

What's New in Research August 2009

The Report: "Why Teens Are Not Involved in Out-of-School Time Programs: The Youth Perspective"

Where It's From: Child Trends Research-to-Results Brief, July 2009

The Findings: Child Trends held a roundtable discussion with nineteen youth, to determine barriers to participation in out-of-school time programs. It is meant to fill a gap in research – existing research focuses more on retention than recruitment.

Some Specifics:

- Reasons for not attending programs include lack of awareness, concerns about neighborhood safety, and a perceived lack of caring adults.
- Ways to get youth to show up include using peer recruiters and incentives.
- Things youth want in programs include flexibility and practical skills.
- Youth want program staff to treat them with respect and be able to set boundaries.

The Full Report Is Available At: http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2009_07_22_RB_YouthRoundtable.pdf

The Report: "Non-Participation of Children and Adolescents in Out-of-School Time Programs: Child, Family, and Neighborhood Factors"

Where It's From: Child Trends Research-to-Results Brief, July 2009

The Findings: This brief looked at child, family and parenting, and neighborhood and community factors to determine which – if any – of these could be connected with non-participation in out-of-school time programs.

Some Specifics:

- Child factors include disability, grade repetition, and overweight.
- Family factors include lack of parental exercise and poor parental health.
- Neighborhood factors include lack of neighborhood support and unsafe surroundings.

The Full Report Is Available At: http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2009_07_22_RB_Nonparticipation.pdf

The Report: "Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement"

Where It's From: Harvard Family Research Project and PTA Research Brief, July 2009

The Findings: Family engagement policies at the district level are a key element of school success. Districts that have specific practices and positions in place related to family and community engagement are best able to accomplish their goals.

Some Specifics:

- Encourage fathers and other males to be involved through mentoring programs.
- Provide a continuum of services to students and families, based on the importance of complementary learning.

The Full Report Is Available At: <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/seeing-is-believing-promising-practices-for-how-school-districts-promote-family-engagement>

What's New in Research August 2009

The Overall Report: "Surrounded by Support"

Where It's From: American Educator, Summer 2009

The Findings: The entire issue focused on the idea and importance of community schools, out-of-school time activities, and other supports in improving both school culture and student improvement. It stressed the effects of health and family factors, and the importance of having staff in schools dedicated to coordinating and overseeing the provision of services beyond academics. Here are some of the key points from different articles within the issue:

The article: "Equalizing Opportunity: Dramatic Differences in Children's Home Life and Health Mean that Schools Can't Do it Alone"

- Differences in social class create dramatic differences in students as early as age three.
- Health, of both students and parents, is a major contributor to these differences.

The article: "These Kids Are Alright"

- A case manager position is a crucial element of a successful community school.
- Case managers work with individual students, have resources for families in need, coordinate after-school programming, and more.

The article: "Freeing Teachers to Teach: Students in Full-Service Community Schools Are Ready to Learn"

- Successful community schools make teaching easier, because students are more ready to learn, and more supports are available to teachers.
- Factors include increasing school readiness, student attendance, parental involvement, and access to health care.

The article: "The Enduring Appeal of Community Schools: Education Has Always Been a Community Endeavor"

- Community schools can trace their roots back to John Dewey's Progressive-era ideas, and Jane Adams' settlement houses.
- These roots are based on the notion that schools play a central role in the country's social and democratic culture.

The article: "A Coordinated Effort: Well-Conducted Partnerships Meet Students' Academic, Health, and Social Service Needs"

- According to the Coalition for Community Schools, a community school is "both a place and a set of partnerships."

The article: "From the Ground Up: Cincinnati is Rebuilding its Schools and Revamping its Student, and Family, Services"

- Cincinnati is using a "Community Learning Center (CLC)" model.
- The process started in the 1990s, when Cincinnati was pressured to rebuild and/or renovate many of its schools; a community engagement process was used to determine individual school needs.

The Full Report Is Available At: http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/summer2009/index.htm