Introduction

Harvard Family Research Project's (HFRP) Out-of-School Time (OST) Program Research and Evaluation Database and Bibliography provide accessible and timely information about research and evaluations involving OST programs and initiatives. The searchable database, which includes narrative profiles of OST evaluations and research studies, is designed to help researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and policymakers learn about and improve OST research and evaluation. The bibliography contains citations for OST program evaluations and research studies, many of which are profiled in the database, as well as links to relevant reports.

HFRP's series of *Research Updates* builds on these resources by highlighting new and innovative methods and findings in the increasingly sophisticated and growing field of OST research and evaluation. This current *Research Update* differs somewhat from previous briefs in this series. Rather than look at OST research and evaluation studies that have been recently profiled in our database, this report focuses on studies published in recent months that have been cited in our bibliography. Our goal is to provide readers with an overview of what the latest studies are saying about OST research and evaluation.

This *Research Update* explores key themes emerging from 13 recent reports[1] added to the OST Research and Evaluation Bibliography (available online at www.hfrp.org/OSTBibliography) in September 2008. Specifically, we look at two major themes from these reports: (a) data collection for the purpose of continuous program improvement and (b) a focus on middle and high school youth served in OST programs. (For more information about these 13 reports, see the Appendix.)

Using Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

Increasing demands for accountability have led many OST staff to use evaluation to demonstrate their programs' value to stakeholders. These same evaluations have great potential to shape program improvement and planning. But, in many instances, accountability demands leave staff with little time and few resources to examine how evaluations can improve the quality of their programs. Several of the studies in this review, however, succeed in using evaluation both to demonstrate their programs' value *and* to strive for continuous improvement.

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1   Four of these reports focus on 4-H programs, three of which were published in the *Journal of Youth Development*, a publication of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents.

Even when programs succeed in using evaluation for continuous improvement, there remain challenges to understanding *how* they do so. Because evaluation reports are usually completed at the end of the evaluation period, they tend not to include details about programmatic changes made as a result of the evaluation—even when continuous improvement is an explicit goal. This review provides insight into how programs use evaluation for continuous improvement by highlighting three reports that *do* note programmatic changes based on previous evaluation findings.

Three Programs That Used Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

1. *Prime Time*—an intermediary that aims to create an integrated and sustainable system of standards, supports, and resources for after school programs in Palm Beach County, Florida—used findings from their Year 2 evaluation report to bring about improvements that were, in turn, reflected in their Year 3 evaluation findings. In Year 2, for example, directors in the western part of the county said that they wanted more professional development offerings in their own areas to cut down on travel time. In response, Prime Time expanded training opportunities in the western part of Palm Beach County. As a result, directors in these areas expressed greater satisfaction with the location of trainings in the Year 3 evaluation— just one among many examples of how Prime Time used evaluation to foster continuous improvement.

2. Directors and staff at *Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning* (CORAL)—an initiative that aims to improve youth's academic achievement in low-performing schools in five California cities through a focus on literacy activities—similarly used data from Year 1 of a 2-year evaluation to develop approaches to improving program quality. As part of CORAL's use of evaluation findings for continuous improvement, Year 2 efforts included putting in place an effective literacy director, targeting trainings for team leaders, monitoring and coaching staff on a regular and ongoing basis, and strengthening the program's independent reading component.

3. The *San Diego After School Regional Consortium*—which provides leadership, technical assistance, and evaluation for after school programs in San Diego—conducts an annual countywide survey to promote continuous program improvement. The survey fosters dialogue

between the Consortium and school sites around issues of program quality and thereby enables the Consortium to both uncover program challenges and find ways to address them. This continuous improvement effort appears to be working: The most recent survey showed improvements from the previous year's evaluation. For example, the number of program staff who gave "outstanding" ratings to the quality of staff communication increased 17% from the previous year. In addition, the number of principals who rated the program's ability to include credentialed teachers as "outstanding" increased from 38% to 48% over the same time period.

Reasons to Conduct Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

While most of the studies included in this bibliography update do not detail the specific improvements made as a result of evaluation efforts, they do provide the types of data that could potentially help inform program improvement efforts. Many of these evaluation reports, in fact, explicitly encourage programs to examine how their findings may be applied to enhance programming. By examining the data collected in these reports, we can extract four primary reasons to conduct evaluation for continuous improvement:

1. To get feedback from key stakeholders.

The perceptions and experiences of those involved in programs both directly (e.g., youth participants and program staff) and indirectly (e.g., parents and school staff) can be invaluable in assessing program strengths and weaknesses. While researchers often seek feedback from such stakeholders, several studies included in this review—including the three noted above—go a step further. They demonstrate a deliberate intent to use their findings to directly inform programming decisions and changes.

For example, the *4-H Job Experience and Training* (JET) program, a work-based learning program for teens, sought to ensure that JET met the needs of both teens and adults involved in the program. Supervisors identified areas, such as planning and support, that, if improved, would better accommodate youth participants. In addition, they identified improvements targeted at program staff —such as additional training and sharing ideas from other sites about how to work with youth—that would, in turn, make JET a more meaningful experience for participants. The program's evaluation report spelled out recommendations to use these findings as a "basis for making any necessary changes in the

program structure, educational strategies, and content."[2] The evaluators emphasized that the buy-in of both youth and adult stakeholders was crucial to the program's quality.

Another example of using evaluation to get feedback from key stakeholders comes from *Girls Creating Games*—an after school program in Capitola, California, that aims to build middle school girls' interest, skills, fluency, and confidence in information technology. One of the primary purposes of this evaluation was to solicit participants' impressions in order to expose areas for improvement. Feedback, collected through interviews and "electronic notebooks" completed by participants, showed what participants liked best—using computers and having mastery experiences (e.g., "I love the feeling of accomplishing something")—and what they liked least—large amounts of direct instruction (e.g., "…when they explain the directions and how to do things it's really boring listening to them talk") and having to work with partners (e.g., "my partner… didn't really like any of my ideas, but she didn't come up with any of her own"). The evaluation report emphasizes that these findings have the potential to inform significant program improvements about "how to integrate computers into middle schools in a way that will enhance the long-term participation of a broader range of students in IT."[3]

2. To seek parents' perspectives.
Two studies highlighted parents' feedback in particular as an important way to inform program improvements. The *Rural After-School Programs Study* asked parents of after school program participants in two rural communities to help determine how programs could better serve families in rural areas. Parents shared fairly positive views of their respective programs, especially in terms of benefits to their children. They said that the programs offered adequate guidance and supervision, appropriate activities, and that the staff exhibited positive and professional characteristics. But they were less certain about the programs' adequacy in facilitating parent–school–community relationships. Several parents described feeling somewhat disconnected from the program and wanting to be more involved. Parents also expressed dissatisfaction with hours of operation and a lack of flexibility in time offerings. Although the study did

not detail improvements made as a result of this feedback, the evaluators suggested that the programs should use the collected data to focus increased effort on involving parents.

Similarly, the study of *Afterschool Programs as an Oasis of Hope for Black Parents in Four Cities* asked parents to provide their thoughts on program access, quality, and other features that were important to them in an after school program. One of the study's primary goals in soliciting parents' feedback was to inform policy decisions related to the design and implementation of programs serving urban areas. By doing so, the study aimed to seek improvements at the policy level that would impact the programmatic level. All participating parents expressed a desire for more opportunities to share their ideas and wanted to hear from staff and youth regarding their program experiences. Parents suggested that program leaders host annual focus groups for this purpose. Other suggestions included encouraging parents' employers to offer incentives to facilitate their children's participation, reviewing existing outreach to assess whether they created or removed access barriers, and advertising programs on local radio stations.

3. To inform other after school initiatives.
In their report on the CORAL program, evaluators stated that they hoped to provide useful data about elements associated with after school program quality not just to the program itself but to other program designers, funders, researchers, and policymakers. To that end, the data collection and analyses of the CORAL program honed in on relationships between program quality, participation, engagement, and outcomes applicable to a range of after school initiatives. For example, evaluators found that participants' exposure to more consistent and higher quality literacy activities was related to higher grade-level reading gains and better standardized test performance. They also found that higher program engagement was related to better attitudes toward reading and school, as well as better behavior in school. Evaluators felt that "the diversity of the children involved in CORAL"—in terms of ethnicity and language proficiency and also, to some degree, their performance in school—contributed to the evaluation's "ability to examine the role of after school programs for different subgroups of youth, in particular, English learners" and thus make findings applicable to a range of other programs.[4]

2 Ferrari, T. M., Arnett, N., & Cochran, G. (2007). *Preparing teens for success: Building 21st century skills through a 4-H work-based learning program.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Extension, p. 18.

3 Denner, J. (2007). The Girls Creating Games Program: An innovative approach to integrating technology into middle school. *Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal, 1*(10), p. 3.

4 Arbreton, A., Sheldon, J., Bradshaw, M., & Goldsmith, J., with Jucovy, L., & Pepper, S. (2008). *Advancing achievement findings from an independent evaluation of a major after-school initiative.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures, p. iv.

4. To improve the workforce.

The quality of after school programs depends, in part, on the quality of program staff. The *4-H Staffing Patterns and Trends Study* used evaluation to gather data for workforce improvement in its survey of state 4-H leaders in all 50 states. The survey, which gathered baseline data about current 4-H staffing structures to inform future 4-H staffing structures and strengthen program outcomes, revealed staffing issues that included the following:

- In many states, academic educator positions had been slowly replaced with activity managers or program assistants. This erosion of professional positions appeared to be more pronounced at the county level than at the state or district level.
- In most states, state 4-H staffs were smaller than 15 years earlier.
- Several states saw high rates of turnover in 4-H positions, as well as a "generational shift" in 4-H ranks—resulting from the loss of many "baby boomers" to retirement, and leaving their positions unfilled. In some states, the high cost of living and remote rural locations made it difficult to find qualified applicants.
- In several states, leaders mentioned the "activity trap," (i.e., the tendency to be too task-focused and to lose sight of the larger goal or aim), which kept skilled 4-H staff from engaging in scholarly work that could otherwise advance the youth development field.

The findings from this study were compiled into a set of recommendations for use in shaping future 4-H staffing policy and practices.

OST Benefits to Older Youth and Their Families

Until recently, much OST programming and related research has focused on serving elementary school-age children, with less attention paid to middle and high school-age youth. Common wisdom posits that older youth are less interested than younger children in structured after school programs and have more options for the after school hours, including sports teams, jobs, and other extracurricular activities. The reality is somewhat different: At an age when they are beginning to become more independent, teens still need to have some structure and guidance, even as they gain greater independence. Increasingly, stakeholders in the OST arena are coming to see after school programs as an underutilized asset to improve outcomes for older youth

in such areas as academics, prevention, and workforce readiness.

In recent years, the OST field has begun focusing greater attention on the previously neglected needs of older youth. For example, in December 2005, HFRP and the National Institute for Out-of-School Time cohosted *Exploring Quality Standards for Middle School After School Programs: What We Know and What We Need to Know.*[5] This summit brought together after school staff, administrators, researchers, and funders to discuss how quality assessment differs for after school programs that serve middle school youth than for programs that serve elementary school children. The National Institute on Out-of-School Time's OST "fact sheet" also highlighted research demonstrating older youth's needs.[6]

The majority of the studies highlighted in this bibliography update have responded to the call for increased focus on middle and/or high school youth. In fact, five of these studies focus specifically on older youth: the JET program, the *California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens* (ASSETs) program, *The After-School Corporation* (TASC), the *4-H Camp Counselor Alumni Study*, and the *Girls Creating Games* program. In addition, *The Study of Promising Afterschool Programs*, which examines both elementary and middle school outcomes, analyzes findings separately for these two age groups.

Leadership Skills and Behavioral Changes

The issues that programs for older youth address tend to differ from those addressed by programs for younger children, due to the different needs of children at different stages of development. As a result, outcomes for older youth participating in OST programs do not always parallel the outcomes for younger children. As three studies reveal, OST programs can have a meaningful influence on older youth's behavior—both in encouraging them to take on leadership roles and in discouraging them from engaging in misconduct.

- **Leadership and choice in activities.** Leadership and choice play an important role in OST programs for older

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5 Presentation materials from this summit are available at www.hfrp.org/WhatWeKnowSummit.

6 National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2008). *Making the case: A 2008 fact sheet on children and youth in out-of-school time.* Wellesley, MA: Author. Available at www.niost.org/publications/Final2008FactSheet.pdf

youth. In fact, the success of programs for older youth may be linked, in part, to the availability of leadership roles for youth and opportunities for choice in the content and structure of activities. For example, in the evaluation of the ASSETs program, which funds OST enrichment programs for high school students, researchers determined that successful after school activities for high school students required an openness to youth voice. They found that ASSETs projects involved youth by asking for their feedback through surveys and focus groups, including them on advisory boards, and paying attention to the informal feedback they provided.

Similarly, the *4-H Camp Counselor Alumni Study*—which examined the reflections of former teen camp counselors on their counseling experiences—uncovered themes of increased responsibility and leadership roles. In this study, young adults who had served as 4-H camp counselors as teens reported that they found the counseling experience rewarding because they were viewed as role models, and they liked the responsibility that came with their role of watching over campers. These alumni believed they developed important life skills, such as leadership and decision making, through active engagement in their roles.

■ **Behavioral outcomes.** Older youth are more likely than younger children to be left unsupervised after school and also more likely to be at risk for drug and alcohol abuse. As *The Study of Promising Afterschool Programs* reveals, quality OST programs provide a response to these challenges. The study examined behavioral outcomes for middle school youth who attended high-quality after school programs and found two notable behavioral outcomes: Middle school students who regularly participated in high-quality after school programs reported a reduction in misconduct relative to youth who spent 1–3 days a week unsupervised by adults after school (the Low Supervision group). In addition, middle school students who regularly participated in after school programs reported reduced use of drugs and alcohol, compared to those in the Low Supervision group.

Preparation for Academic and Career Success

As youth get older, they, along with their parents and teachers, begin to think more seriously about their career interests and prospects and focus energy on ensuring that they obtain the skills necessary to pursue their chosen careers. Because their college and career prospects are more closely tied to their academic achievement than are younger children's, the pressure for academic success is often greater for older youth. For this reason, OST programs that focus on academic achievement and career readiness play an important role in older youth's lives. The evaluations described below demonstrate the different ways in which OST programs prepare middle and high school students for academic and career success.

■ **Academic success.** Three studies included in this update focused on academic outcomes for older youth participating in OST programs. *The After-School Corporation* (TASC) and the ASSETs program evaluations and *The Study of Promising After School Programs* all looked at ways OST programs impacted academic outcomes for middle and high school youth.

The most recent evaluation of TASC—an initiative to enhance the quality and availability of after school programs in New York—examined whether TASC participation in grades 6–8 promoted the development of protective factors that result in higher levels of school engagement and academic progress. Outcomes for TASC middle school participants were compared to those of two groups: nonparticipants who attended the same schools as the TASC participant group and nonparticipants who attended schools that did not host a TASC program. Results revealed the following statistically significant findings:

- Program youth had higher school attendance rates in the early high school years than either comparison group.
- More program youth remained enrolled in a New York City high school for at least 2 years after grade 9 than did nonparticipants from TASC schools.
- Program youth earned more high school credits: (a) in grade 9 than did nonparticipants from TASC schools and (b) in grade 11 than did youth from non-TASC schools.
- Program youth were more likely to be promoted to grade 10 on time than were nonparticipants from TASC schools.

Similarly, the ASSETs program evaluation assessed academic outcomes for teen OST program participants compared to their nonparticipant peers. Results revealed that ASSETs participants passed both the English language arts (ELA) and math portions of the California High School Exit Exam at a higher rate than similar stu-

dents not involved in ASSETs. Participants who passed this exam also attended program activities a greater number of days than participants who did not pass. Moreover, grade 11 ASSETs participants who attended the project 30 or more days showed greater gains in the percentage scoring at the proficient and advanced levels on the ELA portion of the California Standards Test than nonparticipants at their schools and students statewide.

Finally, *The Study of Promising Afterschool Programs* examined high-quality after school programs' outcomes for low-income elementary and middle school students. The 2-year study followed almost 3,000 low-income, ethnically diverse elementary and middle school students from 8 states in 6 major metropolitan centers and 6 smaller urban and rural locations. Data from the study revealed that middle school students who regularly attended high-quality after school programs demonstrated significant gains in math test scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised after school, and also had significant gains in self-reported work habits relative to unsupervised students.

■ **Workforce readiness and career interests.** Several studies in this review hone in on evaluations of the role workforce and career preparation play in OST programs for older youth. The JET program evaluation, for example, aimed to determine whether the teens gained workforce skills through their participation in the program. Specifically, youth reported gains in workforce skills, especially in demonstrating self-motivation, understanding organizational systems, using resources wisely (e.g., time and materials), asking questions to clarify information, listening and verbal communication, demonstrating responsibility, and problem solving.

The *4-H Camp Counselor Alumni Study* and ASSETs program evaluation also touched on issues of workforce readiness. According to the analysis of the *4-H Camp Counselor Alumni Study*, the opportunity to try out new roles allowed alumni to learn more about the types of job environment where they wanted to work. Some alumni felt that the counseling experience had a direct impact on their career choices, as they chose to enter careers in fields such as education that involved working with people. In the ASSETs program evaluation, results indicated that involvement in ASSETs projects increased youth's awareness of their post-high school options.

Although not focused specifically on older youth, the *4-H and Youth Development Program—East Texas*

Region Study of Minority Participation, collected surveys from youth ages 9 to 17, and included questions related to career and postsecondary education interests that were likely more meaningful for older participants. The researchers compared program benefits provided to participants in two delivery methods: club membership (an organized group that met regularly and focused on character and life skills) and curriculum enrichment (short-term programming presented by teachers in classrooms). Significant findings related to career interests and postsecondary education include:

- Compared to other youth, 4-H club members had more interest in careers related to agriculture, while curriculum enrichment participants had more interest in becoming lawyers, law enforcement officers, and joining the military.
- A baccalaureate degree was important to the majority of 4-H club members (83%) and curriculum enrichment participants (76%).
- Nearly half (45%) of both the curriculum enrichment participants and 4-H club members wished to obtain graduate degrees.
- 4-H club members were more involved than curriculum enrichment participants in career related clubs.

The evaluation of the *Girls Creating Games* program also studied workforce development. It looked specifically at whether the middle school girls who participated in the program increased their capacity to pursue and persist with computer technology. While the evaluation found no significant changes in participants' intentions to take computer courses in the future or in their attitudes toward computers, in interviews girls made comments that suggested an improved attitude toward computer use. Furthermore, while the comparison group reported an increase in negative stereotypes, the program group reported virtually no change in stereotypes about computer workers. Finally, computer skill level increased at a significantly greater level among participants than the comparison group.

Summing Up

Taken together, the studies and evaluations described here are helping to support two important trends in OST program evaluation: Evaluation and research data are being fed back to programs in ways that they can use both

to inform their programming *and* to serve older youth through quality OST programming. While barriers to programs' ability to use evaluation results and to attract and retain older youth continue to exist, the studies highlighted here show some evidence that gains are being made in these two important areas.

Programs are increasingly seeing the value of evaluation for continuous improvement, and there indeed seems to be a growing trend for OST program evaluations to include informing program improvements as one of their goals. As detailed in this *Research Update*, the recommendations that are emerging from these evaluations provide lessons applicable not just to the program being evaluated, but to other similar programs, which can learn from the successes and challenges highlighted in these evaluations.

At the same time, evaluations focusing on OST programs and services for older youth are also likely to continue to increase, paralleling increased recognition of the differing needs of older youth compared to their younger peers—as well a growing understanding of the significant benefits that OST programs can bring to older participants. This *Research Update* highlights just some of the many ways that OST programs are beginning to respond to this knowledge about how best to serve middle and high school youth.

While this *Research Update* highlights some major themes emerging from the latest studies of OST programs, it is by no means a comprehensive synthesis of all the findings emerging from recent research and evaluation. Full reports of all of these studies provide additional detail and insight that can help to guide future OST research and evaluation. These studies are available online and accessible via links included in the Appendix to this report.

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Acknowledgments

Appendix Table I: Research and Evaluation Studies Included in This Review

Program/Study Description	*Citations*
4-H Job Experience and Training Program (JET) Located in a 4-H education center in Dayton, Ohio, this work-based learning "program-within-a-program" builds on existing Adventure Central after school programming and relationships between teen participants and adult staff. The program culminates in a summer work experience in collaboration with a local park district.	Ferrari, T. M., Arnett, N., & Cochran, G. (2007). *Preparing teens for success: Building 21st century skills through a 4-H work-based learning program.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Extension. www.ohio4h.org/workforceprep/documents/2007JournalofYouthDevelopment_JET.pdf
4-H and Youth Development Program—East Texas Region Study of Minority Participation This study analyzed minority participation in a 4-H and Youth Development Program in Texas.	Williams, M., & Howard, J. W. (2007). Analysis of minority participation in Texas' east region 4-H and youth development program in relationship to leadership, marketing, and educational opportunities. *Journal of Youth Development 2*(2). www.nae4ha.org/directory/jyd/index.html
4-H Camp Counselor Alumni Study—Ohio This study examines perceptions of Ohio 4-H camp counselor alumni about the skills gained and transfer of these skills to other settings.	Digby, J. K., & Ferrari. T. M. (2007). Camp counseling and the development and transfer of workforce skills: The perspective of Ohio 4-H camp counselor alumni. *Journal of Youth Development 2*(2). www.nae4ha.org/directory/jyd/index.html

Program/Study Description	*Citations*
4-H Staffing Patterns and Trends Study Conducted in 2006, this study consisted of a national survey of 4-H programs about current staffing structures.	Astroth, K. A. (2007). Making the best better: 4-H staffing patterns and trends in the largest professional network in the nation. *Journal of Youth Development 2*(2). www.nae4ha.org/directory/jyd/index.html
Afterschool Programs as an Oasis of Hope for Black Parents in Four Cities This study, conducted in 2006–2007, examines the opinions of low-income and working-class Black parents regarding the quality and importance of public school- and community-based after school programs. Data were collected from four cities: Detroit, Milwaukee, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia.	Robinson, G., & Fenwick, L. (2007). *Afterschool programs as an oasis of hope for black parents in four cities.* Washington, DC: The Black Alliance for Educational Options. Executive Summary: www.baeo.org/files/mottSummary.pdf
California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program Initiated in 2002, this program provides incentives for establishing out-of-school time enrichment programs in California that partner schools and communities to provide academic support; safe, constructive alternatives for high school students; and assistance in passing the state high school exit exam. Each program must consist of three elements: academic assistance, educational enrichment, and family literacy services.	Hipps, J., & Diaz, M. (2007). *ASSETs final evaluation report: California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd. www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/840
Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning (CORAL) Initiative Begun in 2001, this initiative in California works to link communities, institutions, and residents around the common goal of improving youth academic achievement through the provision of structured literacy programming and enriching out-of-school time opportunities.	Arbreton, A., Sheldon, J., Bradshaw, M., & Goldsmith J., with Jucovy, L., & Pepper, S. (2008). *Advancing achievement findings from an independent evaluation of a major after-school initiative*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures. www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/225_publication.pdf
Girls Creating Games Program This after school program in Capitola, California, aims to build middle school girls' interest, skills, fluency, and confidence in information technology.	Denner, J. (2007). The Girls Creating Games Program: An innovative approach to integrating technology into middle school. *Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal, 1*(10). www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2007/girlgaming/index.htm
The Promising After-School Programs Study Begun in 2002, this national study seeks to determine the short-term and long-term impacts of high-quality after school programs on the cognitive, academic, social, and emotional development of youth who are growing up in high-poverty communities.	Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R., & Pierce, K. M. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of Promising Afterschool Programs.* University of California, Irvine. www.gse.uci.edu/docs/PASP%20Final%20Report.pdf
The Prime Time Initiative of Palm Beach County, Florida Initiated in 2001, this system-building effort is designed to strengthen the availability and quality of after school programs in Palm Beach County, Florida, including a Quality Improvement System based on program standards and assessment, technical assistance and professional development, curricular and program enhancements, and outreach, advocacy, and marketing.	Speilberger, J., & Lockaby, T. (2008). *Palm Beach County's Prime Time Initiative: Improving the quality of after-school programs*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children. www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1455

Program/Study Description	*Citations*
Rural After-School Programs Study	
Conducted in 2003–2004, this study examines the salience of after school programs for youth in two rural communities in a western state. The goal of the after school programs in this study is to assist youth in gaining knowledge and skills that will lead to attitudes and behaviors necessary to become contributing community members.	Letiecq, B. L., Bailey, S. J., & Keller, J. A. Rural after-school programs: Meeting the needs of at-risk youth and their families. *Journal of Youth Development 2*(2). www.nae4ha.org/directory/jyd/index.html
San Diego After School Regional Consortium	
This consortium provides leadership, technical assistance, and evaluation for after school programs in San Diego, California.	Hoffman Clark & Associates. (2007). *San Diego After School Regional Consortium perception survey report.* Solana Beach, CA: Author. www.hoffmanclark.org/documents/HoffmanClarkPerception07.pdf
The After-School Corporation (TASC)	
Begun in 1998, the organization has a two-part mission: (a) to enhance the quality of after school programs in New York State by emphasizing program components associated with student success and program sustainability and (b) to increase the availability of after school opportunities in New York by providing resources and strategies for establishing and expanding after school projects.	Russell, C. A., Mielke, M. B., & Johnson, J. C. (2007). *After-school programs and high school success: Analysis of post-program educational patterns of former middle-grades TASC participants.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/1758/

ABOUT HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

Since 1983, we have helped stakeholders develop and evaluate strategies to promote the well-being of children, youth, families, and communities. Our work focuses primarily on three areas that support children's learning and development—early childhood education, out-of-school time programming, and family and community support in education. Building on our knowledge that schools cannot do it alone, we also focus national attention on complementary learning. Complementary learning is the idea that a systemic approach, which integrates school and nonschool supports, can better ensure that all children have the skills they need to succeed. Underpinning all our work is our commitment to evaluation for strategic decision making, learning, and accountability.

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