

The Benefit of After School Programs

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"For many children..., after-school programs provide a structured, safe, supervised place to be after school for learning, fun and friendship with adults and peers alike."¹ After-school activities are associated with benefits to:

EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE & ACHIEVEMENT

Increased Student Attendance

"LA's BEST participants are 20 percent less likely to drop out of school compared to matched nonparticipants."²

"... over the course of their time in high school, students who were enrolled in ASM for three or more semesters and those who participated at the highest levels had higher rates of graduation and lower dropout rates than similar students who did not participate in the program ... the students who participated in ASM, on average, had better prior attendance records and fewer course failures than students who did not enroll in the program. However, the study finds that after taking prior levels of attendance and educational achievement into account, ASM participants still had significantly better outcomes than students who did not participate in ASM."³

"Children in the Quantum Opportunities afterschool program were half as likely to drop out of high school, and two and one half times more likely to pursue higher education, than students not selected to participate."⁴

Increased Time Spent on Academic Activities

"Children who attended after-school programs spent more time on academic and extracurricular activities, whereas children in informal care settings spent more time watching TV and hanging out."⁵

"Children in formal programs spent more time in academic activities and enrichment lessons and less time watching TV and playing outside unsupervised than other children. They also spent more time doing activities with peers and adults and less time with siblings than did other children."⁶

"Children involved in ASPs appear to spend more time in academic, enrichment learning, and adult-supervised play."⁷

Increased Parent Involvement in Academics

"Forty-five percent of principals said that the after-school programs had increased parents' attendance at school events."⁸

Improved Academic Performance

"The Promising Afterschool Programs Study, a study of about 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary and middle school students, found that those who regularly attended high-quality programs over two years demonstrated gains of up

to 20 percentiles and 12 percentiles in standardized math test scores respectively, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours.”⁹

“Citizen Schools reported especially large improvements in achievement among the most high-risk students, including those initially in the lowest quartile on standardized test scores and English language learners.”¹⁰

“...Students who participated at the highest levels in the after-school program also tended to fail fewer core academic courses (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies).”¹¹

“Students in a statewide program in California improved their standardized test scores (SAT-9) in both reading and math by percentages almost twice that of other students and also had better school attendance.”¹²

“When maternal education, race, and family income were controlled, attending a formal after-school program was associated with better academic achievement. The time that children spent in these activities was correlated with their academic and conduct grades...”¹³

Increased Cultural Awareness and Opportunities for Non-Traditional Learning

After-school program “...activities can also provide culture to a child’s life. For example, the program could offer ballet classes to a young girl who might have not have otherwise taken a dance class. The program could also offer acting classes for children interested in theatre. Here is an example of a woman named Joy who began an after-school program for children. She used her knowledge of dance to get children involved and off of the street. Here is a link to a short video clip which gives an explanation of her programs and what it’s about.”¹⁴

HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Reduced Drug, Alcohol, and Cigarette Use

“Teens who do not participate in after school programs are nearly three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs; they are also more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes.”^{15, 16}

“The after school hours are the peak time for ... experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex.”¹⁷

After-school programs “reduced problem behaviors ... and drug use.”¹⁸

Reduced delinquent behavior was achieved “by increasing intentions not to use drugs...”¹⁹

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center “NYVPRC found that children who do not spend any time in after-school activities are 49 percent more likely to have used drugs.”²⁰

Reduced Underage Sex and Teen Pregnancy

“The after school hours are the peak time for experimentation with ... sex.”²¹

“NYVPRC found that children who do not spend any time in after-school activities

[are] 37 percent more likely to become a teen parent.”²²

Reduced Juvenile Crime

“The after school hours are the peak time for juvenile crime....”²³

“After the implementation of the city-wide San Diego 6 to 6 program, the San Diego Police Department’s 2001 report indicated that...juvenile arrests during after school hours were down 13.1%. The police chief specifically cited the 6 to 6 program as one of the primary factors responsible for this decrease. Additionally [,] the rates of juveniles as victims of violent crime during after school hours decreased 11.7% from the previous year.”²⁴

“...students who participated at a higher rate in LA’s BEST had significantly lower incidences of juvenile crime. ...each dollar spent on LA’s BEST returns a benefit of \$2.50 to society in the form of costs avoided due to juvenile crime.”²⁵

Improved Nutrition And Physical Fitness And Lowering Obesity Rates²⁶

A “...benefit of after-school programs is the exercise kids get when they partake in recreational programs. These programs let children use their energy, relieve stress, and reduce the possibility of childhood obesity.”²⁷

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING AND THE ECONOMY

Reducing Costs²⁸

A 2003 study on after-school programs found that they “reduced costs from crime, increased tax revenues flowing from increased educational attainment, increased tax revenues resulting from increased maternal labor supply, and reduced social costs associated with teen fertility.”²⁹

A Rose Institute Study on the costs and benefits of The After School and Education Safety Act of 2002 found that it reduced a number of costs per participant, including: \$899 - \$1,777 in reduced child care costs and \$335-\$502 in reduced welfare costs.

Return on Investment

“Social benefits are over \$3 for each \$1 spent on after-school programs.”³⁰

A Rose Institute Study on the costs and benefits of The After School and Education Safety Act of 2002 found that a dollar invested in after school programming for an at-risk child brings a return of \$8.92 to \$12.90.³¹

Reducing Job Absenteeism and Increasing Maternal Employment

“Parents who are concerned about their children’s after-school care miss an average of eight days of work per year. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about after-school care costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year.”³²

“...a fifty cent drop in the price of care increases the participation rate from 0.608 to 0.687, a jump of almost 8 full percentage points.”³³

STRONGER INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

Improved Social Skills

"A meta-analysis of 73 afterschool evaluations concluded that afterschool programs employing evidence-based approaches to improving students' personal and social skills were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth including improvements in children's personal, social and academic skills, as well as their self-esteem."³⁴

"When maternal education, race, and family income were controlled, attending a formal after-school program was associated with ... social adjustment in comparison to other types of after-school care. The time that children spent in these activities was correlated with their ... emotional adjustment."³⁵

Increased Self-Confidence & Self-Esteem

"Youth who participate in after-school programs improve feelings and attitudes, [and] indicators of behavioral adjustment ... 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 ..."³⁶

Stronger relationships with peers

"Reduced delinquent behavior was achieved by "positive peer associations."³⁷

"The time that children spent in [formal after-school programs] was correlated with their peer relations..."³⁸

Connecting Youth with mentors

"Recreational activities are also important, but (compared to structured after-school programs) these activities do not appear to have as much developmental potential as mentoring (that occurs in after school programs) and it proved difficult to consistently provide quality activities in a gender-equitable manner. The importance of the youth-staff tie (mentoring) is the fundamental benefit of after-school programming."³⁹

EQUITY

Closing the Achievement Gap

"Poor, inner-city communities are especially in need of after-school programs because urban youth often lack the safe parks, sports teams, clubs, and other enriching opportunities that are typically offered in middle-income and affluent communities."⁴⁰

Students at the greatest risk make the greatest educational (achievement) gains from out-of-school programming."⁴¹

ENDNOTES

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