

The Future of Youth Development

Building Systems and Strengthening Programs

NATIONAL
ACADEMIES *Sciences
Engineering
Medicine*



RELEASE WEBINAR

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Statement of Task

- Conduct a consensus study on learning and development of low-income youth in out-of-school time (OST) settings across the K-12 age span. Specifically:
 - **How can programs** specifically designed to serve K-12 youth from low-income households can **be characterized**; how and why do these characteristics vary among OST programs; are there patterns among the organizational dimensions related to community served, focus/purpose, geographic region, or other factors?
 - What is the **evidence on the effectiveness and outcomes of OST programs** for promoting learning, development, and wellbeing for children and youth from low-income households; how are these constructs defined and measured by programs and in research literature; do findings vary by subgroups of low-income youth experiencing additional forms of structural inequality?
 - What **approaches are linked to positive effects across a range of quantifiable outcomes**; How do results vary by demographic factors, program approach, and intersectionality with additional forms of structural inequality?
 - **How can existing policies and regulations for OST programs can be improved** to ensure high-quality opportunities for children and youth from low-income households, and how might these vary when low-income youth experience additional forms of structural inequality?
 - What are existing **gaps in the literature that can be addressed to produce more robust findings** about how OST can support learning and development for children and youth from low-income families, and how these may vary when youth experience additional forms of structural inequality?

Importance of Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs



Play a crucial role in positive child and youth development



Serve as a bridge between school, home, and the community



Offer safe, structured environments



Provide a chance to engage in meaningful activities, build relationships, and develop life skills



Support working parents and families

The Theory of OST

Positive youth development is the theory most associated with OST programs, offering approaches that recognize and emphasize the strengths of young people, their circumstances and relationships, and their individual agency



The OST Learning and Development Ecosystem



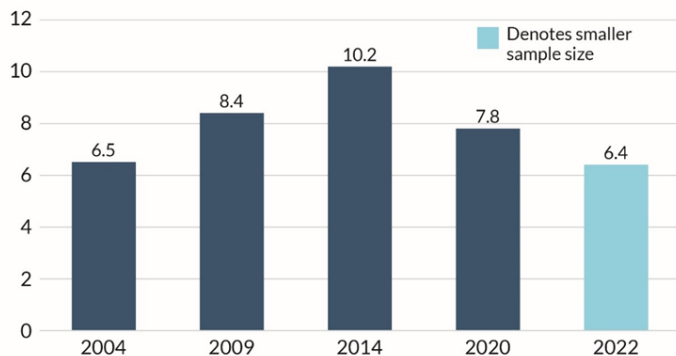
- *Intermediaries serve a critical function in coordinating, funding, and collecting data on OST systems and providing technical assistance to local programs*

The OST Workforce

Youth development practitioners: the adult leaders who guide children and youth through social, educational, and personal development within informal educational spaces

- 62% entered the field because they felt **called to make a difference**
 - 77% feel a strong **sense of commitment** to their work
 - Nearly 50% experience **stress or burnout**
 - **Low compensation** continues to be a challenge
- Challenges can lead to staff turnover, affecting program availability and quality

Programs and Participation Trends



Number of participants in out-of-school time programs by the millions

*Data from America After 3 PM survey

UNMET DEMAND:

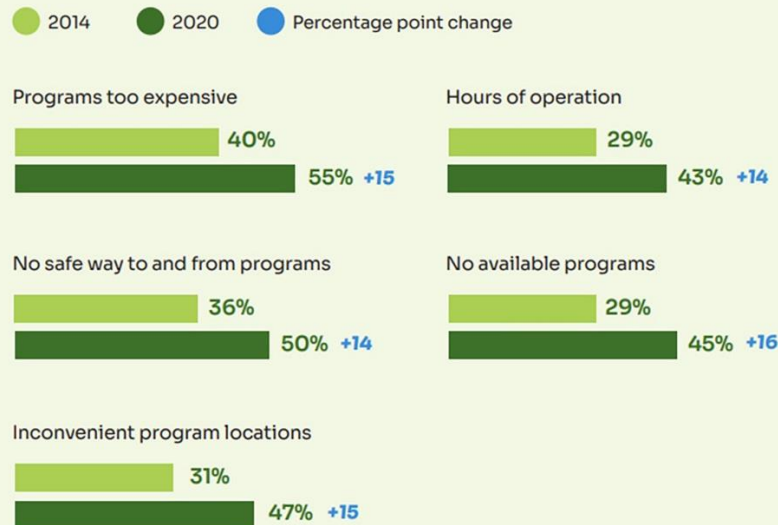
- Grew to 24.6 million young people in 2020, with about 11 million children from low-income families reporting that they would participate in an afterschool program if they had access to one
- Black and Hispanic families have high unmet demand (60% for Hispanic children and 54% for Black children).
- Rural areas unmet demand grew from 39% in 2009 to 47% in 2020.
- Unmet demand highest for grades K-5 (56%) with grades 6-8 at 47% and 9-12 at 36%

Factors Affecting Participation

- Program availability
- Program location
- Transportation
- Program costs and family resources
- Program awareness
- Family involvement
- Family perceptions and values
- Participant interests and motivations
- Program timing and competing activities

Example: Rural Families

Percentage of rural families reporting the following were an important factor in their decision not to enroll their child in an afterschool program



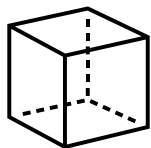
*Afterschool Alliance. (2021). *Spiking demand, growing barriers: The trends shaping afterschool and summer learning in rural communities.*

What Makes a Quality Out-of-School Time Program?

“Providing high-quality OST experiences for children and youth from low income and marginalized backgrounds requires strong OST systems and organizational capacity, a stable and well-trained workforce, and high-quality programming that is responsive to the needs of the populations being served.”

Program Quality

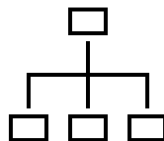
Program quality has been defined in many ways, but generally includes aspects of:



Physical Space



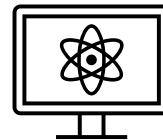
Psychological
Safety



Structure



Adult-Youth
Interactions

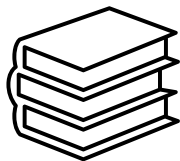


Learning
Opportunities

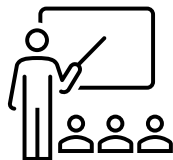
Studies that connect OST outcomes and quality exist but are limited. Additional research is needed to explore associations between specific indicators of quality and outcomes, and to provide additional guidance for focusing on or prioritizing elements of quality to improve outcomes for all children and youth.

Features of Positive Developmental Settings

The following have been found to be key features of positive developmental settings and contribute to program quality:



Adopting culturally sustaining practices and critical pedagogies



Building supportive relationships with program peers and staff



Honoring youth-adult partnership



Intentionally cultivating a positive program climate

Features of Positive Developmental Settings - Updated

Table 6-2: Features of Positive Developmental Settings—Annotated

- 1) Physical and psychological safety
- 2) Appropriate structure
- 3) Supportive relationships
- 4) Opportunities to belong and intentional cultivation of a responsive and inclusive program climate
- 5) Social contribution
- 6) Support for efficacy and mattering
- 7) Opportunities for skill-building
- 8) Integration of family, school, and community efforts
- 9) Adoption of culturally sustaining practices and critical pedagogies
- 10) Programs and structures that honor youth voice and choice

Current OST Funding and Policies

Federal: siloed and targeted

State and Local: tremendous variability

- OST programs face **increased burden** researching, competing for, and complying with onerous accountability measures across their funding portfolio.
- Complex grant applications make it **challenging for OST programs to develop a sustained funding portfolio**
- **Intermediaries provide timely supports**, but public and private funding streams can restrict funds for intermediaries, leaving them **underfunded and overstretched**

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Effectiveness and Outcomes of OST Programs



Effectiveness and Outcomes

Reviewed available literature on:

- Social and Emotional Learning
- Youth Identity and Culture
- Civic Engagement
- Academic Success
- Violence, Substance Use, and Risk Behaviors
- Physical and Mental Health
- Family and Peer Relationships
- Long-term Outcomes

Conclusions: Effectiveness and Outcomes

- OST settings **provide a responsive place for the social and emotional development** of children and youth, **provided they are well designed and offer high-quality experiences** that intentionally support these areas. Children and youth report that these programs and activities not only make them feel a sense of belonging and affirm their sense of self but also help them across a range of domains including responsibility, positive work ethic, social skills, and interest in civic activities. (Conclusion 7-1)

Conclusions: Effectiveness and Outcomes

- It is more **difficult for OST programs to impact outcomes** that require continuous, effective teaching, **like test scores and grades**. Though programs can sometimes exhibit effects on a few outcomes, they vary drastically in terms of access to resources, one of which is the ability to engage well-trained staff. However, **some OST programs have been shown to foster interest and engagement in specific academic domains and socioemotional skills that can help youth succeed in school**, which may lead to **better educational outcomes in the long term**. (Conclusion 7-2)

Conclusions: Effectiveness and Outcomes

- Not all OST programs are expected to demonstrate positive effects on all outcomes. OST programs are **most likely to affect outcomes that they intentionally support with specific program content** and opportunities that promote development.
- OST programs **vary in terms of quality** and the developmental experiences they provide. As a result, some studies show positive associations and others no effects. **Variation in program quality helps to account for differences in effectiveness.**

Conclusions: Effectiveness and Outcomes

- Future **research is needed to understand which quality features and experiences in which activities** are associated with positive developmental outcomes **for which groups** of youth.
- Future research can **capitalize on the strengths of multiple methods** to provide a deeper understanding of **what specific types of programs, experiences, approaches, and characteristics of program quality are linked to positive outcomes for which specific children and youth.**

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Recommendations



Ensuring High-quality OST Opportunities for All

1.

Support the funding stability of OST programs

2.

Increase investment in intermediary organizations to strengthen the organizational capacity of OST programs

3.

Advance program quality efforts to foster enriching, safe, and supportive OST settings

4.

Build stable, supportive environments and career pathways for youth development practitioners

5.

Improve understanding of the landscape of OST programs and participation, OST staff development, program quality efforts, and OST systems

6.

Improve understanding of OST program effectiveness and outcomes

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Goal 1: Support the Funding Stability of OST Programs



Supporting Funding Stability to Meet the Needs of All Children and Youth

Recommendations

1-1. Federal, state, local, and philanthropic funders should **support the funding stability** of OST programs by providing **long-term flexible funding** that allows for **general program support**, as well as funding for **staff compensation, indirect costs** (i.e., administrative or operating costs), **and robust evaluation**. Longer-term, more flexible funding allows programs to be responsive to and best elevate the assets and meet the needs of youth by reducing concerns around program sustainability and allowing the use of funds to build program capacity. Allowing use of funds for staff compensation and professional development supports the growth and retention of talent to design, run, and sustain high-quality programs.

1-2. Federal, state, and local funders should **increase coordination across funding streams** and **implement greater cross sector and interagency partnership to alleviate the administrative burden** on OST programs in researching and competing for grants and complying with grant requirements. Reducing administrative burden on program staff can enable them to focus efforts on growing programs and improving program impact.

Supporting Funding Stability to Meet the Needs of All Children and Youth

Recommendations

1-3. Federal, state, local, and philanthropic funders should **define funding priorities that align with priorities in the youth development field** and are **responsive to the needs and interests of participants, families, communities, and youth development practitioners**; funders should engage these groups in designing funding opportunities and application requirements.

1-4. Federal, state, local, and philanthropic funders should **reduce access and opportunity gaps for all children and youth by providing dedicated funding**, including funding for cross-sector partnerships, to help providers address common barriers to participation in out-of-school time programs. Funding can be used to provide transportation, offer financial incentives (e.g., through stipends, gift cards, transit cards), provide culturally relevant offerings, and conduct intense and focused outreach to support participation.

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**Goal 2: Increase Investment in
Intermediary Organizations to Strengthen
the Organizational Capacity of OST
Programs**



Increasing Investment in Intermediaries to Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Recommendations

2-1. The federal government and state agencies should **provide dedicated, sustained support and resources for entities that coordinate and support out-of-school time programs**, including city- and state- level intermediaries to improve infrastructure for program availability, accessibility, and quality. Philanthropic funders should coordinate and collaborate to direct funding to grow and sustain local and regional out-of-school time intermediaries to fill any gaps left by federal and state funding.

2-2. When allocating formula or grant dollars for OST programs to state or local education agencies, **public funders should prioritize or incentivize partnerships with local intermediaries** who can provide OST system level supports, such as grant allocation and monitoring, and the integration of quality improvement systems.

Increasing Investment in Intermediaries to Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Recommendations

2-3. In states or locales where no coordinating body currently exists, government offices or jurisdictions should **form or support coordinating bodies**, such as intermediaries or children's cabinets or their equivalent, which would work across youth-serving entities.

2-4. Local intermediaries should **continually identify gaps in access to out-of-school time (OST) programs and related barriers at the neighborhood level** (e.g., through needs-based assessments and mapping tools) to increase program participation.

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Goal 3: Advance Program Quality Efforts to Foster Enriching, Safe, and Supportive OST Settings



Advancing Program Quality Efforts to Foster Enriching OST Settings

Recommendations

3-1. Public and private funders should **support the development and implementation of quality improvement initiatives** that **provide ongoing technical assistance** to advance program quality efforts, including supporting efforts for intermediaries to build capacity for program providers to collect, analyze, and use data for continuous improvement.

3-2. Local intermediaries should **set a schedule and process for reviewing and updating program quality initiatives, associated assessment tool(s), and aligned supports** (e.g., data systems, professional development opportunities) for out-of-school time programs, reflective of evidence-based practices and research as well as evolving community strengths and needs.

Advancing Program Quality Efforts to Foster Enriching OST Settings

Recommendations

3-3. Intermediaries should **support cross-sector collaboration with school districts, local universities, and municipal agencies to share and analyze data** to support continuous improvement of program quality. This collaboration should include clearly articulate data-sharing agreements that allow for bidirectional data-sharing; public reporting of non-sensitive, de-identified data; and data systems that include information on youth development measures.

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Goal 4: Build Stable, Supportive Environments and Career Pathways for Youth Development Practitioners



Building Stable, Supportive Environments and Career Pathways for Youth Development Practitioners

Recommendations

4-1. State entities, agencies, and other regional funders, including philanthropic funders, should **strengthen investment in youth development practitioners** in out-of-school time (OST) settings so OST intermediaries and providers can **create opportunities to prepare and increase professional pathways** for the OST workforce.

4-2. Colleges and universities should **provide more opportunities for students** to pursue their interests in the youth development field, **including exposure to practical experiences and relevant coursework**.

4-3. The Office of Management and Budget should **establish and maintain a standard occupational classification for youth development practitioners** to build evidence on the workforce supporting out-of-school time programs.

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Goal 5: Improve Understanding of the Landscape of OST Programs and Participation, OST Staff Development, Program Quality Efforts, and OST Systems



Improving Understanding: The Landscape of OST

Recommendations

5-1. Federal agencies should utilize existing research or support new or existing research and/or survey efforts to **continually monitor supply and demand of OST programs, experiences of OST workforce, and identify which young people are and are not being served** in out-of-school time programs, in order to inform future federal policy and funding to meet the needs of children and youth from marginalized backgrounds.

5-2. Federal, state, and local government agencies that sponsor surveys and collect data on children and youth should intentionally and explicitly **collect data on participation in out-of-school time programs, including data that allow for examination of intersecting demographics**. Agencies should engage with youth development experts and youth-serving organizations to consider how best to collect data and shape survey questions. Data collected should be made publicly available.

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Goal 6: Improve Understanding of OST Program Effectiveness and Outcomes



Improving Understanding: OST Program Effectiveness and Outcomes

Recommendations

6-1. Federal, state, local, and philanthropic funders should **support research that examines a wide variety of outcomes** based on the goals of out-of-school-time programs. Funders should support large-scale, systematic experiments (i.e., randomized controlled trials) to **assess the efficacy of specific program designs and of specific program features**, examining a wide range of short- and long-term outcomes, and other rigorous quantitative (e.g., matched longitudinal quasi-experimental designs, natural experimental approaches, alternative designs) and rigorous qualitative research (e.g., case studies, ethnographies, mixed methods) that **include measures of participation, program duration, program quality, and implementation.**

In Their Own Words: Final Thoughts from Youth

“...program has been a ‘second home’ ...‘They always encourage me to go anywhere I want, do anything I want, and just be who I am.’”

“[The program] is a place where you can come and be safe...”

“[The program] ‘has changed my viewpoint on a lot of things [...] and it has changed the way I think before I react to certain situations [...] Your thoughts, words, and actions will determine your destiny.’”

The Future of Youth Development

Building Systems and Strengthening Programs



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www.nap.edu

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THE FUTURE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX

What's Changed Since the Blue Book?

- Systems-level focus
- Existence and expansion of intermediaries
- Focus on program quality elements, including youth agency and voice; inclusiveness and belonging; and cultural responsiveness
- Research specific to OST, spanning childhood and adolescence
- Broader range of outcomes examined
- Growing understanding of the OST workforce and its role in program quality, experiences, and outcomes

What Hasn't Changed?

- Importance of quality
- Barriers to participation
- Need for increased access and opportunities to participate in OST programs

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Social and Emotional Learning Outcomes

Persistence	Experimental	Activities aimed at improving skills and motivation have the potential to improve persistence
Sense of Responsibility	Qualitative	Adolescents and parents report stronger sense of responsibility; need to examine the generalizability
Work Habits	Correlational	OST associated with work habits that can help them excel academically; Associations may vary by activity type, quality, and developmental period
Self-Control and Emotion Regulation	Experimental	Mixed findings
Prosocial Behavior	Correlational	Associations mixed; Potential to promote prosocial behavior, depends on activity quality and content, and participants' experiences

Program Outcomes: Social and Emotional Learning

- **Persistence:** Experimental findings suggest that OST programs that choose activities aimed at improving skills and motivation have the potential to improve persistence. However, more research is needed to understand under what circumstances and for whom participation in these activities might help build persistence.
- **Sense of Responsibility:** Qualitative research suggests that adolescents and parents think that one of the benefits of participating in organized OST activities is developing a stronger sense of responsibility. More quantitative studies need to examine the generalizability of all these development processes, as the effects are larger for certain adolescents and some activities seem more effective.
- **Work Habits:** Correlational studies suggest that organized OST activities are associated with a young person's work habits and that these skills can help them excel academically. However, the results suggest that these associations may vary by activity type, quality, and developmental period. More research is needed to understand what developmental experiences within OST activities help strengthen young people's work habits.

Program Outcomes: Social and Emotional Learning

- **Self-control and Emotion Regulation Skills:** Research using experimental designs and programs that serve adolescents who are struggling present mixed findings. Qualitative studies in childhood and adolescence provide some guidance on staff practices that may be associated with adolescents' emotion regulation skills, including creating positive norms and having positive relationships with participants. These results might provide insight into why the findings on participation or time spent in activities are mixed.
- **Prosocial Behavior:** The pattern of associations between a young person's organized OST activities and their prosocial behavior is mixed when researchers measure activities simply in terms of whether youth participated in activities or how much time they spent in activities. The research suggests that OST activities have the potential to promote prosocial behavior among young people, but that potential depends on activity quality and content, and participants' experiences in the setting. It might be more useful to consider which experiences within activities and the extent to which activities highlight prosocial behavior might be associated with a young person's prosocial behavior.

Program Outcomes: Youth Identity and Culture

- Correlational work, quasi-experiments, rigorous randomized designs, and mixed quantitative and qualitative designs that describe *both* effects and processes of how programs might prove helpful.
- Research demonstrates that programs in which children and youth feel safe and supported and that intentionally include culturally informed programming attuned to the contexts of their lives can result in more positive perceptions of their social identities, values of respect, and cooperation.
- Results show:
 - Increased caring, connection, and competence;
 - Improved academic achievement
 - Reduced risk for violence and substance use

Program Outcomes: Civic Engagement

- **Volunteering and Community Service:** Several correlational studies suggest that participating in activities, particularly if those activities were focused on volunteering or community service, during adolescence is associated with volunteering later in adolescence and early adulthood.
- **Political Engagement:** Though adolescents' OST activity participation is not consistently associated with their voting behavior, more recent work suggests that OST activities can inspire participants to learn about political issues, and support confidence to influence these issues. Some studies suggest that the extent to which activities promote participants' sociopolitical development depends on the extent to which these issues are a core component of the OST program and mission of the activity. Understanding how the activity is structured may help illuminate why some activities may be better positioned to promote individuals' sociopolitical development.

Program Outcomes: Academic Success

- OST activities tend to have more positive effects on important academic outcomes:
 - Attendance
 - High school graduation
 - College attendance
- OST programs that showed positive effects in these studies were typically intensive, including many hours of participation and targeted programming
- With some exceptions, RCTs and quasi-experimental studies find that the OST activities they explored did not have positive effects on test scores or school grades

Program Outcomes: Violence Prevention, Substance Use Prevention, and Mitigation of Other Risk Behavior

- Experimental studies across multiple city programs found that these programs consistently reduced involvement in the criminal justice system and led to improvements in a range of positive youth development outcomes.
- Overall, the relationship between OST program participation and prevention of violence, substance abuse, and/or other risk behaviors is mixed, as varied as the programs themselves, the mitigating variables in the studies (e.g., depth and breadth of participation, skill development, peer influence).

Program Outcomes: Physical and Mental Health

- **Physical Health:** OST programs that include a physical health component have demonstrated somewhat mixed results, but some studies have demonstrated effectiveness in improving the physical outcomes of interest for children and youth. School-level randomization and multiple assessments are necessary to better understand the effectiveness of OST interventions. Future studies need to provide more comprehensive assessments of physical activity and the utility of a physical activity program to promote activity both within and outside of the program.
- **Mental Health:** There is relatively little concrete evidence about how OST programs relate to the mental health of children and youth, especially pertaining to internalizing behaviors such as depression and anxiety. Yet, there is some indirect indication that OST programs might impact outcomes that relate to mental health.

Program Outcomes: Family and Peer Relationships

- To date, no studies separate out the effects of differential selection into participation and the treatment effects of actually participating in OST activities on family and peer relationships.
- High-quality experimental or quasi-experimental evidence is greatly needed in this area.

Program Outcomes: Long-Term

- Several studies use nationally representative, longitudinal datasets to examine observable associations between program participation and longer-term outcomes.
- More randomized trials are needed, particularly for children and youth from marginalized backgrounds, to determine long-term outcomes for young people who participate in out-of-school-time programs.

Increasing Investment in Intermediaries to Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Conclusions

- Intermediaries, such as state afterschool networks, local OST intermediaries, and children's cabinets, serve a critical function in coordinating, funding, and collecting data on OST systems, and in providing technical assistance to local OST programs, activities, and related services. More research is needed on the tangible effects of intermediary supports on OST outcomes. (*Conclusion 3-1*)

Supporting Funding Stability to Meet the Needs of All Children and Youth

Conclusions

- While public investment in children and youth from low-income households has grown over the past 2 decades, these investments are often designed for a specific purpose (e.g., health, education, housing, food security, workforce development) and administered through a designated agency. This has created both a fragmented and incremental portfolio of funding for children, youth, and families. With federal dollars often distributed using a formula across all 50 states, territories, and tribal communities, the dollars rarely stretch to meet the needs of children and youth, and many eligible families remain unserved. (*Conclusion 8-1*)
- The siloed, short-term, and restrictive nature of funding leads to increased administrative burdens and concerns around sustainability for programs. Whereby OST providers must constantly research, compete for, and comply with onerous accountability measures across their funding portfolio, as well as respond to funding priorities over strategic implementation of the program's mission, instead of focusing on delivering high-quality programming that responds to the needs of children, youth, and families. (*Conclusion 8-2*)
- Greater access to consistent technical assistance and professional development resources can support programs in their capacity and skills to fundraise, implement, comply with, and sustain funding at the program level. When grants do permit access to technical assistance and professional development, OST programs benefit. (*Conclusion 8-3*)

Advancing Program Quality Efforts to Foster Enriching OST Settings

Conclusions

- Adopting culturally sustaining practices and critical pedagogies, building supportive relationships with program peers and staff, honoring youth-adult partnership, and intentionally cultivating a positive program climate are key features of positive developmental settings and contribute to program quality. (*Conclusion 6-1*)
- More research is needed to explore associations between specific indicators of quality and outcomes, and to provide additional guidance for focusing on or prioritizing elements of quality to improve outcomes for all children and youth. (*Conclusion 6-2*)

Building Stable, Supportive Environments and Career Pathways for Youth Development Practitioners

Conclusions

- Youth development practitioners face a number of challenges that can influence retention, such as lack of recognition and respect, low wages, job stress, and limited training and professional development. Addressing the challenges contributing to staff attrition in OST programs requires organizational commitment and capacity. Especially for programs serving primarily children and youth from low-income households that rely on public funding, commitment and capacity often depend on system-level support structures and funding. *(Conclusion 5-1)*
- The quality and competency of the workforce supporting OST programs are important elements of program quality, contributing to young people's level of engagement in programs and the impact of programs on their outcomes. More professional development opportunities through education and training (e.g., through postsecondary degrees, certificates, and organization-led trainings) for individuals interested in or currently serving in youth development can help build the OST workforce pipeline and strengthen career trajectories, which ultimately strengthens program quality. *(Conclusion 5-2)*
- Formalizing national population-level data collection of youth development practitioners can provide a more accurate number and understanding of these staff, which can support policy-level improvements for the OST workforce. *(Conclusion 5-3)*

Improving Understanding: The Landscape of OST

Conclusions

- Systematic information of OST programming at a national level, including the type of programming, location, and populations served, is needed to offer a clearer understanding of the availability and accessibility of programs for children and youth from low income and marginalized backgrounds. (*Conclusion 4-1*)
- Understanding OST program participation among children and youth in the United States necessitates examining participation at the intersections of multiple demographics. However, there are no population-level data on OST participation for some groups of children and youth, such as those with chronic health conditions, disabilities, and special needs, and those experiencing homelessness, involved with the juvenile justice system, or from immigrant families. Data on intersections of marginalization are also lacking. (*Conclusion 4-2*)
- The limited available data indicate that despite steady increases in participation among children and youth in the early 2000s, participation rates declined between 2014 and 2020, especially among Black, Hispanic, and Asian youth. While participation has declined, unmet demand has continued to rise. Population-level or nationally representative data that report on participation at intersecting demographics, although not currently available, are critical to document and explore reasons for these trends. (*Conclusion 4-3*)

Improving Understanding: OST Program Effectiveness and Outcomes

Conclusions

- OST programs support positive youth development, but the effects vary. Existing literature is unable to delineate whether certain activities are more effective, whether activities have larger effects on certain outcomes, or whether the activity effects depend, at least in part, on the alignment of the activity content and the area of development. More focused, systematic, longitudinal, rigorous quantitative and qualitative research is needed to understand what specific types of programs, experiences, approaches, and characteristics of OST programs are linked to positive outcomes across learning, development, and well-being for which specific children and youth, families, and communities. *(Conclusion 7-1)*
- OST settings provide a place for the social and emotional development of children and youth, provided they are well designed and offer high-quality experiences that intentionally support these areas of development. OST settings can provide a place that is responsive to youth where all participants feel a sense of belonging and affirms their sense of self. Children and youth report that these programs and activities help them develop responsibility, positive work ethics, social skills, and interest in civic activities. *(Conclusion 7-2)*

Improving Understanding: OST Program Effectiveness and Outcomes

Conclusions

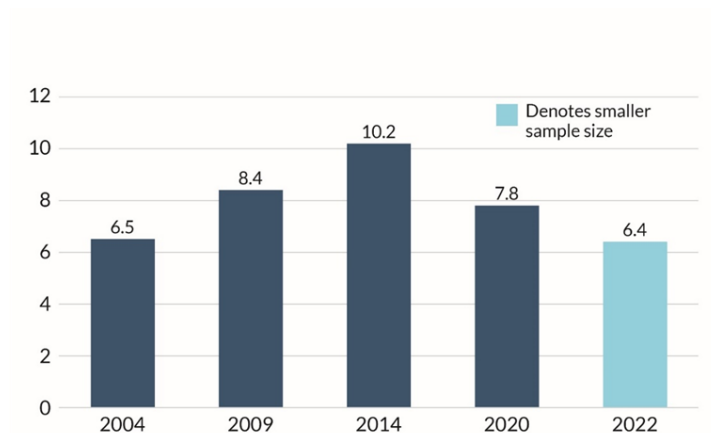
- OST programs are not easily poised to affect intransient, hard-to-change outcomes such as test scores and grades, which require continuous and effective teaching and are heavily influenced by schools. Though there are programs and experiences offered by dedicated and motivated staff that exhibit effects on some outcomes, these programs vary in access to social and economic resources, including the ability to engage well-trained staff, sensitive to the culture and backgrounds of the students they serve. OST staff are often paraprofessionals with varying degrees of educational and professional experience, that are expected to attain some of the outcomes that are difficult for the most expert of educators. Notwithstanding, some OST programs and experiences have been shown to foster interest and engagement in specific academic domains and socioemotional skills that help youth succeed at school, which over the long term may lead to better educational outcomes, such as attendance and graduation. (*Conclusion 7-3*)

Improving Understanding: OST Program Effectiveness and Outcomes

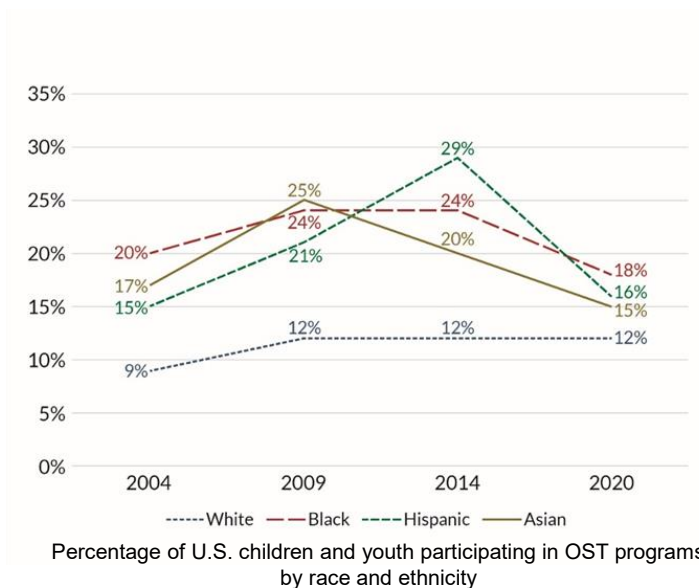
Conclusions

- Not all OST programs are expected to demonstrate positive effects on all outcomes. OST programs are most likely to affect outcomes that they intentionally support through the content and provision of developmental opportunities. *(Conclusion 7-4)*
- Research and evaluation of OST programs need to move beyond comparing those who do and do not attend to understanding which features and experiences in which activities are associated with youth development for whom, taking into account both activity-level factors (e.g., the content or quality of the activity) and youth-level factors (e.g., engagement in the activity and youth's current functioning and circumstances). *(Conclusion 7-5)*

Programs and Participation Trends

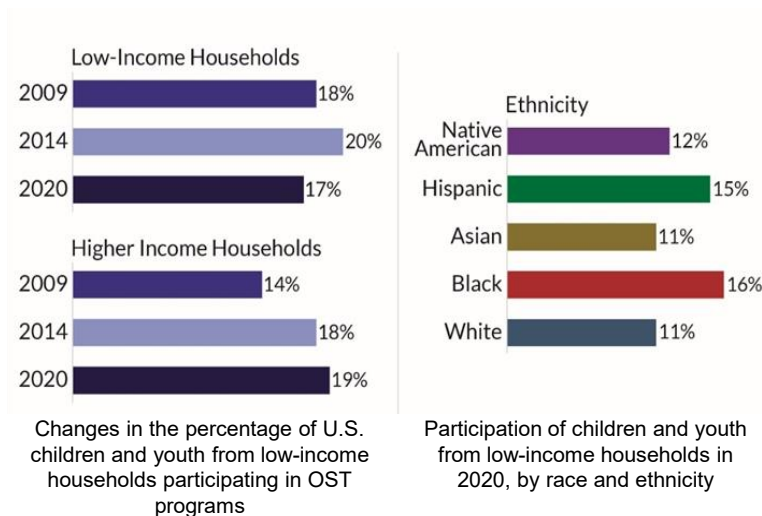


Number of participants in out-of-school time programs by the millions



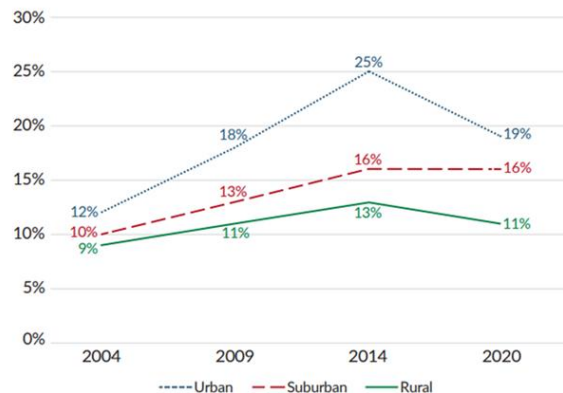
UNMET DEMAND: According to Afterschool Alliance, Black and Hispanic families have high unmet demand (60% for Hispanic children and 54% for Black children). Black and Hispanic parents disproportionately report experiencing barriers to entry such as programs being too expensive, unavailable in their communities, or lacking safe and reliable transportation options for their children.

Programs and Participation Trends

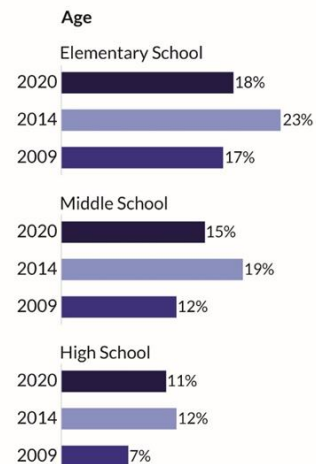


UNMET DEMAND: The America After 3 PM survey reports that unmet demand for afterschool programs has grown to roughly 24.6 million young people as of 2020, with about 11 million children from low-income families reporting that they would participate in an afterschool program if they had access to one.

Programs and Participation Trends



Percentage of U.S. children and youth participating in OST programs by community type



Changes in participation in OST activities by grade level

UNMET DEMAND: Afterschool Alliance reports that unmet demand in rural areas has been on the rise, jumping from 39% in 2009 to 47% in 2020. Unmet demand remains the highest among children between grades K-5 at 56%, with grades 6-8 at 47% and 9-12 at 36%; all three groups have experienced an increase in demand since 2009.