

## **MAKING THE CASE:**

### **A FACT SHEET ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME**

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#### **Children and Youth Today**

There are approximately 49 million children and youth, ages 6-17, living in the U.S. [1].

The racial and ethnic diversity of America's children and youth (under 18) continues to grow. According to 2000 Census data, 68.6% were white, 15.1% were black or African American, 7.6% indicated "other", 4% chose 2 or more races, 3% were Asian, and 1% were American Indian. Seventeen percent reported Hispanic ethnic origin [2].

A study of child poverty in 20 modern industrialized countries reveals that the U.S. ranks 19th at 20.3%. The poverty rate of the U.S. is two times the average rate of all the other countries combined [3].

Twelve million U.S. children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level of \$18,400 for a family of four. Double this income is the amount for most families to afford the basic necessities, such as adequate food, steady housing, and healthcare [4].

In 68% of married-couple families with children age 6 to 17, both parents work outside the home; in 77.8% of female-headed families, and 83.7% of male-headed families, the custodial parent works outside the home [5].

There remains a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need in typical 21st century skills. Students need to learn academic content through real-world examples, applications and experiences both inside and outside of school [6].

#### **Health and Well-being**

Within the past three decades the number of overweight children between the ages of 6 and 12 has doubled [7]. Only two percent of children within this age group meet the recommended minimum number of daily servings from all five food groups [8]. The number of overweight teens (12-19 years) has tripled in the past 30 years [7]. As a result of being overweight, these children and youth are at an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, elevated blood pressure, and low self-esteem [9-11].

Rates of participation in physical activity have declined in the past 30 years for both children and youth. Baker et al. reported that between the ages of 6 and 18, boys decrease participation in physical activities by 24%, while girls decrease participation by 36% between these same ages [12].

Opportunities for recess and physical education are disappearing from urban schools and fewer than 1 in 3 teens get an adequate amount of regular physical activity [13].

Rates of cigarette smoking among teens have been cut in half since the mid 1990s. This rate continued to decline in 2003, however the pace of declination has begun to wane [14].

2002 saw both serious and juvenile crime rates drop nationwide to levels not seen in a generation [15]. Despite this overall decrease, juvenile crime rates for females have been steadily rising. On a national level, delinquency cases involving girls increased by 83% between 1988 and 1997 [16].

The Children's Defense Fund reported that an American child or teen is killed by gunfire every 2 hours and 40 minutes; that results in 9 American children dying from gunfire every day [18].

#### **Children and Youth Spend Time After School in a Variety of Ways**

Forty-four percent of families do not have any regular after-school care for their children [19]. This results in approximately 3.3 million children between the ages of 6 and 12 regularly spending time without adult supervision. Ten percent of all children between the ages of 6 and 12 use self-care as their primary child care arrangement [20].

During the school year, more than 1 in 10 children regularly spend time alone or with a sibling under 13; but these children spend twice as much time unsupervised in the summer — 10 hours a week more on average — compared to the school year [21].

Lack of adult supervision and participation in self-care for both children and adolescents have been linked to: increased likelihood of accidents, injuries, lower social competence, lower GPAs, lower achievement test scores, and greater likelihood of participation in delinquent or other high risk activities such as experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, drugs and sex [22-25]. Teens who are unsupervised during afterschool hours are 37% more likely to become teen parents [26].

About one-third of 8th graders, one-fourth of 10th graders, and one-fifth of 12th graders watched four or more hours of television on weekdays in 2000 [27]. Researchers have associated watching violence on TV to an increased likelihood that children and teens will display physically aggressive behaviors, exhibit relational aggression (behaviors that harm others through damage or threat of damage to relationships, feelings, friendship, or group inclusion), and assume the worst in their interactions with others [28, 29].

More than half of teens say they would not watch so much TV or play video games if they had other things to do after school. Fifty-two percent of teens say they wish there were more community and neighborhood based activities during the afterschool hours [30].

In a recent survey of 94 cities conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, city leaders indicated that afterschool program capacity is growing, but only about 35% of children needing afterschool care are actually enrolled in programs [31].

Young people with nothing to do during out-of-school hours miss valuable chances for growth and development. The odds are high that youth with nothing positive to do and nowhere to go will find things to do and places to go that negatively influence their development and futures [32].

### **Children and Youth Benefit from Participation in Afterschool Programs**

In a two year study examining literacy goals and practices in afterschool programs in three cities, Halpern concluded that programs that were exemplary in strengthening literacy were intentional about planning to integrate literacy activities into program life; create a rich literacy environment with book displays and dedicated areas for reading and writing, purposefully integrate literacy into other program activities; and strengthen children's motivation for reading and writing [33].

There is growing evidence that quality out-of-school opportunities matter — that they complement environments created by schools and families and provide important “nutrients” that deter failure and promote success — and that they matter in ways that are observable and measurable [34].

Go Grrrls in Tucson Arizona is a preventative afterschool intervention program focusing on promotion of middle school girls' positive psychosocial development. In a random assignment evaluation, the intervention group reported significantly greater increases in body image, assertiveness, positive attitudes regarding attractiveness, self-efficacy, and self-liking and competence [35].

Recent research by Gambone, Klem, and Connell identified two crucial elements to what matters most in helping youth reach healthy adult outcomes — the achievement of developmental outcomes such as learning to be productive; to connect with adults and peers; to navigate through diverse settings — and the availability of supports and opportunities such as supportive relationships with adults and peers; challenging activities and learning experiences; and meaningful opportunities for involvement and membership [36].

Afterschool programs can increase engagement in learning by providing middle school students with opportunities to meet needs that schools often can't, e.g., personal attention from adults, a positive peer group, and activities that hold their interest and build their self-esteem (Vandell, et al. 1996; Garnezy, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Clark, 1987; Masten, et al. 1990; Comer, et al., 1984; Werner, 1993; Halpern, 1992; As reported in Miller, 2003) [37].

Afterschool programs can offer intangibles such as — the opportunity to engage in activities that help young people realize they have something to contribute to the group; the opportunity to work with diverse peers and adults to create projects, performances and presentations that receive accolades from their families and the larger community; and the opportunity to develop a vision of life's possibilities that, with commitment and persistence, are attainable [37].

In New York City, afterschool programs started by Boys and Girls Clubs in selected public housing developments saw significant drops in drug use, presence of crack cocaine and police reports of drug activity. Drug activity decreased 22%, juvenile arrests dropped 13%, and vandalism in the public housing developments decreased 12.5%. At the same time, parental involvement increased, compared to public housing developments not selected to implement the afterschool programs [38].

In a meta-analysis of 56 studies of out-of-school time programs researchers at McREL found that out-of-school time strategies can have positive effects on the achievement of low-achieving or at-risk students in reading and mathematics; that the timeframes for delivering OST programs (i.e., after school or summer) do not influence their effectiveness; and that OST strategies need not focus solely on academic activities to have positive effects on student achievement [39].

Adolescent mental and emotional well-being is associated with teens' environments. Links have been found consistently between teens' well-being and environments that are emotionally positive and warm and that provide support for developing adolescent autonomy. Some research suggests that positive experiences in one area (for example, in the family, among peers, at school, through youth community service...) may lessen the effect of negative experiences in other areas. Adolescents who spend time in communities that are rich in developmental opportunities for them experience less risk and show evidence of higher rates of positive development [40, 41].

### **The Out-of-School Time Workforce**

According to a recent survey conducted by AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the out-of-school workforce lacks a clear professional identity. When questioned about their job title, 207 different titles were reported for 350 respondents. Direct line staff alone reported approximately 20 job titles including: child care worker, instructor/teacher, youth worker/leader, and recreation specialists. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority (97%) of OST staff believe that working in the OST field is a profession. However, only 38% think that people outside of this field view it as a profession [42].

The out-of-school time field lacks a national professional development system. However, several statewide initiatives are in pursuit of building components for a statewide system. Alaska, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Michigan, and New York are at various stages of developing core competencies, career lattices, and school-age credentials. Indiana has launched a combined school-age and youth development credential and Massachusetts has created a set of core competencies and is in the process of developing a career lattice. Local efforts are also underway in Baltimore, Chicago, Kansas City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC [43].

Staff turnover rates in military child development centers have been reduced by 300% annually since the Military Child Care Act was passed by Congress in 1989. The Act paved the way for a training system in which staff receive ongoing training and education that is linked to increases in compensation [44].

Respondents to the 2001 National Career Development Survey of early childhood/school-age staff reported that stipends, wage supplement programs, scholarships, and loan forgiveness programs were among their preferred strategies to combating staff turnover [45].

In a national survey of 273 afterschool programs, California Tomorrow found that 56% of responding programs enroll youth from more than one language group, and one in four

serve English Language Learners (ELL). Very few program directors reported having enough bilingual staff to work with these youth in their home languages, and even fewer have staff who are trained to effectively serve youth who speak little English. Half the programs that enroll a significant number of English learners do not have any staff who speak the home languages of the participants and their families [46].

### **Economic Costs and Benefits**

Findings from the MOST Initiative evaluation estimated that a full year program costs approximately \$4,000 per child. Costs drop to \$3,000 when space and utilities are donated. Administrative time and other in-kind donations are excluded from these estimates [47].

A recent report calculates the potential national cost of ensuring developmental opportunities and supports for school-age youth (6-17) would be 144 billion dollars annually. That is a cost of \$2.55 per hour or \$3,060 annually per youth. The resulting return on every dollar is a gain of \$10.51 for every dollar invested [48].

A study by the Rose Institute pertaining to California's proposition 49 concludes that afterschool programs in California are cost-effective. The study indicates that the return to taxpayers ranges from \$2.99 to \$4.03 for every dollar spent on afterschool programs and the benefit to students attending afterschool programs ranges from \$2.29 to \$3.04 for every dollar spent on afterschool programs. Expenditures produce benefits in the areas of reduced child care costs, improved school performance, increased compensation, reduced crime costs, and reduced welfare costs [49].

### **Public Support Continues to Grow**

All 14 women in the Senate signed a bi-partisan letter to President Bush requesting the administration support adequate funding for 21st Community Learning Centers which would double the current number of children served from 1.4 million to 2.8 million [50].

In a random survey of 1178 police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors, respondents were asked to rank the impact of several strategies to reduce youth violence and crime. By more than a 4 to one margin, respondents chose providing afterschool programs for school-age youngsters and more educational child care programs for preschool children rather than hiring more police officers as having the greatest impact in reducing youth violence and crime [51].

Public polling shows strong evidence of public support for afterschool. Across all demographic and party lines, Americans see afterschool as a necessity. Voters say afterschool programs are key to keeping students out of trouble, and they want gov-

ernment at all levels to provide more funds for these programs. They are willing to pay more taxes if they are certain those monies will support afterschool programs [52].

The presence of afterschool programs in public schools has risen. In 2001, 67% of principals reported that their schools offer optional afterschool programs and 60% reported that their programs began within the past five years [53].

In October 2000, “Lights on Afterschool” events were held in more than 1,200 communities nationwide and supported by more than a dozen national partners. Over the past four years, the “Lights On Afterschool” has grown to a week-long celebration. In 2003 more than 6,000 communities participated in events throughout the week and more than 120 national supporting organizations demonstrated their commitment to afterschool [50].

### **Trends in Public Funding**

Federal funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program began at \$750,000 in 1995 and was nearly one billion dollars in FY2003. The program is now administered by the states and a database is being developed to track numbers of young people served by community. In 2003, 1.4 million children and youth were attending programs in approximately 6,800 schools in 1,597 communities across the country [54, 55].

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) represents a significant public investment — \$4.8 billion in federal dollars and an estimated \$2.2 billion in state funds in fiscal year 2003. In addition to these figures, many states are transferring significant amounts of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to CCDF, and are directly spending TANF on afterschool programs and child care [56].

In fiscal year 2001, 36% of 1.8 million children receiving CCDF subsidies were school-aged. Another 10% were kindergarten age. For school-age children receiving subsidies, half were in center-based programs, a third were in family child care homes, and 13% were in the child’s own home [57].

Despite increased funding, disparities in access and quality still persist. Programs in affluent or middle class neighborhoods are more likely to include direct instruction in the arts, enrichment activities, and sports, and are more likely to provide snacks or meals than programs in poorer neighborhoods. Wealthier communities are also more likely to have computer labs, playing fields, and gyms, open enrollment slots, and resources for art and enrichment materials. Programs in low-income areas have much tighter budgets, more facilities in need of repair, longer wait lists to get into the program, and higher staff-to-youth ratios [46].

### **Strengthening the Field**

The delivery of program activities and opportunities to high school age youth during out-of-school time would be enhanced by a systemic approach with infrastructure elements, such as (a) funding collaborations; (b) planning and cooperation among stakeholders; (c) formal linkages between high schools, community, and local government organizations; (d) high school age program standards; (e) an agreed upon set of objectives; and (f) designated citywide leadership [58].

Available evidence suggests that the best program and policy ideas are unlikely to be effective if they do not include proper staff training, a well-developed infrastructure, and buy-in from parents and teens, including involving teens in program development [59].

The most recent wave of evaluations offers a number of valuable lessons for all the interested parties. Future programmatic reforms should focus on raising participation rates, particularly among children who would otherwise be on their own after school.... Similarly, evaluators and policymakers need to be clear about the nature and magnitude of expected effects and be sure studies are prepared to measure them [60].

Researcher T. Kane suggests that in designing future evaluations it may be important to identify intermediate outcomes on the road to student achievement — including parental involvement and homework completion, as well as other outcomes such as teacher perceptions of student engagement [61].

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