



## RESOURCES

*for Further Study and Informed Action*

### Recent Field-Building Research and Reports

***The National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century: Final Report*** (April 2002). National 4-H Council.

To mark the centennial anniversary of 4-H, the national leadership dedicated their resources to a nationwide research and strategic-planning process called “The National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century.” Held in the Fall of 2001, 1,577 local conversations led to more than 10,000 action items that were reviewed by 63 state conversations and culminated (in February 2002) with a national conversation of 1,200 youth and adults, representing 600 organizations, and the diverse demographic spectra of American youth in the 21st century. The results of these conversations are the most comprehensive and inclusive ever produced, and they emerged from the most democratic process ever engaged for this purpose.

The key findings, which strongly support cross-sector positive youth development, are presented as specific and strategic calls to action on a national level to citizens and their communities, the philanthropic sector, the corporate community, the education system, and the federal government.

Report available by phone (301) 961-2800 or online at [www.fourhcouncil.edu](http://www.fourhcouncil.edu).

***Improving the Odds: The Untapped Power of Schools to Improve the Health of Teens*** (April 2002). Center for Adolescent Health and Development, University of Minnesota.

When students feel they are a part of school, say they are treated fairly by teachers, and feel close to people at school, they are healthier and more likely to succeed. What promotes this connectedness to school? Well-managed classrooms, small school size, and integrated friendship groups. This short report is based on an analysis of data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a comprehensive school-based study of the health-related behaviors of American adolescents. Up to three copies of the monograph may be obtained by contacting [ahp@umn.edu](mailto:ahp@umn.edu).

***Moving an Out-of-School Agenda: Lessons and Challenges Across Cities*** (2002). The Forum for Youth Investment.

Recognizing the critical role of community-level change in moving an out-of-school agenda, the Forum for Youth Investment began the GRASP Project (Greater Resources for After-School Programming) with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Through GRASP, the Forum partnered with four cities

(Chicago, Kansas City, Little Rock, Sacramento) to assess their current work and deepen community discussion about out-of-school time. This report shares highlights and emergent patterns across the four cities. It emphasizes the critical role of communities supplementing the work of schools. It identifies significant recurring gaps in the out-of-school hours and describes the challenges cities must face as they attempt to improve the availability of, and access to, out-of-school opportunities for all young people.

These challenges are described in ten short Task Briefs: Coordination, Collaboration and Networking; Staffing; Quality Standards, Assessments and Supports; Physical Infrastructure; Funding and Policy; Leadership and Political Will; Youth Engagement; Public Will and Constituency Engagement; Planning and Visioning; Mapping, Monitoring and Research.

The original report and Task Briefs are available in pdf format from the Forum's website at [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org).

**Community Programs to Promote Youth Development** (2002). National Research Council and National Institute of Medicine. National Academy Press.

With funding from a diverse group of public and private sponsors, the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine created the Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Chaired by Jacquelynne Eccles (Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan), the committee conducted a two-year project to document the impact of community youth programs.

Recognizing the dramatic social changes impacting the lives of young people in recent decades, the committee evaluated and integrated the current science of adolescent health and development with research findings related

to community-level program design, implementation, and evaluation. Their focus was on programs not specifically focused on curricular issues, in schools and beyond, serving young people between the ages of 10 and 18. They defined community in the broadest sense: neighborhood, block, town, city, county, non-geographical groupings such as family, and groups with shared interests or beliefs. The committee consciously adopted a positive youth development framework, and rejected the simplistic polarization that pits positive youth development against important prevention and intervention work (often viewed as problem-centered). This approach forced dialogue and cooperation across traditionally insulated, if not competitive, domains: education, youth development, and adolescent health.

After two-years the committee generated a set of conclusions and recommendations organized around two primary themes: 1) policy and practice, and 2) research, evaluation, and data collection. They concluded that the emphasis in all work related to young people must shift from debating which youth outcomes (academic or other) are most important, to understanding what it takes to support the full range of outcomes for all youth. The recognition that developmental consistency is essential in young people's lives puts the need for safe, structured places to learn and links to basic supports and services at the center of the public policy debate. This report is a broad, interdisciplinary synthesis of the features of positive developmental settings and programs. It highlights the need for further longitudinal studies and evaluation efforts to understand the actual correlations between specific programs and positive developmental outcomes.

The full 400+ page report is available from NRC in hardback for \$49.95, or in pdf format from their website at [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu).

***Off the Shelf and Into the Field: Making the Most of the National Research Council's New Report*** (April 2002). The Forum for Youth Investment.

Forum for Youth Investment.

Recognizing the field-building potential of getting information from the new National Research Council's report into the hands of youth advocates, practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and funders, the Forum for Youth Investment has prepared a seven-page summary with key take-aways and recommendations for action. It is a concrete and accessible teaching tool. Available in pdf format at website [www.forumforyouthinvestment.org](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org).

***Expanding After-School Opportunities and Promoting Youth Participation: Action Kits for Public Leaders*** (2002). National League of Cities.

National League of Cities.

The National League of Cities new Institute for Youth, Education and Families (YEF) recently produced two new action kits for municipal leaders.

*Expanding After-School Opportunities* highlights strategies that civic leaders can use to promote learning, keep children and youth out of trouble, and meet the needs of working parents. The recommendations include promoting partnerships, building public will, assessing local needs, improving quality, broadening access, and developing long-term, sustainable financing plans.



*Promoting Youth Participation* highlights the many steps cities and towns across America have taken to ensure that youth have a voice and a role in local government. It emphasizes four approaches that have proven successful: establishing a youth council, using Community YouthMapping for planning processes, hosting a youth summit, and promoting youth service.

Both action kits and information about the Institute's related support services can be obtained by writing to [rpdl@nlc.org](mailto:rpdl@nlc.org) or by leaving a detailed message on the information line at (202) 626-3014.

***Evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs*** (April 2002) ***and Youth Involvement in Evaluation & Research*** (February 2002). Harvard Family Research Project's (HFRP) Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation briefs.

Through the Out-of-School Time Learning and Development Project, the Harvard Family Research Project is working with other organizations to build the out-of-school time field, with a focus on out-of-school learning and development for children. They identify and research key issues in out-of-school time evaluation and promote strategic use of this information to improve the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of out-of-school time programs across the country. The briefs are short, user-friendly documents to provide practitioners, funders, evaluators, and policymakers with information to inform their work.

*Evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs: A Guide for State Education Agencies* offers an in-depth look at 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) evaluation requirements, and provides practical suggestions about how to implement state and local 21st CCLC evaluation while making the process meaningful.

*Youth Involvement in Evaluation & Research* is an eight-page report on a study of eleven organizations. It describes the process and benefits of involving young people in assessing community programs that affect their lives. Involving youth in evaluation and research about the programs in which they participate serves multiple purposes, including enhancing individual development and active decision making, contributing to organizational development and capacity building, and providing the opportunity to create real community change. Both briefs are available on the web, under the Resources link at [www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/projects/afterschool/about.html](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/projects/afterschool/about.html).

***Challenges and Opportunities in After-School Programs: Lessons for Policy Makers & Funders*** (April 2001). Public/Private Ventures.

Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to improve the effectiveness of social policies, programs, and community initiatives, especially as they affect youth and young adults. Recognizing that school-based after-school programs are becoming the solution policymakers suggest to address youth problems (poor academic achievement, gang participation, violence and drug use), this report looks at the strengths and the challenges for success. It draws data from the multi-year evaluation of the Extended-Service School (ESS) Adaptation Initiative, examining 60 after-school programs in 17 cities. The report focuses on three areas of challenge, their underlying causes, and the implications for social policy: 1) programs' access to school space, 2) participation, and 3) transportation.

The report is available in pdf format from their website at [www.ppv.org](http://www.ppv.org).