

Making the Case Through Research

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MN Governor's Afterschool
Opportunities Summit



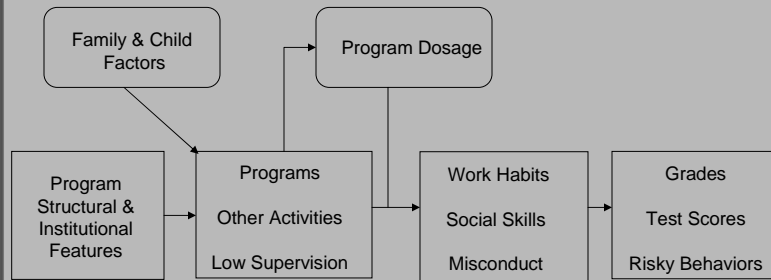
The Policy Context

- Disconnect between the length of the school day and children's needs – academic, social, behavioral, and physical
- High rates of maternal employment
 - 69% of married moms & 71% of single moms of children 6-17 yrs
- Concerns about
 - Low test scores
 - Unmet needs of English Language Learners
 - Negative effects of low supervision
 - Youth as victims & perpetrators of crime
 - Childhood obesity
- Some evidence of beneficial effects of programs but others (e.g., National 21st Century CLC evaluation) do not find effects
- Public investments in programs

Study of Promising Afterschool Programs

- A 3-year longitudinal study
- Year 1 devoted to identifying & describing promising programs
- Years 2 & 3 – a study of 3,000 low-income, ethnically diverse elementary and middle school students
- Eight states: CA, CT, MI, MT, NY, OR, RI
- 14 communities: rural, small town, mid-size city, large city
- All programs and schools served high-poverty communities

Theory of Change



Characteristics of the Promising Programs

- Positive relationships between students and staff
- Positive relationships between students
- Mix of academic and non-academic skill-building activities
- High levels of student engagement
- Mastery orientation
- Appropriate levels of structure
- Opportunities for autonomy and choice

Other Types of After-School Experiences

- Organized activities such as team sports, school-based activities, clubs, and music lessons
- Home alone
- Home with siblings
- “Hanging out” with peers

Study Participants

Elementary Sample

1,796 3rd and 4th grade students from 19 schools

89% free- or reduced-price school lunch

88% students of color

Middle School Sample

1,118 6th and 7th grade students from 16 schools

63% free- or reduced-price lunch

69% students of color

Participation in Promising Programs and Other Activities Over Two Years

Elementary Sample

- 54% regular program participants
(2/3 Program Only; 1/3 Program Plus)
- 15% low supervision

Middle School Sample

- 49% regular program participants
(2/3 Program Only; 1/3 Program Plus)
- 16% low supervision

Child Outcomes
Measured at Baseline, Year 1 and Year 2

Test Scores	Self-Reports	Teacher Reports
Math	Work habits	Work habits
Reading	Misconduct	Task persistence
	Substance use	Academic performance
		Social skills
		Pro-social
		Aggression

Effect Size

An effect size is a statistic that measures the magnitude of a program's impact on a particular outcome.

Effect sizes can be benchmarked against those reported in other studies.

Aspirin on heart disease $d = .03$

Class size reductions on math achievement $d = .23$

School-based substance abuse prevention programs on drug & alcohol use $d = .09$

Elementary School Students

Standardized Test Scores

Significant gains in math scores over two years

Program Only vs. Low Supervision - 12 percentiles

Program Plus vs. Low Supervision - 20 percentiles

Effect sizes for math gains

Program Only vs. Low Supervision – $d = .52$

Program Plus vs. Low Supervision – $d = .73$

Elementary School Students

Academic-related Skills

Significant gains in work habits and task persistence

Program Plus vs. Low Supervision

Gains in work habits ($d = .35$)

Gains in task persistence ($d = .30$)

Gains in grades ($d = .25$)

Program Only vs. Low Supervision

Gains in work habits ($d = .31$)

Gains in task persistence ($d = .23$)

Middle School Students

Standardized Test Scores

Significant gains in math scores over two years

Program Only vs. Low Supervision - 12 percentiles

Program Plus vs. Low Supervision - 12 percentiles

Effect sizes for math gains

Program Only vs. Low Supervision – $d = .55$

Program Plus vs. Low Supervision – $d = .57$

Middle School Students

Academic-related Skills

Program Only vs. Low Supervision

Gains in work habits ($d = .20$)

Program Plus vs. Low Supervision

Gains in work habits ($d = .33$)

Middle School Students

Behavioral Outcomes

Program Plus vs. Low Supervision

Reductions in misconduct (d = .64)

Reductions in substance use (d = .67)

Program Only vs. Low Supervision

Reductions in misconduct (d = .55)

Reductions in substance use (d = .47)

Conclusions

Improved Academic Outcomes

Elementary school and middle school students who regularly attended the high-quality afterschool programs demonstrated significant gains of 12 to 20 percentiles in standardized math test scores.

Elementary and middle school students who regularly participated in high-quality afterschool programs had significant gains in self-reported work habits. Classroom teachers of the elementary students also reported gains in work habits and task persistence.

Conclusions

Improved Social and Behavioral Outcomes

Elementary program participants exhibited gains in social skills with peers and pro-social behavior, and reductions in aggression.

Both elementary and middle school program participants demonstrated reductions in misconduct. (e.g., skipping school, getting into fights).

Middle school program participants in reported reduced use of drugs and alcohol.

Unresolved Questions

- More pervasive programs associations detected for children than for youth
 - Because the programs are a better “fit” for children??
 - Because children attend more regularly??
 - Because the elementary school teachers (who are responsible for the children for most of the school day) are more knowledgeable and provided more valid ratings??
 - Because it is more difficult for after-school programs and activities to shift developmental trajectories in older youth than in children??
 - Because more time is needed to detect developmental changes in the program youth??

