Expand Learning:

Building a Framework for Out-of-School Time

The Larry King Center
for Building Children's Futures

Council for Children's Rights

Charlotte-Mecklenburg

2013

As part of the Council for Children's Rights, the Larry King Center works on behalf of all children in Mecklenburg County. Utilizing local data and research on best practices, we drive broad systems change, improve policies that impact children and families and build community capacity to serve and support children.

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Introduction

Out-of-school time is a unique space for learning and development – distinct from home and school – where children can engage in enriching experiences that broaden their horizons and build critical skills supporting healthy development and lifelong success. Research demonstrates that high-quality OST programs can improve children's social skills and behavior management, improve academic skills and engagement in school, promote civic engagement, promote physical health and well-being, and reduce risky behaviors. In addition, OST programs are well-positioned to address some of our children's greatest developmental needs, including: supervision and safety during non-school hours, connection to caring adults, belief in themselves and their ability to reach goals, feeling like they matter in the community, and aspiration for the future.[1]

> Out-of-school time is a unique space for learning and development – distinct from home and school – where children can engage in enriching experiences that broaden their horizons and build critical skills that support healthy development and lifelong success.

Out-of-school time encompasses a wide range of structured program offerings for school-age children (K-12th grade) that expand learning outside the traditional school day. The diverse and varied programs include school-age child care, afterschool, summer camp, clubs, mentoring, extended learning, and youth development.

Stakeholders in Charlotte-Mecklenburg recognize the potential positive impact that OST programs can have for children. Over the past fifteen years, multiple efforts to prioritize and address the challenges facing children in our community have included out-of-school time strategies. These efforts include: Foundation for the Carolinas Out-of-School Time Report (1999), United Agenda for Children (2004), United Way Community Needs Assessment (2010), Good Will Preparing Our Youth (2010), Healthy Weight Healthy Child: The Blueprint for A Healthier Generation (2010), Urban League State of Ethnic Charlotte (2010), and The State of Out-of-School Time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg (2011). In addition, several organizations have played key leadership roles in supporting out-of-school time programs, including Child Care Resources, Inc.[2] and Partners in Out-of-School Time.[3]

Over the past decade, communities across the nation have fundamentally shifted their approach to out-of-school time, moving from focusing on individual programs to building comprehensive out-of-school time systems that engage providers, funders, children and families, schools, institutional partners, community leaders and other stakeholders.[4] Effective coordination of

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[1] See Larry King Center (2013). Out-of-School Time Programs: Research Summary.

[2] Over the last thirty years, Child Care Resources, Inc. (CCRI) has helped develop and implement a statewide system for supporting licensed school-age child care providers (serving children age 5 to 12) through training, technical assistance, professional development, consumer information and referral, and advocacy. Because school-age child care is a large component of out-of-school time, systems-building in OST must be compatible with this statewide system.

[3] From 2001 to 2012, Partners in Out-of-School Time (POST) supported the broad OST sector with a range of services including coordination, professional development resources, and advocacy. In 2012, POST's efforts supporting and advocating for out-of-school time in Mecklenburg County shifted to the Larry King Center of the Council for Children's Rights.

the broad stakeholders and diverse programs in the OST sector is a critical piece of system-wide efforts to serve children outside of school hours. Increased system-wide coordination can lead to improved quality of programs, greater access to programs for low- and moderate-income children and middle- and high-school students, and sustainable funding for OST programs. The ultimate goal of system-wide coordination is to improve social, emotional, cognitive and physical outcomes for children.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Out-of-School Time Framework

In December 2012, the Larry King Center (LKC) of the Council for Children's Rights commenced a community planning process for the out-of-school time sector to address system-wide coordination in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Out-of-School Time Planning Group consisted of over 50 members representing 45 providers, funders, institutional partners, and other stakeholders in the OST sector. See Appendix A for a full list of OST Planning Group participants.

The OST Planning Group addressed three critical supports needed to achieve maximum impact from the OST sector in our community: Program Quality, Professional Development, and Data & Information. Over a six-month period, these work groups convened to develop a framework of OST system supports in our community. LKC staff served as support to the work groups and worked between meetings to synthesize and coordinate information generated by the groups. In addition, LKC staff provided a comprehensive body of research on out-of-school time to inform work group recommendations, including: research on evidence-based programs and best practices, local data on school-age children and the OST sector in our community, and information about how OST systems operate in other communities.[5]

> The ultimate goal of system-wide coordination is to improve social, emotional, cognitive and physical outcomes for children.

The overarching goal of the OST system in Charlotte-Mecklenburg states:

> **All children (K-12th grade) have access to out-of-school time experiences that support learning, enrichment and healthy development.**

To achieve this goal, the OST Framework (page 3) outlines specific goals, objectives and strategies in the areas of Program Quality, Professional Development and Data & Information. Together, implementation of these strategies will build the infrastructure in Charlotte-Mecklenburg to sustain and expand access to quality OST programs, supporting improved child outcomes in our community. Over time, additional strategies will be needed to increase the number and type of programs available and the amount of financial support for free and subsidized programs.[6] However, the infrastructure needed to build a system of quality, sustainable programs is a critical first step, and must be in place before programs expand.

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[4] National League of Cities (2011). Municipal leadership for afterschool: Citywide approaches spreading across the country. Washington, D.C.: National League of Cities. Retrieved from: http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/institute-for-youth-education-and-families/afterschool/municipal-leadership-for-afterschool-citywide-approaches-spreading-across-the-country.

[5] See: LKC (2013). Out-of-School Time Programs: Research Summary; the "Community Context" section of this report; and Appendix B: Out-of-School Time Context and System Examples.

[6] For recommendations regarding system coverage and financial investments, see The Bridgespan Group(2011). The State of Out-of-School Time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME FRAMEWORK

	All children (K-12) have access to out-of-school time experiences that support learning, enrichment and healthy development		
Program Quality	Provide intentional programming in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment		
	Objectives	**Strategies**	**Next steps**
	Adopt shared definition of program quality	• Define quality standards • Communicate quality standards to providers, families and funders	• Create quality standards work group to review national examples and recommend local standards • Establish Learning Collaboratives for outcomes training and logic model review
	Promote practice of continuous quality improvement	• Identify a range of compatible tools to assess and improve program quality • Provide professional development, technical assistance and organizational capacity building to improve programs • Support implementation of evidence-based and best practices • Advocate for financial incentives for programs engaged in quality improvement	
	Align activities with individual program goals	• Support providers in setting achievable goals and outcome measures	
Professional Development	Equip all staff to provide effective programming and to create an environment that supports healthy development		
	Objectives	**Strategies**	**Next steps**
	Develop a system of coordinated professional development that is aligned with program and sector needs	• Adopt core competencies for youth workers • Conduct professional development needs assessment for providers and practitioners • Establish an Institute for professional development and quality improvement	• Create core competency work group to review national examples and recommend local competencies • Identify partners and host entity to plan for Institute for professional development • Celebrate successes of OST professionals
	Raise professional standing of OST workforce	• Identify and promote professional development pathways related to core competencies • Promote youth work as a profession	
Data & Information	Provide data and information to inform provider practice, guide family choices, and communicate the impact of out-of-school time to community stakeholders		
	Objectives	**Strategies**	**Next steps**
	Provide accurate and timely information about OST programs	• Conduct needs assessment among identified users • Identify a community tool to collect and disseminate program information	• Identify partners and host entity for program information tool • Create work group to conduct review of national models and recommend local data system • Promote use of existing community data resources
	Develop a system to track program participation and child outcomes	• Define sector outcomes and measurement tools • Define a process for collecting and tracking information	
	Increase provider access to research, best practice and community data	• Develop a clearinghouse of best practices and OST resources • Identify and track strengths-based indicators for OST sector	

Implementing the OST Framework

Full implementation of the OST Framework will require meaningful collaboration between providers, community leaders, children and families, and public and private funders. Stakeholders in the OST sector will be called upon to drive the work forward and generate increased public will to support system improvements benefiting children and youth.

The LKC will be responsible for guiding overall implementation of the OST Framework by identifying implementing partners, convening work groups to further develop and execute strategies, and brokering resources to support implementation of the strategies. In addition, as part of the LKC's broader role in the community, the LKC will specifically support two objectives in the OST Framework:

- **Program Quality: Align activities with individual program goals** by establishing a Learning Collaborative and providing training and technical assistance around program evaluation and outcome measurement; and
- **Data & Information: Increase provider access to research, best practice, and community data** by promoting use of existing community data resources, including the LKC Community Indicators project, and disseminating LKC research on best practices in OST programs and systems

Priorities and Next Steps. The OST Planning Group identified several priorities for implementation and initial efforts are underway. Priority objectives are:

- **Adopt** a shared definition of quality;
- **Develop** a system of coordinated professional development that is aligned with program and sector needs;
- **Align** activities with individual program goals; and
- **Provide** accurate and timely information about OST programs.

Quality Standards. Since the completion of the OST Framework, significant progress has been made on defining quality standards for OST programs. Out-of-School time quality standards are a set of research-informed best practices to promote positive outcomes in OST programs. The value in creating local quality standards is that all stakeholders - providers, children and families, policymakers, and funders – have a common framework to understand what quality means, how to achieve it, and how to support it.

Over several meetings, a subcommittee of the Program Quality Workgroup drafted a set of Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The workgroup reviewed research on "What Works?" to achieve positive outcomes in out-of-school time programs; examined local, state and national standards and quality frameworks; and considered research on what children and families want from out-of-school time experiences. The drafting process included input and feedback from the OST Planning Group and additional community stakeholders.

The quality standards are not intended to dictate program design or curriculum. Rather, they serve as a model of excellence that, with the right resources and support, providers can strive to achieve over time. The quality improvement process takes time, capacity, and resources; achieving high-quality programming in all areas is an on-going process that takes an intentional commitment by all stakeholders.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME FRAMEWORK

The result of this collaborative and research-informed work is a set of standards for out-of-school time that will drive program quality in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.
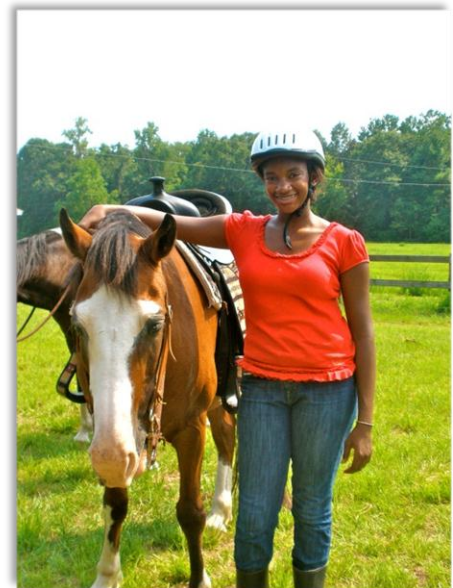
QUALITY STANDARD CATEGORIES

- Management & Administration
- Staffing, Volunteers & Professional Development
- Healthy & Safe Environment
- Supportive Relationships

- Learning Experiences
- Child and Youth Involvement
- Integrated Community Partnerships
- Continuous Quality Improvement

The next steps in adopting a shared definition of quality are to communicate the standards to providers, funders, and families, and to support providers in achieving the model of excellence defined by the standards. [7] See Appendix C for the full Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time report.

Challenges and Opportunities. Implementing the strategies in the OST Framework will take sustained effort and collaborative partnerships, and the community must address several key challenges:

1. **Reframe expectations for OST programs.** The trend over the past fifteen years in OST funding and public policy has been to align out-of-school time programs with a narrow set of academic outcomes (e.g. test scores and grades), though the range of potential impacts of OST programs is much larger, and program effects are potentially much greater in other developmental domains.[8] The OST sector must work to ensure that the expectations and outcomes for out-of-school time programs are appropriately focused on the developmental needs of children and youth, and aligned with the opportunities that OST programs are uniquely positioned to offer. See the next section of this report, Making the Case for Out-of-School Time, for more detail on out-of-school time research and appropriate expectations for OST program outcomes.

2. **Continue to cultivate municipal leadership.** A recent study of out-of-school time systems demonstrates the significance of mayoral and city manager commitment in successful out-of-school time efforts. Findings from the study suggest a positive correlation between mayoral commitment and sustained funding for out-of-school time programs.[9] In 2010, former Mayor Anthony Foxx expressed a commitment to youth development and out-of-school time programs as one of his core priorities.[10] The OST sector must continue to cultivate mayoral commitment. However, because of Charlotte's council-manager form of government and functional consolidation with Mecklenburg County, it is

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[7] See Drafting Quality Standards report for full description of the purpose of the standards, standards development process, and how to use the standards.

[8] See Out-of-School Time Programs: Research Summary and Halpern (2005).

[9] Simkin, L, Charner, I., Dailey, C., Watts, E., Taub, H. & Adelaja, A. (2013). Is citywide afterschool coordination going nationwide?: An exploratory study in large cities.

[10] See 2010 State of the City Address; National League of Cities (2011). Municipal leadership for afterschool: Citywide approaches spreading across the country, pp. 85-88.

critical that the OST sector also cultivate engagement and commitment from city management, City Council, county management, and the Board of County Commissioners.

3. **Funding constraints and competing priorities.** Like communities across the nation, Charlotte-Mecklenburg has faced challenging fiscal constraints over the past several years. A recent analysis of funding for out-of-school time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg found that an estimated $4.4 million was invested in OST programs from public sources at the federal, state and local level, another $3.7 million was invested by local philanthropic foundations, and approximately $30.6 million came directly from families in the form of fees ($18 million) and child care subsidies ($12.6 million).[11] In order to achieve the goals in the OST Framework and maximize positive outcomes for children, additional resources will be needed from both public and private sources. However, competing local priorities and drastically reduced state spending will make it difficult to expand resources for OST in the short-term.

Making the Case for Out-of-School Time

Why out-of-school time? A decade of national research and program evaluation demonstrates that

regular participation in high-quality out-of-school time programs has the potential to support and promote learning and healthy development.[12] When children have a safe, structured environment that engages them in meaningful activities during out-of-school hours, they can reap multiple benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas including academic, social, emotional, prevention, and health and wellness.[13]

Out-of-school time experiences are just one of many factors influencing child outcomes in middle childhood and adolescence. Others include individual (genetic), family, school, community, and environmental factors, as well as experiences in early childhood. Out-of-school time has often been proposed as a potential mitigating factor for at-risk children. While research on OST programs suggests that the likelihood for beneficial outcomes may be greatest for programs serving low-income students and low-achieving students at risk for developing social-academic problems, out-of-school time is only one part of a multi-faceted approach toward closing the achievement gap.[14]

Rather than thinking of out-of-school time as a mitigating factor, out-of-school time is best conceived as a unique space for learning and development – distinct from home and school – that offers opportunities for

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[11] The Bridgespan Group (2011). The State of Out-of-School Time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg: A report of the Out-of-School Time Task Force of the Community Catalyst Fund.

[12] Vandell, D., Reisner, E., & Pierce, K. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising practices.* Irvine, CA: University of California and Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. Retrieved from: http://www.gse.uci.edu/childcare/pdf/afterschool/PP%20Longitudinal%20Findings%20Final%20Report.pdf.

[13] Harvard Family Research Project. (2008). After school programs in the 21st century: Their potential and what it takes to achieve it. *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation, 10,* 1-12.
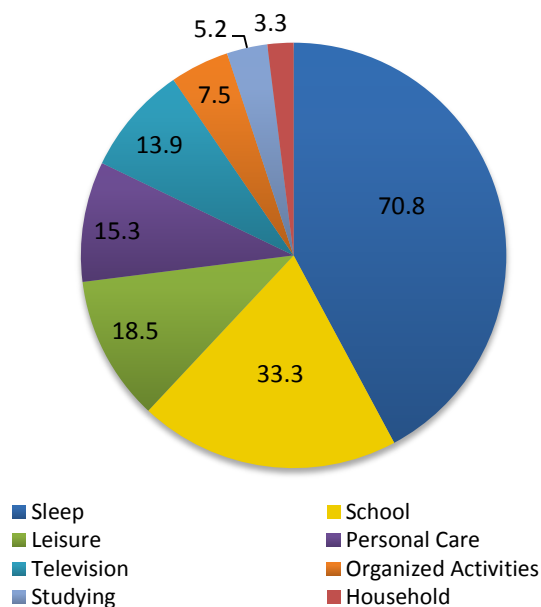
[14] For more on this debate, see for example: Gardner, M., Roth, J. L. & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2009). Can afterschool programs help level the playing field for disadvantaged youth? *Equity Matters: Research Review No. 4.* Retrieved from: http://www.equitycampaign.org/i/a/document/11242_After-school_report_10-7-09_web.pdf; and Mahoney, J. L., Larson, R. W., Eccles, J. S., & Lord, H. (2005). Organized activities as developmental contexts for children and adolescents. In J. Mahoney, J. Eccles, & R. Larson, (Eds.), *Organized activities as contexts for development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs* (pp. 3-22). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

building skills, especially noncognitive skills, which are critical for healthy development and life success.[15] Although early childhood is critical to brain development and the later development of cognitive skills, research has demonstrated that important noncognitive skills - including self-control/self-regulation, self-efficacy (belief in ability to reach goals), persistence, interpersonal skills, prosocial behavior, mastery orientation, and approaches to learning – are malleable and can be taught to children during middle childhood and adolescence.[16] In addition to skill-building, OST programs are uniquely positioned to offer enriching experiences to children, particularly low- and moderate-income children, that other institutions cannot or no longer provide, including experiences in the arts and humanities, science and technology, civic education, and physical activity.[17]

How Children (ages 6-12) spend their time outside of school

- Sleep
- School
- Leisure
- Personal Care
- Television
- Organized Activities
- Studying
- Household

Time matters. Even though children technically spend 75% of their time outside of school and only 25% of their time in school, the time available to impact children in structured OST programs is relatively small. The maximum amount of time available is approximately 15 hours per week for an afterschool program (3 hours per day, five days per week) and 35 hours per week for a summer program (7 hours per day, 5 days per week). However, only a small percentage of children participate in OST programs with this level of intensity. A 2009 study of children's time found that elementary school-age children in America only spend an average of 7.5 hours per week in organized activities, including OST programs, sports and recreation, and child care.[18] This time limitation must be recognized in order to maximize the potential for OST programs to impact child success.

The state of OST research. Research on the effectiveness of OST programs is promising but limited. Studies generally conclude that programs do have the potential to improve important child outcomes, but few programs achieve that potential. Research on out-of-school time is limited in a number of significant ways:

1) **Rigor**. There are very few randomized control trial (RCT) evaluations from which to draw causal conclusions, limiting the ability to state that any observed effects on children resulted from the OST program.[19]

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[15] This position stems from Robert Halpern's research on the afterschool field. Halpern describes afterschool programs as a "historically distinct child development institution" and a "normative developmental support." See Halpern, R. (2006). Critical issues in afterschool programming. Monographs of the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy.

[16] Chien, N., Harbin, V., Goldhagen, S., Lippman, L, Walker, K. (2012). Encouraging the development of key life skills in elementary school-age children: A literature review and recommendations to the Tauck Family Foundation. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from: http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/2012-28KeyLifeSkills.pdf. See also: Rosen, J., Glennie, E., Dalton, B., Lennon, J. & Bozick, R. (2010). Noncognitive skills in the classroom: New perspectives on educational research. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. Retrieved from: http://www.rti.org/pubs/bk-0004-1009-rosen.pdf; Cunha, F. & Heckman, J. (2007). The technology of skill formation. *American Economic Review 97*(2), 31-47; and Heckman, J., Stixrud, J. & Urzua, S. (2006). The effects of cognitive and noncognitive abilities on labor market outcomes and social behavior. *Journal of Labor Economics 24*(3), 411-482.

[17] Halpern, R. (2005). Confronting the big lie: The need to reframe expectations of afterschool programs. New York, NY: Partnership for Afterschool Education. Retrieved from: http://www.pasesetter.org/publicationResources/Publications/PDF/halpern.pdf.

[18] Hofferth, S. (2009). Changes in American children's time: 1997 to 2003. Retrieved from: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2939468/.

2) **Selection bias**. Many quasi-experimental design (QED) evaluations suggest that OST programs may be beneficial, but most studies fail to control for selection bias. That is, most children or their families self-select into OST programs, and may differ systematically from those who choose not to attend in terms of motivation, effort, aspiration, or other factors, potentially biasing results.

3) **Program variability**. Program design and delivery vary widely, and many programs are geographic- or population-specific, limiting the ability to draw conclusions across programs.

4) **Limited program effects**. The trend over the past fifteen years of aligning OST with a narrow set of academic outcomes (e.g. test scores and grades) informs what has been evaluated and limits what is known about other potential impacts of OST programs, especially in the area of noncognitive skill-building.

What's possible in OST programs? In a comprehensive review of OST research, LKC identified seven evidence-based OST interventions and curricula as well as another seventeen rigorous program evaluations.[20] This body of research demonstrates the potential for OST programs to moderately impact a range of child outcomes across developmental domains. Developmental domains are not independent of one another and the interaction of outcomes across domains is not well understood; it is likely that initial outcomes in one domain must be addressed before intermediate and long-term outcomes can occur.

Developmental Domain	Initial Skills, Knowledge, Attitude	Intermediate Behavior Change
Social/Emotional	• Child self-perceptions • Social skills • Civic engagement • Behavior management skills • Life skills	↑ Positive social behaviors ↓ Problem behaviors ↑ Scholastic behaviors ↑ Engagement in school and community ↓ Substance abuse ↓ Reproductive risk behavior ↑ Physical activity and food choices
Cognitive (Academic)	• Scholastic and academic skills • Achievement motivation	
Physical (Health)	• Substance use knowledge and refusal skills • Skills and knowledge that increase physical health • Skills and knowledge that reduce reproductive risk	

What works in OST programs? Since not all OST programs achieve their potential to impact child outcomes, a significant body of literature has developed to identify the components of OST programs that may contribute to positive outcomes. Review of the most rigorous evaluations suggests that a program must have three components: 1) **specific goals**, 2) **structured programming** based on sound educational techniques and aligned with goals, and 3) **frequent attendance**.[21]

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[19] The effect of impact of an OST program is defined as the change in the outcome measure of the program that was due to participation in the program as opposed to other factors affecting participants. RCT evaluations determine whether the program produces an effect over and above what would have occurred without the program – not whether the outcomes measure itself changed.

[20] See Out-of-School Time Programs: Research Summary for more information.

[21] Apsler, R.(2009). After-school programs for adolescents: A review of evaluation research. *Adolescences 44*(173), 1-19.
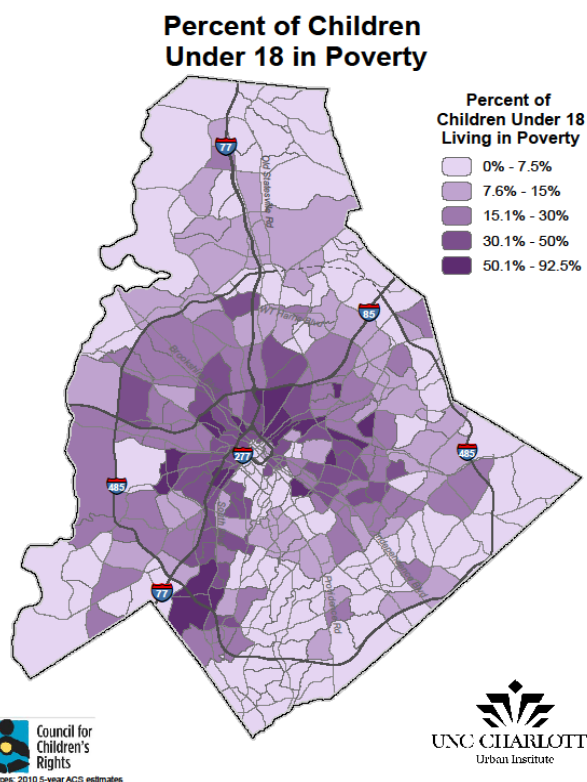
Expanding this framework, Bodilly & Beckett (2005) reviewed the literature on school-age child care, education, youth development, and OST programs, and found a convergence of multiple factors that may be associated with positive outcomes. These factors are: 1) a clear mission, 2) high expectations and positive social norms, 3) a safe and healthy environment, 4) a supportive emotional climate, 5) small total enrollment, 6) stable, trained personnel, 7) appropriate content and pedagogy relative to the children's needs and the program's mission, with opportunities to engage, 8) integrated family and community partners, and 9) frequent assessment.[22] More in depth information is available in the LKC Out-of-School Time Research Summary which includes an annotated bibliography of relevant literature and meta-analyses describing OST research, outcomes and program components and a summary of research informed OST interventions and randomized control trial evaluations. This summary and all other OST research and planning documents can be found on the Council for Children's Rights website (www.cfcrights.org).

Community Context

In order to provide out-of-school time experiences that support learning, enrichment and healthy development, it is critical to develop a better understanding of children and youth in our community. Demographics and community-level child indicators can provide a glimpse of the school-age children in our community: who they are, how they're doing, what they need, and how the out-of-school time sector can best support them.

Demographics. As of the 2012 American Community Survey, there were 242,486 children under age 18 in Mecklenburg County, and approximately 158,000 of these children are school-age (5-17). Twenty-one percent of school-age children in Mecklenburg County live in poverty, and another 23.7% are considered low-income or in-need.[23] Many of these children live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, situated in an arc stretching around the northern side of center city and in a corridor stretching south along South Boulevard. Childhood poverty, particularly concentrated and intergenerational poverty, is correlated with poor health, social, behavioral, academic and economic outcomes.[24]

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. In 2012-13, there were 141,171 children enrolled in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Of these, 42% were African-American, 32% were White, 18% were Hispanic, 5% were Asian, and 3% were Multi-Racial or Other. Almost 55% of CMS students were economically disadvantaged.[25]

Percent of Children Under 18 in Poverty

Percent of Children Under 18 Living in Poverty
- 0% - 7.5%
- 7.6% - 15%
- 15.1% - 30%
- 30.1% - 50%
- 50.1% - 92.5%

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Sources: 2010 5-year ACS estimates

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[22] Bodilly, S. & Beckett, M. (2005). Making out-of-school time matter: Evidence for an action agenda. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation. Retrieved from: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG242.pdf.

[23] Low-income or in-need is defined as living in families with income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (Medicaid eligibility guidelines). Number of children in-need in Mecklenburg County is estimated by the number of children enrolled in Medicaid, as reported by the North Carolina Division of Medical Assistance.

[24] Moore, K. & Redd, Z. (2002). Children in poverty: Trends, consequences, and policy options. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends Research Brief #2002-54.

[25] Explain EDS (eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch) – up to 185% FPL

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Indicators – Education. The most commonly used indicators of educational achievement are 3rd grade reading and math scores and the 4-year cohort graduation rate. In 2011-12, 69.2% of all 3rd grade students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools were on grade level in reading, and 81.5% were on grade level in math. Only 66.4% of third graders were on grade level in both reading and math. There is a large achievement gap between non-economically disadvantaged students (non-EDS) and economically disadvantaged (EDS). The composite reading and math proficiency for non-EDS students was 86.7% and only 51.4% for EDS students.

The achievement gap continues through high school. In 2011-12, the 4-year cohort graduation rate for non-EDS students was 82.9% and for EDS students was 69.7%. The overall 4-year cohort graduation rate was 76.4%. The 3rd grade reading and math scores and the 4-year cohort graduation rate have been steadily increasing over the past several years.[26]

Children on Grade Level
3rd Grade Reading and Math Composite

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	84.3%	84.7%	86.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	49.9%	48.9%	51.4%

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	77.2%	81.1%	82.9%
Economically Disadvantaged	59.8%	64.6%	69.7%
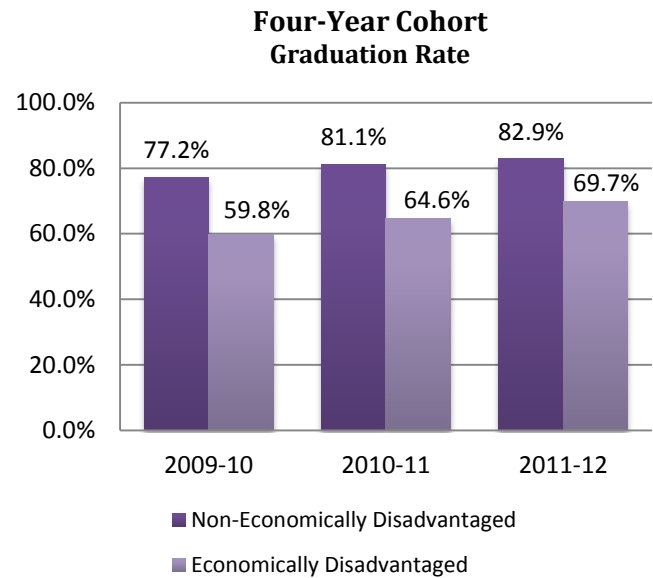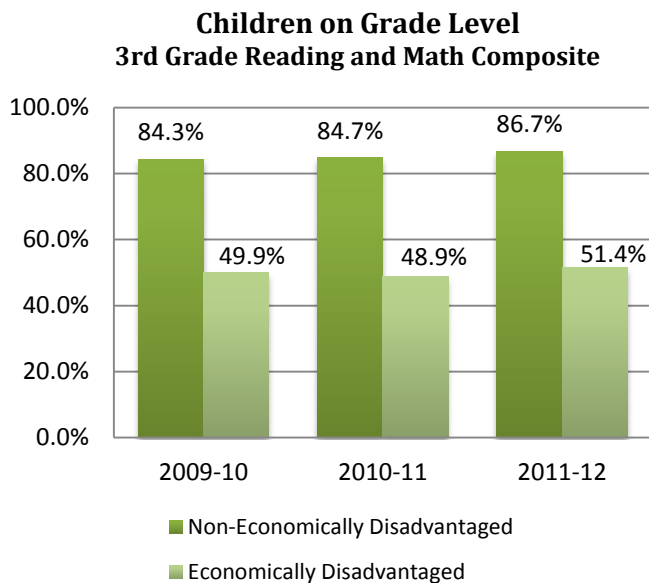
Indicators – Health and Mental Health. As a community, we have limited data on the health and mental health of school-age children. However, data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) can give us an idea of how middle and high school students are faring. In 2009, 23% of middle school students reported signs of depression and 20% reported having considered suicide. In 2011, 24% reported having considered suicide and 11% reported ever actually trying to kill themselves.[27] These numbers have been steadily increasing since the YRBS began in 2007.[28]

CMS Middle School Student Mental Healh

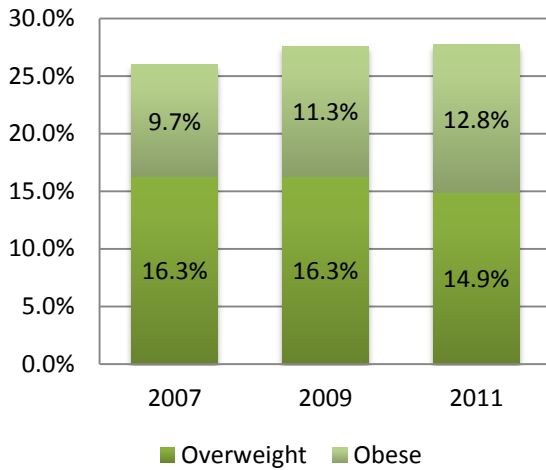|	2007	2009	2011
Depression	21%	23%	
Considered Suicide	18%	20%	24%

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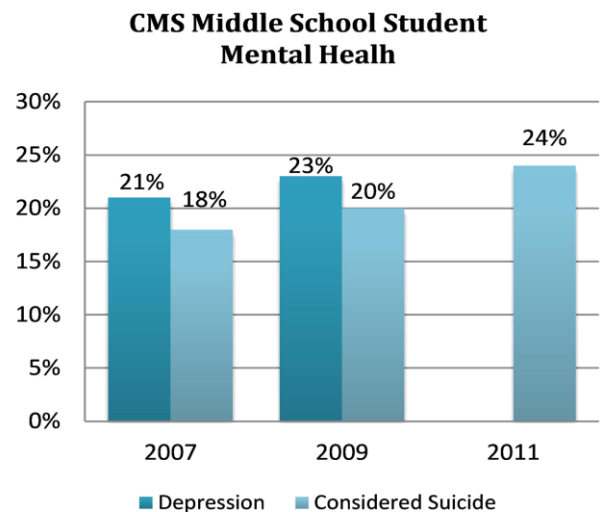
[26] Note the 2012-13 graduation rate for all students was 81.0%; 87.6% for non-EDS and 74.5% for EDS. Third-grade EOG scores for 2012-13 had not been reported at the time of this publication.

[27] A question about feelings of depression was not included in the 2011 Charlotte-Mecklenburg YRBS.

[28] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2012). Health Risk Behaviors for Middle School Students: A collaborative report from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Mecklenburg County Health Department. Retrieved from: http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/csh/Documents/Middle%20School%20Highlights%20-%202011.pdf.

CMS High School Student Health

As an indicator of physical health, 28% of high school students report that they are either overweight (15%) or obese (13%), a slight increase from 2007. In addition, only 43% of high-school students report getting the recommended amount of daily activity (60 minutes per day, five days per week) and only 23% report eating the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables (five or more per day).[29]

Indicators – Risk Behaviors. In 2011, 31% of middle school students reported ever having alcohol and 34% of high school students reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row) in the past month. Twelve percent of middle school students and 28% of high school students reported ever using marijuana. These numbers have remained relatively stable over time.[30]

CMS Middle School Students
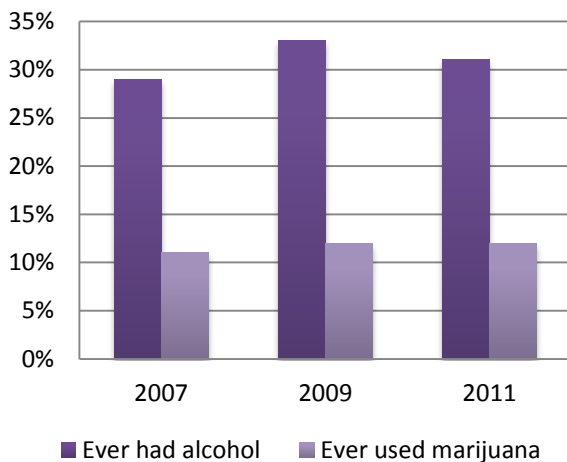
Teen Birth Rate Age 15-19
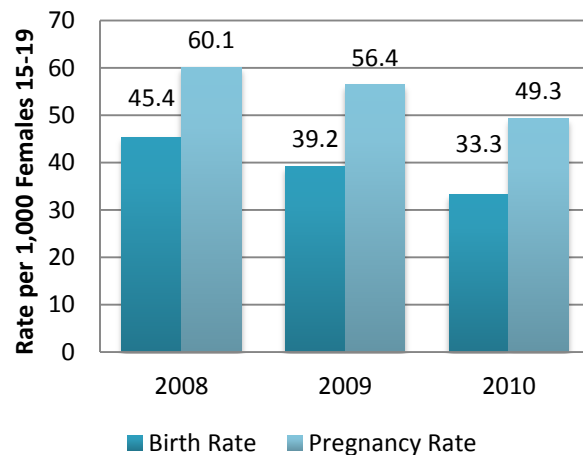
The teen birth rate, however, has been steadily trending downward for several years. In 2011, the teen pregnancy rate was 49.3 per 1,000 and the teen birth rate was 33.3 per 1,000. The birth rate equates to approximately 1,000 births to teenage mothers in 2011, or 6.1% of the total births that year.[31]

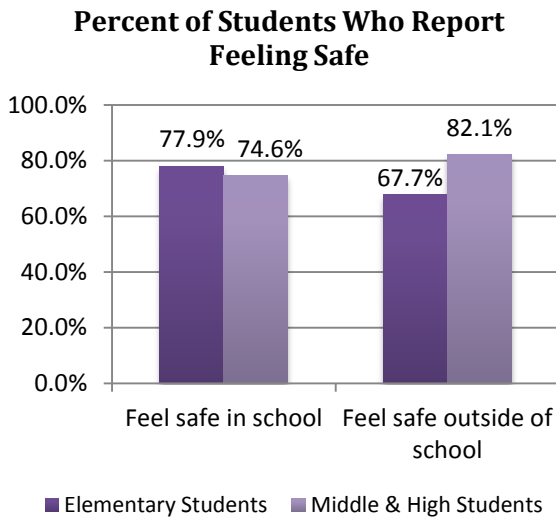[29] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2012). Health Risk Behaviors for High School Students: A collaborative report from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Mecklenburg County Health Department. Retrieved from: http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/csh/Documents/High%20School%20Highlights%20-%202011.pdf.

[30] Ibid.

[31] North Carolina Center for State Health Statistics. Baby Book 2011.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Indicators – Safety. In 2011, 45% of middle school students and 19% of high school students report being bullied on school property. For middle school students, this number has increased substantially since 2007, when just 26% of students reported being bullied on school property.[32] Overall, 78% of elementary-age students and 68% of middle- and high-school students report feeling safe in school. Seventy-five percent of elementary-age students and 82% of middle- and high-school students report feeling safe outside of school.[33]

Percent of Students Who Report Feeling Safe

In addition to broad community indicators, data on developmental needs suggests a role for OST programs in our community, particularly around critical needs such as supervision, mattering, connection to caring adults, and aspiration. According to data from the 2011 middle-school YRBS:

- More than 16% of students were alone after school without a parent or trusted adult for three or more hours per average school day;
- Only 45% of students agreed or strongly agreed that, in their community, they feel like they matter to people, and this number is declining;
- Only 35% of students report that most of the time they get the help they need when they feel sad, empty, hopeless, angry or anxious;
- And only 73% say they definitely/probably will complete a post-high school program, down from 82% in 2007.[34]

Survey Response	2007	2009	2011
Youth alone after school without a parent or trusted adult three or more hours per average school day	15%	15%	16%
Agree or strongly agree that in their community they feel like they matter to people	51%	53%	45%
Most of the time get the help they need when they feel sad, empty, hopeless, angry or anxious	N/A	N/A	35%
Definitely/probably will complete a post high school program such as vocational training program, military service, community college, or 4-year college	82%	68%	73%

Clearly, additional support for the healthy development of school-age children is needed in our community. Out-of-school time has an important role to play in addressing that need. Furthermore, Charlotte-Mecklenburg is a unique community with both a variety of OST experience opportunities and a highly invested group of stakeholders interested in filling the gaps in the community's OST system.

[32] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2012).
[33] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Student Surveys (2013). Retrieved from:
http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/accountability/cfre/Pages/Surveys.aspx?year=2008-2009.
[34] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2012).

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

The State of Out-of-School Time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

OST Providers and Programs. In 2011, the Community Catalyst Fund of the Foundation for the Carolinas convened an Out-of-School Time Task Force to make recommendations for actions and investments to create a vibrant, effective OST sector in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. As part of this effort, The Bridgespan Group compiled data on OST providers in the community to get an overview of programs and an estimation of program participation. The inventory includes 512 distinct programs operated by 76 providers, with approximately 28,000 program slots in afterschool and approximately 16,000 program slots in the
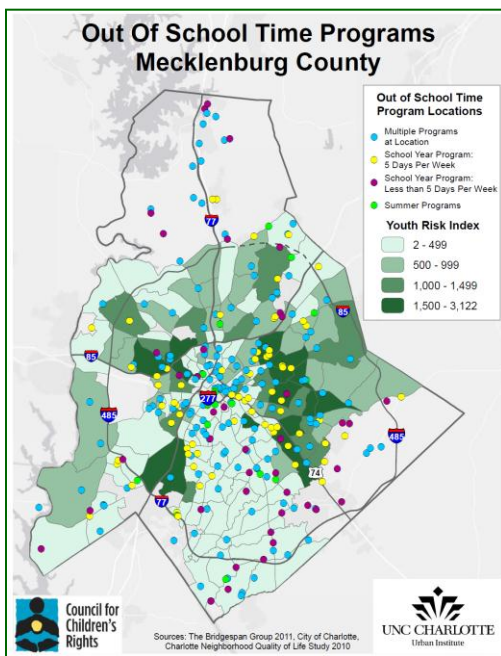
summer. It is important to note that this does not count the number of children enrolled in OST programs; children may be enrolled in more than one program in the inventory.[35] Nationally, approximately 15% of children are enrolled in afterschool programs and approximately 25% of children are enrolled in summer programs.[36]

The 2011 program inventory illustrates that Charlotte-Mecklenburg is home to an incredible variety of out-of-school programs, ranging from academic and arts enrichment to summer camps and scouting to mentoring and leadership development opportunities. Local service providers include schools, museums, churches, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and for profit companies. Programs may be funded by fees, public child care subsidy dollars,[37] private donations, philanthropic foundations, and public agencies at the federal, state and local level.[38]

The largest out-of-school time provider in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is the After School Enrichment Program operated by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS ASEP). This primarily fee-based program operates in over 100 schools in CMS, serving over 7,000 children. Other major OST providers include Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Children's Theater of Charlotte, The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Clubs, Police Activities League, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation/4-H, Girls on the Run, Providence Day School, the YMCA, and the YWCA.[39]

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[35] The Bridgespan Group (2011). The State of Out-of-School Time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg: A report by the Out-of-School Time Task Force of the Community Catalyst Fund. Retrieved from: http://cfcrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/OST-Task-Force-Final-Report-2011.pdf.

[36] Yohalem, N., Pittman, K. & Edwards, S. (2010). Strengthening the youth development/after-school workforce: Lessons learned and implications for funders. Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment and Cornerstones for Kids.

[37] Out-of-school time programs that serve children ages 5 to 12 and operate four or more hours per day regularly throughout the school year must be licensed by the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education. All other programs are considered license-exempt, though some programs choose voluntarily to be licensed by the State in order to access public funding to serve children in need of financial aid.

[38] The Bridgespan Group (2011).

[39] Ibid.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations of the OST Task Force (2011)

Drawing from the program inventory and analysis of the OST sector in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the OST Task Force identified several gaps in the community's OST system around parent and youth engagement, system coverage, program quality, and leadership and advocacy. Based on national research and review of OST systems in other communities, the OST Task Force recommended four key actions for OST system-building in Charlotte-Mecklenburg:

Out-of-school time Task Force (2011) Recommendations

- Empower parents and youth with better information to make informed decisions about afterschool and summer programs.
- Increase the number of unsupervised youth enrolled in high-quality afterschool and summer programs. Start by increasing access for low-income, disadvantaged youth (K-8th grade).
- Raise the overall quality of Out of School Time programs with a comprehensive quality improvement system, including a common and clear set of standards.
- Establish a leader and lead organization with clear responsibility for supporting, promoting and advocating for the Out of School Time sector in Charlotte.

Coordination with Other Efforts. Out-of-school time fits within a broad landscape of other local and statewide efforts around expanded learning time (See Appendix D for more information about Expanded Learning Models). Throughout the out-of-school time planning process, the LKC worked to coordinate the work of the OST Planning Group with other expanded learning efforts. For example, in 2013, the CMS Task Force on Extended Learning provided a set of seven recommendations to CMS as part of a broad community engagement effort that included 22 task forces. LKC staff provided research support to the ELT Task Force and Task Force members participated in a joint meeting with the OST Planning Group. One of the recommendations of the Extended Learning Task Force was to support the strategies of the community-wide Out-of-School Time Framework.[40]

In addition, the work being done in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is compatible with the state policy recommendations around expanded learning opportunities from the recent statewide study group convened by the NC Public

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[40] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (2013). Task Force Recommendations for the Superintendent. Retrieved from: http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/mediaroom/taskforce/Documents/22_Task_Force_Recommendations%20online%203.pdf.

School Forum.[41] Continued coordination of expanded learning efforts within the school system and around the state is critical to successful implementation of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Out-of-School Time Framework.

Conclusion

Children spend 75% of their time outside of school. However, the maximum amount of time available to impact children through out-of-school time experiences is approximately 15 hours per week for an afterschool program and 35 hours per week for a summer program. Filling those hours with enriching experiences and skill building activities has the potential to significantly enhance a young person's social/emotional, cognitive and physical growth. In creating those enriching experiences, it is important for our community to recognize that out-of-school time programs have a broad range of potential impacts which extend beyond traditional academic support.

Through effective system-wide coordination, Charlotte-Mecklenburg's OST sector can, not only increase access to programs for low- and moderate-income children, but also strengthen programs that will improve outcomes for all children. In doing so, a comprehensive understanding of children and youth in our community, as well as an understanding of current OST program offerings is critical to the sector's success. Research on specific OST program models is limited. However, studies identify guiding principles which are applicable to all types of programs. Implementation of these key components contributes to positive outcomes that support healthy development.

In creating the Out-of-School Time Framework for Charlotte-Mecklenburg, over 45 providers and stakeholders in our community identified priority objectives which included adopting quality standards and establishing a system of professional development and continuous quality improvement. This effort, combined with the objective to develop a data and information system that informs providers, guides family choices and communicates the impact of quality programming, will position the sector to provide excellence for the children and youth of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The planning process was guided by research on evidenced based programs and best practices, local data, and information on OST systems around the country. Moving forward, stakeholders and funders will be called upon to support implementation of the strategies in the framework so that all children (K-12) will have access to out-of-school time experiences that support learning, enrichment and healthy development.

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[41] NC Public School Forum (2013). Education 24/7: Expanding learning opportunities for North Carolina students to be career and college ready. Raleigh, NC: Public School Forum of NC. Retrieved from: http://d2lvn0a00hwoiz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/StudyGroup_2013_D5_SPREADS.pdf.

Appendix A. Out-of-School Time Planning Group participants

Data & Information Work Group	
Ashleigh Snyder	BELL
Jared Keaton	Bethlehem Center
Millard McCluney	Charlotte Housing Authority
Pamela McCarter	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library
Danielle Frazier	Charlotte Works
Nancy Hughes	Child Care Resources Inc.
Leigh Bishop	CMS Afterschool Enrichment Program
Tamika Bease	Greater Enrichment Program
Amy Hawn Nelson	Institute for Social Capital
Leslie Johnson	Mecklenburg County
Sabrina Gilchrist	Right Moves For Youth
Anita Self	YWCA Central Carolinas

Professional Development Workgroup	
Carmen Blackmon	Above and Beyond Students
Jennifer Hurd	Bank of America
William McDonald	Bethlehem Center
Pam McIntyre	Central Piedmont Community College
Amanda Goldson	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library
Susan Butler	Child Care Resources Inc.
Jennifer Tampa	CMS Afterschool Enrichment Program
Heather Heslep	Discovery Place
Rashida Waleed	First Baptist Church West
Renee Jones	Jones Consulting Group, LLC
Eric Rowles	Leading to Change, Inc.
Robbie Furr	Mecklenburg County Extension Service/4-H Youth Development
Dana Carpenter	Salvation Army B&G Clubs
Yolanda R. Bynum	YMCA of Greater Charlotte
Dee Rankin	Youth Development Initiatives

Program Quality Workgroup	
Carmen Blackmon	Above and Beyond Students
Justin Lewter	Boy Scouts of America/Mecklenburg County Council
Mollie James	Bruce Irons Camp Fund
Donna Smutherman	Child Care Resources Inc.
Jake House	Citizens Schools
John Sylvester	Citizen Schools
Tom Warshauer	City of Charlotte
Colette Jeffries	CMS After School Enrichment Program
Andrew Ladd	Communities In Schools
Kristy Davis	Faith, Hope, and Love
Patsy Burkins	First Baptist Church West
Macie Stewart	Freedom School Partners
Amy Farrell	Generation Nation
Melanie Miller	Girl Scouts
Kwain Bryant	Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont
Bronica Glover	Greater Enrichment Program
Amy Korb	Junior Achievement of the Central Carolinas
Robbie Furr	Mecklenburg County Extension Service/4-H Youth Development
Jerri Haigler	United Way of Central Carolinas
Amanda Wilkinson	YMCA of Greater Charlotte
Darryl Bego	Youth Development Initiatives
William McDonald	Bethlehem Center
Angela Craig	Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

Appendix B. OST Context and System Examples

	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Denver	Minnesota	Palm Beach County, FL	San Francisco
Program Quality	Standards embedded in APAS, APAS QIS process	Organizational and Program Standards, Staff Qualifications	Standards embedded in PD framework	100 best practices and 600 indicators, PQA	Positive Youth Development framework as a core philosophy, PQA	5 program standards and PBC-PQA, COA on horizon	Minimum Quality Standards, 3 Aligned Self-Assessment Tools, Resource Guide
Prof. Develop.	APAS training, coaching, PD investments	The After-School Institute	Achieve Boston PD system	DQUAC, YPQI	Youth Work Institute, YPQI	YPQI, COA	Core competency toolkit, online training
Data & Information	Efforts to Outcomes	Data Collaborative, Efforts to Outcomes, Evaluation	BOSTONavigator and Data Integration	Community Partnership System, Program Map, Provider Directory	Youth development research & evaluation	Research & Evaluation Team	Program locator
Planning & Coordination	Boys & Girls Clubs Metro Atlanta & United Way	Baltimore Safe & Sound: Afterschool Strategy	Boston Beyond	Denver OST Alliance	University of Minnesota Extension Center (4-H)	Prime Time Palm Beach County	San Francisco Afterschool for All

Acronym Key: APAS = The Afterschool Program Assessment System; QIS = Quality Improvement System; PD = Professional Development; PQA = Program Quality Assessment (tool); PBC-PQA = Palm Beach County Program Quality Assessment (tool); COA = Council on Accreditation; DQUAC = Denver Quality Afterschool Connection; YPQI = Youth Program Quality Intervention

OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAM QUALITY CONTEXT

Framework	Target and Use	Considerations for System-Wide Use
NC Rated License Quality Rating and Improvement System	• Licensed child care programs, K through age 12 • Part of licensing system to access child care subsidy dollars	• Valid and reliable, support for use and improvement provided by CCRI • Only serves K through age 12 • SACERS tool has primary focus on physical environment and safety
NC CAP Standards of Excellence Self-Assessment Tool	• After school programs • Required for 21st CCLC grantees	• Includes aligned questionnaires for parents, teachers, student & staff • Standards in checklist format • No support for use and improvement • Not valid and reliable
Internal tools and standards	• Specific to each organization	• Specific to organizational needs • Definition of quality not shared
Council on Accreditation After School Program Standards	• After school programs	• Comprehensive, "gold standard" • Expensive and intensive • Relies on self-study and narrative response

Nationally recognized , research-informed program assessment tools: APT/APAS, CORAL, OST, PQO, PPRS, PQA, SACERS	• Program target age varies
	• Purpose varies:
	  • Program improvement
	  • Program monitoring/accreditation
	  • Research/evaluation
		• Observed measures of program quality and staff practice
		• Tools vary on:
		  • Ease of use
		  • Strength of technical properties
		  • Degree of available support

Acronym Key: NC CAP = North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs; 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Center; CCRI = Child Care Resources, Inc.; APT/APAS = Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool/The Afterschool Program Assessment System; CORAL = Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning Observation Tool; OST = Out-of-School Time Observation Tool; PQO = Program Quality Observation Scale; PPRS = Promising Practices Rating Scale; PQA = Program Quality Assessment; SACERS = School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale

DATA & INFORMATION TOOLS

Tool(s)	Target and Purpose	Considerations for System-Wide Use
Child Care Search: Child Care eSearch (CCRI) and Child Care Facility Search (NCDCDEE)	• Online search for parents seeking licensed, school-age child care • CCRI offers referral service and eSearch also includes legally exempt programs	• Accessible & comprehensive • CCRI analyzes data for planning & policy • Child care programs serving K through age 12
NC CAP: Statewide Afterschool Directory, EZReports	• After school programs • EZReports: promoted for 21st CCLC grantees (also use PPICS)	• Potential for collaboration across counties • In development
Internal tools and tracking mechanisms	• Specific to each organization	• Specific to organizational needs • Definitions and measures not shared
Institute for Social Capital, UNC Charlotte Urban Institute	• Integrated data system for Mecklenburg County	• Source for data across multiple systems • Procedures for privacy, security and use • Not for individual case management

Variety of commercial vendors of OST Management Information Systems: COMET, CI-ODM, KidTrax, ETO, EZReports, YouthServices.net	• Variety of features: attendance, case management, agency management, survey & evaluation, reporting	• Interface, functionality and reports specific to OST program needs
		• Cost
		• Tools vary on:
		  • Integration with other data systems
		  • Degree of training and support
		  • Additional functionality

Acronym Key: CCRI = Child Care Resources, Inc.; NCDCDEE = North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education; NC CAP = North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs; 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Center; PPICS = Profile and Performance Information Collection System; CI-ODM = Community Impact-Online Data Manager; ETO = Efforts to Outcomes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Framework	Target and Purpose	Considerations for System-Wide Use
Child Care Resources, Inc. (CCRI): PD, training and technical assistance	• Open to all school-age child care practitioners, but primarily serve employees of licensed facilities • NCDCDEE-approved, licensing credit-bearing training • Technical assistance for licensing and QRIS	• Aligned to state licensing system • Accessible & affordable • Child care programs serving K through age 12
NC School-Age Child Care Credential and School Age Care Certificate	• Coursework through NC Community College System • Credential awarded by NCDCDEE (credential or equivalent required for lead teachers) • Certificate is 17 credit hours	• Aligned to state licensing system • Certificate feeds into 2-year School-Age Education Degree (not currently offered at CPCC) • Focus on child care environments serving K through age 12
NC CAP: PD System-Building (PD Workgroup, Core Competencies, Afterschool Training Database, Leadership Institute)	• Afterschool work force statewide • Focus on system building and connecting resources	• Broad definition of afterschool professional, but primary focus on school-age afterschool
Internal trainings and PD paths	• Specific to each organization	• Specific to organizational needs • Definitions and measures not shared
National frameworks: Nextgeneration Youth Work Coalition, National Collaboration for Youth, BEST Initiative, The North American Certification Project	• Youth workforce (afterschool and youth development) • Focused solely on youth workforce development	• Defines youth workforce more broadly, but not explicitly • Includes policy and advocacy efforts • Nextgen Core competencies adopted by NAA and NIOST

Acronym Key: NCDCDEE = North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education; QRIS = Quality Rating and Improvement System; CPCC = Central Piedmont Community College; NC CAP = North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs; BEST = Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers; NAA = National Afterschool Alliance; NIOST = National Institute on Out-of-School Time

Appendix C. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time

The purpose of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time is to:
- Create **engaging out-of-school** time environments where children can thrive;
- Establish a **common language and shared understanding** of out-of-school time for all stakeholders;
- Inform **professional development** for out-of-school time staff;
- Provide a context for **fundraising and public policy efforts**; and
- Increase **public recognition of out-of-school time** as a professional field that plays an important role in the lives of children and families.

The standards are a set of research-informed best practices to promote positive outcomes in out-of-school time programs. There are eight categories of standards, each with a guiding principle and a series of quality elements. The standards are:
- **Aspirational yet achievable**, grounded in empirical research, field-tested by communities across the nation, and relevant to the unique needs of children and providers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg;
- A **complement to other systems and standards in Charlotte-Mecklenburg** focused on quality improvement, including the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) of the North Carolina Department of Child Development and Early Education (NC DCDEE) and the Standards of Excellence of the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP); and
- **A symbol of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's commitment to provide access to a diverse range of programming that will enrich and support the healthy development of children in our community.**

HOW TO USE THE STANDARDS

Children and families can use the standards as a **tool** to understand what activities and components to look for and what to expect from a quality program.

Program providers can use the standards as a **guide** to assess their own programs and identify what they are doing well and what areas may need improvement.

Funders and policymakers can use the standards as a **framework** to inform investment decisions in individual programs and across the OST system.

The OST sector can use the standards as the **foundation** for the development of a system of accountability and support for quality improvement.

SUMMARY OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Management and Administration

The program displays effective leadership, sound fiscal management, and coherent policies and procedures that support quality and sustainability.

Staffing, Volunteers and Professional Development

The program employs and supports the professional growth of highly effective staff and volunteers that are equipped to create an environment that supports healthy development.

Healthy & Safe Environment

The space/facilities and program environment protect and promote the physical, mental, and social/emotional health of all participants.

Supportive Relationships

The program creates high expectations for participants, builds a positive and inclusive social environment, and builds connections among staff, participants, and families.

Learning Experiences

Programming and activities are developmentally appropriate and intentionally designed to build skills that support the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of all participants.

Child and Youth Involvement

The program provides and supports intentional opportunities for participants to play a meaningful role in the program and make authentic choices about activities.

Family & Community Partnerships

The program intentionally builds and leverages collaborative, integrated partnerships among internal and external stakeholders to achieve program goals.

Continuous Improvement

The program utilizes a variety of information, mechanisms and procedures to create a learning culture, promote high standards of operation, accountability and quality, and improve outcomes for participants.

Management and Administration

The program displays effective leadership, sound fiscal management, and coherent policies and procedures that support quality and sustainability.

- The program has a clearly defined mission, goals and measurable outcomes that are supported by stakeholders and used to drive program design, implementation and improvement.
- The program has clear and well-defined channels of communication between staff members, between staff and participants, and between staff and families.
- Staff-to-participant ratios and group size enable staff to meet the needs of participants.
- The organization has sound fiscal management and a plan to support sustainability, follows Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and has appropriate expenditures that focus on the well-being of children.

Staffing, Volunteers and Professional Development

The program employs and supports the professional growth of highly effective staff and volunteers that are equipped to create an environment that supports healthy development.

- The program works to recruit the highest quality staff and volunteers according to an adopted core competency framework and develops strategies to decrease staff turnover.
- Program staff and volunteers are provided with relevant training and ongoing professional development that supports growth and builds on strategies for effective program practice.
- Staff and volunteers are trained to address cultural and individual differences in working with participants and their families.
- Program managers assess job performance and satisfaction among staff and volunteers and create individual professional development plans on an ongoing basis.
- The organization offers a clear salary structure, fair compensation and benefits.
- Staff and volunteers build positive relationships and create engaging learning environments for all participants.
- Staff and volunteers have annual criminal background checks and copies are kept on file.

Healthy & Safe Environment

The space/facilities and program environment protect and promote the physical, mental, and social/emotional health of all participants.

- Participants are supervised during all program activities and appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are in place.
- The program's indoor and outdoor facilities are welcoming, safe, clean and accessible to children and their families.
- Staff and volunteers are trained in responding to health needs, illness or injury, evacuation and emergency, and in recognizing and reporting potential child maltreatment.
- Program materials, space and equipment are developmentally appropriate and fit the needs of participants, staff and the curriculum.
- Staff creates a physical and psychologically safe environment that respects diversity and allows participants to express themselves without fear of harm.
- The program provides participants with the opportunity to learn about and practice healthy eating and physical activity.
- The program promotes character development and healthy choices.
- Policies, procedures, and services create an environment that values and embraces diversity and equity regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, income level, national origin, physical ability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.

Supportive Relationships

The program creates high expectations for participants, builds a positive and inclusive social environment, and builds connections among staff, participants, and families.

- Program staff reinforces and models positive behavior and uses positive techniques to address negative behavior by participants.
- Participants interact with one another in positive ways and feel they belong.
- Staff relationships with participants are positive, supportive, nurturing and consistent in responding to the individual needs of participants.
- Staff encourages and fosters respect, independence and responsibility in all participants.
- Staff encourages participants to manage feelings and resolve conflicts appropriately.
- Staff and volunteers interact with families in positive ways and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement of participants' families.

Learning Experiences

Programming and activities are developmentally appropriate and intentionally designed to build skills that support the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of all participants.

- Program design and activities incorporate active, meaningful, and engaging learning that promotes mastery, encourages collaboration, and expands participants' horizons.
- The program maintains high expectations for all participants and provides individualized instruction to meet the needs of all participants.
- Program links goals and curricula with development of 21st-century skills (such as life and career skills, critical thinking and communication, and media and technology skills), and aligns activities to school standards and curriculum.
- The program provides opportunities for participants to interact with and learn from peers and role models of diverse backgrounds.
- Program activities are enhanced with appropriate materials, supplies and technology where needed.

Child and Youth Involvement

The program provides and supports intentional opportunities for children and youth to play a meaningful role in the program and make authentic choices about activities.

- The program develops leadership among and provides leadership opportunities to all participants under the guidance of program staff.
- The program provides a wide variety of activities that promote participant choice.
- The program involves participants in planning, program development and implementation, and creates opportunities for participant-led activities.
- The program supports participants to navigate the learning space independently.
- Participants have opportunities to set goals and make plans.

Family & Community Partnerships

The program intentionally builds and leverages collaborative, integrated partnerships among internal and external stakeholders to achieve program goals.

- Program policies and activities are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community.
- The program is linked to the broader community through family engagement, peer networking and knowledge-sharing, dedication to best practices, and incorporation of school and community resources.
- Staff is trained to connect participants and their families to appropriate social services when needed.
- Ensure that program staff maintains two-way communication with all partners as appropriate including families, school staff, and community partners, around program mission, core values, program implementation, and participant outcomes.
- The program actively cultivates partnerships with community organizations (neighborhoods, businesses, faith partners, cultural organizations, etc.) to provide real-world learning opportunities for participants.

Continuous Improvement

The program utilizes a variety of information, mechanisms and procedures to create a learning culture, promote high standards of operation, accountability and quality, and improve outcomes for participants.

- The program has in place internal and external evaluation tools that are used to ensure effectiveness and share success with stakeholders.
- The program establishes measurable goals and objectives that are connected with the mission of the organization, aligned with program activities, and reflect research on effective out-of-school time programming.
- The program gives participants, families, staff and other stakeholders opportunities to assess the program through an annual survey.
- The program regularly uses participant data, feedback from children and families, and program outcome data to guide program administration, design, planning, implementation and evaluation.
- The program works to expand access by regularly identifying and addressing potential barriers to participation including transportation, neighborhood safety, language barriers and cost.

Appendix D. Expanded Learning Models

Expanded Learning Time Summary

There are three primary models of expanded learning time:
- Extended In-School Learning Time, including Extended School Day (ESD), Extended School Year (ESY) and Summer School (SS)
- Out-of-School Time Opportunities
- Community School Approaches

Comprehensive school reform typically includes one or more models of expanded learning time, varying in degree of coordination and integration. The research base, while limited, suggests that expanding learning time may be effective in improving a range of outcomes for students.

Comparison of ELT Models

		Extended In-School Time (ESD, ESY, &SS)	Out-Of-School Time	Community School Approach
Operator	Schools	X	X	X
	Community Organizations		X	
Hours of Operation	During School Hours	X		X
	Outside school Hours		X	X
Participation Requirements	Mandatory	X		X
	Voluntary		X	X
Focus	Academic Achievement	X		
	Varying Developmental Domains		X	
	Comprehensive, multi-service			X

Expanded Learning Time Research Overview

Extended In-School Learning Time

- Extended School Day (ESD) program models lengthen the school day beyond the standard 6.5 hours offered in most public schools in the United States
- Extended School Year (ESY) program models lengthen the school year beyond the standard 180 school days offered in most public schools in the United States
- Summer School program models provide a variety of opportunities for additional instructional support during the summer months

1. The majority of studies that have examined ESD and ESY program outcomes suggest that the programs are positively related to improved student outcomes.
2. These studies focus mostly on models that bundle EDS and ESY with other school reforms, and the research is not clear about whether or not gains in test scores are a direct result of an ESD or ESY component within these reform initiatives.

Out-of-School Time Opportunities

Out-of-School Time (OST) program models provide learning and enrichment supports outside of regular operating school-day hours, including before- and after-school, during school breaks, on weekends, and/or over the summer.

1. A small number of rigorous program evaluations have demonstrated positive impact in multiple developmental domains including social, emotional, academic, and physical. Outcomes include increased positive social behaviors and decreased problem behaviors, increased engagement in school and community, improved scholastic behaviors, reduced risk behaviors, and increased health behaviors.
2. For academic outcomes, OST programs tend to be more effective in improving predictors of academic achievement, such as academic skills, homework completion, study habits, and achievement motivation.

Community School Approaches

Community school program models provide integrated in-school extended learning time and out-of-school expanded learning opportunities, as well as a wide range of health, mental health and social support services for children, families, and communities.

1. Research suggests that community school approaches have potential to impact student learning and healthy development, family engagement, school effectiveness, and community vitality.
2. Outcomes achieved by various community schools across the country include: higher attendance rates, improved average test scores, increased parent leadership, improved nutrition for families, increased immunization rates, and reduced pregnancy rates.