



# Afterschool Alliance

## **Evaluations Backgrounder: *A Summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs' Impact on Behavior, Safety and Family Life***

**August 2008**

Although afterschool programs for children have been operating for decades 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.

Fortunately for afterschool advocates, a steady stream of afterschool evaluations are showing important gains for children, not only in terms of academic achievement but also in terms of safety, discipline, attendance and avoidance of risky behaviors. In addition, researchers have found that afterschool programs encourage increased parental involvement, an important building block for student success.

This updated evaluations backgrounder 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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org), summarizes findings related to student academic achievement. Included in this compilation is new information from the following evaluations:

- A new meta-analysis by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) covering 73 separate studies of afterschool programs and their impact on students' personal and social skills;
- The “Promising After-School Programs Study” of programs serving 3,000 low-income students at 35 programs in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Michigan, Montana, New York, Oregon and Rhode Island, and their impact on student behavior;
- The Chapin Hall study of Chicago's After School Matters program and its impact on student attendance;
- The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA study of the LA's BEST program and its impact on juvenile crime;

- A new study of the five-city, California-based Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning (CORAL), conducted by Public/Private Ventures;
- The Women’s Studies Research Center at Brandeis University and Catalyst’s study of the impact on business of working parents’ stress caused by issues related to care for their children after school; and
- The Medical College of Georgia’s test of an afterschool model designed to use physical fitness and other activities to improve students’ body fat index numbers, cardiovascular fitness, blood pressure and cholesterol scores.

Also included in this report are evaluations of The Boys & Girls Clubs’ Project Learn; Citizen Schools; The Children’s Aid Society of New York’s Carrera-Model Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program; The Extended-Service Schools Initiative; Girls Inc.’s Friendly PEERsuasion; California’s After School Education and Safety Program; The Maryland After School Opportunity Fund Program; The After-School Corporation (TASC); North Carolina Support Our Students; Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC); Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs; Generacion Diez in Adams County, Pennsylvania; Fort Worth After School Program; Woodcraft Rangers’ Nvision After School Program (NASP) in Los Angeles, California; the Beacons Initiative in New York City; YMCA of Greater New York’s Virtual Y Program; and the Mahoney and Lord Study of Program Participation and Obesity. A list of the studies and their key findings is provided at the end of this document on page 27.

## **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 student and other outcomes—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. For example, studies correlating increased afterschool attendance with increased academic performance have triggered considerable discussion in the afterschool community about ways to improve student attendance in afterschool programs.

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 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Open Society Institute, 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.

The studies included in this backgrounder are just a few of the numerous evaluations of afterschool programs completed in recent years. To learn more about evaluations of afterschool programs and to search a more comprehensive database of studies, visit the Harvard Family Research Project website at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time>.

## Summary Lessons from the Data

The evaluations included in this summary amply demonstrate that afterschool programs can help keep children safe, have a positive impact on behavior and discipline, and help relieve parents' worries about their children's safety. Below we present the summary lessons from the studies included in the backgrounder. Detailed descriptions and findings from all the studies, including citations, are included in the *Afterschool Evaluations in Detail* section beginning on page seven. See Appendix A, *Afterschool Evaluations at a Glance* on page 27 for a summary listing of the studies included in this backgrounder.

***Afterschool programs have a positive impact on children's self-concept and help them make healthier choices that keep them on-track toward success.***

- The Promising Programs evaluation found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to “reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students,” including “significant reductions in aggressive behaviors with peers,” “reductions in misconduct,” and “reduced use of drugs and alcohol.”
- 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.
- A meta-analysis by the University of Illinois at Chicago-based Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) found that “Youth who participate in after-school programs improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance.... They also reduced problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, noncompliance and conduct problems) and drug use.”
- 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 afterschool 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 PEERsuasion<sup>SM</sup> 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 percent to under five percent."
- Students participating in the Maryland Afterschool Opportunity Fund Program demonstrated less delinquent behavior compared to nonparticipants in the program. Students participating in at least 23-40 days of the program showed more positive gains on measures such as commitment to education and academic performance, and a reduction in delinquency and contact with the police.

***Afterschool programs help keep children safe.***

- A 2000 evaluation report of the LA's BEST program found that parents and children alike found the safety of the afterschool program far superior to the safety within the neighborhood. A 2007 evaluation report found that children attending LA's BEST are 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities than their peers who do not attend the program. Researchers estimate that for every dollar invested, the program saves the city \$2.50 in crime-related costs.
- 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."
- An evaluation of the Fort Worth After School (FWAS) program found that "94 percent of parents agreed that FWAS kept their child from getting in trouble and 45 percent also felt that their child would get into trouble if they were at home."
- A Public/Private Ventures evaluation of the Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning (CORAL) initiative in California found that nine in 10 program participants reported feeling safe.

***Students in afterschool programs are more likely to go to school, attend regularly, enjoy school and behave better in the classroom.***

- 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."
- The Chapin Hall Study of After School Matters found that, "students who participated in the program missed fewer days of school than their classmates."
- A five phase evaluation of the Citizen Schools program found that former participants of the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy consistently continued to attend school more often through ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade compared to a group of matched nonparticipants. This was true among all participants with low and high levels of exposure to the program.

- A statewide evaluation of California’s After School Education and Safety Program found improved regular school day attendance for participating students—ranging from 5 to 17 additional days per year.
- A five-site evaluation of The Boys and Girls Clubs’ Project Learn found that after 30 months, participants improved school day attendance while nonparticipants skipped school more often. There was no statistical difference between truancy rates at baseline, however, there was a statistical difference in attendance rates between the groups at the 30-month follow-up.
- Researchers at Fordham University found that participants in the YMCA of Greater New York Virtual Y Programs demonstrated statistically significant and moderate to large improvements in task motivation, frustration tolerance, learning skills, acting out, peer social skills, assertive social skills, shyness/ anxiety and on the overall behavior scale. Participants also had statistically significant gains in attendance compared to a group of matched nonparticipants.
- Research by the Texas State Education Agency found that strong participation in afterschool correlated with better attendance during the regular school day. Approximately half (48 percent) of youth who participated in three quarters or more of the available 21st CCLC activities missed five or fewer days of school during the fall semester, compared to 17 percent of youth who participated in less than one quarter of the available activities.
- North Carolina’s *Support our Students’* participants improved their school attendance. More than one third of middle school students and nearly half of elementary school students reported enjoying school more since they started the program.

***Afterschool programs help keep children healthy.***

- The Mahoney and Lord study, conducted in an unnamed urban setting, found that “controlling for baseline obesity, poverty status, and race and ethnicity, the prevalence of obesity was significantly lower for ASP participants (21 percent) compared to nonparticipants (33 percent) at follow-up.”
- The Medical College of Georgia study of a specially designed afterschool curriculum found that children who attended 40 percent of the afterschool sessions or more, compared to children in the control group, showed significant differences in change in body fat percentage (test group students decreased their body fat percentage, while the control group students increased theirs). These same 40-percent-or more students showed significantly greater gains in bone mass density and cardiovascular fitness.

***Afterschool programs help working families and encourage parental participation.***

- The Brandeis/Catalyst study of working parents found that worries about children’s activities in the afternoon makes mothers and fathers less productive at work and contributes to employee stress, costing businesses between \$50 billion and \$300 billion annually in lost productivity.
- 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 addition, 31 percent of principals reported that TASC “very much” increased parents’ attendance at school events and 15 percent reported that it “very much” increased parents’ attendance at parent–teacher conferences.
- 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.”
- An evaluation of Woodcraft Rangers’ Nvision After School Program (NASP) in Los Angeles found that, “In focus groups, parents said that NASP helped them become more involved in their children’s education, for example, through volunteering for the program. Parents also said that they were more aware of school activities and ways to volunteer at the school.”
- An external evaluation of Adams County, Pennsylvania’s Generacion Diez afterschool program found that children who attended the program for more days per week showed significantly greater decreases in behavior problems than those who attended less frequently, and that parents of children with greater attendance rates in the program reported higher rates of quality and quantity of parent-teacher contact, as well as their engagement in their children’s school activities.

## **Afterschool Evaluations in Detail**

Over the past decade researchers have conducted a number of important afterschool evaluations—more than enough to demonstrate that afterschool programs keep children safe and help working families. Following are summaries of some of the most recent evaluations. The summaries are organized by scope, beginning with large-scale studies, evaluating programs located in multiple cities and states, and a meta-analysis of multiple programs. We then turn to evaluations of programs operating at a state level and end with local or program level evaluations. Studies that are newly included or updated for this 2008 version of the evaluations backgrounder are indicated as such.

## Large-Scale Studies



### *The Promising After-School Programs Study*

A study by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Policy Studies Associates, Inc. examined the impact of high-quality afterschool programs on a group of nearly 3,000 low-income students at 35 programs in Aurora, Colorado; Baldwin, Michigan; Bridgeport, Connecticut; Central Falls, Rhode Island; Denver, Colorado; Los Angeles, California; Missoula, Montana; New York, New York; Oakland, California; Pawtucket, Rhode Island; Salem, Oregon; San Diego, California; San Ysidro, California; and Seaside, California. The study, conducted with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, was released in October 2007.

Noting that many afterschool participants also took part in other structured or adult-supervised afternoon activities one or more days a week, researchers compared results across three groups of students: children in afterschool programs (“program only”); children in afterschool programs two to three days a week and in other structured or adult-supervised activity the other days of the week (“program plus”); and children who were frequently unsupervised in the afternoons (“unsupervised”).

In screening programs for inclusion in the study, researchers focused on “high quality” programs. Researchers described the screening for quality thusly:

“Using a rating system, researchers assessed programs based on evidence of supportive relationships between staff and child participants and among participants, and on evidence of rich and varied academic support, recreation, arts opportunities, and other enrichment activities. Ratings were consistently positive. Students typically were highly engaged with one another and with program activities, and group leaders structured activities to maximize learning and positive relationships. Adults facilitated activities without imposing controls that limited student learning opportunities. Disruptive or chaotic behavior was rarely observed; when behavioral disruptions occurred, leaders managed them calmly and constructively.” [page 2] [This and subsequent quotes for this study are from *Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs*, Deborah Lowe Vandell, University of California, Irvine, Elizabeth R. Reisner, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. and Kim M. Pierce, University of California, Irvine, available at <http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Promising%20Programs%20FINAL.pdf>.]

Researchers gathered two years of data, and found:

- “Regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.” [page 1]

- “Program Only and Program Plus students posted significant gains in teachers’ reports of students’ social skills with peers...and prosocial behaviors.... Program Only and Program Plus students also posted significant reductions in aggressive behaviors with peers...” [page 5]
- “Reductions in misconduct over the two-year period were reported by Program Plus and Program Only middle school students, relative to the Low Supervision group.” [page 6]
- “Middle school students who regularly participated in afterschool programs also reported reduced use of drugs and alcohol, compared to those in the Low Supervision group.” [page 6]



***CASEL’s Study of the Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills***

“The Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills” study, by Roger P. Weissberg, President of the University of Illinois at Chicago-based Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and Professor Joseph Durlak, Loyola University—Chicago, was intended to fill what the authors regarded as a gap in existing research. While many studies have focused on afterschool’s impact on students’ academic achievement, large-scale studies focused on programs’ impact on students’ personal and social skills were less common. Their meta-analysis, released in 2007 with funding from the William T. Grant Foundation, used data from 73 existing studies to identify broad conclusions. The two they deemed most significant:

- “Youth who participate in after-school programs improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance. More specifically, after-school programs succeeded in improving youths’ feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding (positive feelings and attitudes toward school), positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores. They also reduced problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, noncompliance and conduct problems) and drug use. In sum, after-school programs produced multiple benefits that pertain to youths’ personal, social and academic life.”
- “It was possible to identify effective programs: Programs that used evidence-based skill training approaches were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth, while those that did not use such procedures were not successful in any outcome area.” [Both quotes from “The Impact of Afterschool Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills,” Joseph A. Durlak, Loyola University Chicago; Roger P. Weissberg, University of Illinois Chicago; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2007, available at <http://www.casel.org/downloads/ASP-Full.pdf>.]

The authors considered programs to be using “evidence-based skill training approaches” if they used a “sequenced set of activities to achieve skill objectives,” “active forms of learning,” and at least one program element “focused on developing personal or social skills” that targeted specific skills.



### ***Catalyst/Brandeis Study of Parental Stress***

A 2006 study from Karen Gareis and Rosalind Barnett of the Women’s Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, and Catalyst, a nonprofit research and advisory organization for business leaders, examined the impact on business of working parents’ stress caused by issues related to care for their children after school.

The study’s key tool was a self-administered questionnaire completed by 1,755 employees of one of three Fortune 500 companies. Respondents were all parents of school-age children who lived with them. According to their report, *After-School Worries: Tough on Parents, Bad for Business* [<http://www.catalyst.org/publication/146/after-school-worries-tough-on-parents-bad-for-business>], as many as 2.5 million parents are over-stressed by parental concern about after-school time, which they dub PCAST, and are likely to bring their concerns to the office. The study found that PCAST concerns are intensified for parents who have more responsibility for childcare in the household, work longer hours and whose children are older (in grades 6 through 12) or spend more time unsupervised.

Relying on research by the American Institute of Stress, the authors conclude that PCAST makes mothers and fathers less productive at work and contributes to employee stress, costing businesses between \$50 billion and \$300 billion annually in lost productivity. The study also found that both men and women are vulnerable to the negative consequences of PCAST, which potentially affects one-third of the U.S. workforce.

### ***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/ppv/publications/assets/116\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/116_publication.pdf).

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.” [page 30] [All quotes for this study are from *Multiple Choices: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative*.]

Specifically:

- “One particularly important outcome desired for after-school programs is that they decrease the risk-taking 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.” [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.” [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.” [pages 33-34]

### ***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, FL; Baltimore, MD; Houston, TX; Portland, OR; Seattle, WA; and 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/files/cas-full\\_12-site\\_report1.pdf](http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/files/cas-full_12-site_report1.pdf). [All quotes for this study are from *The national evaluation of the Children’s Aid Society Carrera-Model Program to prevent teen pregnancy*.]

“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.” [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.” [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.” [page 7] “The likelihood of giving birth by the end of the third year was 46 percent 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].” [page 10]

### ***Girls Inc.’s Friendly PEERsuasion<sup>SM</sup>***

In 1988, Girls Inc. launched its Friendly PEERsuasion<sup>SM</sup> 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 1988, 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 website<sup>1</sup> at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/girls-inc.-friendly-peersuasion-program>:

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<sup>1</sup> 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>.

- “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 percent to under five percent (p=0.05). [This and subsequent quotes for this study are from the HFRP summary.]
- “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 percent 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.”

## State Level Evaluations



### *Medical College of Georgia FitKid Project*

With concerns about childhood obesity mounting, in 2003, the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) launched a three-year experiment designed to test the proposition that third grade children attending an afterschool program offering specified physical fitness activities could achieve improved body fat index numbers, better cardiovascular fitness, lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol scores.

The study involved control and test groups of third-graders at 18 afterschool programs. Test group programs agreed to provide a two-hour series of activities, consistent with MCG’s program design, that began with 40 minutes of academic enrichment activities and homework help, a healthy snack based on U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines, 20 minutes of physical warm-up and skills instruction, 40 minutes of continuous moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, and 10 minutes of calisthenics and cool down. Individual students’ fitness was assessed using appropriate medical testing.

Results were published in *An Environmental Approach to Obesity Prevention in Children: Medical College of Georgia FitKid Project Year 1 Results*, [<http://www.obesityresearch.org/cgi/content/full/13/12/2153>]. Analysis of the first year of data from the study led Medical College of Georgia researchers to conclude that children who attended 40 percent of the afterschool sessions or more, compared to children in the control

group, showed significant differences in change in body fat percentage (test group students decreased their body fat percentage, while the control group students increased theirs). These same 40-percent-or more students showed significantly greater gains in bone mass density and cardiovascular fitness.

### ***The After-School Corporation (New York)***

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. TASC supports 322 programs across New York City serving more than 300,000 kids, and helped establish programs for another 50,000 kids in the New York region. TASC's mission is to enhance the quality, availability and sustainability of after-school programming in New York City and beyond, and change public policy so that every child in every community across the nation will have access to free, quality after-school programming by 2010.

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. [All quotes for this study are from *Building Quality and Supporting Expansion of After-school Projects, Summary of Findings,*

<http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/tasc-year2.html>] 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.” [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.” [page 12]

Fourth-year findings included:

- “Thirty-one percent of principals reported that TASC ‘very much’ increased parents’ attendance at school events and 15 percent reported that it ‘very much’ increased parents’ attendance at parent-teacher conferences.”

- “Forty-one percent of principals reported that TASC ‘very much’ improved student safety, and 17 percent reported that it ‘very much’ reduced vandalism at the school”

### ***The Maryland After School Opportunity Fund Program***

Created in 1999, the Maryland After School Opportunity Fund Program (MASOFP) provided \$10 million in annual funding to afterschool programs in the state. In fiscal year 2003, the program served more than 18,000 students around the state.

The enacting legislation called for an evaluation of MASOFP, and in 2001, a team of researchers from the University of Maryland’s Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice began to construct a research model. The final report, *A Statewide Evaluation of the Maryland After School Opportunity Fund Program*, Final Report, released June 30, 2004 by Denise C. Gottfredson, David A. Soulé, and Amanda Cross, applied a number of different evaluation measures to funded programs, seeking to account for the programs’ divergent objectives. The evaluation gathered data on more than 3,300 students in 73 programs.

Evaluators identified seven different types of programs, characterized by their self-described main objectives:

- Academic Enrichment
- Youth Development
- Community Service
- Recreation
- Workforce Skills
- Mentoring
- Comprehensive

Among other things, the resulting data permitted comparisons among the different types of programs. The study concluded:

- “Secondary school participants who attended MASOFP programs increased their decision-making skills and reduced their delinquent behavior as compared to non-participating youth in comparison groups.”
- “Programs classified as ‘youth development’ (e.g. having a greater emphasis on social problem solving instruction) had the most consistently positive outcomes.”
- “Youth attending a medium number of days (23-40) showed a more positive gain on such measures as commitment to education and academic performance, and a reduction in delinquency and contact with the police.”
- “MASOFP programs appeared more effective for youth in poverty relative to more advantaged youth.”
- “Students who attended youth development programs (that emphasized social problem-solving skills) experienced more gain in skill development, character development, and

decision-making skills.” [All quotes are from *A Statewide Evaluation of the Maryland After School Opportunity Fund*, page vii, available from the authors.]

### ***21st Century Community Learning Centers – Texas***

At the end of the 2003-2004 school year, Texas had 32 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grantees, operating 136 afterschool sites. Relying on pre-program and post-program data collected from sites as part of grant reporting requirements, the Texas Education Agency, the state’s department of education, compiled and analyzed data on student performance and program implementation. A summary of the evaluation’s findings by the Harvard Family Research Project is available at the website link below. The complete evaluation study can be accessed online at

[http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/OutOfSchoolLearning/21cclc\\_03\\_04\\_eval.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/OutOfSchoolLearning/21cclc_03_04_eval.pdf) .

According to the research, strong participation in afterschool correlated with better attendance during the regular school day.

- “Approximately half (48 percent) of youth who participated in three quarters or more of the available 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities missed five or fewer days of school during the fall semester, compared to 17 percent of youth who participated in less than one quarter of the available activities. The corresponding percentages for spring were 33 percent and 26 percent, respectively. Youth who participated in 50 percent or more of the available 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities were absent approximately two regular school days less in the spring term than youth who participated in less than 50 percent of the available 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities. This difference was statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ). After controlling for demographic factors, those youth participating in 26 percent–50 percent, 51 percent–75 percent, and 75 percent–100 percent of available activities missed significantly fewer days of school than those participating in 25 percent or fewer activities ( $p < .01$ ).” [From “A Profile of the Evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers—Texas,” Harvard Family Research Project, available at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/21st-century-community-learning-centers-texas> .]

### ***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 that same year, 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. By 2003-2004, the program served students in all 100 counties and raised around \$10 million from other grants, in-kind donations and volunteer labor valued at more than \$1 million.

An evaluation of the 2003-2004 year’s programs, conducted by EDSTAR, an independent research and analysis firm based in Raleigh, North Carolina, found the following:

- “35 percent of middle school students and 49 percent of elementary students reported that they enjoy school more since joining the SOS program.” [*North Carolina’s Support Our Students 2003-2004 Program Highlights*, at [http://www.edstar.biz/edstar/reports/file/SOS\\_2004\\_highlight.doc](http://www.edstar.biz/edstar/reports/file/SOS_2004_highlight.doc) .]
- “Nearly a third of the SOS Program participants’ math and English teachers reported that they students’ behavior had improved.”

Findings from an evaluation of the 2001-2002 school year also show positive results:

- “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.” [A summary of the evaluation’s findings by the Harvard Family Research Project is available at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/north-carolina-support-our-students-sos-initiative/evaluation-2001-2002> .]
- “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).”

### ***After School Education and Safety Program – California***

Begun in 1998 as the California Afterschool Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (ASLSNPP), now the After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program, provided \$117 million annually in matching funds to local partnerships of school districts, community groups, and local governments to provide before and afterschool programs for students. Today, California provides \$550 million to afterschool through the ASES program. In selecting grantees, the state gives priority to schools where 50 percent or more of pupils are eligible for free or reduced-cost meals. Programs are designed locally, but are required to include an “educational and literacy component to provide tutoring or homework assistance in one or more of the following subject areas: language arts, mathematics, history and social science, or science”; and “an educational enrichment component, which may include but is not limited to, recreation and prevention activities. Such activities might involve the visual and performing arts, music, physical activity, health/nutrition promotion, and general recreation; career awareness and work preparation activities; community service-learning; and other youth development activities based on student needs and interests.” [*California’s After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program Description*, at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/pgmdescription.asp>, July 28, 2008.] In all, 947 afterschool programs were funded during the ASES program’s first two years.

Working with the California Department of Education, the Education Department of the University of California at Irvine conducted evaluations of two academic years of the program, from 1999 to 2001, releasing results in February 2002. The evaluation relied on data supplied to the state by participating programs, as required by law, and examined student and parent satisfaction with their programs, as well as students’ academic outcomes. One important conclusion:

- “The regular school day attendance of students in the ASLSNPP increased between 1999 and 2000. Among the ASLSNPP participants who were absent 5 percent or more days in 1999, the average increase in attendance was 5.6 days. Among those who were absent 10 percent or more days in 1999, the average increase in attendance was 11 days. For those absent 15 percent or more days in 1999, the average increase in attendance was 17 days.” [From Harvard Family Research Project, Summary of ASLSNPP Evaluation, at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/after-school-education-and-safety-program-california> .]

### ***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.” [This and subsequent quotes for this study are from Harvard Family Research Project, “A Profile of the Evaluation of Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project,” available at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/ohio-urban-school-initiative-school-age-child-care-project> .]
- “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.”
- “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.”
- “Parents participating in interviews or completing surveys felt the programs had positive impacts on their families.”
- “Participating children spent more hours in a safe, supervised environment, before and/or after school, than they had prior to program involvement.”
- “Participating children’s television and video viewing decreased because of attendance in this program.”

### **Local or Program Level Evaluations**



### ***Public/Private Ventures Evaluation of CORAL***

In 1999, the James Irvine Foundation launched an eight-year, \$58 million afterschool initiative to improve the educational performance of low-achieving students in five California cities.

“Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning,” (CORAL), funded programs in the lowest-performing schools in Fresno, Long Beach, Pasadena, Sacramento and San Jose.

In 2004, the Foundation sharpened the focus of the initiative and brought Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) into the project to help with intensifying the academic focus, and to evaluate program effectiveness. P/PV’s evaluation commenced with the 2004–2005 school year, during which time total CORAL enrollment statewide was 5,321 students across the five cities. Most were elementary-school aged, more than half were designated English learners and 89 percent were recipients of free or reduced-price lunch.

Beyond academic outcomes researchers found that children enrolled in the CORAL programs experienced a range of benefits including high levels of participation, and a strong sense of engagement, belonging and feeling safe. Specifically, they found:

- “Overall, 69.3 percent attended more than 75 days during the year. These attendance rates appear particularly strong when compared to other studies of after-school programs.” [All quotes for this study are from *Advancing Achievement: Findings from an Independent Evaluation of a Major After-School Initiative*, page vii, available online at [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/youth/youth\\_publications.asp?section\\_id=8#pub225](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/youth/youth_publications.asp?section_id=8#pub225).]
- “Almost all children (97 percent) reported that there was at least one adult at CORAL who supported them and to whom they could talk, and 73 percent indicated that there were two or more such adults.”
- “About 90 percent agreed that they felt safe at CORAL.”
- “Almost three-quarters of the children (71 percent) agreed that they felt that they belonged at CORAL.”



### ***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 168 school sites, serving more than 26,000 students, as of early 2008. 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.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA studied the effects of the LA's BEST afterschool program on juvenile crime. The September 2007 report, *The Long-Term Effects of After-School Programming on Educational Adjustment and Juvenile Crime: A Study of the LA's BEST After-School Program*, used eight years of data from approximately 6,000 students. CRESST researchers Pete Goldschmidt, Denise Huang, & Marjorie Chinen examined the program's effect on student achievement, juvenile crime, and cost effectiveness, among other things.

Researchers compared students' long-term juvenile crime records to determine the impact of LA's BEST. They compared three groups of students from 1994 to 2003—approximately 2,300 who participated in the LA's BEST program, another 2,300 who attended schools with LA's BEST programs but did not participate, and 1,900 who attended demographically similar schools without LA's BEST programs. Report authors conclude that while overall differences between afterschool participants and non-participants in the area of juvenile crime were not significant, “more sophisticated analysis found LA's BEST had impact. That is, students who participated at a higher rate in LA's BEST, had significantly lower incidences of juvenile crime....By 2005, approximately 87.5 percent of the control group members and low-engagement LA's BEST participants had avoided juvenile crime records. In contrast, about 91.4 percent of medium-engagement and 93.1 percent of high-engagement LA's BEST students avoided juvenile crime records.”

A second finding: “The economic benefits of the program exceed its costs; that is, every dollar invested in the LA's BEST program resulted in a savings in juvenile crime costs of approximately \$2.50.”

[All quotes for this study are from *The Long-Term Effects of After-School Programming on Educational Adjustment and Juvenile Crime: A Study of the LA's BEST After-School Program*, available online at

[http://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/LASBEST\\_DOJ\\_Final%20Report.pdf](http://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/LASBEST_DOJ_Final%20Report.pdf).]

Previously, in June 2000, the Center released a comprehensive report summarizing five previous studies, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades in the 1993-94 school year. 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.” In addition, parents of children in the program worried less about their children's safety, and thought the programs were safer than the alternatives. [All quotes for this study are from *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, available online at <http://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/uclaeval.pdf>.]

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.”
- “Across the board, parents and children alike found the safety of the afterschool program far superior to the safety within the neighborhood.”



***Chicago, Illinois: Chapin Hall Study of After School Matters***

Chicago’s “After School Matters” program was created in 2000, as an afterschool job training program, initially focused on the arts, but subsequently expanded to include sports, technology and communications. Led by Maggie Daley, wife of Mayor Richard Daley, Jr., the program offers paid internships to teenagers in some of Chicago’s poorest neighborhoods. As of 2006, the program, working with its partners, the City of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Public Library, had grown to include 725 programs in 35 schools, providing more than 22,000 apprenticeships and other opportunities for teens.

The program requires students to attend school during the day in order to participate in the paid internship program. A 2006 study, “After-School Programs and Academic Impact: A Study of Chicago’s After School Matters,” [available at [http://www.chapinhall.org/content\\_director.aspx?arid=1444&afid=335&dt=1](http://www.chapinhall.org/content_director.aspx?arid=1444&afid=335&dt=1)] by researchers Robert Goerge, Gretchen R. Cusick, Miriam Wasserman, and Robert Matthew Gladden, all of the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, examined the program’s impact on daily attendance and performance of participating students. After accounting for student demographic characteristics and prior attendance records, researchers found that students who participated in the program missed fewer days of school than their classmates.



***Citizen Schools***

Since 1995, Boston-based Citizen Schools has provided afterschool and summer programs designed to provide children with “authentic, hands-on learning experiences, supportive relationships with adults, and positive youth development opportunities.” The program includes help with homework, team-building activities, “apprenticeships,” and more. The program is based in public schools, and seeks to coordinate its work with school-day teachers. In fall 2002, Citizen Schools expanded beyond its home market, to create programs in San Jose, California; Houston, Texas; and Worcester and Framingham, Massachusetts.

In 2001, Citizen Schools began sponsoring a five-phase evaluation conducted by Policy Studies Associates, Inc. The most recent phase of the research was released in January 2008 and is available at

<http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Citizen%20Schools%20Phase%20V%20report.pdf>.

*Establishing A Foundation for Progress Toward High School Graduation: Findings from Phase V of the Citizen Schools Evaluation*, found:

- “Participants consistently attended school more often than matched nonparticipants during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades. This was true for participants overall and among those with high and low levels of program exposure.” [page 19]
- “Consistent with earlier phases of the evaluation, evaluators found different patterns of suspension rates in the ninth and tenth grades among former 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy participants and matched nonparticipants. The only subgroup in which fewer participants were suspended, compared with matched nonparticipants, was ninth graders with high levels of program exposure.” [page 21]

### ***Mahoney and Lord Study of Program Participation and Obesity***

In 2005 Joseph Mahoney and Heather Lord of Yale University and Erica Carryl of New York University released an evaluation of the effects on students of an afterschool program targeting obesity issues. An article featuring the findings of their study, “Afterschool Program Participation and the Development of Child Obesity and Peer Acceptance,” is now available online in *Applied Developmental Science*, 2005, Volume 9, No. 4 pp. 202-215, at <http://www.leaonline.com/toc/ads/9/4>. [A summary of the evaluation can be found on the Harvard Family Research Project website at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/yale-study-of-children-s-after-school-time>.] The project was a longitudinal study tracking a sample of more than 400 mostly minority students living in poverty and attending one of three public schools in an undisclosed northeastern city. The study included a control sample, and compared children’s body mass index over a two-year period. According to the researchers:

“Baseline and follow-up obesity status was also compared for ASP [afterschool program] participants and nonparticipants. The prevalence of obesity was not significantly different for ASP participants and nonparticipants at baseline (18 percent and 22 percent, respectively). However, controlling for baseline obesity, poverty status, and race and ethnicity, the prevalence of obesity was significantly lower for ASP participants (21 percent) compared to nonparticipants (33 percent) at follow-up.”

### ***Fort Worth After School Program***

The Fort Worth After School (FWAS) program is a project of the Fort Worth Independent School District, providing homework help, tutoring, mentoring, and a variety of cultural and recreational activities at more than 50 schools. Over the period of five years, scholars Peter A. Witt, Terri King, Jin-Hyung Lee, Kristi Montadon, Lydia Justice, Joanne Oh, and Billy Brown, all of Texas A&M University, conducted a multi-phase evaluation of the program. In the fifth-year evaluation, covering the 2004-05 school year, they reached the following conclusions with respect to student behavior, as summarized by the Harvard Family Research Project at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/fort-worth-after-school-program> :

- “Ninety-four percent of parents agreed that FWAS kept their child from getting in trouble and 45 percent also felt that their child would get into trouble if they were at home. Similarly, 69 percent of youth agreed that FWAS kept them from getting in trouble at home or in their neighborhood and 40 percent agreed that if they were at home they would be getting into trouble.”
- “Of parents who indicated that their child would have been getting into trouble at home, 74 percent felt that FWAS kept their child from getting into trouble. Of youth who indicated that they would be getting into trouble at home, 56 percent indicated they got into trouble less at FWAS. Youth who indicated that they would be getting into trouble if they were home were significantly more likely to say that there was nothing else to do in their neighborhood after school ( $p = .05$ ).”
- “The majority of parents (95 percent) felt that, as a result of FWAS, their child learned new activities they could do at home besides watching TV or playing video games. Parents reported more impact for younger youth (grades Pre-K–2) than older youth (grades 6–8).”
- “Youth indicated that they learned conflict resolution, sports/recreation, and art/drama skills.”
- “Of surveyed youth, 81 percent agreed FWAS helped them learn to work with other youth.”

### ***Los Angeles: Woodcraft Rangers' Nvision After School Program***

The Los Angeles-based Woodcraft Rangers' Nvision After School Program (NASP) offers a series of afterschool “clubs” aimed at improving children’s behavior and learning skills. The program serves more than 13,000 children at more than 44 urban public school sites. Lodestar Management/Research, Inc. has conducted two separate evaluations of the program, with more underway. Findings to date have been summarized by the Harvard Family Research Project at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/woodcraft-rangers-nvision-after-school-program>. Findings from the evaluation of the elementary school program in 2003-04 included:

- “In focus groups, parents said that NASP helped them become more involved in their children’s education, for example, through volunteering for the program. Parents also said that they were more aware of school activities and ways to volunteer at the school.”
- “Three quarters of school staff interviewed reported that NASP helped increase youths’ sense of safety at school.”
- “NASP staff reported that 62 percent of participants improved their prosocial skills/risk avoidance behaviors after 6 months. Significant changes were found for all 9 items of the scale, with most substantial improvement for the following items: ‘expresses negative attitudes toward risk behaviors,’ ‘forms friendships with prosocial peers,’ and ‘seeks understanding of peers’ family traditions, practices, etc.’”
- “The majority of participants surveyed did not engage in risk-taking behaviors. For example, at follow-up, 92 percent said they ‘never’ did things that they knew weren’t good for them and 66 percent said they ‘never’ hung around with kids who get into trouble. However, risky behaviors did significantly increase from baseline to follow-up ( $p < .05$ ).”

Findings from the evaluation of the middle school program in 2003-04 included:

- “NASP staff reported that 57 percent of participants improved in prosocial skills/risk avoidance behaviors after 6 months of participation. More frequent participation in NASP was associated with significantly greater improvements in this area ( $p < .05$ ). Staff’s average ratings of participant development improved for all 9 items of the scale and significant changes were found for three items: ‘expresses negative attitudes toward risk behaviors,’ ‘approaches new tasks or projects with confidence,’ and ‘demonstrates that he/she values others’ feelings and needs.’”
- “Seven of the 10 interviewed school administrators indicated that the program had a positive impact on youths’ at-risk behaviors.”
- “According to youth surveys, 35 percent of participants improved in risk-taking behaviors by the end of 2003–2004.”

### ***New York: The YMCA of Greater New York’s Virtual Y Program***

Since spring 1996, the YMCA of Greater New York has run a *Virtual Y* initiative – a school-based afterschool program serving second- through fourth-graders five afternoons a week. In the 1997-98 school year, the program expanded from its initial ten pilot sites to operate in as many as 100 sites, and no fewer than 66 sites, each year since. More than 50,000 children have participated. The program is aimed at lower income public school children, providing a safe environment where children receive reinforcement in reading, math and healthy lifestyles, as well as training intended to emphasize such values as respect, responsibility, honesty and caring.

The program has undergone several evaluations by the National Center for Schools and Communities (NCSC) at Fordham University. Funding sources for the study have varied. Several years of research were funded by the Charles Hayden Foundation; several commissioned by the YMCA; and several funded by the New York State Education Department. In 2005, NCSC published an overview of seven years of research, (*The Virtual Y Afterschool Program: A Ray of Hope for Urban Public Elementary School Children*, available at [http://www.ncscatfordham.org/binarydata/files/rayofsunshine\\_final.pdf](http://www.ncscatfordham.org/binarydata/files/rayofsunshine_final.pdf)). The report found:

- “In all years, the data showed statistically significant and moderate to large improvements on all seven subscales (task motivation, frustration tolerance, learning skills, acting out, peer social skills, assertive social skills, shyness/ anxiety), and on the overall behavior scale.”
- “Our analyses found effects for children at each level of behavioral difficulty from mild to severe. The likelihood of obtaining chance differences in performance as large as those found in this study is less than one percent.”
- “In regression studies designed to determine the role of the *Virtual Y* in behavioral improvements, NCSC controlled for factors other than the *Virtual Y* that may have contributed to positive changes in participants’ behavior (students’ English proficiency, gender, race, age, and prior behavior). The regression studies showed attendance at the *Virtual Y* to be a factor contributing to improved outcomes for participants.”

### ***Adams County, Pennsylvania: Generacion Diez***

Adams County, Pennsylvania's Generacion Diez (G-10) afterschool program is aimed specifically at the children of migrant workers in the area. Among its goals for children and their families is improving the behavior and parental involvement of the participating 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders. A series of studies conducted by Nathaniel R. Riggs and Mark T. Greenberg, of the Prevention Research Center at Pennsylvania State University, summarized by the Harvard Family Research Project at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/generacion-diez>, identified a number of positive outcomes, and also noted that students who attended more frequently received the most significant benefit. The most recent research examined data collected between 2001 and 2003.

Quoting from HFRP's summary:

- “Children who attended the G-10 program for more days per week made significantly greater gains in social competence than those who attended less frequently.”
- “Children who attended the G-10 program for more days per week showed significantly greater decreases in behavior problems than those who attended less frequently.”
- “Parents who had children with greater attendance rates in the G-10 program increased their reports of quality and quantity of parent-teacher contact, as well as their engagement in their children's school activities.”

### ***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/About/ContactUs.cfm>); the second-phase summary is at <http://scs.aed.org/publications/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.”

[This and subsequent findings for the first phase of the evaluation are from *Evaluation of the New York City Beacons, Summary of Phase I Findings*, available by request from the contact listed above.]

- “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.”
- “Three-quarters (74 percent) of youth interviewed said that the Beacon was either ‘very helpful’ or ‘pretty helpful’ in helping them avoid fighting.”

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.” [page 3] [This and subsequent findings from phase two of the evaluation are from *A Place to Grow: Evaluation of the New York City Beacons Summary Report*, Academy for Educational Development, 2002, at <http://scs.aed.org/publications/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.” [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.” [page 5]

### ***The Boys & Girls Clubs’ Project Learn***

Begun in 1996, the Boys & Girls Clubs’ Project Learn focuses on providing youngsters with “high-yield learning activities,” including weekly discussions with knowledgeable adults, leisure reading, writing activities, homework help, helping others, and games that rely on cognitive skills. The program has been implemented in full at one-tenth of the Clubs’ 3,300 sites, and all sites are implementing components of the program. Steven P. Schinke, Ph.D., of New York’s Columbia School of Social Work, led an evaluation of the program that relied on a quasi-experimental design. Three groups of students were identified, in five separate cities:

- Students participating in Boys & Girls Clubs programs that had implemented Project Learn, (BGC program sites),

- In the same cities, students at Boys & Girls Clubs that had not implemented Project Learn (BGC comparison sites), and
- In the same cities, students at non-Boys & Girls Clubs sites that had not implemented the kind of enhanced learning initiatives characteristic of Project Learn (non-BGC comparison sites).

All students in all groups lived in public housing projects, and the sites were chosen to be nationally representative of students in public housing. Data on students' academic performance were collected four times: before they began the program, six months after they began, 18 months after they began, and 30 months after they began. Findings cited by the Harvard Family Research Project's database of out-of-school-time-program evaluations at

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/pleep.html>, included:

- “Program youth missed an average of only 2.19 days of school a year at the 30-month measurement as compared to missing an average of 6.4 days a year at baseline. In contrast, BGC comparison youth went from missing an average of 4.85 days of school in the baseline year to missing an average of 12.33 days a year at the 30-month follow-up.”
- “Similarly, non-BGC youth went from 7.47 days at baseline to 16.67 at follow-up. The differences between the school attendance of program youth and youth in both comparison groups at 30 months were statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , while they had not been significantly different at baseline.”
- “Although youth at the 30-month measurement in the program group had fewer behavioral incidents at school than youth in the BGC comparison group, who, in turn, had fewer behavioral incidents at school than youth in the non-BGC comparison group, these differences were not statistically significant.”

\* \* \* \*

*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

## Appendix A

### *Afterschool Evaluations at a Glance*

<b>Large-Scale Studies</b>			
<b>Study Subject</b>	<b>Evaluator/Author</b>	<b>Release Date</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
The Promising After-School Programs Study Evaluation of 3,000 elementary and middle school kids in 35 afterschool programs across the country	Deborah Lowe Vandell, University of California, Irvine; Elizabeth R. Reisner, Policy Studies Associates, Inc.; and Kim M. Pierce, University of California, Irvine	October 2007	The study examined the impact of high-quality afterschool programs, and concluded that, regular participation was “linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students,” led to “significant gains in teachers’ reports of students’ social skills with peers...and prosocial behaviors..., posted significant reductions in aggressive behaviors with peers..., [r]eductions in misconduct over the two-year period..., [and] reduced use of drugs and alcohol, compared to those in the Low Supervision group.”
CASEL’s Meta-Analysis of the Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills	Roger P. Weissberg, President of the University of Illinois at Chicago-based Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and Professor Joseph Durlak, Loyola University - Chicago	January 2007	The meta-analysis spanned 73 separate studies of afterschool programs, and found that “[A]fter-school programs succeeded in improving youths’ feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding (positive feelings and attitudes toward school), positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores. They also reduced problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, noncompliance and conduct problems) and drug use. In sum, after-school programs produced multiple benefits that pertain to youths’ personal, social and academic life.”
<i>After-School Worries: Tough on Parents, Bad for Business</i> 1,755 employee/parents at three Fortune 500 companies, in a study focused on parental	Karen Gareis and Rosalind Barnett of the Women’s Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, and Catalyst, a nonprofit research and	2006	In their report, <i>After-School Worries: Tough on Parents, Bad for Business</i> , the authors write that as many as 2.5 million parents are over-stressed by parental concern about after-school time, or PCAST, and are likely to bring their concerns to the office. Relying on research by the American Institute of Stress, the authors conclude that PCAST makes mothers and fathers less productive at work and contributes to employee stress, costing businesses between \$50 billion and \$300 billion annually in lost productivity. The study also found that

stress.	advisory organization for business leaders		both men and women are vulnerable to the negative consequences of PCAST, which potentially affects one-third of the U.S. workforce.
The Extended-Service Schools Initiative	Public/Private Ventures (PPV) with Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation	2002	“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.”
The Children’s Aid Society of New York’s Carrera-Model Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program	Philliber Research Associates	2001	An evaluation of sites in New York City and Rochester, New York; Broward County, Florida; Baltimore, Maryland; Houston, Texas; Portland, Oregon; and Seattle, Washington, found: “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 PEERsuasion <sup>SM</sup>	Abt Associates	1991	A year-long evaluation of four sites of a nation-wide program found participating girls drank alcohol less. Researchers estimated that the program halved the incidence of drinking.
<b>State-Level Evaluations</b>			
<i>Medical College of Georgia FitKid Project</i> Third-graders at 18 schools in Georgia, participating in afterschool programs using a fitness curriculum developed by the Medical College of Georgia, aimed at reducing obesity.	Researchers at the Medical College of Georgia.	December 2005	In 2003, the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) launched a three-year experiment designed to test the proposition that third-grade children attending an afterschool program offering specified physical fitness activities could achieve improved body fat index numbers, better cardiovascular fitness, lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol scores. Researchers concluded that children who attended 40 percent of the afterschool sessions or more, showed improvement in body fat percentage, bone mass density and cardiovascular fitness.
The After-School Corporation (TASC) - New York	Policy Studies Associates	Five-year data released in	According to surveys of principals and parents, TASC participation led to better parental participation at school events and parent-teacher conferences, improved feelings of student safety, and a reduction in vandalism at school. In

		2004. (Reports issued each year of the study.)	addition, parents reported positive effects in their work lives: 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.
The Maryland After School Opportunity Fund Program	Research team from the University of Maryland's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice	2004	Researchers found that participating students reduced their delinquent behavior as compared to non-participating youth in comparison groups. Students who participated in programs with a youth development focus showed more improvement in skill development, character development and decision-making skills than participants in other types of programs.
Texas 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Programs	Texas Education Agency	2004	Strong participation in afterschool correlated with better attendance during the regular school day. "Approximately half (48 percent) of youth who participated in three quarters or more of the available 21st CCLC activities missed five or fewer days of school during the fall semester, compared to 17 percent of youth who participated in less than one quarter of the available activities."
North Carolina Support Our Students	EDSTAR	2004 and 2002	An evaluation of afterschool programs funded by a statewide grant program found a reduction in suspensions of participating students and better school attendance. More than one third of middle school students and nearly half of elementary school students reported enjoying school more since they started the program.
California's After School Education and Safety Program (ASLSNPP)	University of California at Irvine working with the California Department of Education	2002	A statewide evaluation of California's After School Education and Safety Program found improved regular school day attendance for participating students—ranging from 5 to 17 additional days per year.
Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC)	University of Cincinnati College of Education Evaluation Services Center	1999	Children in the Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC) had reduced absence and tardiness, and fewer suspensions and expulsions.
<b>Local or Program Level Evaluations</b>			
Evaluation of the	Public/Private	February	A Public/Private Ventures evaluation of the "Communities Organizing

California-based Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning initiative (CORAL)	Ventures’ Amy Arbreton, Jessica Sheldon, Molly Bradshaw, Julie Goldsmith with Linda Jucovy and Sarah Pepper	2008	Resources to Advance Learning” (CORAL) project, an eight-year \$58 million afterschool initiative of the James Irvine Foundation, concluded that the five-city program’s tightly focused literacy programming three to four days a week produced “pronounced gains in achievement for a range of students.” Furthermore, students experienced a range of benefits including high levels of participation, and a strong sense of engagement, belonging and feeling safe. Most afterschool students were elementary-school aged. More than half were designated English learners, and 89 percent were recipients of free or reduced-price lunch. The CORAL programs are in Fresno, Long Beach, Pasadena, Sacramento and San Jose, California.
LA’s BEST Los Angeles, California	Pete Goldschmidt, Denise Huang, & Marjorie Chinen of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA	September 2007	The study examined eight years of data from approximately 6,000 students. It compared students’ long-term juvenile crime records to determine the impact of LA’s BEST. They compared three groups of students from 1994 to 2003 – approximately 2,300 who participated in the LA’s BEST program, another 2,300 who attended schools with LA’s BEST programs but did not participate, and 1,900 who attended demographically similar schools without LA’s BEST programs. Authors conclude that while overall differences between afterschool participants and non-participants in the area of juvenile crime were not significant, “more sophisticated analysis found LA’s BEST had impact. That is, students who participated at a higher rate in LA’s BEST, had significantly lower incidences of juvenile crime....By 2005, approximately 87.5 percent of the control group members and low-engagement LA’s BEST participants had avoided juvenile crime records. In contrast, about 91.4 percent of medium-engagement and 93.1 percent of high-engagement LA’s BEST students avoided juvenile crime records.” A second finding: “The economic benefits of the program exceed its costs; that is, every dollar invested in the LA’s BEST program resulted in a savings in juvenile crime costs of approximately \$2.50.”
LA’s BEST Los Angeles, California	UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation	2000 (release of decade-long study with series of reports	The newest report issued from the study found that LA’s BEST parents felt strongly that their children were safer at their afterschool program than they would be at home or elsewhere in the afternoons. “Across the board, parents and children alike found the safety of the afterschool program far superior to the safety within the neighborhood,” and “[T]hree-quarters of the parents [surveyed] indicated that they worried significantly less about their children’s

		issued)	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.”
Chapin Hall’s After-School Programs and Academic Impact: A Study of Chicago’s After School Matters program	Robert Goerge, Gretchen R. Cusick, Miriam Wasserman, and Robert Matthew Gladden, of the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago	2006	The program requires students to attend school during the day in order to participate in the paid internship program. After accounting for student demographic characteristics and prior attendance records, researchers found that students who participated in the program missed fewer days of school than their classmates.
Citizen Schools - sites in Massachusetts	Policy Studies Associates	January 2008 (most recent installment of ongoing five phase evaluation report)	Former participants of the Citizen Schools’ 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Academy program consistently continued to attend school more often through ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade compared to a group of matched nonparticipants. This was true among all participants with low and high levels of exposure to the program. Although high exposure participants had statistically significant reductions in suspension rates in the ninth grade compared to matched nonparticipants, there was not a statistically significant difference in suspension rates in the tenth and eleventh grades.
Mahoney and Lord Study of Program Participation and Obesity	Joseph Mahoney and Heather Lord, Yale University, and Erica Carryl of New York University	2005	An examination of the impact of afterschool on obesity issues in an unnamed northeastern, urban, public school found that “controlling for baseline obesity, poverty status, and race and ethnicity, the prevalence of obesity was significantly lower for ASP participants (21 percent) compared to nonparticipants (33 percent) at follow-up.”
Fort Worth After School Program	Researchers from Texas A&M University	2005	Parents surveyed reported that the program kept their children from getting into trouble.
Woodcraft Rangers’ Nvision After School Program (NASP), Los Angeles, California	Lodestar Management/Research, Inc	2005	Surveys of parents, students, and principals found that participating students were less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Parents reported becoming more involved in their children’s education because of the program.
The YMCA of Greater	National Center for	2005	Researchers concluded that “data showed statistically significant and moderate

New York's Virtual Y Program	Schools and Communities at Fordham University		to large improvements on all seven subscales (task motivation, frustration tolerance, learning skills, acting out, peer social skills, assertive social skills, shyness/ anxiety), and on the overall behavior scale.”
Generacion Diez Adams County, Pennsylvania	Prevention Research Center at Pennsylvania State University	Data collected between 2001 and 2003	An evaluation of the Generacion Diez (G-10), aimed at the children of migrant workers, found “Children who attended the G-10 program for more days per week showed significantly greater decreases in behavior problems than those who attended less frequently,” and “Parents who had children with greater attendance rates in the G-10 program increased their reports of quality and quantity of parent-teacher contact, as well as their engagement in their children’s school activities.”
Beacons Initiative, New York City	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	2002	Researchers found that “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.” And, “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.”
The Boys & Girls Clubs’ Project Learn	Columbia School of Social Work	2000	A five-site evaluation of Project Learn over 30 months found improved attendance among program participants.