



Using Out-of-School Time to Create Opportunities for New York City Youth: A Briefing Report

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Introduction

Converging national and local trends have created an urgent need to rethink out-of-school-time services. National policy shifts in the last decade paved the way for out-of-school-time service reform, especially for children living in low and moderate-income households. First, welfare reform requirements enacted in 1996, made work mandatory for hundreds of thousands of families with children under thirteen years of age, necessitating full and part-day care arrangements while parents work. Second, the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act, redirected federal aid for low-income students and linked funding to parent choice, afterschool remediation services, standardized testing, academic performance targets and other goals. Finally the Workforce Investment Act created new expectations about employment, work experience, summer jobs and other work-related supports for in and out-of-school youth. State-level programs, policies and funding priorities were reconfigured to conform with and meet the demands of new federal requirements and local government realignment was a necessary corollary to these state and federal changes.

Nowhere does the intersection of these policy changes come together with more impact than in New York City, which has begun a process to rethink the way that out-of-school time (OST) services are organized, governed, delivered and financed; paving the way for a fundamental restructuring and long overdue improvements in public schools, afterschool services, and youth development programming.

It is against this backdrop that Mayor Bloomberg has led an historic and ambitious effort to reorganize the New York City public schools, to improve accountability and increase academic achievement and from which he has begun to advance a new vision for meeting the needs of children and youth in the time they spend out of school. The Mayor's education and youth services reform efforts come together programmatically in a vision where every New York City child has a chance to learn and where a variety of learning and developmental opportunities are provided during the school day and in out-of-school time to support academic achievement, social and emotional health and other positive youth development goals. While there are concerns about how the city will manage these multiple large-scale reform efforts simultaneously, there is broad support by parents, policymakers, professionals, providers, advocates, funders, academics, researchers and others that these improvements are timely and necessary.

In October 2003 the Mayor kicked-off a major planning effort to better coordinate and increase the availability and quality of out-of-school-time services with funding from the Wallace Foundation. This process, directed by the Fund for the City of New York, brings together the policy reform goals outlined by the Mayor and supported by the City Council, and the expertise, experience and support of a broad community of interest to develop and sustain an array of high quality, easily accessible, regularly available and affordable out-of-school-time services for New York City youth.

The community at large has a vital interest in the success of our children. Well-educated young people who are ready to face the demands of the new knowledge economy will play a key role in New York City's economic growth and prosperity. And while schools are essential to this process, they are not the only places where learning happens. In fact, research and empirical evidence supports the contention that as much learning takes place outside of the classroom – at home and in the community during out-of-school-time hours - as in it. This suggests that increased attention must be paid to what children and youth do when they are not in school.

Furthermore, the changing nature of work has resulted in long periods during the week and during the summer and school vacations, when children are out of direct contact with and supervision by their parents or school personnel. This *home alone* syndrome, not only increases safety and behavior risks for young people, but it affects parent productivity at work and creates tension with employers, who need workers who are not distracted by worries about the safety of their children.

Most parents, working or not, seek safe and supervised activities to fill their children's out-of-school time. But safety and supervision are not enough. Parents also want out-of-school time to be spent in meaningful ways, involved in supplemental activities that advance academic achievement, learning and college preparation, develop athletic and creative abilities and nurture social and emotional development and leadership skills.

It is not in anyone's interest for young people to be home alone, unengaged or unsupervised when the school day is over. There are better alternatives to *vegging out* in front of the television, playing computer games, *hanging out* on the street or sitting at home day after day. Consider the risks that can be minimized, or even averted, through participation in out-of-school time programs – programs that are shown to reduce and prevent teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol use and school failure and that promote pro-social behavior and healthy peer relationships.

Untapped potential exists during the time when children and youth are out of school and unengaged. OST programs motivate and prepare young people to succeed in school and life by preparing them for college and work at a time when the bar is being set higher and higher. Government policies and funding must support the development of young people's skills and talents as well as their intellect to prepare

them to be the good citizens and productive workforce of the future and in so doing help secure economic prosperity for all New Yorkers.

Understanding this, policymakers are beginning to ask:

- How can out-of-school time be better used to prepare our children for the future?
- How can out-of-school hour programs for children be used to support parents' labor force participation?
- How can school day and out-of-school time activities work in tandem to promote learning, achievement and healthy child development?

Over the years, a variety of out-of-school-time activities have evolved in New York City, provided or funded by government agencies, foundations, community organizations, schools, religious congregations and a growing cadre of specialists (tutors and instructors). While many youth and families have benefited, the evidence suggests that the range of OST activities is inadequate and the availability of OST programs is insufficient to meet the needs of an estimated 450,000 New York City children who are currently unserved and their families and communities.

Key Points

In 2004, with a grant from the Wallace Foundation, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC) undertook an assessment of the need for and availability of OST programs in New York City neighborhoods. This work, conducted for the Mayor's Office, the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and the Fund for the City of New York, Learning in Communities: The New York Project, supports the City's OST planning effort. This overview report, "Using Out-of-School Time to Create Opportunities for New York City Youth", synthesizes several complex data sets into an easy-to-use format that identifies priorities and preferences for OST services in New York City. The data was shared in Working Data Sessions held at the Wallace Foundation on 4/21/04; at the Mayor's Office, Fund for the City of New York and DYCD on 4/29/04; with the Parent and Community Leadership Team on 7/20/04; and for the Leadership Team on 7/29/04.

This work is the first comprehensive needs assessment of what New York City's young people are doing in out-of-school time and what they and their parents say they need. It reveals a yawning gap between need and available services, and makes a series of recommendations to address key concerns cited by parents and by young people and others that surfaced in the course of collecting and analyzing administrative, demographic and other data. These concerns fall into three main categories: cost, communication and convenience and raise questions about two other areas: infrastructure and program quality. The data highlight the need for structural changes in the design, management and funding of OST programs in order to better serve

families, ensure quality programming and better meet the developmental needs of New York City's young people.

What do we mean by Out-of-School Time?

A quality OST system is one that offers safe and developmentally appropriate environments for children and youth when they are not in school. OST programs should support the academic, creative, social, physical, and emotional development of young people, and serve the needs of New York City's families and communities. (Vision Statement for New York City's Out-Of-School Time System, OST-NYC, Working Draft, June 16, 2004)

Overview of the Report

This report offers detail on the need for, availability of and preferences for OST programming as expressed by New York City parents and youth through public opinion polling and focus groups and captured in an analysis of administrative and demographic data. The report relies on several data sets generated by and derived from: a 1000 household public opinion poll; six parent and youth focus groups; and administrative, demographic, education and child well-being indicators. This report synthesizes data about OST services with information about what parents and youth want from OST programs, identifies a set of findings and generates a series of recommendations that flow from the data and findings to inform the OST planning process.

- **Focus groups with New York City parents and youth** took place between March 19 and 25, 2004, in collaboration with the Partnership for After School Education, Inc. (PASE). Six groups were conducted:
 - Three took place in Brooklyn, and included one middle school group, one high school group and one parent group. All participants were involved in OST activities that were defined as including after-school programs, classes, test preparation, jobs, internships and community service and summer school and camp. Groups were roughly split between boys and girls, and Hispanic and African-American youth and parents. These OST programs served the following neighborhoods: Prospect Park, Flatbush, Park Slope, Sunset Park, Ft. Greene, Clinton Hill and Bedford-Stuyvesant.
 - Three groups were held in the Bronx, including one group of high school students who participate in formal, out-of-school time programs, one group of high school students who did not participate in formal OST programs and one group of parents. Within the parents' group, participants had children who were involved in OST programs. The youth that participated in OST

programs were by and large Latino, while the young people who were not engaged in an OST activity were African American.

- **A citywide poll of 1,000 New York City parents** of school-age children was conducted by telephone using random digit dialing to reach parents of children aged 5 to 19.¹ It was conducted between February 12 and 29, 2004. While most of the interviews were conducted in English, 121 were conducted in Spanish and 14 in Mandarin or Cantonese Chinese. The poll was conducted by a Washington, D.C.-based research firm, Belden Russonello & Stewart, working under the direction of Douglas Gould & Co., Inc.
- **Data collection and analysis** of the supply of and demand for OST services based on: the poll findings; the PASE database of OST programs in New York City; 2000 Census data; and CCC's Keeping Track of New York City Children.
- **Recommendations** that flow from the data on parent and youth need and preferences, data analysis and provider feedback on the data are included as a springboard for discussion.

Major Findings

Understanding Capacity/Supply of Government-Funded OST Programs

The PASE database of 1,123 government funded OST programs (estimated to be serving 221,120 children in New York City), was used to analyze the availability or supply of currently operating OST programs in New York City that receive full or partial government funding.² This database is the only centralized database available that collects OST services data across providers and funding sources. It does not include OST programs or take account of children served in activities that receive no government funds and are fee-based or funded through foundation grants.

The PASE data divides each OST program day into three time slots: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. or *daytime*, 3-6 p.m. or *afternoon*, and 6-9 p.m. or *evening*. Most OST program sites provide afternoon programs five days a week during the school year. During the summer

¹ The poll was conducted during February 2004 after which time New York City's OST process changed the age range of its study to include youth up to 21 years of age.

² The PASE database collects information on sites from the New York City: Administration for Children's Services; Department of Parks and Recreation; public library system; Department of Cultural Affairs; Housing Authority; Department of Youth and Community Development; Department of Education; as well as LIFENET (Mental Health Association of New York City); and PASE's general outreach.

months, only one-third of OST sites offer daytime or afternoon programs five days a week. Fewer sites provide services on weekends, especially during the summer.

- Three-quarters of OST program sites in New York City provide services every afternoon, Monday through Friday during the school year.
- The overwhelming majority of sites offer services five days a week and few offer services less than five days a week.
- About a third of program sites (35%) provide daytime services during the summer.
- Relatively few sites offer services in the evening or on the weekends, especially during the summer.
- Manhattan is the borough with the most OST program sites in every time slot, both during the school year and in the summer.
- The most prevalent type of OST program is academic, followed by: youth leadership; creative/cultural; recreation/sports; intergenerational; parent involvement; and career exploration.³

Understanding the Demand for OST Services

There are approximately 1.6 million school-aged children (age 5-19 years) in New York City today. The public opinion poll of 1000 parents of school-age children in the five boroughs, found that only 57% of New York City school-age children are enrolled in OST programs during the school year. Discounting the number of children whose parents do not want them to participate in OST programs during the school year and those who identified other barriers to participation, the poll found an unserved rate of 28% for New York City children. When applied to the City's school-age population age

³ The PASE database categorizes programs as follows: arts and culture, recreation and sports, conflict resolution, health education, community service, mentoring, peer education, counseling and group work, advocacy, intergenerational programs, parent involvement programs, homework help, literacy, math and science, ESOL, GED, computers, SAT prep, college prep, job training, job readiness, journalism, special needs programs, immigrant services, and other programs. We condensed these categories into nine new categories as follows: arts and culture; recreation and sports; youth leadership and community services (which includes conflict resolution, health education, community service, mentoring, peer education, counseling and group work, and advocacy); intergenerational and parent involvement programs; academics (which includes homework help, literacy, math and science, ESOL, GED, computers, SAT prep, and college prep); career exploration (which includes job training, job readiness, and journalism); special needs programs; immigrant services; and other.

5-19 years, an estimated 450,000 children and youth of New York City children are unserved by OST programs.

It should be noted that the poll asked parents to consider a broad range of OST activities, both free and fee-based, including tutoring, private lessons (such as music or dance), community service activities and part time jobs as well as traditional after-school programs. The unserved rates derived from the poll are thought to be conservative estimates as they are based on a broad definition of publicly funded and fee-based OST services.

Demographics and Geography of Need: Unserved School-Age Children

According to the survey, parents report their school-age children's involvement in OST as follows:

- **School year participation:** About half (57%) of New York City children participate in one or more OST activities during the school year.
- **Underserved:** Approximately one-third (30%) of school-age children have been prevented from fuller participation in OST due to one barrier or another, although they participate in some type of OST activity during the school year. The barriers identified include: hours that do not fit the child's or family's schedules, programs that are too expensive, travel arrangements that are too difficult, lack of space, or the lack of a program that fits the child's needs (the parents of underserved children did not identify their child as not needing or wanting OST services; they did not respond by saying that their child was too young or too old nor did they respond by saying that they wanted the child at home when not in school).
- **Unserved:** Fully 28% of households surveyed identified children who were not engaged in any OST program during the school year (the parents of unserved children did not identify their child as either too young or too old for OST services nor did they respond by saying that they wanted the child at home during out-of-school time).

The poll data suggests that an estimated 450,000 New York City children age 5-19 years are currently unserved by OST programs. Further, the distribution of unserved children varies across neighborhoods, by race and ethnicity and by household income. The data also suggests that as many as 480,000 additional children need more OST services than they are receiving now – that is, they have encountered barriers that prevent them from taking part in additional OST services.

Unserviced Rates for School Year OST Services	
(Source: CCC, 2000 Census Data and Poll of 1000 New York City Parents)	
Demographic	Unserviced Rate
Citywide	28%
Manhattan	27%
Brooklyn	30%
Bronx	30%
Queens	25%
Staten Island	20%
Child 5-9 years old	27%
10-13	29%
14-19	27%
White child	20%
Latino	34%
African American	27%
Asian	27%
Household < \$25K	36%
\$25K to \$49K	26%
\$50K+	16%

Community Districts with the most unserved children also tend to be neighborhoods with a concentration of risks to child well-being. Community Districts with upwards of 11,000 children unserved include: Concourse/Highbridge (B04), University Heights (B05) and Unionport/Soundview (B09) in the Bronx; Williamsburg/Greenpoint (K01), Bedford Stuyvesant (K03), East New York (K05), Borough Park (K12), Flatbush/Midwood (K14), East Flatbush (K17) and Canarsie (K18) in Brooklyn; Washington Heights (M12) in Manhattan; and Jamaica/St. Albans (Q12) in Queens. (Attachment 1: Children Unserved: By Community District . Attachment 2: Risks to Child Well-Being)⁴

⁴ This map ranks community districts according to their risks to child well-being using a composite rank that includes the following indicators: population age 18 and under, single parents, children under 18 living below the poverty level, new immigrant public school students, the infant mortality rate, the asthma hospitalization rate, the estimated number of children without health insurance, births to teen mothers, juvenile and youth felony and misdemeanor arrests, and the percentage of youth age 16-19 years who are not in school and not high school graduates.

Unserved Children by Community District ⁵				
Community District	Estimated Unserved		Community District	Estimated Unserved
Bronx	30%		Manhattan	27%
Mott Haven (B01)	7,398		Battery Park/Tribeca (M01)	981
Hunts Point (B02)	4,076		Greenwich Village (M02)	2,137
Morrisania (B03)	6,276		Lower East Side (M03)	6,998
Concourse/Highbridge (B04)	11,317		Chelsea/Clinton (M04)	1,737
University Heights (B05)	11,174		Midtown Business District (M05)	825
East Tremont (B06)	6,607		Murray Hill/Stuyvesant (M06)	2,057
Fordham (B07)	10,572		Upper West Side (M07)	5,782
Riverdale (B08)	5,608		Upper East Side (M08)	4,934
Unionport/Soundview (B09)	12,699		Manhattanville (M09)	6,391
Throgs Neck (B10)	6,182		Central Harlem (M10)	6,610
Pelham Parkway (B11)	6,519		East Harlem (M11)	7,512
Williamsbridge (B12)	10,346		Washington Heights (M12)	12,327
Bronx Total	98,791		Manhattan Total	58,292
Brooklyn	30%		Queens	25%
Williamsburg/Greenpoint (K01)	11,390		Astoria/Long Island City (Q01)	8,443
Fort Greene/Brooklyn Hts (K02)	4,537		Sunnyside/Woodside (Q02)	4,217
Bedford Stuyvesant (K03)	11,319		Jackson Heights (Q03)	8,274
Bushwick (K04)	8,557		Elmhurst/Corona (Q04)	7,966
East New York (K05)	14,421		Ridgewood/Glendale (Q05)	7,793
Park Slope (K06)	4,760		Rego Park/Forest Hills (Q06)	3,744
Sunset Park (K07)	7,538		Flushing (Q07)	9,823
Crown Heights North (K08)	6,561		Fresh Meadows/Briarwood (Q08)	6,704
Crown Heights South (K09)	7,556		Woodhaven (Q09)	7,660
Bay Ridge (K10)	5,699		Howard Beach (Q10)	6,550
Bensonhurst (K11)	8,796		Bayside (Q11)	4,888
Borough Park (K12)	14,306		Jamaica/St. Albans (Q12)	12,945
Coney Island (K13)	6,123		Queens Village (Q13)	10,500
Flatbush/Midwood (K14)	12,030		The Rockaways (Q14)	6,230
Sheepshead Bay (K15)	8,906		Total	105,777
Brownsville (K16)	7,788			
East Flatbush (K17)	11,411		Staten Island	20%
Canarsie (K18)	13,249		Willowbrook (S01)	7,495
Brooklyn Total	164,947		South Beach (S02)	4,977
			Tottenville (S03)	6,369
New York City Total	446,695		Staten Island Total	18,889

Focus Groups with New York City Parents and Youth

Parent and youth focus group participants gave very clear reasons for using or not using OST programs, frankly assessed their satisfaction and pointed to gaps that need to be filled.

⁵ This table applies the borough unserved rate to the number of children age 5-19 in each community district within the borough.

Not only do parents and youth report that OST activities are necessary and integral to their daily lives – helping young people earn money and do better in school and providing supervision to children while parents work – they also said that OST programs build positive self esteem and assist young people in the pursuit of their dreams and goals for the future (to go to college, be a dancer, artist, teacher, etc.). Even among youth who don't currently participate in OST programs, there is an overwhelming interest in becoming engaged in an OST activity.

Those who participate in OST activities are largely satisfied with the programs. High school youth express a strong preference for community-based OST programs where problematic or negative relationships with students and teachers could be left behind at the end of the day, rather than for OST programs that are based in school. They noted that community-based programs also offered an opportunity to meet youth and adults from their home community. Middle school youth preferred having OST programs take place at their school. They viewed their school as their community and felt safe there.

Focus group participants valued the welcoming attitudes of adults working in community-based OST programs and parents felt that qualified staff who cared about their children was important. Having qualified staff that care about children, is important to parents. Both middle and high school participants opposed the employment of high school-aged personnel in OST programs because they did not feel that young employees were attentive or skilled enough.

Tutoring and academic support were a priority for high school youth and parents. Other respondents wanted more access to a broader range of OST programs and internships to hone their skills, boost self-confidence, and broaden their horizons socially, academically and professionally. Middle and high school youth enjoyed the opportunities OST programs offer to socialize in a safe, supervised and structured environment. Middle school youth valued their involvement on school government councils and both middle and high school youth appreciated opportunities to work on community improvement projects. The high school students were aware of the importance of technology in school and for work and wanted access to computers, the Internet and web design instruction to prepare for the future.

Overall, focus group participants reported a lack of OST activities during the summer. They wanted summer programs that offer opportunities to travel, participate in college preparation programs and work in internships and jobs.

Finally, all of the youth participating in the focus groups were aware of the connection between the focus groups and efforts to shape City policies, and they were eager to have their voices heard as policies and programs were being shaped. And, most youth

made a connection between government budget cutbacks and the loss of an OST activity or program they cared about. Tragically, they interpreted the motivation behind these actions as racist, expressing the feeling that budget cuts that affected activities they cared about or budget proposals that threatened their programs year after year, happened because they are young people of color and because government leaders do not care about them.

Public Opinion Survey of 1000 New York City Parents

FINDING ONE

Parents agree on and want the same things from OST programs

Across race, income levels, and geography, the reasons parents wanted their children enrolled in OST activities, varied only slightly. Parents take into account both practical and educational considerations when deciding what their children should do when apart from family. Once the practical thresholds, such as finding a safe place for children to be, are met, parents hope activities will enrich their children's education in areas not taught at school, enhance their academics, and provide a way to be around good models.

Looking first at practical considerations, majorities of parents place top importance on finding a safe place for the child to be (73%), keeping the child from getting into trouble (68%), and finding a supervised place for her/him while a parent is at work (52%).⁶ Parents also value the ways in which OST programs and services contribute to their child's development - academically, artistically, and socially. More parents report their children currently participate in sports and physical activities than in activities such as receiving academic help and exposure to arts and music. However, in the list of reasons to enroll, being physically active comes a little farther down the list of parental desires (64%), below adding to the child's education with things not taught in school (74%), being around good role models (74%), and getting academic help (73%).

⁶ The poll's listing of "Reasons to Enroll" is based on the body of OST research, extracting the core functions related to what parents and youth want and need as well as what constitutes a quality OST program or activity.

% Top Reason to Enroll	Unserved	Underserved	All 1000 NYC Parents polled
Adding to child's education with things not taught at school, such as music, art, language, leadership skills, or other areas	75%	81%	74%
Getting child help with academic areas including homework or test preparation	72%	77%	73%
The need to find a safe place for child to be	72%	77%	73%
Getting job experience, internships, or doing community service work (<i>Base is 9th-12th grade: N=72 for Unserved and N=66 for Underserved</i>)	72%	74%	69%
Providing a way for child to be around good role models	69%	80%	74%
Giving child an opportunity to play sports or be physically active	67%	68%	64%
Keeping child from getting into trouble	65%	74%	68%
Socializing, playing, and having fun	60%	63%	61%
Finding a way for child to earn money (<i>Base is 9th-12th grade: N=72 for Unserved and N=66 for Underserved</i>)	54%	42%	47%
Child needs supervision while a parent or guardian is at work	50%	58%	52%

FINDING TWO

Many New York City school-age children (69%) participate in OST activities.

- During the school year, 57% take part in one or more of the following OST activities: programs such as classes, clubs, or sports held at schools (39%) or in other locations (27%), child care centers (seven percent), or jobs, internships, or community service commitments (25% of high school students).
- During the summer months, a total of 39% of children participate in OST activities. These include day or overnight camps (19%), summer school (18%), or summer jobs (29% of high school students).

FINDING THREE

Non-participation in OST activities is linked to race, ethnicity and family income.

Children most likely to reap the benefits from OST participation are disproportionately white and have well-educated, upper-income parents.

- Fully eight in 10 white children (81%), those who have a college-educated parent (81%), and children living in households earning \$50,000 or more annually (79%) participate in one or more OST programs or activities in the calendar year.

- Fewer children in families earning less than \$25,000 annually (58%), Latino children (60%), and those who have a parent with a high school education or less (61%) can be found in OST programs at some point during the calendar year. When children who are unserved during the school year are considered, the same problem is encountered. That is, families with lower household income and children of color are more likely to be unserved.

Race and Ethnicity	Unserved Rates
Latino	34%
African American	27%
Asian	27%
White	20%

Household Income	Unserved rates
< \$25K	36%
\$25K to \$49K	26%
\$50K+	16%

- Many of these disparities are constant across types of programs and services –from activities at school to those offered off school grounds.
- Children in upper-income households with higher-educated parents are also more likely than their counterparts to participate in programs and services that require fees or other costs. For example, of parents whose children participate in OST activities during the calendar year, over half (56%) earning more than \$50,000 a year pay for the programs, whereas only 23% of those earning less than \$25,000 pay fees or other costs.

FINDING FOUR

The unserved rate is virtually the same for children regardless of age but unserved rates vary markedly by borough.

- Across all age groups of children there are substantial numbers of children who are unserved and the rate of those who are unserved is virtually identical. When these rates are applied to 2000 Census data, the *actual number* of children who are unserved is highest among 14-19-year olds.

Age Group ⁷	Unserved Rate	Number of Unserved
5 to 9	27%	151,500
10 to 13	29%	124,400
14-19	27%	168,000

- Looking at the unserved population during the school year and across the five boroughs, the Bronx and Brooklyn have the highest rate of children living in their borough who are not in any OST activity and whose parents would like them to be in one.

Borough	Unserved Rate
Manhattan	27%
Brooklyn	30%
Bronx	30%
Queens	25%
Staten Island	20%

⁷ This table applies the citywide unserved rate for each age group to the number of children in each age group

FINDING FIVE

OST activities are predominantly athletic but youth also get scholastic help and nourishment for their creative sides.

- Seven in ten of the children who participate in OST programs at their school (70%) play sports or take part in physical activities. Among children in child care centers, 72% are involved in physical activities, as are 76% of those attending other programs held off school grounds.
- Academic assistance is often a part of the activities children stay at school to do (58%). Three quarters (76%) of children who regularly go to a child care center and only 39% of those going to programs held elsewhere in the community are getting help with academics.
- Art, culture and/or music are included in the activities of close to half of the children participating in programs at the school and off school grounds (49% and 54% respectively). Among those at child care centers, 62% are involved in these activities.

FINDING SIX

Parents view OST programs and services as beneficial to children and helpful in meeting the family's practical needs.

- A main reason to enroll children in OST programs and services is to enhance their overall development. Close to three-quarters of parents say the top reasons are enriching their child's education in the arts, music and other areas (74%), helping with academics (73%), and providing good role models (74%).
- Nearly as many parents also identify as top reasons their practical needs, such as finding a safe place for their children (73%) and wanting to keep their children out of trouble (68%).
- Providing a supervised environment while a parent is at work is more important to parents of younger children –five to nine year olds, 63% reported this reason as a top priority, compared to 33% of parents of 14 to 19 year olds. During school holidays, 31% of parents reported that they or another adult in the household missed work last year, to care for their children.
- During a typical week, 16% of children age 10-13 years and 13% of children age five to nine years, spend time at home without adults around. While for the 46% of youth age 14-19 years, this practice may be acceptable, for the younger population, it is risky.

- The great majority of parents with children in OST programs and services express satisfaction with the program in which their child most often participates.

FINDING SEVEN

The main barriers to participation in OST activities were identified as: Cost, Convenience and Communication.

The survey of New York City parents of school-age children reveals that although the City's out-of-school time programs for youth serve nearly seven in 10 children (57% during the school year and 39% in the summer months) at some point during the year, the programs may be under-serving those most in need. In the five boroughs, children in grades kindergarten through 12 routinely take part in organized OST activities, from playing on the baseball team to taking a music lesson off campus, to spending the entire afternoon every school day in programs sponsored by a community-based organization or their school. A large majority of parents enroll their children in these programs for a variety of practical and other reasons. They find these programs valuable not just as safe havens for young people when school is out, but as conduits for developing interest and skills in art and music, to get help with homework and to provide their children with good role models and new opportunities.

What is holding back participation? The survey indicates that issues of cost, convenience, and communication are the main barriers. Half of parents surveyed said they were not satisfied with the availability of affordable programs in their areas, three in 10 did not know enough about programs and services to form an opinion, and four in 10 said that transportation had been a barrier or expressed dissatisfaction with the hours of the programs.

FINDING EIGHT

Cost of programs is the most common barrier to participation.

- Only 18% of parents with school-age children in New York City say there are enough good, affordable programs in the area.
- Dissatisfaction with the cost of OST programs is highest among parents of African-American children (57% not satisfied), residents of the Bronx (54%), and middle-income parents (54% of those making \$25,000 to \$49,000 annually).
- Parents whose children do not currently take part in any OST activities during the calendar year are especially critical of the affordability of programs: half (51%) express dissatisfaction, compared to 43% of parents whose children do participate.

FINDING NINE

Inconvenient location and hours of operation prevent children from taking part in OST activities.

- More than four in 10 (44%) parents whose children do not participate in any OST activities during the calendar year say that the need to make transportation arrangements to and from programs has kept their child from participating, and 40% are not satisfied with the convenience of locations. When asked whether they prefer programs and services near their home 47% of these parents say near the home versus 19% who prefer activities at the school (31% volunteer that either or both are workable for them).
- More than a third of all parents (35%) say they have withheld their child from an OST activity because the program was held during inconvenient hours.

FINDING TEN

Poor communication and lack of awareness about OST services limited participation.

- A lack of awareness about OST programs and services is another significant barrier, especially among parents whose children are not in any programs, and less-educated and lower-income parents.
- Three in 10 parents (30%) of all surveyed, cannot say whether there are enough good, affordable programs and services for their children, or too few. They simply do not know.
- A full four in 10 parents whose children are not participating in any programs (41%) do not know enough to voice an opinion about the availability of programs and services, compared to 30% of all parents surveyed.
- Thirty-seven percent of parents earning \$25,000 or less do not know enough to form an opinion, compared to only 25% of those earning \$50,000 or more.

Recommendations

Taken together, the data in this report supports the need for the development of a streamlined, better-coordinated, better-resourced system of out-of-school time services and programs. The data raise important and as yet unanswered questions about cost, convenience, communication, infrastructure and programming.

For New York City and its school-age children to fully benefit from the opportunities offered through the productive use of out-of-school time, an OST plan must be developed that considers and addresses the barriers to participation in OST services identified in this data. Outstanding questions raised by the data must also be addressed

in the plan: 1) About OST service availability, quality and funding; about enrollment, participation, utilization, capacity and gaps; 2) About the need to improve coordination across the City's eight different OST service systems; and, 3) About the need to develop a streamlined OST infrastructure that supports quality programming and a trained, experienced workforce, that will enable the City to meet the needs of children and families for many years to come.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Cost

- Provide universal access to OST programs at no cost for children age 5-19 years. Parents earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year report the greatest difficulty paying for fee-based OST programs, accounting for their children's low participation rates (New York City median household income: \$38,000). Many parents are unaware of available no-cost OST options.
- Subsidize transportation costs, or walkers to supervise children's travel from school to OST programs.
- Promote program participation in the federal Child and Adult Care Food program.
- Invest in OST services development and phase in OST program expansion over a period of five years to meet the needs of an estimated 450,000 unserved children and youth .

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Convenience

- Increase convenience and accessibility by developing OST programs closer to home. Increase the availability of OST programs in underserved communities. Communities with the most unserved children include: Concourse/Highbridge (B04), University Heights (B05) and Unionport/Soundview (B09) in the Bronx; Williamsburg/Greenpoint (K01), Bedford Stuyvesant (K03), East New York (K05), Borough Park (K12), Flatbush/Midwood (K14), East Flatbush (K17) and Canarsie (K18) in Brooklyn; Washington Heights (M12) in Manhattan; and Jamaica/St. Albans (Q12) in Queens.
- Align OST program hours to meet parent work schedules.
- Coordinate OST daily program schedules (start-time) with school schedules (release-time) and increase the availability of OST programs during school breaks and summer vacations.

- Develop on-line technology and improve telephone assistance to help parents locate and enroll their child in an OST program. An up-to-date OST services directory and on-line and telephone-assisted program enrollment function will improve access to OST services. DYCD’s website provides location and telephone numbers for BEACON programs and links to the PASE New York City Family Guide for After School Programs. PASE maintains an interactive website for parents – www.pasesetter.com, that links users to OST programs by address. Match and link the database to both the DYCD Youthline (I-800-246-4646) and the city’s 311 system.
- Develop a coordinated and streamlined OST enrollment process.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Communication

- Increase parent and public awareness of OST programs and expedite enrollment in OST programs by:
 - Developing print material in multiple languages: Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), French-Creole, Korean, Russian and Spanish and establishing multiple community dissemination points at: libraries, pediatricians’ offices and clinics, through the city’s new public health and mental health initiative- Take Care New York- and send information home with school age children.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Infrastructure

- Support the development of a planning and management infrastructure that promotes high quality, developmentally appropriate OST programming. Use the DYCD database to support OST system redesign and planning efforts including: tracking information on foundation and government funded OST programs and services and OST services provided directly or through contract by the Administration for Children’s Services, Department of Cultural Affairs, Department of Education, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Youth and Community Development, New York City Housing Authority, Human Resources Administration and public Libraries and producing reports on attendance, enrollment, vacancies, capacity by community.
- An annual OST budget allocation that supports OST services, phases in OST expansion and an open RFP and expedited procurement process that provides the flexibility to expand services in underserved neighborhoods.

- Develop for all government subsidized OST services - program, facility and performance standards and a performance monitoring system that promotes and assures quality services, qualified staff and safe facilities.
- Adequate resources to address issues related to the recruitment, retention, training, preparation and development of the OST workforce.
- Strengthen OST program infrastructure and administrative capacity
- Annual public reporting of OST system performance and progress.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Programming

- Move toward a coherent set of program school-based and community-based OST programs and activities across city agencies that support the city’s OST goals including the development of young people’s intellectual, physical, emotional, social, artistic, and leadership skills and civic responsibilities.

Conclusion

There is an urgent need to increase the availability of OST opportunities for New York City’s school-age children and youth. This report begins a discussion of what parents and youth want in the way of OST services, offering suggestions to guide the city in its OST planning and OST system redesign efforts starting from where families and children are. Taken together, the public opinion poll, focus groups and indicator data tell the story about OST needs and services in New York City today. This data provides a context and information to support the development of the city’s OST plan. The data should be used to think through system design, program model development, service offerings and program locations. This report provides a baseline estimate of the number of children and youth needing OST services and from this, estimates can be made about the need for and adequacy of OST funding over a period of years. The report ends by asking the question, “How can available data on OST service needs, availability, capacity and program preferences be best used to develop and monitor a universal OST system for all school-age children in New York City?” and positing some recommendations to consider about how to get there.

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