Out-Of-School Time Programs In Rural Areas

The publications in this series each focus on a particular theme of interest to the out-of-school time field, related to the evaluations and research studies that are available in our Out-of-School Time Program Research and Evaluation Database and Bibliography.

Out-of-school time (OST) programming can be a crucial asset to families in rural areas where resources to support children's learning and development are often insufficient to meet the community's needs. OST programs that offer youth in rural communities a safe and supportive adult-supervised environment—along with various growth-enhancing opportunities—can promote academic, personal, social, and recreational development. However, programs located in rural areas face a number of challenges in implementation and sustainability. This *Research Update* highlights findings from evaluations and research studies of nine programs located in rural areas, all of which have been profiled in Harvard Family Research Project's OST Research and Evaluation Database.

Overview of the Programs and Studies Featured

Although all located in rural areas, the rural out-of-school time programs profiled in the OST database represent a diverse range of geographic locations across the U.S. These programs mainly serve elementary-age children, but some also serve middle school grades. Some of the programs focus on serving a specific demographic, such as Spanish-speaking children or struggling students, while other programs provide services to any interested child within the local community. They also provide a variety of program offerings, from academic supports to recreational activities. All of the OST programs discussed in this *Research Update* have evaluations and/or research studies that include a quasi-experimental or experimental design component and that examine participant outcomes. Some of these studies also include a non-experimental descriptive component examining program implementation.

Table 1 (see next page) provides a quick overview of the nine rural OST programs discussed, including the activities they offer and the populations they serve. The remainder of this *Research Update* addresses the benefits, challenges, and successful strategies of OST programs in rural areas, based on data from these programs, and supplemented by other OST research examining programs in rural areas.

TABLE 1. Rural Programs Profiled in the OST Research and Evaluation Database

Program	Youth Activities Offered	Population Served	Evaluation/Study Purpose
4-H Youth Development Program—Montana Extension Service	In-school and out-of-school youth development activities including community and project clubs	Adults in rural Montana who participated in 4-H as youth	To examine the relationship between the leadership skills of adult community leaders in rural Montana and their participation in 4-H as youth
21st Century Community Learning Centers—Four Counties for Kids	Afterschool academic tutoring, recreation, life-skills training, family and adult programming, and a computer lab	Children in elementary and middle school in four rural counties in western Illinois	To examine program implementation, youth and family outcomes, and the relationship between program participation rates and youth outcomes
Battle Mountain After-School Program	Afterschool supervision, homework completion, and life-skills (e.g., community service and career) education	Children in Grades K–5 in Battle Mountain, Nevada	To assess the program's impact on youth participants' locus of control, attitudes toward school, and academic achievement
Generacion Diez	Afterschool snacks, homework help, and group activities ranging from indoor games and outdoor play to field trips and specialized curricula promoting academic achievement and social/emotional competence	Migrant Latino children in Grades 1–6 in rural Pennsylvania	To explore factors associated with the program's academic impact, the influence of program attendance on the children's social development, and associations between program participation and parent involvement with schools
Hispanic After School Program	Afterschool arts & crafts and music activities, discussions related to ethnicity, and role modeling by Latino professionals	Spanish-speaking children in elementary school in a semi-rural town in Massachusetts	To determine the impact of the program on participants' self-concept, cultural identity, and school adjustment
Project EMERGE	Afterschool tutoring and enrichment activities, development of critical thinking skills, conflict resolution and violence prevention techniques, and counseling support	Children in Grades 4–6 in Crisp County, Georgia	To assess whether the program improved youth participants' reading and math learning and their behavior, and youth participants' perceptions of and satisfaction with the program
Save the Children Model Literacy Initiative	Afterschool and in-school programming designed to improve reading skills	Struggling students in grades K–6 in rural areas in 12 states	To examine program participants' reading proficiency
Rural After-School Programs for At-Risk Youth and Their Families	Afterschool recreational opportunities, homework assistance, creative arts, and computer literacy activities	Children and youth in two rural counties in a Western state	To explore participants' life skills, school connectedness, behaviors, and competencies, and to examine parent/caregiver practices, perceptions of the program and its influence on their child's behavior, peer relationships, and parent–child relations
Say Yes First	School team training, afterschool substance abuse prevention programs, and case management	High-risk children in Grades 4–8 and their families in rural Colorado	To examine whether program involvement was associated with reductions in students' drug-use prevalence over time and improvements in academic performance

Benefits of OST Programs in Rural Areas

OST programs in rural areas demonstrate a number of positive outcomes related to academic achievement and school functioning, youth development, family involvement and functioning, and prevention. Table 2 summarizes some of the major outcomes reported in studies of rural programs. In most cases, these quasi-experimental and experimental studies indicated statistically significant positive outcomes. In some cases, the data suggest neutral outcomes—that is, non-statistically significant outcomes that suggest no program impact. Negative outcomes were rare and were relatively minor, usually tempered by more positive findings. For example, while the Say Yes First evaluation found

that increased participation was associated with increased drug use for moderate-risk youth, increased participation was associated with *decreased* drug use for high-risk youth.[1]

The vast majority of rural programs in the OST database had study findings related to positive academic and school outcomes. These findings most often involved improvements in school grades, attitudes toward and engagement in school, academic test scores, school attendance, and behavior in the classroom. Most also included findings related to youth development. The most common findings in this area involved improvements in relationships and communication, behavior, self-esteem and self-concept, and physical health and activity. In addition, several programs had positive outcomes related to family or prevention outcomes. Findings about families included increased parental involvement in their child's education and development. Prevention findings included decreased school disciplinary referrals, drug use, and behavioral problems. One program had workforce development findings, which included the development of job and leadership skills. While these findings are not unique to rural programs, they suggest that OST programs can be effective in these settings.

TABLE 2. OST Program Benefits for Rural Youth

Type of Outcomes	*Youth Outcomes Reported*
Academic Achievement and School Functioning	*Increased or improved:* • School grades • Attitudes towards and engagement in school • Academic test scores • School attendance • Behavior in the classroom • School work, study skills, and/or homework completion
Youth Development	*Increased or improved:* • Relationships and communication • Behavior • Self-esteem and self-concept • Physical health and activity
Family	*Increased or improved:* • Parent involvement and engagement • Family functioning
Prevention	*Decreased:* • School discipline • Drug use • Behavior problems
Workforce Development	*Increased or improved:* • Job skills • Leadership skills

Challenges Faced by OST Programs in Rural Areas

OST programs in rural areas face challenges that differ from those encountered in urban and suburban settings. The major challenges faced by rural OST programs are addressed below.[2]

High poverty levels in rural areas create additional challenges to promoting positive outcomes for youth. Rural areas tend to have higher rates of poverty than urban or suburban areas. These high poverty levels create additional problems for children that rural communities need to address. According to Child Trends, "when compared with children from more affluent families, poor children are more likely to have low academic achievement, to drop out of school, and to have health, behavioral, and emotional problems."[3] In addition, a recent national study found that only 12% of low-income youth in rural areas participate in afterschool programs compared to 21% of low-income youth in suburban areas and 30% of low-income youth in urban locations.[4] Thus, the rural setting seems to add to the challenges for low-income families in accessing afterschool programs.

Low funding levels mean that there are fewer resources available to support children's learning and development during non-school hours. In general, rural areas' smaller populations tend to result in limited financial resources for families. As a result, federal, state, and local funding levels for afterschool services are lower for rural areas than for urban and suburban areas. For example, as a whole, rural schools have lower per-student afterschool program funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers than non-rural schools. These lower funding levels are particularly troubling given the high poverty rates in rural areas that leave children at risk and families with few resources to address their children's needs. In a recent national study, 57% of rural parents of children who do not participate in afterschool programs reported that afterschool programs were not available in their communities, compared to only 37% of suburban parents and 36% of urban parents.[5]

Lack of transportation and geographic isolation in rural areas can make afterschool programs less accessible to families. Rural areas are more spread out than urban or suburban areas and thus require longer travel distances and time to get around than more densely populated areas. At the same time, rural areas are frequently plagued with inadequate or non-existent public transportation. In addition, high poverty rates mean that many families do not have vehicles of their own, and when they do, parents often work long hours that may make them unavailable to transport their children at the beginning and end of the program day. These factors result in families facing major barriers in arranging to get their children to and from afterschool program sites.

Recruiting and retaining quality staff is a particular challenge. The lack of financial resources, combined with a small workforce pool due to the relatively small population and low education levels due to high poverty rates, make it difficult for programs to recruit and retain qualified staff. In addition, rural locations often lack resources to provide professional development opportunities to program staff to increase their skill set. Even when staff do receive such training, they are likely to move on to jobs in urban or suburban areas, where the pay for the same work tends to be higher.

Successful Strategies for Rural Programs

Given the scarce resources in rural communities, OST programs in these areas need to be strategic and creative in their approaches to ensure that they are able to successfully serve the youth in their communities. The following strategies contribute to sustained youth program participation in quality OST programs. While not necessarily unique to rural programming, per se, the strategies listed below, culled from the studies profiled, are particularly helpful in addressing the specific challenges faced by programs in rural areas.

Ensure that programs are affordable. OST program affordability can be a determining factor in whether youth join and stay in a given program, especially in rural areas where poverty rates tend to be higher. For example, the Four Counties for Kids (4C4K) program evaluation revealed that program affordability was an important consideration in parents' decisions to send their children to the program.[6]

Provide a safe and welcoming environment for participants after school. Rural areas tend to have fewer options than urban or suburban areas for organized and constructive afterschool settings with adult supervision to keep children safe. Thus, OST programs can help to fill a crucial gap in offering a safe place to go after school. In addition to safety, programs also need to be seen as welcoming. The Project EMERGE evaluation reported that one of the program teachers cited the "family feeling" that the program developed with youth as a program strength.[7]

Make programs accessible. Since transportation can be a particular challenge for OST programs in rural areas, programs need to ensure that program offerings are convenient for parents. Transportation concerns can be alleviated when program hours are coordinated with parents' schedules and when program locations are convenient to parents' places of work or homes. In the interviews conducted for the Rural After-School Programs for At-Risk Youth and their Families study, parents and caregivers cited the program's hours of operation as problematic, and they requested more flexibility in time offerings.[8]

Invest in staff. As noted above, recruiting and retaining staff can be particularly difficult in rural settings. As such, rural programs need to devote substantial resources to hiring and training staff. One successful strategy is to hire school-day teachers to teach in the programs, since, in many cases, they have already built strong bonds with the children served. Hiring teachers can be especially successful when programs take place on school sites. A survey of 4C4K program participants found that youth participants viewed their program teachers as caring, enjoyed working with them, and viewed them as being open to new program ideas. In addition, the majority of parents reported that program teachers knew their children well and were warm and caring toward the participants.[9]

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Acknowledgments

Notes

1 Zavela, K. J., Battistich, V., Dean, B. J., Flores, R., Barton, R., & Delaney, R. J. (1997). Say Yes First: A longitudinal, school-based alcohol and drug prevention project for rural youth and families. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 17*(1), 67–96.

2 The challenges outlined are adapted from: Collins, A., Bronte-Tinkew, J., & Logan, C. (2008). *Strategies for improving afterschool programs in rural communities* (Research-to-Results Brief No. 2008-18). Washington, DC: Child Trends. Online at: www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2008_05_05_RB_RuralOST.pdf; and Afterschool Alliance. (2007). *Afterschool programs: Helping kids succeed in rural America* (Issue Brief No. 4). Washington, DC: Author. Online at: www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_rural_4.pdf

3 Moore, K. A., Redd, R., Burkhauser, M., Mbwana, K., & Collins, A. (2009). *Children in poverty: trends, consequences, and policy options* (Child Trends Issue Brief No. 2009-11). Washington, DC: Child Trends. Online at: www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_04_07_RB_ChildreninPoverty.pdf

4 Afterschool Alliance. (2010). *America after 3pm: From big cities to small towns.* Washington, DC: Author. Online at: www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM_Cities_Towns_10122010.pdf

5 Ibid.

6 Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2004). *4 Counties for Kids—The implementation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program: Final evaluation report.* Champaign, IL: Author.

7 Monsaas, J. (1994). *Evaluation report—final validation: Project EMERGE, Crisp County.* Atlanta, GA: Emory University.

8 Letiecq, B. L., Bailey, S. J., & Keller, J. A. (2007). Rural after-school programs: Meeting the needs of at-risk youth and their families. *Journal of Youth Development 2*(2).

9 Center for Prevention Research and Development, 2004.

APPENDIX: RESEARCH ON OST PROGRAMS IN RURAL AREAS

The Harvard Family Research Project's Out-of-School Time (OST) Program Research and Evaluation Bibliography is an online resource that contains citations for all of the OST program evaluations and research that HFRP is tracking. The goal of this appendix is to list all of the rural OST programs from the OST Bibliography in one place, providing a cross-section of the wide variety of programs represented. Evaluations and studies that have been profiled in depth in the OST Program Research and Evaluation Database are noted as such and include a link to the corresponding profile in the OST Database.

A note about how we are defining "rural": According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Many people have definitions for the term rural, but seldom are these rural definitions in agreement. For some, rural is a subjective state of mind. For others, rural is an objective quantitative measure." The program/studies listed below all have a self-identified focus on rural areas— we did not apply specific criteria to select which programs qualified as rural and which did not. There may be additional programs in the bibliography that could be considered rural, but did not self-identify as such.

Evaluations/Studies in the OST Database and Bibliography that Focus on Rural Programs

4-H Youth Development Program—Montana Extension Service   VIEW PROFILE

These 4-H Clubs are designed to be places where Montana children can make contributions to improve the quality of life in their families, neighborhoods, and communities. By providing structured out-of-school activities, these Clubs provide youth with benefits that include leadership, social competency, positive self-identity, self-confidence, empowerment, compassion, and a variety of skills.

Astroth, K. A., & Haynes, G. W. (2002). More than cows and cooking: Newest research shows the impact of 4-H. *Journal of Extension, 40*, 1–12.

Flynn, A., Frick, M., & Steele, D. (2010). Relationship between participation in 4-H and community leadership in rural Montana. *Journal of Extension, 48*(2). www.joe.org/joe/2010april/rb1.php

4-H Summer Opportunities for Advancement, Remediation, and Socialization (SOARS)

This 4-H summer day camp program for K–5 students in an economically deprived rural mountain county in North Carolina includes enrichment activities, limited academic activities, supervised play, swimming, and life skills activities.

Garland, T. (1999). *Lifeskills education: Perceived effectiveness of a 4-H out-of-school program.* Robbinsville, NC: North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

21st Century Community Learning Centers—Four Counties for Kids   VIEW PROFILE

Funded in 2001, this comprehensive community learning center project provides afterschool programming including academic tutoring, recreation and life-skills training, family and adult programming, and a computer lab in four rural counties in western Illinois. It is designed to extend learning beyond the school day, offer alternatives to drug use and violence, coordinate services among local agencies, coordinate programs among school districts, and improve families' access to services and technology.

Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2003). *4C4K 21st Century Community Learning Center: The second year evaluation report.* Champaign, IL: Author.

Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2004). *4 Counties for Kids—The implementation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program: Final evaluation report.* Champaign, IL: Author.

21st Century Community Learning Centers—Northeast Kansas Education Service Center

Begun in 1999, these afterschool programs operate in elementary schools in five rural Kansas school districts. Based on resiliency research and social development theory, the project's mission is to improve academic skills, build healthy human relationships, and widen student horizons.

Kraft, N. (2001). *Critical characteristics of successful after-school programs: An evaluation of the 21st Century initiative.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA. www.kcresearch.org/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/coll&CISOPTR=2326&filename=2327.pdf

Active Winners

This afterschool and summer program was delivered in rural South Carolina to rising sixth graders through seventh graders, beginning in the summer of 1994 for a period of 19 months. The goal was to provide youth with regular exposure to enjoyable physical activities, improve self-efficacy during physical activities, and increase physical activity and fitness. The program was divided into four activity areas: fitness activities, sports skills, academic skills, and social skills.

Felton, G., Parson, M. A., Pate, R. R., Ward, D., Saunders, R. P., Valois, R. F., . . . Trost, S. (1996). Predictors of alcohol use among rural adolescents. *Journal of Rural Health, 12*, 378–385.

Trost, S., Pate, R. R., Dowda, M., Saunders, R., Ward, D., & Felton, G. (1996). Gender differences in physical activity and determinants of physical activity in rural fifth grade children. *Journal of School Health, 66*, 145–150.

Trost, S. G., Pate, R. R., Saunders, R., Ward, D. S., Dowda, M., & Felton, G. (1997). A prospective study of the determinants of physical activity in rural fifth-grade children. *Preventive Medicine, 26*, 257–263.

Pate, R. R., Trost, S. G., Felton, G. M., Ward, D. S., Dowda, M., & Saunders, R. (1997). Correlates of physical activity behavior in rural youth. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 68*, 241–248.

Ward, D. S., Trost, S. G., Felton, G., Saunders, R., Parsons, M. A., Dowda, M., & Pate, R. R. (1997). Physical activity and physical fitness in African-American girls with and without obesity. *Obesity Research, 5*, 572–577.

Valois, R. F., Dowda, M., Trost, S., Weinrich, M., Felton, G., & Pate, R. R. (1998). Cigarette smoking experimentation among rural fifth grade students. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 22*, 101–107.

Felton, G. M., Pate, R. R., Parsons, M. A., Ward, D. S., Saunders, R. P., Trost, S., & Dowda, M. (1998). Health risk behaviors of rural sixth graders. *Research in Nursing & Health, 21*, 475–485.

Felton, G., Parsons, M. A., Ward, D. S., Pate, R. R., Saunders, R. P., Dowda, M., & Trost, S. (1999). Tracking of avoidance of alcohol use and smoking behavior in a fifth grade cohort over three years. *Public Health Nursing, 16*, 32–40.

Pate, R. R., Trost, S. G., Dowda, M., Ott, A. E., Ward, D. S., Saunders, R., & Felton, G. (1999). Tracking of physical activity, physical inactivity, and health-related physical fitness in rural youth. *Pediatric Exercise Science, 11*(4), 364–376.

Pate, R. R., Saunders, R. P., Ward, D. S., Felton, G., Trost, S. G., & Dowda, M. (2003). Evaluation of a community-based intervention to promote physical activity in youth: Lessons from Active Winners. *American Journal of Health Promotion, 17*(3), 171–182.

After-School Peer Tutoring

This afterschool program for at-risk middle school students in a rural southeastern school district provides one-on-one tutorials in language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies from trained college-student volunteers.

Collins, K. M. T., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2001). *Effect of an after-school tutorial program on academic performance of middle school students at-risk*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Little Rock, AR.

Battle Mountain After-School Program

This afterschool program for K–5 students in rural Battle Mountain, Nevada, provides youth with nutritious snacks, homework and tutoring help, life-skills education, and recreational activities.

Neufeld, J., Smith, M. G., Estes, H., & Hill, G. C. (1995). Rural after-school child care: A demonstration project in a remote mining community. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 14*(3), 12–16.

Building Academic and Social Skills (B.A.S.S.) Project

Begun in 1997, this project in rural Georgia provides a physically and emotionally safe environment for elementary students while parents work. The program offers enriching, developmentally appropriate experiences aimed at improving children's academic success and social interaction skills.

Miller, D. T., & Bales, D. W. (2001). Using research literature to guide programming decisions: The case of the Eldora Building Academic and Social Skills Program. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, 93*(5), 50–53.

Miller, D. T. (2003). *Building Academic and Social Skills (B.A.S.S.): A positive youth development project for the Eldora area of Bulloch County Georgia—1997–2002*. Statesboro, GA: Bulloch County Extension Family & Consumer Sciences.

Delta Area Summer Science, Mathematics, and Technology Academy

This program, initiated in 2000, is a summer science enrichment program for rising eighth-grade students in the Mississippi Delta area. Activities include inquiry-guided activities and field trips to science-related locations.

Moore, J. M. (2001). *The effects of inquiry-based summer enrichment activities on rising eighth-graders' knowledge of science processes, attitude toward science, and perception of scientists* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Mississippi, Oxford.

Generacion Diez												VIEW PROFILE

Begun in 1998, this afterschool program provides first- to sixth-grade migrant Latino children in rural Pennsylvania with snacks, homework help, and group activities ranging from indoor games and outdoor play to field trips and specialized curricula promoting academic achievement and social/emotional competence.

Riggs, N. R., & Greenberg, M. T. (2004). Moderators in the academic development of migrant Latino children attending after-school programs. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 25*, 349–367.

Riggs, N. R., & Medina, C. (2005). The Generacion Diez after-school program and Latino parent involvement with schools. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 26*(6), 471–484.

Riggs, N. R. (2006). After-school program attendance and the social development of rural children of Latino immigrant families. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*(1), 75–87.

Girl Game Company

This afterschool and summer program serves middle school girls in a rural part of central California. The goals are to increase girls' information technology fluency through computer-based activities, and to build peer, family, and other adult support to enhance girls' interest in and capacity to pursue and persist in computer science education and careers.

Denner, J., Bean, S., & Martinez, J. (2008). The Girl Game Company: Engaging Latina girls in information technology. *Afterschool Matters, 8*, 26–35. www.robertbownefoundation.org/pdf_files/2009_asm_spring.pdf

Hispanic After School Program										VIEW PROFILE

This program serves Spanish-speaking elementary school students in a semi-rural northeastern town in Massachusetts. Children participate in Spanish Puerto Rican arts & crafts and singing; discussions of ethnicity and ethnicity-related problems, morals, values, sex roles, and skin color; and role modeling by male and female Latino professionals.

Garza Fuentes, E., & LeCapitaine, J. E. (1990). The effects of a primary prevention program on Hispanic children. *Education, 110*(3), 298–303.

Poetry Athletics

This afterschool program in two rural Virginia schools provides fifth- and sixth-grade youth with poetry exercises in a sports format. The program aims to increase fluency, the development of creative moves and expressions, and self-confidence.

Carter-Pounds, A. A. (1996). *Teaching reading through poetry using a sports format: An evaluation* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Promising Readers Program

This afterschool tutoring and reading assistance program for struggling K–3 students at a rural elementary school in Mississippi is a literature-based program that engages children in frequent reading and writing, small group instruction in skills and strategy, and one-on-one reading.

Brenner, D., Jayroe, T., & Boutwell, A. (2002). *Working with families in the rural south: Findings from the REA funded Promising Readers Program.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. www.hfrp.org/FI-ResearchDigest-FamiliesinRuralSouth

Project EMERGE

This early-morning program designed to increase the learning time of at-risk students was developed for fourth- through sixth-grade youth in Crisp County, Georgia. The program aims to improve basic skills and to positively impact students' self concept and attitude toward school.

Monsaas, J. (1994). *Evaluation report—final validation: Project EMERGE, Crisp County*. Atlanta, GA: Emory University.

Project Outreach

This community-based afterschool program for elementary school students in Berlin, Maryland, brings the school, community churches, and parents together as a support network for youth. Participating youth receive help with homework and lessons in reading, math, or language arts.

Kerbin, D. L. (2000). *The Project Outreach extended-day program: A formative evaluation of implementation* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Wilmington College, New Castle, DE.

Relevance of Community Based Programs for Rural Youth

This study examines how youth find community-based youth development settings relevant to their everyday lives in a predominantly Hispanic rural community.

Subramaniam, A. (2007). *The relevance of community based programs for rural youth* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of California, Davis.

Rural Massachusetts Residential Summer Weight Loss Camp

This program, for youth aged 10–15 in rural Massachusetts, uses structured fun-based skill learning physical activities, moderate dietary restriction, and behavior modification to reduce obesity in overweight youth.

Gately, P. J., Cooke, C. B., Butterly, R. J., Mackreth, P., & Carroll, S. (2000). The effects of a children's summer camp programme on weight loss, with a 10 month follow-up. *International Journal of Obesity, 24*(11), 1445–1453.
www.nature.com/ijo/journal/v24/n11/abs/0801405a.html

Rural After-School Programs for At-Risk Youth and Their Families

Conducted in 2003–2004, this study examines the salience of afterschool programs for youth in two rural communities in a western state. The goal of the afterschool programs in this study is to assist youth in gaining knowledge and skills that will lead to the attitudes and behaviors necessary to become contributing community members.

Letiecq, B. L., Bailey, S. J., & Keller, J. A. (2007). Rural after-school programs: Meeting the needs of at-risk youth and their families. *Journal of Youth Development, 2*(2). centralvalleyafterschool.org/pdf/RuralAfterSchool.pdf

Save the Children Model Literacy Initiative

Begun in 2003, this initiative supports programs across the U.S. that involve in-school, afterschool, and summer literacy activities.

White, R. N., & Reisner, E. R. (2007). *Model literacy programs: Save the Children. Evaluation findings from the 2005–06 school year*. Washington DC: Policy Studies Associates. http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED498796

Palmiter, A. S., Arcaira, E. R., White, R. N., & Reisner, E. R. (2009). *The literacy programs of Save the Children: Results from the 2008–09 school year*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED508135

Say Yes First

This multi-component, school-based drug-prevention project in rural Colorado provided primary and secondary prevention programs and services for students in fourth through eighth grade and their families from 1991 to 1996. The project focused on protective and resiliency factors such as academic success and personal involvement in positive, drug-free family, school, and community experiences.

Zavela, K. J., Battistich, V., Dean, B. J., Flores, R., Barton, R., & Delaney, R. J. (1997). Say Yes First: A longitudinal, school-based alcohol and drug prevention project for rural youth and families. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 17*(1), 67–96.

Zavela, K. J., Shaw, A. R., & Dean, B. J. (1998). *Cost-benefit analysis of the Say Yes First—To Rural Youth and Family Alcohol/Drug Prevention Program*. Paper presented at the XVI World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Zavela, K. J., & Battistich, V. (2001). *Say Yes First: Findings from the high school follow-up assessments*. Unpublished manuscript.

Zavela, K. J., Battistich, V., Gosselink, C. A., & Dean, B. J. (2004). Say Yes First: Follow up of a five-year rural drug prevention program. *Journal of Drug Education, 34*(1), 73–88. baywood.metapress.com/link.asp?id=tvu5fk00v5muk7tr

Structured Out-of-School Time Use Among Youth: The Effects of Self, Family and Friend Systems

This study examines various types of structured out-of-school time use and their correlates among youth in grades 9–12 in a rural southeastern state. The study explores four different uses of time with regard to self, family, and friend systems.

Huebner, A. J., & Mancini, J. A. (2003). Shaping structured out-of-school time use among youth: The effects of self, family, and friend systems. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32*(6), 453–463. www.springerlink.com/content/m2r5348143817833/

Verilette Parker Science Intervention Program

This summer program was developed in 1998 and provides science lessons for fifth- and sixth-grade African American students in rural Georgia.

Parker, V., & Gerber, B. (2000). Effects of a science intervention program on middle-grade student achievement and attitudes. *School Science and Mathematics, 100*(5), 236–242.

Evaluations/Studies in the Bibliography that Have a Rural Component

There are several studies in the OST bibliography that do not focus solely on rural sites, but that have a notable program or evaluation component focused on rural settings. For the bibliography entries listed below, a brief explanation of the rural component follows each entry in **bold type**.

Community Access to Technology Program

Since 1999, the Community Access to Technology (CAT) program has made grants to a wide variety of Washington State nonprofits that improve clients' lives by providing access to and hands-on training in technology. To evaluate the collective impact of programs sponsored by the CAT program, a multiyear study was conducted of out-of-school time programs that use technology as a learning tool for low-income youth in Washington state. **One of the funding priorities for this program is "rural communities."**

MGS Consulting. (2008). *Community Access to Technology Program: Evaluation report—Year 3.* Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. communitiesconnect.wikispaces.com/Outcomes+Measurement+and+Evaluation

Developing Social Capital Through Participation in Organized Youth Programs

This study explores how three youth programs serve as a means through which youth are connected to resource-bearing adults who promote social capital development in the community. Two of the programs—one focusing on arts education and the other focusing on youth activism—are located in a large Midwestern city. The third is an agriculture-focused afterschool program located in a small rural community. **One of the programs in this study is in a rural setting.**

Jarrett, R. L., Sullivan, P. J., & Watkins, N. D. (2005). Developing social capital through participation in organized youth programs: Qualitative insights from three programs. *Journal of Community Psychology, 33*(1), 41–55.
www.youthdev.uiuc.edu/Documents/JarrettSullivanWatkins2005.pdf

Kids Learning in Computer Klubhouses (KLICK)

Begun in 1999, this consortium of 10 middle school afterschool computer clubhouses across Michigan provides safe and engaging learning opportunities to students during the out-of-school hours. **This evaluation report focuses on the program's four rural sites.**

Garner, R., & Zhao, Y. (2000). Afterschool centers in four rural communities in Michigan. *Computers in Human Behavior, 16*(3), 301–311.

Kids on Campus

Begun in 1996, this 6-week summer program for kindergarten to sixth-grade students in Ohio provides nutritional meals and an educational enrichment program to serve as a bridge from spring to fall. **The evaluation was conducted by the Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development.**

> The Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development at Ohio University. (2000). *Kids on Campus: Ohio State University and Hocking College summer enrichment program evaluation*. Athens, OH: Author.

Save the Children—Web of Support Initiative

Begun in 1997, this national initiative enhances the quality of out-of-school time programs for children ages 5 to 18 by focusing on three desired outcomes: constructive activities, caring adults, and safe places. **The evaluation includes findings related specifically to rural sites.**

> Terao, K. L., Morell, L. C., Stevenson, C. L., & Sloane, K. J. (1999). *1997–98 Web of Support Initiative wide evaluation: Annual report.* San Mateo, CA: The Aguirre Group.
>
> Terao, K. L., Morell, L., & Stevenson, C. (2000). *1998–99 Web of Support Initiative wide evaluation: Annual report*. San Mateo, CA: The Aguirre Group.
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> Terao, K. L., Morell, L., & Stevenson, C. (2001). *1999–2000 Web of Support Initiative wide evaluation: Annual report*. San Mateo, CA: The Aguirre Group.
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> Terao, K. L., Morell, L., Stevenson, C., & Moulton, J. (2002). *2000–2001 Web of Support Initiative wide evaluation: Annual report*. San Mateo, CA: The Aguirre Group.

Seeds to Success

Begun in 2003, this program serves high school students in Gloucester County, New Jersey. The program is a hands-on business and life-skills training program which prepares youth for the workforce through classroom and on-the-job training through youth farmstands. Programming is delivered during both the school year and summer. **The program partners with local rural farms to supply produce for the farmstand program.**

> Hughes, L., & Strieter, L. (2007). *Seeds to Success final outcomes report* (Internal Report). Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey.

Youth-Led Strategies to Captivate Youth Engagement in Youth Programs and Opportunities

This study examines what can be learned from youth about designing captivating opportunities for positive youth development. The study includes focus groups conducted with middle and high school students in eight Minnesota towns and cities in 2004, and two parallel youth-mapping projects, one rural and one urban, that involve youth interviewing other youth in their community about the availability of youth-friendly programs, people, and places. **The study includes a rural area youth-mapping component.**

> Saito, R. N. (2006). Beyond access and supply: Youth-led strategies to captivate young people's interest in and demand for youth programs and opportunities. *New Directions for Youth Development, 112*, 57–74.
> www1.extension.umn.edu/youth/docs/beyond-access-and-supply.pdf

ABOUT HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

Since 1983, we have helped stakeholders develop and evaluate strategies to promote the well-being of children, youth, families, and communities. Our work focuses primarily on three areas that support children's learning and development—early childhood education, out-of-school time programming, and family and community support in education.

Building on our knowledge that schools alone cannot meet the learning needs of our children, we also focus national attention on complementary learning. Complementary learning is the idea that a systemic approach, which integrates school and nonschool supports, can better ensure that all children have the skills they need to succeed. Underpinning all our work is our commitment to evaluation for strategic decision making, learning, and accountability.

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