



21st CCLC–Funded Afterschool Programs

ABOUT THE OST DATABASE & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Our online Out-of-School Time Database includes profiles of evaluations and research studies about OST programs and initiatives. Our Out-of-School Time Bibliography contains citations for all of the OST program evaluations and research studies that we are currently tracking. These valuable and easy-to-use resources can help you learn about and improve OST research and evaluation. They can also support policy and program development.

Visit the database and bibliography on our website at www.hfrp.org/OSTDatabase.

Introduction

Harvard Family Research Project's 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.

The *Research Update* series 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 *Research Update* focuses specifically on evaluations and research studies of programs and that are funded by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative. An up-to-date bibliography of research studies and evaluations of 21st CLCC-funded programs can be found in the Appendix.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative provides funds for afterschool programs across the country. These programs, which operate during nonschool hours (i.e., before and after school, summers, holidays, and weekends) present children with academic enrichment opportunities and other activities that support school-day learning and positive development. Programs with 21st CCLC funds also serve the families of participating children through services such as family literacy programs.

The 21st CCLC initiative provides funding for programs that self-identify as 21st CCLC programs and also for existing community- or school-based programs that use 21st CCLC funds in conjunction with other funding sources. 21st CLCC-funded afterschool programs vary in their scope, from local (city, district, or county) to statewide and national programs.

Why 21st CCLC Funding Is Important

The 21st CCLC initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programming.

Why Afterschool Programs Are Important

Afterschool programs are one of many ways to expand learning time beyond the regular school day to help meet the learning needs of children, especially given the increasing recognition that schools and school-hours alone cannot provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to become successful adults. Different approaches to expanding the school day offer different advantages when it comes to supplementing school-day learning. Afterschool programs can provide the following unique advantages:

- **Choice** for children and parents in selecting activities, which can lead to greater engagement and more meaningful learning experiences.
- **Diversity of activities** such as academic tutoring, drug prevention, art, and recreation, so that children can learn in a variety of ways that complement school-day learning.
- **Creativity and innovation** in approaches to learning that can help identify successful learning and teaching strategies.

What Research Says About the Value of the 21st CCLC Initiative

More than a decade of research evidence supports the value of 21st CCLC funds in offering positive learning experiences for children and youth. The research base on 21st CCLC is vast and varied, ranging from in-depth descriptive studies of program implementation to rigorous outcome studies examining the benefits of program participation. While not all studies demonstrate benefits for youth participants, research suggests that three elements of afterschool programs (including those with 21st CCLC funding) are connected to positive outcomes: (a) Access to and sustained participation in programs; (b) Quality

More than a decade of research evidence suggests that 21st CCLC funding can help quality afterschool programs to:

- Provide a wide array of high quality afterschool experiences for children and youth.
- Work toward improving academic success.
- Contribute to improved child well-being.
- Promote child health and wellness.

programming, as demonstrated by such factors as appropriate supervision and structure, well-prepared staff, and intentional programming; and (c) Partnerships with families, other community organizations, and schools.¹ Some key findings from recent evaluations and research studies of quality programs that have received 21st CCLC funding appear on the next page.

For more information about 21st CCLC programs and details on research studies and evaluations that examine programs with 21st CCLC funding, please see the bibliography in the Appendix, available online at www.hfrp.org/21stCCLC.

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21st Century Community Learning Center Funding Can Help Quality Afterschool Programs to ...

Provide a wide array of quality afterschool experiences for children. 21st CCLC funds allow programs flexibility to develop a diverse set of activities that support children's learning and development, and that match a child's specific needs and interests.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION A national study of high-functioning 21st CCLC programs, including rural and urban programs, and community-based and school district-related programs, revealed that the majority of the programs offered three or more activities to children and youth each day. Most offered some type of homework help or tutoring. Other activities included academic supports (e.g., math, reading, writing, science); enrichment (e.g., arts and crafts, cooking, gardening, health and nutrition, cultural activities, computers); and recreation (e.g., sports, dance, outdoor games).²

Work toward improving academic success. Students who participate in quality 21st CCLC-funded programs have shown significant improvements in achievement in core academic subjects.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION Youth who attended math-focused activities as part of the Texas 21st CCLC program were significantly more likely to pass the math portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.³ Participants in California's 21st Century High School After School Safety & Enrichment program passed both the English language arts and math portions of the California High School Exit Exam at a significantly higher rate than their non-participating peers.⁴

Contribute to improved child well-being. Youth who participate in quality 21st CCLC-funded programs exhibit positive outcomes related to healthy social development.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION A national review of evaluations of afterschool programs—some of which received 21st CCLC funding—whose goals included the promotion of personal and social skills, found positive social development outcomes for youth participants. Compared to the control group youth, youth who participated in a subset of these programs improved significantly in their self-confidence and self-esteem and exhibited significant declines in problem behaviors and drug use.⁵

Promote health and wellness. Afterschool programs can contribute to healthy lifestyles and increased knowledge about nutrition and exercise.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION The Yale Study of Children's After School Time, a longitudinal study of over 650 youth at 25 afterschool programs in Connecticut that receive 21st CCLC funding, found that youth who participated in afterschool programs were more likely than non-participants to experience reductions in obesity, after accounting for differences between participants and non-participants. These positive results held true even after controlling for youth's initial Body Mass Index status at the beginning of the study, as well as demographic factors such as poverty, race, and ethnicity.⁶

Notes

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2. Huang, D., Cho, J., Mostafavi, S., Nam, H., Oh, C., Harven, A., & Leon, S. (2009). *What works? Common practices in high functioning afterschool programs across the nation in math, reading, science, arts, technology, and homework—A study by the National Partnership. The afterschool program assessment guide (CRESST Report 768)*. Los Angeles: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), University of California–Los Angeles. Online at: www.cse.ucla.edu/products/summary.asp?report=768
The OST database profile of this program and related evaluations can be found online at: www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/21st-century-community-learning-centers-national
3. Burgette, J., Zoblotsky, T., Neergaard, L., Akerstrom, J., Gibbs, C., Naftzger, N., Vinson, M., & Nunnery, J. (2009). *Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers evaluation 2007–2008*. Memphis, TN: Center for Research in Educational Policy. Online at: ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/OutOfSchoolLearning/21CCLS_Final_0809.pdf
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6. Mahoney, J. L., Lord, H., & Carryl, E. (2005). Afterschool program participation and the development of child obesity and peer acceptance. *Applied Developmental Science*, 9(4), 202–215. Online at: www.leaonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s1532480xads0904_3
The OST database profile of this program and related evaluations can be found online at: www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/yale-study-of-children-s-after-school-time

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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