



The Advocate

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A newsletter on children's issues

May 2006



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Calendar of Events

Events relating to helping children are available at:
www.tennessee.gov/tccy/webcalen.pdf.

TCCY

For more information on the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth and its programs, check out the website at:
www.tennessee.gov/tccy.

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After School: Prime Time for Learning, Enrichment and Service

Once upon a time families lived together, ate together and worked together. As soon as they got old enough, children began to work with their parents, first as apprentices, learning the skills they needed, and then as full partners.

In today's world, parents can no longer supply their children with the skills the ever-changing future demands. In our industrial and service-based society, most parents must leave home to work every day.

Public schools provide children with the education they need and serve as surrogate parents for at least six and one half hours each day, plus, in many cases, the time needed to transport them between school and home. But parents have even longer work days and may travel even farther between work and home.

And so a gap has arisen between when children arrive home and when their parents do. The industrial age created the middle class, a group of people who earned material comforts and the time to enjoy them without possessing great wealth. It has also taken these parents away from their homes and communities.

A more complex world also requires that children learn a wider array of skills to survive. Changing technology means that education must teach children to be open to continued learning and changes over their lifetimes and careers.

Changes in family demographics have also increased the need for after-school care. Changes in employment patterns, including the greater number of women in the labor force, have resulted in more children being home alone.

After-school care is one way schools and communities can help children, families and neighborhoods. It provides for the care of children while also opening up learning opportunities.

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After School

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A factor in the lack of availability of after-school care for older children who need opportunities to explore options for their futures under the guidance of caring adults is the limited age range in the federal child care deduction. Once a child reaches the age of 13, the cost of care is no longer eligible for an income tax deduction.



Frequently school hour scheduling creates a disconnect between parental work and school hours. School systems, which stagger times in order to maximize the use of school buses and other facilities, have chosen to have high schools start times as early as 7 a.m., despite evidence that adolescents function better later, in part because of the lack of after-school care for younger children.

Need for the Programs

Nationally an estimated 6-8 million school children between the ages of 5 and 14 are “latchkey” kids who are “home alone.” The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center quotes Census figures that 7 million children ages 5 to 15 years care for themselves part of the day. By the time children reach age 14, 48 percent are unsupervised before or after school. It has been reported that 23 percent of school-age and kindergarten youth are on their own for at least part of the day – up to four hours a day. More than 21 percent would be likely to participate in an after-school program were one available to them.

Juvenile crime rates triple during the first hour after school, according to FBI statistics. Crime is at its highest during the afternoon and early evening hours. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a group of 2,000 active law-enforcement leaders, has dedicated much effort to increasing access to after-school programs.

A third of all car crashes caused by 16-17 year olds occur between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Children home unsupervised are also at risk of other sorts of unintentional injuries. Studies have found that 40 to 60 percent of unintentional injuries occurred in the home.

As childhood obesity has increasingly been regarded as a major problem focus, unsupervised children may eat unhealthy snacks and fail to be active. Studies have found adolescent girls consume more than a third of their calorie intake during the afternoon hours and that only a third of students regularly ate an evening meal with their families.

According to a National League of Cities survey, community leaders in the South are more likely to say their cities’ after-school programs are inadequate.

Advantages of After-School Programs

Studies have also estimated that effective after-school programs save between \$1.87 and \$5.29 per dollar spent on the programs (with \$3 being the most common number). Just keeping children and adolescents active,

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth Cindy Durham, Chair Gallatin

Natasha Blackshear Nashville	Dana L. Lesley Chattanooga
Sidney Bynum Nashville	Carlton Lewis Nashville
Dennis Clark Chattanooga	Christy Little Jackson
Beverly Cosley Chattanooga	Jerry Maness Memphis
Michelle Crowley Antioch	Diane Neighbors Nashville
James B. Ford Franklin	Sue Pilson Cookeville
Susan Glassman Germantown	Colonel Robbins Murfreesboro
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Marti Herndon Martin	Dwight Stokes Sevierville
Barbara Holden Memphis	Nancy Williams Memphis
Trudy Hughes Maryville	Joetta Yarbro Dyersburg
Charles Hutchins Greeneville	JoAnn Yates Lookout Mt.
Drew Johnson Johnson City	Linda O’Neal Executive Director

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After School

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busy and protected would have an impact, but the programs are also credited with improving positive behaviors. The financial advantages include those from improving students' school performances and from increasing students' civic and value-based behaviors.

Studies of successful after-school programs found they exposed children to cultural experiences they otherwise would not have had. Participants were more likely to be law abiding, be sexually responsible and remain in school. Teens enrolled in after-school programs were a third less likely to experiment with drugs. They were also less likely to drink, smoke and engage in sexual behavior. One program, focused on pregnancy prevention, reduced births by 50 percent and contributed to a six-fold reduction in crime by male participants. Seventy-eight percent of programs included sports and recreation activities.

The No Child Left Behind legislation called for increases in funding for the 21st Century Learning Centers because of their potential to help students address gaps and lags in their learning and help those who need additional time to learn more. Children spend only 20 percent of their waking time in class, contributing to a feeling that more time may be needed to help them learn necessary skills. After-school programs have shown that they can help. Project Learn, an educational program of the Boys and Girls Clubs, increased participants' grade averages and improved school attendance and study skills, according to the Afterschool Alliance.

Support for After-School Programs

The Harvard Education Letter reported that in 2001 94 percent of voters surveyed said children and youth should have organized activities after school. A slightly smaller percentage of police chiefs believe that after-school programs have advantages for youth and communities. Respondents to a 2003 National League of Cities survey rated after-school programs as the third most frequently stated concern.

After-School Programs: Not Just a Longer School Day

Offering an after-school program is not just making the school day longer, an effort that is as counterproductive as replacing activity programs with classroom time. After-school programs are different. The educational enrichment does not include tests, and there are no grades. Less emphasis is placed on achievement and more on encouraging participation. A report on after-school in Massachusetts quoted a program director, "When kids come in here...they are not expecting to fail." After-school programs may be particularly successful with children who flourish in a less formal, more relaxed environment. The programs foster an excitement for learning and achievement. Tutoring and educational enrichment are part of comprehensive programs including arts, recreation and sports activities. ■

Resources

Afterschool Alliance, 1616 H St., NW, Suite 820, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 347-2030, Fax: (202) 347-2092, e-mail: info@afterschoolalliance.org, www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Promising Practices in Afterschool, AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, 1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 884-8947, Fax: (202) 884-8404, E-mail: cyd@aed.org, www.afterschool.org.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 1212 New York Ave. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 776-0027, Fax (202) 776-0110, www.fightcrime.org, Mark Rogers, Tennessee State Director, 615-269-9287, mrogers@fightcrime.org.



TCCY Authorization
No. 316069, May
2006

LEAPs: Lottery Education: After-School Programs

A change in Tennessee State Lottery legislation passed by the Tennessee General Assembly authorizes the distribution of unclaimed lottery winnings up to an annual limit of \$18 million to fund after-school programs. Previously after-school programs received only half the unclaimed lottery winnings. The funds are allocated through the Lottery for Education: Afterschool Programs and are directed to provide academic enrichment opportunities that reinforce and complement the regular academic program.

The state has been able to fund 88 new programs using \$8.9 million of unclaimed lottery earnings.

Public and nonprofit organizations providing after-school education programs for children ages 5 to 18 years old and enrolled in school are eligible for the funding. At least 50 percent of the students served must be at risk because of one or more of the following:

- ★ Eligible for free and reduced-price lunch;
- ★ Exposed to abuse or neglect or disabled;
- ★ Enrolled in a public school identified as failing to make adequate progress or having transferred out of such a school;
- ★ At risk of failing one or more subjects or behind grade level by at least one year;
- ★ Preference is given to programs that serve 80 percent at risk students.

Program activities must include:

- ★ 15 hours of services per week;
- ★ Reading skills development and enhancement;
- ★ Math or science skills development and enhancement;
- ★ Computer literacy and skills development;
- ★ Academic mentoring or tutoring;
- ★ Sports or leisure opportunities, including creative arts and enrichment.



For more information contact <http://tennessee.gov/education/learningsupport/extendedlearning.shtml>.

Federal Funding That Supports Youth Programs

Department of Labor – Job Corps, Workforce Investment Act, Youth Opportunity Grants

Department of Health and Human Services – Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities, National Youth Sports Program Fund, Promoting Responsible Fatherhood, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment

Department of Justice – Juvenile Accountability Block Grants, Gang-Free Schools and Communities, Juvenile Mentoring Program, Weed and Seed Program, Tribal Youth Program

Department of Education- 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, Safe Schools/Healthy Students, Gear Up

Department of Agriculture – Cooperative Extension Service/4-H, Child and Adult Care Food Program, School Breakfast and Lunch Program

Department of Housing and Urban Development – Community Development Block Grants, YouthBuild, America's Promise

Corporation for National and Community Service – AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America

Notes and Appreciation

*Amber Dixon, a Union University student working with TCCY as an intern this year, contributed to this newsletter. TCCY also thanks Ashley Mayer, Elizabeth Tate and James Moore, TCCY interns during the 2005-06 school year who contributed to **The Advocate**, along with their other contributions to the agency.*

After-School Programs: Not Just For Young Children

By Amber Dixon

Adolescence is a time of exploration and learning as young people's brains continue to develop. It is a time when exposure to the world outside the school room and the neighborhood can alter their paths forever.

After-school programs provide encouraging environments and inspiring activities that interest and benefit young people. Adolescents could learn to play an instrument, learn a sport, join a theater group, work with computers, volunteer and explore careers, develop new skills and be interns and apprentices.

"Quality after school programs provide a unique venue in which young people can develop the range of skills they need to enter the 21st Century workplace," according to Corporate Voices for Working Families. The Corporate Voices report noted that learning the traditional basics was no longer enough. Problem-solving, working with diversity, building relationships, communication and using technology are the new basic skills.

Unfortunately, opportunities to develop these skills after school frequently are not available to older youth. Of the 14.3 million children and youth caring for themselves after school, 51 percent are in grades 9-12. Quality after-school programs are needed for teens grades 9-12. After-school programs provide many benefits to participants, but most after-school programs are focused on younger children. Eight percent or 520,000 of the estimated 6.5 million children in after-school programs are in grades 9-12. In a recent survey, however, 2.3 million high school students would participate in an after-school program if one were available.

Aspects of Good After-School Programs for Adolescents

Listen to youth. They know what they need in an after school program – tailor programs to meet their needs and wants.

Be flexible. After-school programs should be flexible in when and where they meet, offer choices in activities, etc.

The Advocate is published by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth as an information forum on children's issues. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, an independent state agency, serves as an advocacy agency and information resource for planning and coordination of policies, programs, and services on behalf of the state's children and youth. The 21-member Commission, appointed by the governor, works with other agencies and with regional councils on children and youth in each development district to collect information and solve problems in children's services. To receive *The Advocate*, contact Fay L. Delk, Publications Editor, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, 710 James Robertson Parkway, 9th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0800. Phone: (615) 741-2633. Fax: (615) 741-5956. E-mail: fay.delk@state.tn.us.

Forty-one percent of municipal officials surveyed by the National League of Cities rated their efforts to meet the needs of children ages 13 and older as less than adequate. Only the needs of two other groups, children with special needs and lower-income working families, were rated as more inadequate. Nearly 60 percent indicated that opportunities for youth to participate in community service were fair, poor or nonexistent.

According to Columbia University psychologists Jodie Roth, Ph.D., and Jeanne Brooks Gunn, Ph.D., good after-school programs "are best characterized by their approach to youth as resources to be developed rather than as problems to be managed." The best after-school programs for adolescents combine many elements, including academic support and mentoring, service learning, youth empowerment and organizing, employment and career development, culture, arts and media, recreation and prevention.

After-school programs have been shown to:

- ★ Lead teens to develop new skills and interests;
- ★ Improve teens' grades and academic achievement;
- ★ Encourage teens to reach higher in planning their futures; and
- ★ Increase teens' self confidence and social skills. 

Successful After-School Programs

A study sponsored by the After-School Corporation found the following characteristics of 10 successful after-school programs.

- ★ **A broad array of enrichment opportunities** that spark interests and expand goals.
- ★ **Opportunities for skill building and mastery** (build literacy, etc.).
- ★ **Intentional relationship-building** with all stakeholders and with funders.
- ★ **A strong, experienced leader/manager supported by a trained and supervised staff,** with a shared vision and provided consistent feedback.
- ★ **The administrative, fiscal and professional-development support of the sponsoring organization,** including giving the on-site supervisor autonomy and flexibility.

Children's Advocacy Days 2006

Good "Days" Keep Getting Better

By Richard Kennedy



TCCY held another successful Children's Advocacy Days. The March event welcomed approximately 500 participants from the nine regions across the state. The theme for the 18th annual event was "Children's Health: Planning for the Future."

The highlight of the event was keynote speaker Dr. Pat Cooper, the superintendent of the McComb School District in Mississippi, who shared his successful implementation of a comprehensive school health program. Dr. Cooper's work in Mississippi resulted in documented gains in student attendance, test scores and teacher productivity, as well as reductions in dropout, suspension and expulsion rates.

Updates from Tom Catron, Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination; Commissioner Viola Miller, Department of Children's Services; Theodora Pinnock, Department of Health; John W. Scott, Department of Education; Frieda Outlaw, Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities; Glenda Shearon, Department of Human Services and J.D. Hickey, TennCare Bureau, expanded participants knowledge, as did a report on legislation and advocacy by TCCY Executive Director Linda O'Neal.

The program provided an opportunity for several legislators to speak: Senator Diane Black, Representative Richard Montgomery, Senator Roy Herron and Senator Thelma Harper. O'Neal also presented TCCY's *Blueprint for Tennessee's Future: Recommendations for Improving the Quality of Life for Children*.

A legislative reception was held at the Downtown Sheraton on the evening of March 14. Throughout the two-day event 68 legislators attended parts of the program.

Linda Moynihan was awarded the Jim Pryor Child Advocacy Award. Tierra French received the Youth Excellence Award. The Making Kids Count Media Award recipients were Small Market Broadcast, Sue Laskey, WLJT, Martin; Large Market Broadcast, Dorinda Carter, WKRN, Nashville; Large Market Print, Judith Tackett, The City Paper, Nashville. TCCY presented its first special merit award to David Sutherland, who produced the PBS documentary, "Country Boys." The documentary deftly portrayed the challenges faced by rural adolescents as they transition to adulthood.

The co-sponsors for this event were The Tennessee Youth Advisory Council (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative), Omni Visions, Tennessee Children's Advocacy Centers, Centerstone Mental Health Center, United Behavioral Health, TCCY regional councils on children and youth and many other fine organizations.



After-School Programs Help Rural Children Grow and Dream

By Amber Dixon

One quarter of school-age children in the United States attend public schools in rural areas. In Tennessee 69 of 95 counties are considered rural.

The parents of more than 28 million school-age children work outside the home. More than half of these children take care of themselves after the school day ends. Rural states lead the nation in the percentage of school-age children who come from families where both parents or the single parent works outside the home.

Compared to their urban and suburban peers, rural children and youth are less likely to complete high school or pursue higher education. Rural children and youth are more likely to engage in drug and alcohol use. Suicide rates are also higher for young people in rural communities.

Children and youth who participate in high quality after-school programs have better grades and conduct in school. Participants also have more academic and enrichment opportunities, better peer relations and emotional adjustment, and lower incidences of drug use, violence and pregnancy. After-school programs can also convey important life and work skills, like providing technology training.

After-school programs in rural communities could meet many needs including:

- ★ Allow children and youth to build important relationships with caring adults;
- ★ Foster a sense of civic responsibility;
- ★ Provide access to computers and technology;
- ★ Distract youth from risky behavior;
- ★ Offer quality, healthy, productive ways to spend afternoons; and
- ★ Create a haven for young people.

Establishing and maintaining high quality after-school programs in rural communities faces unique challenges:

- ★ Few private partners;
- ★ Limited tax base;
- ★ High transportation costs;
- ★ Limited access to technology;
- ★ Staffing challenges;
- ★ Fewer resources available to support system change.



There are many resources for establishing and maintaining a quality after-school program. Resources range from grant money to best practice ideas. 📖

More After-School Resources

21st Century Community Learning Centers, www.ed.gov/21stccclc or <http://tennessee.gov/education/learningsupport/titleiv/partb/>.

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 503 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 1200, Flint, Michigan 48502-1851, (810) 238-5651, Fax (810)766-1753, info@mott.org, www.mott.org.

Finance Project, 401 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 628-4200, Fax (202) 628-1293, info@financeproject.org www.financeproject.com.

Harvard Family Research Project, Study of Participation in Out-of-School Activities, www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/ost_participation.html. 📖

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21st Century Learning Centers

A federal program to fund after-school programs, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, was established to provide educational enrichment services. The program is administered by state education agencies and funds schools, community- and faith-based organizations and youth development agencies. Funding for the program began at \$1 million in 1997 and peaked at \$1 billion in 2002. Despite provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) authorizing annual increases up to \$2.5 billion in 2007, actual funding for the program has been reduced in every federal budget since the NCLB was passed in 2002.



In Tennessee approximately 78 programs receive between \$50,000 and \$110,000 grants, which are awarded for three to five years. They serve more than 15,000 children.

After-school programs can also receive funding assistance from the federal school lunch and nutrition program. Programs may also qualify for extended learning opportunities funding.

21st Century Learning Centers should provide:

- Core educational services;
- Enrichment and support activities;
- Community involvement;
- Services to parents;
- Extended hours;
- Professional development;
- Evaluation.

For more information, see www.ed.gov/21stcclc.

No Child Left Behind: Supplemental Learning

Title I, which began in 1967, is the largest source of federal funding and is targeted to schools serving a high percentage (currently at least 40 percent) low income students. Title I funds can be used to fund after-school efforts. Teacher's professional development costs can be funded through the program. Schools that fail to make "adequate yearly progress" are especially targeted.

NCLB also allows for Title I School Improvement Funds to be used for after-school programs in schools that have failed to make adequate yearly progress if integrated into the larger school improvement plan.