

How Afterschool Programming Supports Academic Success

Recent studies demonstrate how regular attendance in quality afterschool programs leads to improved academics. This fact sheet presents the latest, supporting research.

1) Findings from a 2-year study examining the effects of participation in quality afterschool programs demonstrated that elementary and middle school students **improved in their standardized math scores, their work habits and task persistence.** (Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007)

2) A meta-analysis combining the results of 35 studies of afterschool programs serving at-risk youth discovered a positive correlation with regular attendance in afterschool programs and **reading and math achievement.** (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2006)

3) In 2008, the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance at the U.S. Department of Education released the results from an evaluation of enhanced academic instruction in afterschool programs. The study involved a two-year intervention and random assignment evaluation of adapted models of regular school-day math and reading instruction in afterschool settings. First-year implementation findings revealed that students in the enhanced programs experienced more targeted instruction, which resulted overall in significant gains for math but not reading. **These findings suggest that participation in an afterschool program that intentionally targets specific skills may lead to positive impacts on learning.** (Black, Doolittle, Zhu, & Unterman, 2008) (Black, Doolittle, Zhu, Unterman, & Grossman, 2008)

4) Beth Miller in her report *Critical Hours* concludes that quality programs can markedly increase engagement in learning by providing students with **opportunities for personal attention from adults, a peer group with positive aspirations, and hands-on activities that hold students' interest and develop their skills and sense of competence.** Schools often have difficulty providing these types of opportunities, yet research indicates they are critical to long-term academic success. In one study cited in *Critical Hours*, students who did not spend between 5 to 19 hours per week in school-sponsored extracurricular activities were 6 times more likely to have dropped out of school by their senior year compared to students who were participating in activities after school. (Miller, 2003)

Through an extensive literature review, the Harvard Family Research Project's *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation* (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008) recently compiled the positive outcomes associated with regular attendance to quality afterschool programs:

- Better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations
- Higher School Attendance rates and less tardiness
- Less disciplinary action (e.g. suspension)
- Lower dropout rates
- Better performance in school, as measured by achievement test scores and grades
- Greater on-time promotion
- Improved homework completion
- Engagement in learning

Summary of Outcomes Attributed to Regular Attendance in Quality Afterschool Programs:

Reducing Negative Behaviors	Reduced juvenile delinquency
	Reduced substance abuse
	Reduced conflicts between youth
	Reduced dropout rates
	Reduced school suspensions
	Decreased school vandalism

Increases in Attitudes and Behaviors Linked to School Success	Better behavior in school
	Better work habits
	Better conflict resolution skills
	Fewer absences from school
	Greater feeling of belonging in the community
Higher educational aspirations	

Improved Academic Performance	Improved skills in data analysis and writing
	Improved homework completion or quality
	Higher scores on achievement test
	Reductions in grade retention
	Lowered truancy rates

(Miller, 2003) (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007)

School's Out Washington offers support to enhance afterschool programs

There are several books and videos on this topic available for checkout in our library. We offer community workshops on the topic of supporting learning, and can send a trainer to your site to tailor training to your program's needs. Our quarterly networking meetings often feature topics related to supporting learning, and we are continually looking for new ways to help.

School's Out Washington provides services and guidance for organizations to ensure all young people have safe places to learn and grow when not in school. School's Out Washington is dedicated to building community systems to support quality out-of-school time programs for Washington's 5-18 year olds through training, advocacy, and leadership.

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