

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

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Building High-Quality After School Systems: Research-to-Policy Resources

In 2014, [10.2 million school-age children](#) (18 percent) participated in after school programs, an increase from 2009, when 8.4 million children (15 percent) participated. Of the nearly 1.4 million children served by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) in 2014, [627,000 were of school age](#) and used subsidies to pay for after school and other out-of-school time programs. The federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, served an additional [1.6 million children](#) in 2014. Children in after school programs are cared for in a variety of settings, including school-based programs, child care centers, and home-based settings.

A number of meta-analytic research reviews have examined the impact of after school programs on children's outcomes. These reviews show after school programs have positive effects on [personal and social skills](#), [reading and math](#), and [academic achievement for at-risk students](#). Additionally, these reviews, as well as other [reviews](#) and [studies](#), have helped to identify specific aspects of after school programs associated with positive child outcomes.

These promising findings on the role of after school programs and their particular features in supporting children's development have encouraged a number of stakeholders to invest in after school systems. The [National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment](#), funded by the U.S. Office of Child Care, is part of the U.S. Administration for Children and Families Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System. The Center assists CCDF lead agencies in ensuring that school-age children in low-income families have increased access to high-quality after school experiences. Municipalities and philanthropies have also partnered in initiatives to build the supply of after school programs, improve program quality, and support the after school workforce.

This **Research-to-Policy Resource List** focuses on resources in the *Research Connections* collection published in the past ten years that focus on building high-quality after schools systems. The resources on this list have been assigned to the following categories: building systems, improving quality, supporting the workforce, and sustaining program finances.



Building Systems

Multisite

Bodilly, S., McCombs, J., Orr, N., Scherer, E., Constant, L., & Gershwin, D. (2010). [*Hours of opportunity: Vol. 1. Lessons from five cities on building systems to improve after-school, summer school, and other out-of-school time programs.*](#) (MG-1037-WF). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Hayes, C. D., Lind, C., Grossman, J., Stewart, N., Deich, S. G., Gersick, A., McMaken, J., & et al. (n.d.). [*Investments in building citywide out-of-school-time systems: A six-city study.*](#) Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. (2011). [*Municipal leadership for afterschool: Citywide approaches spreading across the country.*](#) Washington, DC: Institute for Youth, Education, and Families.

Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. (2009). [*Cities and statewide afterschool networks partnering to support afterschool.*](#) Washington, DC: Institute for Youth, Education, and Families.

McCombs, J., Bodilly, S., Orr, N., Scherer, E., Constant, L., & Gershwin, D. (2010). [*Hours of opportunity: Vol. 3. Profiles of five cities improving after-school programs through a systems approach.*](#) (TR-882-WF). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

McCombs, J., Orr, N., Bodilly, S., Naftel, S., Constant, L., Scherer, E., & Gershwin, D. (2010). [*Hours of opportunity: Vol. 2. The power of data to improve after-school programs citywide.*](#) (MG-1037/1-WF). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Russell, L., & Little, P. M. (2011). [*Collecting and using information to strengthen citywide out-of-school time systems.*](#) Washington, DC: Institute for Youth, Education, and Families.

Spielberger, J., Axelrod, J., Dasgupta, D., Cerven, C., Spain, A., Kohm, A., & Mader, N. (2016). [*Connecting the dots: Data use in afterschool systems.*](#) Chicago: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children.

Starr, E., Stavsky, S., & Gannett, E. (2016). [*Strengthening and safeguarding continuous quality improvement systems: Lessons from afterschool system builders.*](#) Wellesley, MA: Wellesley Centers for Women.

Baltimore

Holleman, M. A., Sundius, M., & Bruns, E. J. (2010). [*Building opportunity: Developing city systems to expand and improve after school programs.*](#) *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45(3-4), 405-416

Improving Quality

Multisite

Smith, C., Akiva, T., Sugar, S. A., Lo, Y., Frank, K., Peck, S. C., Cortina, K. S., & et al. (2012). [*Continuous quality improvement in afterschool settings: Impact findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention study.*](#) Ypsilanti, MI: David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.

Kansas City, Missouri

Hansen, D. M., Crawford, M. J., & Jessop, N. (2012). [Program quality, adolescent learning experiences, and academic indicators: Report of findings from cohorts 1-3 of the Quality Matters initiative](#). Kansas City, MO: United Way of Greater Kansas City.

Spehar, S., Hallman, S., & Sugar, S. A. (2011). [United Way of Greater Kansas City out-of-school time Quality Matters 2010-11 project report](#). Kansas City, MO: United Way of Greater Kansas City.

Minnesota

Moore, D., Grant, S., McLaughlin, C., Walker, K., & Shafer, B. (2010). [Preliminary findings from the Minnesota 4-H quality improvement study: Using youth and adult volunteer assessors to take quality improvement to scale](#). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Center for Youth Development.

Nashville, Tennessee

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. (2012). [Nashville After Zone Alliance quality improvement intervention: 2011-2012 findings from the Northeast and South Central Zones](#). Ypsilanti, MI: David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. (2013). [Nashville After Zone Alliance quality improvement intervention: 2012-2013 findings from the Northeast, South Central and Northwest Zones: Report to the Nashville After Zone Alliance](#). Ypsilanti, MI: David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. (2014). [Nashville After Zone Alliance quality improvement intervention: 2013-2014 findings from the Northeast, South Central, Northwest and Southeast Zones: Report to the Nashville After Zone Alliance](#). Ypsilanti, MI: David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.

Sugar, S. A., Wallace, L., Akiva, T., & Devaney, T. (2010). [Quality counts: Nashville After Zone Alliance: Quality improvement pilot final report](#). Ypsilanti, MI: David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.

Palm Beach County, Florida

Baker, S., Spielberger, J., Lockaby, T., & Guterman, K. (2010). [Enhancing quality in afterschool programs: Fifth-year report on a process evaluation of Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc.](#). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children.

Naftzger, N., Hallberg, K., & Yang, T. (2014). [Exploring the relationship between afterschool program quality and youth outcomes: Findings from the Prime Time of Palm Beach County quality improvement system study: Summary](#). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Providence, Rhode Island

Kauh, T. J. (2011). [AfterZone: Outcomes for youth participating in Providence's citywide after-school system](#). Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Kotloff, L. (2010). [AfterZones: Creating a citywide system to support and sustain high-quality after-school programs](#). Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Wyoming

National Institute on Out-of-School Time (U.S.), & Third Mile Group. (n.d.). [The Wyoming afterschool quality improvement three-year initiative: 2011-2014: Final report](#). Lander, WY: Wyoming Afterschool Alliance.

Supporting the Workforce

Multisite

Akiva, T., Li, J., Martin, K. M., Horner, C., & McNamara, A. R. (2017). [Simple Interactions: Piloting a strengths-based and interaction-based professional development intervention for out-of-school time programs](#). *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 46(3), 285-305.

Huang, D., & Cho, J. (2010). [Using professional development to enhance staff retention](#). *Afterschool Matters*, 12, 9-16.

Huang, D., Cho, J., Nam, H. H., La Torre, D., Oh, C., Harven, A., Huber, L., & et al. (2010). [Examining practices of staff recruitment and retention in four high-functioning afterschool programs. \(CRESST Report 769\)](#). Los Angeles, CA: University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

New York, New York

Vile, J. D., Russell, C. A., Miller, T. D., & Reisner, E. R. (2008). [College opportunities for after-school workers: Report on the first-year implementation of the Center for After-School Excellence certificate programs](#). Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

Oregon and Washington State

Organizational Research Services. (2010). [Pathway to Excellence professional development model: Outcome evaluation report](#). Seattle, WA: School's Out Washington.

Palm Beach County, Florida

Akiva, T., & McGovern, G. (2010). [Knowledge gains from professional development training: Report on the Palm Beach County Afterschool Educator Certificate pilot](#). Ypsilanti, MI: David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.

Baker, S., Johnson, L., Turski, K., Lockaby, T., Daley, K., & Klumpner, S. (2012). [Moving from afterschool training to the workplace: The second year of the Palm Beach County Afterschool Educator Certificate Program](#). Chicago: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children.

Baker, S., Lockaby, T., Guterman, K., Daley, K., & Klumpner, S. (2011). [Professional development for afterschool practitioners: The first year of the Palm Beach County Afterschool Educator Certificate Program](#). Chicago: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children.

Sustaining Program Finances

Multisite

Grossman, J., Lind, C., Hayes, C. D., McMaken, J., & Gersick, A. (2009). [*The cost of quality out-of-school time programs*](#). Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Chicago, Illinois

Kotloff, L. (2012). [*Building stronger nonprofits through better financial management: Early efforts in 26 youth-serving organizations*](#). Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

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