



Afterschool Alliance Backgrounder: Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs' Impact on Behavior, Safety and Family Life

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Although afterschool programs for children have been operating for many years in some communities, the afterschool movement – the great national awakening to the opportunity afterschool offers – is just a few years old. As public demand for afterschool has grown, so has the demand for accountability. That is particularly true in afterschool programs that spend public dollars. After all, where tax dollars flow, so must accountability to taxpayers.

The Landscape of Afterschool Evaluations

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 the effect afterschool programs have on the children who participate in them, their parents, and even the communities at large.

Both types of evaluations are of great value to afterschool providers and to policymakers, and when taken together the two types of studies help identify the particular program elements and approaches most critical to accomplishing program goals. It is useful, for example, to correlate information on student attendance at afterschool programs with student academic performance. Were an evaluator to conclude that attendance is key to academic gains, program designers might focus more energy on improving attendance for students.

Evaluations also differ by virtue of who conducts them. Many programs self-evaluate, providing useful data and satisfying the needs of their various stakeholders – parents, funders, partnering businesses, local public officials and so on. But for academics and large funders – the federal government, state governments, the Open Society Institute, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation or the Wallace Fund, for example – more exacting standards and greater independence is often required. Independent evaluations commissioned by such entities are the primary subject of this document.

Moreover, this compilation focuses chiefly on the impact of afterschool programs on student safety, behavior and discipline, and on the closely related topic of afterschool's effect on parents' concerns about their children's safety. A separate backgrounder,

available from the Afterschool Alliance website at www.afterschoolalliance.org, summarizes findings related to student academic achievement.

Summary Lessons from the Data

The evaluations included in this summary amply demonstrate that afterschool programs help keep children safe, have a positive impact on behavior and discipline, and help relieve parents' worries about their children's safety. (Citations for the following are included in the detailed descriptions of afterschool studies that follow.)

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, and help steer children away from negative and unsafe behaviors.

- The LA's BEST evaluation found that parents and children alike found the safety of the afterschool program far superior to the safety within the neighborhood.
- The evaluation of the New York City Beacons program concluded that "the vast majority of youth (85 percent) reported that it was 'always true' or 'mostly true' that they felt safe at the Beacons."
- Eighty percent of New York Beacons students who took part in intercept interviews described the Beacon as either "very helpful" or "pretty helpful" in helping them avoid drug use.
- Seventy-four percent of New York Beacons students interviewed said that the Beacon was either "very helpful" or "pretty helpful" in helping them avoid fighting.
- In Ohio's SACC program, "school absence and tardiness were reduced for participating students. First graders who were not in a SACC program during kindergarten reduced the number of school days they missed from an average of eight during their kindergarten year to an average of three days during their 1998-99 1st grade year. Eighth graders who were not in a SACC program during 7th grade reduced the average number of school days missed from 18 to five." Similarly, "suspensions and expulsions, when comparing the 1998-99 school year to the prior school year, were reduced for both elementary school students and middle school students who participated in SACC programs."
- An evaluation of The After-School Corporation's (TASC's) program concluded that "staff, students, and parents provided examples of student improvements that they attributed to the after-school program. Among the most common were improvements in students' social skills, including the ability to maintain self-control, make constructive choices about their behavior, and avoid fights."
- An evaluation of the Children's Aid Society of New York's afterschool pregnancy prevention program concluded, "Perhaps most importantly since this is the program's major goal, at the third-year follow-up, females in the CAS-Carrera program had significantly lower rates of pregnancy and births than did control females."
- Girls Inc.'s Friendly PEERsuasionSM program was found to have an important effect on alcohol abuse by youth: "The estimated effect of the program if both groups had participated in the program during the fall 1988 would be to halve the incidence of drinking from the actual rate of over 10% to under 5%."

- An evaluation of a Santa Ana, California program supported by the state's After School Education and Safety Program, examined attendance issues, comparing frequent afterschool attenders ("high-dosage participants") with less frequent attenders ("low-dosage participants"), as well as with a control group of "matching" students. The study found, "There were significantly fewer days of school missed by high-dosage participants (5.56 days) as compared to low-dosage participants (7.46 days) and the matches (6.80 days). In addition, high-dosage LEP [Limited English Proficiency] students missed significantly ($p < .002$) less school than low-dosage participants and the matches. Higher-dosage sixth and eighth graders, on the other hand, had higher means in days absent than the matches, although this also was not statistically significant."

Afterschool programs help working parents.

- The LA's BEST evaluation found that "three-quarters of the parents [surveyed] indicated that they worried significantly less about their children's safety and that they had more energy in the evening since enrolling their children in the program. A clear majority also indicated that the program resulted in sizeable savings in their time."
- Parents in the TASC study said that the program helped them balance work and family life: 94 percent said the program was convenient; 60 percent said they missed less work than before because of the program; 59 percent said it supported them in keeping their job; and 54 percent said it allowed them to work more hours.
- In Ohio's SACC program, "the adults in the participating children's families had a greater awareness of community agencies, their facilities, and their services because of the SACC programs." Similarly, "parents participating in interviews or completing surveys felt the programs had positive impacts on their families."
- A study of the Extended-Service Schools Initiative found that "the after-school programs were having some of these beneficial outcomes: 80 percent of parents said they were less worried about their child's safety after school. 57 percent said their child's participation helped them manage their own work schedule. 47 percent said it let them attend classes or job training more easily. 45 percent said it helped them get a better job or do better at their job."

The Mathematica Study

Recent years have seen dozens of rigorous studies of afterschool programs, and although specific findings vary depending on the programs studied, the evaluation measures applied, and the design of the studies, most reach the conclusion that afterschool programs help keep children safe, and help them succeed in school. In February 2003, the first phase of a three-phase, federally funded study offered strikingly different conclusions, and immediately became the subject of great controversy.

Conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. on a contract from the U.S. Department of Education and with supplemental funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the study was originally intended as a tool for improving the quality of afterschool programming. The Bush Administration's release of the first phase of the study just

hours after submitting a budget calling for a 40-percent cut in 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding, and the study's subsequent use by the Administration as the sole justification for the cut, set the tone for its reception. In fact, Mathematica's conclusions included no budget recommendations one way or the other. But it did include a number of negative findings based on data-collection and evaluation methods that many in the research community deemed flawed.

In the study, Mathematica researchers separately examined elementary and middle school 21st Century-funded programs, relying on data from the 2000-2001 school year, and using control and comparison groups. Among the many findings of the study, the authors and the Department of Education chose to focus on a handful of negative ones, including that the studied programs did not increase students' feelings of safety after school, and that middle school students in the studied 21st Century programs were deemed more likely to "report that they sold drugs, smoked marijuana, and, especially for girls, had their personal property damaged or were 'picked on.'"

Other more positive findings received less attention from the authors and the Administration, and consequently from the media.

- Middle school participants reported feeling more confident about their schoolwork and more comfortable being around students who are different from themselves.
- Teachers reported that middle school participants were more likely to try harder, be more attentive and participate more in class.
- Student participation in afterschool produced greater involvement by parents of participating students – improving parents' participation rates generally and by as much as 40 percent in some areas. Parental involvement has long been regarded as one of the keys to improved academic performance, and afterschool programs around the nation typically work to bring parents and other adults into the school building during the afterschool hours. Advocates say the Mathematica study's finding regarding increased parental involvement, even at this early stage of the research, suggests that this program design is yielding important benefits.
- Many trained, experienced teachers work in afterschool, bringing their skills and expertise to these programs. One-third of the program coordinators and three in five program staff members at programs in the study were school-day teachers. The middle school teachers who worked in afterschool programs noted that, as a result of working with students at the afterschool learning centers, they improved their teaching skills and had better relationships with some students – another significant benefit of the program design.

The report's finding about behavioral issues was a source of particular frustration for the afterschool community, because it was based on data regarded by many researchers as profoundly flawed. First, Mathematica relied solely on student-supplied data, even though students might hesitate to be forthcoming on matters of illegal behavior.

Second, Mathematica's survey instrument asked students questions that were open to wide interpretation. Conclusions that afterschool students are more likely to be involved

in drugs or to have their property damaged were based on the question, “How often has the following happened to you?” followed by a list of five experiences, including “Been offered, sold or given an illegal drug,” and “Had your property (such as clothing or books) damaged on purpose.” *But Mathematica did not inquire about whether responses related to afterschool in any way at all.* A student who had been offered drugs two years before enrolling in an afterschool program might well have responded affirmatively. Such an experience might even have been the reason for enrolling in the afterschool program. Moreover, the students in the middle school sample were different from the comparison group students in ways that might affect their past experiences with drugs and other negative behaviors and therefore their answers to the survey questions.

The study also suffered from serious methodological flaws:

- Just seven elementary school 21st CCLC grantees participated in the evaluation – far fewer than one might expect for a study of this size. In an acknowledgement of this problem, Mathematica added more elementary school sites to the sample for future phases of the research, and conceded that “the elementary school findings in this report should be viewed as preliminary.”
- According to Mathematica: “grantees were chosen for their ability to carry out the experimental design” of the evaluation, rather than because they were representative of the population of the 21st Century program. Therefore, the researchers conclude, “Findings for the elementary school centers in the evaluation do not generalize to all elementary school centers.”
- The samples of Hispanic and African American students in the studied elementary schools are not representative of the number of Hispanic and African American students in afterschool programs. According to Mathematica’s own numbers, 27.6 percent of elementary afterschool students in 21st CCLC programs were Hispanic, compared to only 1.8 percent of the students in the studied elementary programs. Similarly, 22.8 percent were African American, while 66.8 percent of students in the studied programs were African American.
- White students were over-represented in the student populations of the 34 participating middle school grantees. By comparison to 21st CCLC middle school centers across the nation, the studied centers included more white children, fewer African American, fewer Native American or Pacific Islander, fewer American Indian or Alaska Native, and fewer Asian.
- Beyond the demographics, students in the middle school sample were different in ways that might affect behavior and feelings of safety. Before their participation in the afterschool program year studied by Mathematica, the middle school students were, as a group, less likely than students in the comparison sample to do assigned homework, less likely to read for fun, more likely to watch television, less confident in their reading skills, more likely to expect to drop out of high school, less likely to have a parent with a college degree and more likely to have a parent who dropped out of high school.

The second phase of Mathematica’s study is expected sometime in 2004, although the report’s timing has not yet been announced. It will include, according to Mathematica, a

second year of data for middle school programs, and additional first-year data from elementary school programs not included in the first report. Of particular interest to the afterschool community will be the extent to which Mathematica and the Administration address the first phase's methodological flaws and more fairly balance the emphasis they give to positive and negative conclusions. A third phase of the report will include a second year of elementary school data.

Afterschool Evaluations in Detail

The gulf between Mathematica's findings and the large body of afterschool evaluation data before and since could not be more pronounced. Over the past decade a number of important afterschool evaluations have been conducted – more than enough to demonstrate that afterschool programs keep children safe and help working families. Following are summaries of several of the most extensive evaluations.

LA's BEST

Los Angeles's Better Educated Students for Tomorrow, or LA's BEST, is among the largest and best known afterschool programs in the nation. Launched in 1988 as a partnership between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the city of Los Angeles and the private sector, the program operates at 117 school sites, serving more than 19,000 students. Schools are chosen for participation because of the generally low academic achievement among their students, or because of the low economic status of the community, or high gang or crime rates in the neighborhood.

Since early in the life of the program, the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation has conducted evaluation studies. The studies have focused on a variety of topics, using a range of measures. The Center released its separate studies in March 1990, March 1991, July 1991, December 1993 and spring 1995. Then in June 2000, the Center released a comprehensive report summarizing each of the five previous studies and adding a rich set of findings based on its five-year tracking of the academic performance and school attendance of LA's BEST students who were in 2nd through 5th grades in the 1993-94 school year.

The study's description of its methodology: "To study LA's BEST schools, we obtained information about students including ethnicity, gender, language proficiency status, eligibility for free/reduced lunch (the proxy for low-income level) and disability status. In addition, we collected outcome data including achievement test scores (using either the *Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills* [CTBS] or the more recently adopted *Stanford-9 Achievement Test* [SAT-9] in reading, mathematics, and language arts. The rate at which students were redesignated as fully proficient in English was also collected. We also obtained school absence rates, course-taking patterns and rates of student mobility (moving between schools or out of the district)."

In addition, because of the size of the LA's BEST program and of the LAUSD school system, researchers were able to track an extraordinarily large sample of students and a correspondingly large "control" group – more than 4,000 LA's BEST students and more

than 15,000 non-participating students. The sheer numbers of students tracked make the data produced highly reliable.

The findings, summarized at <http://www.lasbest.org/learn/eval.html> with a link to the complete study, are powerful evidence of the value of afterschool programming. In short, the study found that LA's BEST participants, defined as students who participated regularly and over a period of more than one year, when compared to non-participating students, were absent less from school, "show positive achievement on standardized tests in mathematics, reading and language arts," and had "higher language redesignation rates to English proficiency." [Quoting from LA's BEST's summary of the findings, at <http://www.lasbest.org/learn/eval.html>.] Specific findings:

- "[T]hree-quarters of the parents [surveyed] indicated that they worried significantly less about their children's safety and that they had more energy in the evening since enrolling their children in the program. A clear majority also indicated that the program resulted in sizeable savings in their time. [*A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance*, June 2000. Denise Huang, Barry Gribbons, Kyung Sung Kim, Charlotte Lee, Eva L. Baker. Page 14.]
- "Across the board, parents and children alike found the safety of the afterschool program far superior to the safety within the neighborhood." [*Decade of Results*, page 14.]

The New York City Beacons Initiative

Launched in 1991, the Beacons Initiative seeks to link community-based organizations and schools in service of children. Programs offer activities for children and families, and seek to function as community resources for parents and seniors, as well. The model has been duplicated in many cities around the nation.

The New York program was the subject of a two-phase evaluation by the Academy for Educational Development, the Hunter College Center on AIDS, Drugs and Community Health, and the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. The first phase examined program operations in 1997-98; the second dealt with similar issues in greater depth, covering the period from 1998-2000. The evaluation was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Open Society Institute and the Ford Foundation. Evaluators stress that the study is not specifically aimed at documenting student outcomes, although some material of that sort may be useful to advocates, particularly from the second phase research. The evaluators' first-phase summary report is available by contacting AED (contact information: <http://www.aed.org/contact.html>); the second-phase summary is at <http://scs.aed.org/grow.pdf>.

Phase One findings include:

- "The Beacons have clearly created a safe place for youth: the vast majority of youth (85 percent) reported that it was 'always true' or 'mostly true' that they felt safe at the

Beacons.” [Evaluation of the New York City Beacons, Summary of Phase I Findings, <http://www.aed.org/news/beacons.html>.]

- “Close to three-fifths of Beacons (57 percent) involve young people in a diverse array of community service activities, at least once monthly.” [Evaluation.]
- “Four-fifths of youth (80 percent) who took part in intercept interviews described the Beacon as either ‘very helpful’ or ‘pretty helpful’ in helping them avoid drug use.” [Evaluation.]
- “Three-quarters (74 percent) of youth interviewed said that the Beacon was either very helpful or pretty helpful in helping them avoid fighting.” [Evaluation.]

Phase Two focused on six sites in greater detail. Among other things, it identified five specific positive youth development practices in use at several of the sites, centered on the extent to which students “had opportunities to 1) participate in stimulating and engaging activities; (2) develop caring and trusting relationships; (3) be challenged to grow by high expectations; (4) connect with and contribute to their communities; and (5) benefit from a continuity of adult support.” [A Place to Grow: Evaluation of the New York City Beacons Summary Report, Academy for Educational Development, 2002, page 3. <http://scs.aed.org/grow.pdf>.] Researchers concluded that:

“In sites with higher youth-development quality, young people were more likely to:

- “Feel better about themselves at the Beacon;
- “Believe that youth of all races and ethnicities were valued at the Beacon;
- “Perceive that staff had high expectations for their behavior and performance; and
- “Report that the Beacon helped them learn leadership skills.” [A Place to Grow, page 5.]

In turn, these students were “less likely to report that they had

- “Cut classes;
- “Hit others to hurt them;
- “Deliberately damaged other people’s property;
- “Stolen money or other property; and
- “Been in a fight.” [A Place to Grow, page 5.]

The Children’s Aid Society of New York Carrera-Model Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program

In 1984, the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) of New York launched a pregnancy prevention program aimed at high-risk adolescents in Harlem. Designed and implemented by Michael A. Carrera and Patricia Dempsey, CAS’s Carrera-Model Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program has expanded significantly since then, and is now replicated in 21 sites in New York and elsewhere. In addition, variations of the program are in place in 29 other sites.

Beginning in 1997, Kaye Philliber of Philliber Research Associates in Accord, New York began a three-year evaluation, relying on an experimental model comparing similar students in a control and treatment group. The evaluation examined six programs in New York City, and six in other communities – Broward County, Fla.; Baltimore, Md.; Houston, Tex.; Portland, Ore.; Seattle, Wash.; Rochester, NY. The resulting report, *The national evaluation of the Children’s Aid Society Carrera-Model Program to prevent teen pregnancy*, is available online at http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/media/general/cas-full_12-site_report.pdf

“The program components are:

- “a work-related intervention called job club, including stipends, development of an individual bank account, graduated employment experiences, and career awareness;
- “an educational component including individual academic assessment, tutoring, homework help, PSAT and SAT preparation, and assistance with college entrance;
- “family life and sex education (FLSE);
- “self expression through the arts; and
- “lifetime individual sports.” [*The national evaluation*, page 1.]

The program also provides medical care, including mental health services and reproductive health counseling, and makes contraception available.

Among the study’s findings:

- “Young people in the CAS-Carrera program were less likely to have initiated intercourse by the end of the third year, but the difference was not quite significant ($p=.098$) in the total sample, nor among the gender subgroups. Once having initiated intercourse, however, program girls were significantly more likely than control girls to use Depo-Provera at last intercourse. There were no significant differences in use of a condom, but most young people in both the program and control groups reported protecting themselves in this way.” [*The national evaluation*, page 7.]
- “Perhaps most importantly since this is the program’s major goal, at the third-year follow-up, females in the CAS-Carrera program had significantly lower rates of pregnancy and births than did control females.” (*The national evaluation*, page 7.) “The likelihood of giving birth by the end of the third year was 46% as large among program girls as among control girls. In other words, females in the control group were more than twice as likely to report a birth during the three years of this study. Moreover, the program females were almost three times more likely than the control girls to use Depo-Provera at last intercourse, net of these other variables [after controlling for age, race, barriers, family living arrangement and being sexually active at intake]. [*The national evaluation*, page 10.]

Girls Inc.’s Friendly PEERsuasionSM

In 1988, Girls Inc. launched its Friendly PEERsuasionSM program to help girls avoid substance abuse. The program focuses on assisting girls in identifying and resisting social messages and pressures that drive substance abuse. By 2001, 12,000 children were

served by the program in sites across the nation – under the direction of 57 affiliates of the national organization.

In 1998, Christine Smith and Stephen D. Kennedy, of Abt Associates in Indianapolis, Indiana began a year-long data-collection effort at four Girls Inc. sites, and drew the following conclusions, as summarized on the Harvard Family Research Project's website¹ at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/gifpp.html>:

- “Friendly PEERsuasion participants who reported having already initiated drinking alcohol prior to the program reported lower incidence of drinking at the post-program periods, although this difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.12$).
- “The estimated effect of the program if both groups had participated in the program during the fall 1988 would be to halve the incidence of drinking from the actual rate of over 10% to under 5% ($p=0.05$).
- “The effectiveness of Friendly PEERsuasion on delaying alcohol use persisted over the study period. Among participants who reported never having drunk alcohol at the pre-program questionnaire, 36% of the control group reported first use of alcohol on any post-program questionnaire. The estimated effect of program participation was a 14 percentage point reduction in the likelihood of drinking during the study period ($p=0.02$).
- “Participation in Friendly PEERsuasion led some girls to report leaving gatherings where others were drinking alcohol ($p=0.05$).
- “A lower percentage of fall participants reported favorable attitudes toward drinking alcohol after completing PEERsuader training than did their peers who had not yet begun PEERsuader training, although this difference was not statistically significant ($p=.20$).
- “Younger girls who participated earlier were less likely to begin using harmful substances during the study period ($p=0.06$). Older girls reported similar behaviors regardless of earlier or later participation.” [HFRP Summary]

Maryland After School Community Grant Program

The Maryland After School Community Grant Program (MASCGP) supports more than 120 afterschool programs serving more than 3,000 fourth- through eighth-graders [National Governors Association Center for Best Practices at <http://www.nga.org/eloDetail/1,1348,131,00.html>.] Its goals, according to the Harvard Family Research Project's Out-of-School Time database, are to “(1) to decrease the number of unsupervised after school hours for program participants, (2) to increase participants' academic performance, (3) to increase participants' social skills, (4) to increase participants' attachments to prosocial adults, and (5) to increase beliefs against substance use and illegal behavior.”

¹ The Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) maintains a rich database of information on out-of-school-time evaluations, from which much information in this report is drawn. A complete listing of HFRP's summaries is available at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/evaldatabase.html>.

Individual program design varies by community. All are required to have components focused on academics, development of social skills, and “bonding” activities aimed at maintaining and boosting participation. Evaluator Denise C. Gottfredson, Ph.D. of the University of Maryland conducted an evaluation of the program’s 1999-2000 school year, with follow-up evaluations for the next two school years on the way. The evaluation focused on the program’s 15 original sites, and used control and treatment groups.

The study’s chief conclusions, summarized by the Harvard Family Research Project and available at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/mascgp.html>:

- “Correlational analysis generally confirms the theory underlying the Maryland After School Community Grant Program, specifically that delinquency and drug use are related to number of hours youth spend unsupervised, level of bonding to school, community or family, academic performance, attitudes towards substance abuse and illegal behaviors, negative peer influence, and social skills.
- “An increase in bonding is significantly related to a decrease in delinquency ($p < .01$), but not drug use.
- “Stronger attitudes against illegal activities and increases in social skills are related to significant decreases in delinquency ($p < .01$) and drug use ($p < .05$).
- “Increased negative peer influence is related to significant increases in delinquency ($p < .01$) and drug use ($p < .05$).
- “Increasing hours supervised and involvement in constructive activities by themselves do not translate into significant declines in delinquency or drug use.
- “Programs that have a high emphasis on social skills and a low emphasis on academics had a significant effect on reducing delinquency ($p < .05$), drug use ($p < .01$), and positive attitudes toward illegal activity ($p < .01$) compared to other programs. These programs are also more effective at decreasing negative peer influence and improving social skills than other programs. Shorter programs, those meeting for less than 9.5 hours a week, appear to have significant negative effects on academic performance ($p < .05$.” [HFRP Summary]

Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project

The Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC) funds a variety of afterschool programs in Ohio urban school districts. The University of Cincinnati College of Education’s Evaluation Services Center conducted a thorough review of the program’s 1998-1999 school year, measuring both project design and its outcomes. Data collection included document reviews, observation of programs, surveys and questionnaires. Among the findings:

- “School absence and tardiness were reduced for participating students. First graders who were not in a SACC program during kindergarten reduced the number of school days they missed from an average of 8 during their kindergarten year to an average of 3 days during their 1998-99 1st grade year. Eighth graders who were not in a SACC program during 7th grade reduced the average number of school days missed from 18 to 5.” [Harvard Family Research Project at

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/osisaccp.pdf>, hereafter *HFRP-Ohio*.]

- “Suspensions and expulsions, when comparing the 1998-99 school year to the prior school year, were reduced for both elementary school students and middle school students who participated in SACC programs.” [*HFRP-Ohio*.]
- “The adults in the participating children’s families had a greater awareness of community agencies, their facilities, and their services because of the SACC programs.” [*HFRP-Ohio*.]
- “Parents participating in interviews or completing surveys felt the programs had positive impacts on their families.” [*HFRP-Ohio*.]
- “Participating children spent more hours in a safe, supervised environment, before and/or after school, than they had prior to program involvement.” [*HFRP-Ohio*.]
- “Participating children’s television and video viewing decreased because of attendance in this program.” [*HFRP-Ohio*.]

After School Education and Safety Program – Santa Ana, California

With funding from California’s After School Education and Safety Program, Santa Ana, California in 1999 opened afterschool sites in four urban middle schools. The sites “serve predominantly Latino students with limited English proficiency and from high poverty backgrounds. Although each site’s schedule varied, a typical program schedule included a one-hour homework period, a one-hour arts or life skills component, and a one-hour sports component.” [Harvard Family Research Project summary, <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/saaslsnpp.html>, December 2003.] Jenel Prenovost, Ed.D., of the University of California, Irvine and the University of California, Los Angeles led an evaluation that relied on a quasi-experimental design, comparing the one-year results of three groups of students – a control group, a high-dosage treatment group (students who attended the program for 38 or more days during the school year), and a low-dosage group (students who attended for fewer than 38 days).

The findings indicated that students in the high-dosage group showed better results than low-dosage and control group students. Results included the following:

- “There were significantly ($p < .005$) fewer days of school missed by high-dosage participants (5.56 days) as compared to low-dosage participants (7.46 days) and the matches (6.80 days). In addition, high-dosage LEP [Limited English Proficiency] students missed significantly ($p < .002$) less school than low-dosage participants and the matches. Higher-dosage sixth and eighth graders, on the other hand, had higher means in days absent than the matches, although this also was not statistically significant.” [*HFRP*]
- “The program was associated with a nearly significant ($p < .082$) difference in improvement in school attendance. There was a statistically significant ($p < .031$) finding that high-dosage students improved more in their school attendance (1.36 days) than low dosage students (.32 days). Also, high-dosage LEP students improved their attendance significantly ($p < .05$) more than low-dosage participants (.29 days) and matches (-.18 days).” [*HFRP*]

The Extended-Service Schools Initiative: 2002 Report

In 1998, the Extended-Service Schools Initiative (ESS) began funding community organizations across the country to partner with local schools to create a total of 60 afterschool programs in 20 communities. Each of the programs follows one of four nationally recognized program models – Beacon, Bridges to Success, Community Schools, or West Philadelphia Improvement Corporation – to provide youth-development activities in low-income areas in programs located in school buildings during non-school hours. ESS was funded as a five-year program by Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds. Separately, the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds provided financial support to Public/Private Ventures (PPV) to conduct an evaluation of the program. PPV, with subcontractor Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, began a four-year, multi-phase evaluation. Issued in June 2002, *Multiple Choices: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative*, is available online at <http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/ess-multi-full.html>.

According to researchers, “Students who participated in the school-based, afterschool programs seemed to experience positive change in four key areas: staying out of trouble; improving their school attitudes and behavior; strengthening their social networks; and learning new skills, seeing new possibilities and improving their self-confidence.” [Multiple Choices, page 30, <http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/ess-multi-full.html>.] Specifically:

- “One particularly important outcome desired for after-school programs is that they decrease the risktaking behavior of youth. By providing them with structured, supervised activities, the time they have to get into trouble is decreased. In addition, the social rules and tone implemented by staff can teach youth to deal more appropriately with negotiation, social conflict and anger. When we asked parents and youth if ESS helped them stay out of trouble and more appropriately deal with conflict, both groups—but especially the parents—believed ESS was very useful in this regard.” [Multiple Choices, page 31.]
- “When we examined how the youth’s academic attitudes and behaviors changed over time, we found a consistent story. Youth who participated in ESS activities experienced a greater increase in their sense of belonging at school and paid more attention in class. Again, consider the two groups of similar youth. . . . [A]mong the youth who did not go to ESS during the 13 months between the initial and follow-up surveys, 20 out of 100 reported that they started skipping school, 29 said they really paid attention in class, and 76 said they were very proud to belong to their school. Among similar youth who went to ESS two days a week, only 11 out of 100 reported starting to skip school; 49 said they really paid attention in class; and 84 said they were very proud to belong to their school.” [Multiple Choices, page 32.]
- “Responses on the parent survey administered in Spring 2001 suggest that the after-school programs were having some of these beneficial outcomes: 80 percent of parents said they were less worried about their child’s safety after school. 57 percent said their child’s participation helped them manage their own work schedule. 47 percent said it let them attend classes or job training more easily. 45 percent said it

helped them get a better job or do better at their job.” [*Multiple Choices*, pages 33-34.]

North Carolina’s “Support Our Students”

In 1994, the state of North Carolina launched its “Support Our Students” initiative (SOS), to provide funding for afterschool programs across the state. The program offers grants in the \$60,000 to \$250,000 range to nonprofit organizations in the state – one per county, each of which coordinates services in their counties. In 2001-2002, the program provided \$12.5 million to nonprofits in 98 counties. In all, the program supported programs in 190 school-based sites, and 54 community-based sites, providing afterschool services to 16,000 students during the school year, and summer programming for 10,000 students.

An evaluation of the 2001-2002 year’s programs, conducted by EDSTAR, an independent research and analysis firm based in Raleigh, North Carolina, found the following:

- “The percentage of middle school SOS participants receiving out-of-school suspensions decreased as compared to their previous year in school (from 13 percent to 8 percent), as did the percentage of those receiving in-school suspensions. [*North Carolina Support Our Students 2001-2002 Program Highlights*, at http://www.edstar.org/sos_2002reports/021009_SOS_handout.doc]
- “Attendance at school improved for SOS participants. Fewer students were chronically absent from school in 2001–2002 (7 percent of participants), compared with the previous year (9 percent). [*Program Highlights*]
- “Classroom teachers reported that 41 percent of participants had improved behavior in math class throughout this school year, and 42 percent had improved behavior in English/Language Arts classes.” [*Program Highlights*]

The After-School Corporation

The After-School Corporation (TASC) is a New York City-based nonprofit, established by the Open Society Institute in 1998, representing a \$25 million five-year commitment by the foundation. TASC provides grants to nonprofit organizations to establish partnerships with individual public schools, and the resulting afterschool programs follow a core set of program components. In all, 143 public schools in New York City and 73 schools in other parts of New York State participate. Funding is based on enrollment and is \$1,000 per student, excluding start-up, facilities and staff training.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation provided funding to the Washington-based Policy Studies Associates to conduct a five-year evaluation, including annual summary reports. The first year’s evaluation, covering the 1998-99 school year, focused largely on issues related to program design and participation. The second- and third-year evaluations focused more on academic achievement. The second-year evaluation, covering the 1999-2000 school year, found:

- “Forty-five percent of principals in Year 2 reported that the TASC project has increased parents’ attendance at school events and 36 percent said that the project had

increased parents' attendance at parent-teacher conferences." Ninety-seven percent of parents surveyed indicated that "their child liked to come to the program"; 86 percent agreed "that the project was helping their child academically." Parents also said that the program helped them balance work and family life: 94 percent said the program was convenient; 60 percent said they missed less work than before because of the program; 59 percent said it supported them in keeping their job; and 54 percent said it was supportive to them in allowing them to work more hours. [*Building Quality and Supporting Expansion of After-school Projects, Summary of Findings,* " http://www.tascorp.org/pages/promising_es2.pdf, page 15.]

- "[S]taff, students, and parents provided examples of student improvements that they attributed to the after-school program. Among the most common were improvements in students' social skills, including the ability to maintain self-control, make constructive choices about their behavior, and avoid fights." [*Building Quality*, page 12.]

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the C.S. Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, JCPenney Afterschool, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation. Washington, DC Office: 202/347-2030; Flint, Michigan Office: 810/239-3449