Youth Policy Forum, Washington DC. (2009). A. Bowles & B. Brand.

This report "identifies and describes Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) that improve academic performance, college and career preparation, social and emotional development, and health and wellness outcomes for underserved youth. The term 'expanded learning opportunity' is used to describe the range of programs and activities available to young people that occur beyond regular school hours. ELOs include traditional afterschool activities with an academic focus, but also incorporate activities such as internships with employers, independent study in alternative settings, classes on college campuses for high school students, and wraparound support services. . . . Twenty-two evaluations of ELOs are briefly summarized to give policymakers and practitioners a quick understanding of the research findings on some effective programs, along with a description of why these programs work. The 22 programs summarized in this publication clearly do not represent the universe of expanded learning opportunities that are successful in helping youth; rather, they are ones that had quality evaluations."

[Full text – Learning Around the Clock](#)

Making Out-of-School Time Matter: Evidence for an Action Agenda

RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California. (2005). Commissioned by The Wallace Foundation. S. Bodily & M. K. Beckett.

The Wallace Foundation "asked RAND to provide an objective and systematic examination of the out-of-school-time (OST) literature to clarify and inform the key issues in the ongoing debates related to whether and how to improve OST programming. RAND undertook a broad literature review to capture what is known with some certainty and what is more speculative about claims being made. This report, the outcome of that review, investigates five major issues: (a) the level of unmet demand; (b) the state of knowledge about the types of outcomes that participation in OST programs are expected to impact and the nature of the impacts observed; (c) determinants of quality in program offerings; (d) determinants of participation and selection; and (e) practices effective in ensuring that quality programming is available to meet local demand."

[Full text –Making Out-of-School Time Matter](#)

Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning

RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California. (2011). Commissioned by The Wallace Foundation. J. S. McCombs, C. H. Augustine, H. L. Schwartz, S. J. Bodily, B. McInnis, D. S. Lichter, & A. B. Cross.

“Summer learning programs are often an afterthought of school districts or not offered at all, especially in restrictive funding environments. To focus attention on the potential of such programs, this monograph reviews the literature on summer learning loss and the effectiveness of summer learning programs, determines key cost drivers of and available funds for summer programs, and gathers information about how such programs operate in district and city contexts, including facilitators and challenges. The findings should be of interest to policymakers and practitioners involved in improving the performance of and expanding opportunities for low-income and low-achieving students.”

[Full text – Making Summer Count](#)

Multiple Choices After School: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative

Public/Private Ventures, New York Office & MDRC, New York City. (2002).

J. B. Grossman, V. Fellerath, L. Z. Jucovy, L. J. Kotloff, M. Price, R. Raley, & K. E. Walker.

"Launched in 1997, the Extended-Service Schools (ESS) Initiative helped establish after-school programs in 17 communities across the country, each of which adapted one of four program models to local circumstances and needs. In this report, Public/Private Ventures and MDRC present the findings from their joint evaluation of the initiative, focusing on ESS programs in six cities where intensive data collection were conducted. Among the themes examined in the report are the programs' implementation, quality, cost, and their effects on students' after-school participation and attitudes toward school." The four nationally recognized models identified by the ESS Initiative are described in Appendix A of the report: (a) The Beacon; (b) Bridges to Success; (c) Community Schools; and (d) West Philadelphia Improvement Corporation.

[Full text and executive summary -- Multiple Choices After School: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative](#)

[Click at the left]

Out-of-School-Time Program Research & Evaluation Database

Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (Continuing Collection).

"This database is a compilation of profiles of evaluations of out-of-school-time (OST) programs and initiatives. It provides accessible information about evaluation work of both large and small OST programs to support the development of high quality evaluations and programs in the out-of-school time field. . . . Each profile contains an overview of the out-of-school time program or initiative that was evaluated, as well as detailed information about each evaluation report produced about that program. Electronic links to actual evaluation reports, where available, are also provided, as are contacts for program directors and evaluators. The profiles are searchable on several key criteria in each of these broad categories."

[Search – Out-of-School-Time Program Research and Evaluation Database](#)

Out of School Time: Proven and Promising Programs

Promising Practices Network (PPN), RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California.
(Continuing Collection)

The PPN website is a unique resource that offers credible, research-based information on what works to improve the lives of children and families. . . . One of the topics addresses "some components explicitly delivered after school hours, on evenings, on weekends, and/or during the summer during the traditional adult workday. This does not include child care programs."

[View the Out of School Programs](#)

STEM Learning in Afterschool: An Analysis of Impact and Outcomes (science, technology, engineering, math)

Afterschool Alliance, Washington DC. (2011).

"This document summarizes evaluation reports from afterschool STEM programs across the United States and identifies common trends and strengths that afterschool learning brings to STEM education. Like many programs nationwide, several of the programs highlighted in this paper were designed specifically to provide services to underrepresented populations in STEM fields, and many also focus on providing girls with exposure to science and female role models. . . . Evaluations presented here were collected by casting a wide net to solicit reports from afterschool programs across the country through various communication channels as well as searching through evaluation databases." Programs are described in the text and also on a table beginning on page 13 that provides additional detail.

[Full text – STEM Learning in Afterschool](#)

[Also see related publications on this page]

Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement: IES Practice Guide

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2009).

M. Beckett (Panel Chair), G. Borman, J. Capizzano, D. Parsley, S. Ross, A. Schirm, & J. Taylor.

"The five recommendations in this guide are intended to help district and school administrators, out-of-school program providers, and educators design out-of-school time programs that will increase learning for students. The guide also describes the research supporting each recommendation, how to carry out each recommendation, and how to address roadblocks that might arise in implementing them. . . . The evidence considered in developing this guide ranges from rigorous evaluations of out-of-school time programs to expert analyses of practices and strategies in such programs." A checklist for carrying out the recommendations is included.

[Full text -- Structuring Out-of-School Time](#)

[Also see – Doing What Works: Increased Learning Time Beyond the Regular School Day](#)

Summer Learning: A New Vision for Supporting Students in Summer Programs – NASBE Discussion Guide

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). (2011). Supported and distributed by The Wallace Foundation, New York City. C. Sun.

"The purpose of this discussion guide is to examine the role summer learning programs play in helping support students outside school hours and throughout the calendar year. To accomplish this goal, the guide provides the following: (a) contemporary research on the major issues facing students regarding summer learning; (b) elements of effective summer learning programs; (c) state-level actions to address issues in summer learning; and (d) policy exercises state boards of education can use to discuss summer learning policy in a structured and meaningful way."

[Full text – Summer Learning](#)

The Evaluation of Enhanced Academic Instruction in After-School Programs: Final Report

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2009).
A. R. Black, M. Somers, F. Doolittle, R. Unterman, & J. B. Grossman.

This report "includes two parallel impact studies, a math program study ("Mathletics" developed by Harcourt School Publishers) and a reading program study ("Adventure Island" developed by the Success for All Foundation) in which students attending an afterschool program are assigned by lottery to either receive the structured academic programming or the after-school programming regularly offered. For each academic program, the evaluation design allows for information about the one-year impact in the first and second years of operation as well as the two-year impact in which the program was offered to students for two consecutive years. Data on after-school staff characteristics, program implementation, and student outcomes were collected in the first and second years in 27 centers (12 providing the reading program and 15 providing the math program)."

[Full text – The Evaluation of Enhanced Evaluation Instruction](#)

The Impact of After-School Programs That Promote Personal and Social Skills

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL),
University of Illinois at Chicago. (2007). J. A. Durlak & R. P. Weissberg.

"This report, made possible with the support of the William T. Grant Foundation, includes a review of 73 after-school programs explicitly designed, at least in part, to enhance students' personal and social skills. The included programs involved children between the ages of 5 and 18. Youth who participate in such after-school programs improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance. More specifically, programs are successful in improving youths' feelings of self-confidence and attitudes toward school; positive social behaviors; and grades

and achievement test scores. They are also successful in reducing problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, noncompliance, conduct problems) and drug use."

[Full text -- The Impact of After-School Programs](#)

What Works for Education: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Social Interventions to Enhance Educational Outcomes (in out-of-school-time programs)

Child Trends, Washington DC. (2008). T. Ling & K. A. Moore

"This review is based on 40 social interventions and programs that take place during out-of-school time (see table). These interventions have been evaluated in a random assignment experiment and focus on educational outcomes from the Child Trends database of experimental evaluations of social interventions for children and youth. . . . The table offers summaries of what works (and what doesn't work) with regard to interventions. . . . Lessons learned from evaluations of interventions include: (a) Most of the out-of-school-time programs that target education outcomes have positive impacts. . . . (b) Programs that include teachers are effective in influencing educational adjustment and achievement. . . . (c) Programs that provide academic support or homework help have positive impacts on education outcomes. . . . (d) Programs with frequent and intense involvement (1 to 8 hours a day, 5 to 6 days a week) have been found to have positive impacts on academic outcomes, including self concept, educational expectations, academic achievement, high school completion, and post-secondary attendance. . . . (e) Programs providing services on an ongoing basis also improve education outcomes, such as increasing academic self concept, school engagement, and educational expectations, as well as increasing academic achievement, high school completion, and post-secondary attendance. . . . (f) A similar proportion of programs target academic learning as target school adjustment. . . . (g) The majority of evaluated programs target at-risk children. . . . (h) Research does not yet address programs targeting achievement motivation."

[Full text – What Works for Education](#)

[On the same page, see "What Works for Civic Engagement: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions"]

What Works in Out-of-School Programs for African American and Latino Children: Two Analyses

Child Trends, Washington DC. (2011). T. Bandy and K. A. Moore.

"African American and Latino/Hispanic children and adolescents often face challenges that differ from each other and from other groups of children in the U.S. Although a number of out-of-school-time programs serving African American and Latino children have been implemented, data on which approaches work among these groups are scarce. Two new Child Trends syntheses fill this gap by reviewing rigorous evaluations of out-of-school programs to identify programs that work, as well as those that do not, and the intervention strategies that contribute to program success. The programs targeted outcome areas such as reproductive health, substance use, and physical health and nutrition."

[Full texts – What Works for African American Children and Adolescents AND What Works for Latino Hispanic Children and Adolescents](#)

[Also see – Children of Latino Immigrants and Out-of-School Time Programs: Research to Results Brief](#)



This information is an attempt to gather wide-ranging information in one place, to convey what others have accomplished, and to make valuable resources readily accessible. Information is presented in the language of the developer, publisher, distributor, or author to the maximum possible extent. The National Implementation Research Network has no ownership of contents described in this library. Nor does NIRN make claims about any models, curricula, strategies, tools, products, or papers that are annotated. Links to evidence are provided, so that you can decide whether the evidence is convincing and the material is relevant to your context. Some collected reviews are developed and distributed by a U.S. Government agency. Otherwise, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of any U.S. Government agency, and no endorsement should be inferred.
