



Clarifying
Complex
Education
Issues

Resource Guide: Creating a Quality After-School Program

In a January 2002 report, the California Department of Education (CDE) links student participation in the state-funded Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program to improved academic achievement, particularly for the state's most at-risk students. This report adds to public sentiment and much expert opinion that after-school programs can provide important support for students to meet the high expectations set for them by the state's standards-based reforms.

Today in California, local educators and community-based organizations have an unprecedented opportunity to put such programs in place at the schools in their communities. Several events have come together to make this true, including:

- ✓ Governor Gray Davis' high-profile proposal to increase funding by \$75 million for the After School Partnerships program in 2002-03.
- ✓ A pending initiative that could go on the California ballot as soon as November 2002 that seeks to provide state funds for an after-school program at every elementary and middle school in the state.
- ✓ An increase in the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which is expected to provide \$45 million for new programs in California.

But how can Californians make sure that the time and resources they put into creating and developing after-school programs are a worthwhile investment? This brief guide will lead you to some recognized resources for evaluating, developing, and funding such programs. It will also help you become familiar with the many organizations working in the field and the resources they offer.



Two major government programs

Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program's website offers application information, eligibility requirements, a list of grantees, the downloadable 2001 evaluation report, and recent news regarding this state program. In addition, the site provides a list of links to national and state after-school efforts, as well as links to information on funding, technical assistance, and state and federal policy. Website: www.cde.ca.gov/afterschool/

21st Century Community Learning Centers' website offers information on recent changes to this federal program, current budget data, access to the national grantee database, and a list of frequently asked questions and their answers. Also, the site provides an extensive list of links to agencies and organizations committed to studying, supporting, and providing information on after-school programming around the country. Website: www.ed.gov/21stcccl

Some key organizations working on after-school issues

The Afterschool Alliance supports and coordinates activities and advocacy. It grew out of the partnership between the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education. 202/296-9378; website: www.afterschoolalliance.org

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) strives to ensure that all children, youth, and families have access to high-quality programs, activities, and opportunities during non-school hours. 781/283-2547; website: www.niost.org

Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) provides technical assistance and support to agencies that serve youth and works with funders and policymakers to help them better align their resources with these agencies' efforts. In 2001, CNYD published the *Youth Development Guide* to introduce key youth development principles and practices to the diverse group of people who are creating and implementing after-school programs. 415/495-0622; e-mail: info@cnyd.org

National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) is a national membership organization that promotes national standards and grants accreditation to quality school-age care programs meeting the standards. 617/298-5012; website: www.nsaca.org

Key studies and reports

Community Counts: How Youth Organizations Matter for Youth Development. A report on 10 years of research looking into how community-based organizations contribute to the success of youths growing up in challenging settings. Public Education Network. 2000. Ordering information at: www.PublicEducation.org

Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart After-School Programs. This report presents “positive research and examples illustrating the potential of quality after-school activities” and details some of the characteristics of successful programs. United States Departments of Education and Justice. April 2000. The full text is available at: www.ed.gov

The Future of Children: When School Is Out. A compendium of articles, written by national experts, on key issues related to after-school care, including the unmet need and challenges of program quality. The David and Lucille Packard Foundation. Fall 1999. For downloadable copies: www.futureofchildren.org

Review of Extended-day and After-school Programs and their Effectiveness. This report reviews the effectiveness of 34 after-school programs and lists components for effective programs. Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR). Report #24, October 1998. A downloadable copy of the report is available at: www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/crespar.html

Learning Together: The Developing Field of School-Community Initiatives. Reports on a project that maps 20 nationally recognized school-community initiatives. Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. September 1998. For an executive summary: www.mott.org

From EdSource

Expansion of Out-of-School Programs Aims at Improving Student Achievement examines the new focus on out-of-school programs, the research on creating quality programs, and the emerging policy questions around expanded government funding for them. This 24-page EdSource report also includes brief profiles of programs operating throughout California. To order, go to: www.edsource.org

National Community Building Network (NCBN) is a national organization that brokers information and connections among community builders. Among its aims, the network strives to help communities integrate services, build on their existing strengths, support families, encourage broad-based participation, and forge collaborative partnerships. 510/663-6226; website: www.ncbn.org

California Department of Education/Foundation Consortium Partnership is a public/private partnership committed to building regional and local capacity to make after-school programs more effective in meeting the needs and interests of children, families, and their communities. The Center for Collaborative Services is the partnership’s “Afterschool Intermediary.” The role of the intermediary is to help strengthen local and regional capacity, develop programs, and leverage resources so after-school programs can meet their goals. 916/567-9911; website: www.ccscenter.org/main/AfterSchoolIntermediary.htm

National Center for Community Education focuses on helping schools become more community-oriented by delivering needed neighborhood services—such as health care, adult education, and recreational opportunities—at the school site. The organization provides leadership training and technical assistance. 810/238-0463; website: www.nccenet.org

Additional online resources

Beyond the Bell: A Toolkit for Creating Effective After-School Programs assists after-school staff in making program decisions in six key areas: management, collaboration, programming, integration with the traditional school day, evaluation, and communication. www.ncrel.org/after

Children Now is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that provides annual statistical reviews on the status of California’s children and makes recommendations for change. In May 2001, the organization published *After School Care for Children: Challenges for California*, which can be downloaded for free from its website. The site also contains links to online child welfare and education sources. www.childrennow.org

What Kids Can Do is a national nonprofit organization that works to connect the previously separate fields of school reform, youth development, community development, service learning, and school-to-work. The resources web page offers a wealth of links from many disciplines. www.whatkidscando.org



EdSource is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization established in California in 1977.

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For data about every school and district in California, visit the Education Data Partnership at: www.ed-data.k12.ca.us