

2013



After School Brief



**Children's
Services Council**
PALM BEACH COUNTY
Healthy. Safe. Strong.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS: SAFETY, OPPORTUNITY AND BENEFITS

Approximately 101,310 children ages 5-11 reside in Palm Beach County, with nearly three quarters of them in homes where parents work. School-age children of working parents need a safe, engaging place to go after school that supports their social and academic development.

Afterschool programs can improve academic and social-emotional outcomes, in addition to preventing risky behaviors and promoting health and wellness. Afterschool programs have shown promise in impacting academically at-risk students¹. An analysis of afterschool studies concluded that afterschool programs can lead to improved attendance, behavior, test scores and grades². Children in programs show better performance on reading and math tests, as well as fewer serious disciplinary offenses such as gang activity, use of weapons, alcohol or drugs^{3,4}.

Various calculations of benefits and cost savings for afterschool have shown substantial savings ranging from \$3 -\$12.90 for every dollar invested related to:

- crime reduction
- improved school performance,
- reduction in high school dropout rates, and
- teen pregnancy prevention⁵.

Palm Beach County School-age Children and Families

Total Number of School-age Children in Palm Beach County⁶

199,120 children ages 5-17

101,310 children ages 5-11 years of age

Palm Beach County Parents in the Labor Force⁶

72.5% of all parents with children ages 6 to 17 years are in the labor force

Children in Poverty in Palm Beach County⁶

23.1% of children 5 to 17 years of age live below poverty (\$22,411 for a family of 4)

Families in Poverty in Palm Beach County⁶

19.3% of families with children under 18 years of age live below the poverty level;
34.6% families with children in female-headed households with no husband present

School-age (ages 5-12) Children Enrolled and Waiting for Early Learning Coalition

/Children's Services Council School Readiness Funds⁷

4,064 enrolled

2,837 on the waiting list

School-age Children CSC Scholarships: 3,060 enrolled

Children’s Services Council’s Goal: Children have Access to Quality Afterschool Care and Summer Programs

The Children’s Services Council funds afterschool scholarships and provides the local matching funds required for the county to receive state and federal funds administered by the Early Learning Coalition (ELC), including the Child Care Executive Partnership Program and the School Readiness Program.

These federal and state programs serve children from birth to age 12 who meet the income and other eligibility criteria set out in state statute. In addition, the Council provides funding to targeted, eligible families with school-age children served by programs in the Council’s system of care, children in the Legal Aid Relative Caregiver Program, and children on the wait list for subsidized afterschool care. Children's Services Council helps the ELC serve more school-age children while many ELCs around the state are scaling back on serving school-age children.

In 2010-2011, the Council’s more efficient voucher funding and our match, which drew additional state and federal dollars, helped more than 8,174 children attend afterschool programs.

In 2008-2009, some CSC afterschool programs were struggling to meet capacity. As a result, the Council changed to a new funding approach that provides parents with an afterschool voucher they may use at any licensed program participating in the Prime Time Quality Improvement System (QIS). This assures that our funding supports more children in the program of their choice. The Council works closely with the Early Learning Coalition, Family Central and the School District of Palm Beach County to assure access to quality programs. At the end of the 2011-2012 school year, at least 117 afterschool programs were part of the QIS and accepting vouchers. (<http://www.primetimepb.org/sites/default/files/docs/2012%20QIS%20Sites.pdf>)⁸

The programs are located at more than 60 schools, four cities and 12 Boys and Girls Clubs and community programs from Boca Raton to Jupiter and including the Glades Communities. In 2010-2011, the Council’s more efficient voucher funding and our match, which drew additional state and federal dollars, helped more than 8,174 children attend afterschool programs.

Quality Programs: Support to Afterschool Programs and Staff

CSC funds expanded learning opportunities aimed at children and staff, as well as a system of quality improvement and professional development, through Prime Time Palm Beach County. Prime Time offers the following resources and technical assistance to afterschool and summer programs throughout the county to promote high quality programming:

- Expanded learning opportunities for children and youth
- The Quality Improvement System for afterschool programs to participate in activities designed to improve their programs and raise the overall standard of quality in the field
- A Lending Center that provides free resources and equipment for programs including electronics, sports and fitness, games, recorded music, musical instruments, activity kits, arts and crafts, books and videos and DVDs <http://www.primetimepb.org/>

- Professional development, career advising and scholarships for afterschool and summer program staff through formal and informal educational opportunities
- Opportunities for networking and professional development.

Expanded Learning Opportunities: Academics in Afterschool, Health & Wellness, Integrated Arts & Creativity, and Positive Youth Development

Children's Services Council funds Prime Time to offer expanded learning opportunities through targeted program enhancements to afterschool and summer programs and staff. These activities expose children to enrichment so children are exposed to science, technology, engineering, arts and culture, and math (STEAM). They also include literacy, academics, sports, recreation, wellness, environmental education, technology, and service learning. More than 28,000 expanded learning opportunities were provided to children in 243 afterschool programs in 2010-11.

Expanded Learning opportunity providers also build afterschool and summer program capacity by training and supporting staff so they can continue the enhancement curricula and experiences, offering more variety in programming and better engaging children.

Prime Time has developed a core group of expanded learning opportunity providers that includes science educators, literacy experts, visual and performing artists, athletic coaches and other experts, who bring enriching activities to more than 250 afterschool programs across Palm Beach County. These providers include, but are not limited to, the following partner organizations:

Expanded Learning Opportunity Providers

- ❖ **ASPIRA** - Youth leadership program
- ❖ **Blue Planet Writers' Room** - Writing and literacy program
- ❖ **Center for Creative Education** - Wide range of visual and cultural performing arts programming
- ❖ **Green Mouse Academy** - Advanced technology enrichment including robotics, animation, digital video production, digital art and video game design
- ❖ **Junior Achievement of Palm Beach County** - Introduction to career exploration and basic financial literacy
- ❖ **Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County** - Literacy support and resources for afterschool programs
- ❖ **Palm Beach Zoo** - Introduction to animal and life sciences
- ❖ **Pine Jog Environmental Education Center** - Environmental education enrichment
- ❖ **Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts** - Performing arts enrichment including performance opportunities
- ❖ **South Florida Science Museum** - Thematically based science enrichment
- ❖ **The Arc of Palm Beach County** - Training and technical assistance on inclusion of special needs children
- ❖ **YMCA of South Palm Beach County** - Sports, recreation and wellness enrichment
- ❖ **Youth Speak Out International** - Introduction to video production and life skills.

Prime Time's STEAM Initiative

Through its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) Initiative, Prime Time facilitates informal science education incorporating the arts through program enhancements to more than 3,000 local children each year. By brokering partnerships between local school- and community-based afterschool programs and community providers with particular content expertise, Prime Time provides STEAM-related expanded learning opportunities, which supplement the professional development activities.

The STEAM Initiative provides afterschool practitioners with the knowledge and resources necessary to deliver informal science education effectively in their programs. Specifically, Prime Time offers:

- STEAM-related training and technical assistance to enable afterschool practitioners to facilitate inquiry-based learning, while allowing them to discover alongside the young people with whom they are working.
- An inquiry-based approach that allows them to inspire love of learning in children and youth through hands-on exploration and reflection, and at the same time, to help those young people imagine careers in the sciences.
- Assists afterschool staff to put their knowledge and training into practice through coaching and support.

What is a Quality Afterschool Program?

A quality afterschool program provides an environment that helps children thrive. Prime Time, the School District of Palm Beach County, Palm Beach State College, Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation, Family Central, local afterschool providers and other funding agencies developed the following standards to define a quality program. A Quality Program has:

1. A Solid Organizational Framework – the program is structured to ensure the health and safety of the children and youth, the administration promotes training and retention of qualified staff and uses sound business practices.
2. Supportive Ongoing Relationships – staff engages youth as partners and encourages children and youth to work together.
3. A Positive and Inclusive Environment – promotes psychological and emotional safety, creates a welcoming environment and fosters a sense of belonging.
4. Challenging Learning Experiences – provides positive learning experiences for children and youth that build upon youth interest and engagement in enrichment activities.
5. Family Outreach and Involvement – promotes positive communications with families and supports parent involvement in the educational experiences of children and youth.⁹

Professional Development

Prime Time provides support to more than 1,500 staff at nearly 200 afterschool sites. Well trained, qualified, afterschool staff are critical to the quality of an afterschool program. Prime Time provides training, coaching, career advising and other supports to afterschool staff to increase their knowledge of youth development and quality afterschool and summer content. Prime Time also supports afterschool practitioners through scholarships to help them attend professional development conferences and to pursue School Age Professional Certificates, Youth Development College Credit Certificates, and associates and/or bachelor's degrees - 198 staff received scholarships totaling \$120,000 in FY 2011-2012.

Helping Parents Choose

Parents weigh convenience and cost, as well as other considerations, when choosing an afterschool program. Children's Services Council supports the system of quality and quality expanded learning opportunities to be sure parents have choices when selecting programs. Prime Time encourages parents to look for quality when selecting an afterschool program: Is it safe? Are the people caring? Is it welcoming? Is it fun? For information on how to choose a quality program see:

<http://www.primetimepbcc.org/sites/default/files/docs/How%20to%20Select%20a%20Quality%20Afterschool%20Program.pdf> and <http://families.cscpbcc.org/choosing-as-provider> .

Quality Summer Camps

Children's Services Council supports The Summer Camp Scholarship Program in partnership with the Palm Beach County Division of Human Services. The program provides scholarships for summer camp for children in Palm Beach County families with incomes at or below 150% of Federal Poverty Guidelines. It provides children educational and recreational opportunities and allows parents to work knowing their children are safe in summer programs that are part of year-round, licensed, afterschool programs. Priorities for the scholarships are provided to children who:

- Are homeless, reside in foster care or in group homes
- Have full-time working parents
- Are children of veterans recently returned from active duty.

The Council has provided an average of 2,200 summer camp scholarships annually over the past five years. Quality summer programs can keep children safe and mitigate summer learning loss. For more information on the summer camp scholarship program see:

<http://www.pbcgov.com/communityservices/programs/humanservices/summercamp.htm> .

For information see the checklist on *Selecting Summer Care for School-Age Children* from the Florida Children's forum: http://www.fcforum.org/publications-summer_care.php .

CONTINUING WORK FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCIL AND OUR PARTNERS

While CSC and other funders have made significant investments in afterschool, there is still work to be done. We will continue to work with our community partners to address availability and accessibility for children who need care quality programs, enhancements and summer programs.

Accessibility and Availability

What are children ages 5 to 11 doing after school if they are waiting for care? Afterschool programs can provide children safe, enjoyable activities during their out-of-school time, allowing parents to work without concerns about their children. Children benefit from adult supervision and have opportunities to gain social and academic skills that will help them in life.

With more than 2,800 children in Palm Beach County on the waiting list for afterschool and others who may need care but haven't signed up, we can't be sure our children are safe and avoiding risky behavior. How can these children be served by quality afterschool programs? The School District, Early Learning Coalition and Children's Services Council should continue to explore ways to address the children waiting to attend an afterschool program. This will include monitoring state and federal funding opportunities and threats, and assuring our current funding is maximized.

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Quality Programs and Training

Prime Time, the School District and Palm Beach State College continue to develop standards and training programs to raise the bar for professional standards and opportunities for staff who work in afterschool and summer programs. We support their efforts to continue to explore what the research demonstrates will improve staff, programs and ultimately, positive results for children.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

Expanded learning opportunity providers may unlock a child's special interest or talent, or approach a subject in a new way that helps them grow in understanding and knowledge. Children can receive a variety of great experiences through these providers. The providers also build program capacity by training and supporting staff so they can integrate the curricula and experiences brought by the provider. We will continue to work with Prime Time to assure we provide quality expanded learning opportunities for youth in our afterschool programs.

Summer Programs

Safe summer programs provide opportunities for young children and provide their parents with security knowing their children are safe. We will continue our work with Palm Beach County to assure our summer programs are high quality, focus on reading, and reach as many children as possible.

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3. Florida Afterschool Network, *Florida Afterschool Network Fact Sheet Educational Impact*.
4. Florida Afterschool Network, *Florida Afterschool Network How Afterschool Programs Impact Juvenile Delinquency and Gang Prevention*.
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9. Prime Time Palm Beach County, *Supporting the Field of Afterschool* brochure.
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<http://www.primetimepb.org/sites/default/files/docs/How%20to%20Select%20a%20Quality%20Afterschool%20Program.pdf>
11. Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, link to choosing a summer program:
<http://families.cscpb.org/choosing-as-provider> .
12. Palm Beach County Division of Community Services, link to Palm Beach County Summer Camp information:
<http://www.pbcgov.com/communityservices/programs/humanservices/summercamp.htm> .
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Who We Are

Children's Services Council, a special district created by Palm Beach County voters, provides leadership, funding and research on behalf of the county's children so they grow up healthy, safe and strong.

How We Work

To make the biggest impact, we focus on prenatal health and early childhood development so more Palm Beach County children are born healthy, are safe from abuse and neglect, are ready to learn when they enter school, and have access to quality afterschool programming.

We accomplish these goals by funding local nonprofit and other agencies to provide proven, high-quality services to our county's children and their families.

How You Benefit

Because of the wise investment Palm Beach County residents make in Children's Services Council, our children are given the fundamental tools for success early in life, making them much more likely to:

- Reach vital growth and developmental milestones
- Graduate from high school
- Become productive members of society

This does more than save us all money. It builds the foundation for a strong, safe community we are proud to live in.

