

Successful Children, Youth and Families: Advancing Community Impact

Identifying community change strategies that will bring about measurable change

Every community wants its children and youth to be ready for a productive, solid future. Too often youth today leave U.S. public schools lagging behind without the 21st century skills they need to succeed in the workplace. The consequences of not educating our children are significant; estimates have quantified the loss at almost \$200 billion a year. Business leaders assert a new urgency of youth prepared for work and life, as employers prepare to fill jobs left by retiring baby boomers.

United Way's Community Change Approach

Out-of-School Time Quality Matters, a change strategy launched to champion and advance quality out-of-school time opportunities.

Working parents have long depended upon out-of-school (OST) time opportunities to make sure their children are supervised and safe. But, quality out-of-school time can deliver so much more – afterschool programs using evidence-based approaches consistently produced multiple benefits, including improvements in children's social and academic skills, higher school attendance, a decrease in risky or self-destructive behaviors, and higher educational aspirations. Before this initiative, this region lacked a convener to promote systemic changes that result in greater out-of-school time quality.

Key Promising Approaches

United Way of Greater Kansas City is launching a multi-year effort to assist out-of-school time programs in strengthening quality that advances child and youth outcomes.

Ten agencies involving twenty five sites throughout the five-county region have agreed to participate in the pilot. Participating programs will be provided training, coaching and tools to assess their program and to develop a program improvement plan to strengthen program quality – with a focus on youth engagement and interactions as the most important indicators of quality. Organizations participating in the pilot are:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City
- Grace United Community Ministries
- Guadalupe Center
- Local Investment Commission
- Operation Breakthrough
- Park Hill School District - School Age Care Program
- Swope Corridor Renaissance
- W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center
- Whatsoever Community Center
- YMCA of Greater Kansas City

Essential Facts - The Need

- Teens who do not participate in out-of-school (OST) programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, to drink alcohol, to smoke cigarettes and to engage in sexual activity.
- Parents, on average, miss eight days of work per year due to a lack of OST care. Decreased worker productivity due to concerns about OST care costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year.

Essential Facts - The Benefits of Investing

- Participation in quality OST programs is linked to: better attitudes towards school, higher school attendance, less disciplinary action, higher educational aspirations, and better school performance.
- An analysis of 73 OST programs concluded that those using evidence-based approaches were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for children and youth, including improvements in children's personal, social and academic skills, as well as their self-esteem.

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