



The Costs and Benefits of Afterschool Programs: Selected Research Findings

Afterschool Programs Support Student Learning

- A 2007 study by UC Irvine, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Policy Studies Associates, Inc. found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to 12-20% gains in standardized test scores (Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs. Deborah Vandell, Elizabeth Reisner, Kim Pierce. University of CA, Irvine, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., October 2007).
- Students who participate in afterschool programs are more likely to perform closely to grade level, are less likely to be placed in remedial and special education courses (which have higher costs per student) and are less likely to repeat a grade. The benefit of improved school performance is estimated between \$447 and \$809 per participant (Rose Institute).
- High levels of participation in LA's BEST afterschool program led to better school attendance resulting in higher academic achievement on standardized tests of mathematics, reading and language arts. (D. Huang, B. Gribbons, K.S. Kim and C. Lee, the Impact of LA's Best After School Program on subsequent Student Achievement and Performance, May 2000, www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/LABest.pdf).
- Active participants in TASC programs (after which New Jersey After3 is modeled) made greater gains in math standardized tests than did non-participants; gains were even more than expected after two years of enrollment. (Building Quality, Scale and Effectiveness in After-School Programs; Reisner, White, Russell, Birmingham; Policy Studies Associates, November 2004 www.policystudiesassociates.com/studies/youth).

Reducing Childhood Obesity and Teen Pregnancy Rates

- In the Quantum Opportunities Program, boys and girls who, through random selection, were left out were more than twice as likely to have children before graduating (Quantum Opportunities Program).
- The Food Research and Action Council identifies afterschool programs as effective venues for improving nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity (Food Research and Action Council, 2006).
- The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, in their 2000 report to the President, "Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports," identified afterschool programs as a means to provide opportunities for youth to be physically active and called for support to enable afterschool programs to do so (National Centers for Disease Control, 2000).
- Teen-age pregnancy costs society from \$7 to \$9 billion annually. Summarizing the results of several studies, afterschool programs may reduce births to school-age children by approximately 40%, providing a societal benefit of up to \$3.2 billion. The societal benefit per afterschool slot would be up to \$267 (Evaluating the Benefits and Costs of After-School Care, Levine and Zimmerman, June 2003, www.kaufman.org/pdf/afterschool_report_020205.pdf).

Afterschool Programs Save Taxpayers Money by Keeping Kids Safe

- Afterschool programs help reduce juvenile crime delinquency rates. A UCLA study found that students who participated at a higher rate in high-quality afterschool programs had significantly lower incidences of juvenile crime. It also found that the economic benefits of the LA's BEST program exceed its costs – every dollar invested in the program resulted in an estimated savings in juvenile crime costs of approximately \$2.50 (The Long-Term Effects of After-School Programming on Educational Adjustment and Juvenile Crime: A Study of the LA's Best After-School Program. Pete Goldschmidt, Denise Huang, and Marjorie Chinen, CRESST/University of California, Los Angeles. Prepared with the support of: U.S. Department of Justice, June 2007, <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org>).
- A 1997 study by Vanderbilt University estimated that each high-risk youth prevented from adopting a life of crime saves the country between \$1.7 million and \$2.3 million. Preventing a youth from becoming a career drug abuser saves from \$408,268 to \$1,070,244; preventing a youth from dropping out of high schools saves from \$268,133 to \$428,130 (The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth. Cohen, Marc A., Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 1998, servicelearning.org/lib_svcs/lib_cat/index.php?library_id=1959).



- The return to taxpayers ranged from \$2.19 to \$3.22 for every dollar spent on afterschool programs, the return to crime victims ranges from \$4.44 to \$6.64 and the benefits to students attending afterschool programs ranged from \$2.29 to \$3.04 (*Rose Institute*).
- The Quantum Opportunities afterschool program produced benefits to recipients and the public of \$3 for every \$1 spent, without even counting the savings from a six-fold drop in crime by boys in the program. High school freshmen from welfare families were randomly assigned to participate in the four-year Quantum Opportunities after-school program. Six years later, boys who did not participate in the program averaged six times more criminal convictions than participants (*Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Book Four: Quantum Opportunities Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. Lattimore, C.B., Mihalic, S.F., Grotper, J.K. & Taggart, R., 1989 www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/programs/details/QOPdetails.htm*).
- RAND Corporation compared the cost effectiveness of the Quantum Opportunities afterschool program with that of California's *Three Strikes Law*, which requires mandatory prison sentences for persons convicted of three serious crimes. RAND concluded that, per dollar spent, Quantum Opportunities prevented more than 5 times as many serious crimes as the *Three Strikes Law* (*Greenwood, P.W., et al. Diverting children from a life of crime: Measuring Costs and Benefits. 1996, Santa Monica, CA RAND, www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR699-1*).
- Mason-Dixon Polling and Research national 2002 survey of law enforcement leaders overwhelmingly picked expanding quality educational childcare and afterschool programs as the most effective strategy to reduce youth violence and crime (*Investments in Children Prevent Crime and Save Money. A Research Brief by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, www.fightcrime.org*).

Afterschool Programs Reduce the High School Drop Out Rate

- In the Quantum Opportunities Program, graduation rates for program participants reached 63%, while only 42% of those in the control group graduated. Attendance in postsecondary education was also higher (42% versus 16% for members of the treatment group) (*Quantum Opportunities Program*).
- The benefits to society of preventing a youth from dropping out of high school range from \$29,415 to \$38,284 per youth (*Rose Institute*).
- High levels of participation in LA's BEST afterschool program led to significantly reduced dropout rates (*D. Huang, B. Gribbons, K.S. Kim and C. Lee, the Impact of LA's Best After School Program on subsequent Student Achievement and Performance, May 2000, www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/LABest.pdf*).

How Much Do Afterschool Programs Cost?

- A study conducted by Public/Private Ventures' Out-of-School-Time Cost Study Team found that the average daily cost for programs serving elementary and middle school children is approximately \$24 per student slot per day during the school year (*Public/Private Ventures & The Finance Project; The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs; Commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, 2009, http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/271_publication.pdf*).

Return on Investment

- Every dollar invested in afterschool programs will save taxpayers approximately \$3. Participation in an afterschool program brings a net benefit of between \$79,484 and \$119,427. In other words, each dollar invested in an at-risk child brings a return of \$8.92 to \$12.90. Afterschool programs led to improved school performance, increased future wages, reduced crime costs and reduced welfare costs (*Rose Institute; The Costs and Benefits of After School Programs: The Estimated Effects of the After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002, http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/rose_institute_nr_final.doc*).

* Note: All online source URLs valid as of February 2009.