



# Building PBIS in Afterschool Programs: A Collaborative Partnership



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## Purpose

This poster presents activities and interim outcomes of collaborative efforts to build PBIS in afterschool programs (ASPs). Our intention was to fuse recommended elements of ASPs and PBIS to support a demonstration project.

This remains the ultimate objective, although the project has faced a number of challenges, including significant limitations in the ASP literature, highly ambitious goals for ASP outcomes, programmatic diversity among ASPs, and resource constraints. Here we present outcomes to date, current activities, and benchmarks for future progress.

## Background

### The Rise of Afterschool Programs

Public support for ASPs has grown. They provide care for children of working families, can support academic and behavioral growth, and supervise youth during hours when risk behaviors are common (Gottfredson, Gertenblith, Soule, Womer, & Lu, 2004; Cosden, Morrison, Albanese, Macias, 2001).

Nearly 20% of American students participate in ASPs (Kleiner, Nolin, & Chapman, 2004). Of nearly 50,000 public elementary schools in the U.S., over half have at least one ASP (Parsad & Lewis, 2009).

Federal support for ASPs includes grants to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs). From 1998-2002, the U.S. Department of Education (2010) awarded nearly \$870 million in grants to support state-administered 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Community programs. In sum, 1.08 billion dollars was allocated to fund 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

### Are ASPs effective in meeting academic, behavioral, and family goals?

By statute, ASPs are charged with advancing the academic achievement of youth, enhancing social-emotional functioning, and engaging families.

Over 2/3 of the ASPs examined in a recent review (Collier et al., 2010) served at-risk youth. Yet, most did not specify how their program design reflected youth characteristics. There is likely a mismatch between the intentions, instruction types and supports offered and the needs of participants.

Some national (Dynarsky et al., 2003; Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010) and state (CT State Department of Education, 2008) studies suggest that ASPs are of limited success in meeting their academic and behavioral objectives.

In CT, a State Department of Education report (2008) indicated that although ASP attendees had fewer ODRs overall, they had more serious rule infractions than their counterparts who do not attend.

In spite of public support and ample federal funding (Council of Chief State School Officers & National Governors Association, 2009), "the field has yet to accumulate a substantial body of empirical evidence concerning linkages between program processes and outcomes" (Palmer et al., 2009, p. 7).

At the same time, a diverse range of quality and rigor within programs may confound large-scale efforts to establish the efficacy of ASPs. The research to date includes few to no careful assessments of program fidelity, so it is not possible to ascertain factors responsible for success – or failure – of programs.

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## The Current Project

### The Collaboration

The activities in this poster occur under a collaboration between the University of Connecticut Center for Applied Research in Human Development, the Capital Region Education Council (CREC), and the CT State Department of Education.

### Project Objectives

- To operationalize common elements of effective ASPs (in ASP and PBS literatures)
- Translate these into measurable activities
- Examine the extent to which these practices exist within existing programs,
- Develop and implement a staff training plan
- Secure funding to support a demonstration of PBIS in ASPs
- Evaluate the fidelity and efficacy of PBIS training on ASP operations and outcomes

### Activities to date:

*Examination of the ASP literature to ascertain common elements of effective programs.* Last year we presented data on this and concluded that the literature lacked sufficient rigor to determine specific practices that might be effective.

*New Analysis of ASP Data:* We further examined the literature, coding the quality of program design and research design for each study. The Table below depicts findings of a subset of studies (n = 43) that met minimal inclusion criteria. We further conclude that the literature fails to support the effectiveness of ASPs in meeting their ambitious objectives and that published works often supply insufficient information to support replication.

Program & Research Design Ratings, ASP Research

Program	Description (with Examples)	N (%)
Poor	– Inadequate specification or description	10 (23.4%)
Adequate	– Goals, activities, and desired outcomes evident	16 (37.2%)
Good	– Clear, specific academic and social goals	15 (34.8%)
Excellent	– Very well articulated design (e.g., logic model) – Goals/objectives linked to outcomes – Program components matched to objectives and outcomes	2 (4.6%)
Research	Description (with Examples)	N (%)
Poor	– Descriptive and/or nonspecific, vague; Inadequate specification	16 (37.1%)
Adequate	– Quasi-experimental	10 (23.4%)
Good	– Quasi-experimental with comparison/control group – Appropriate research design & statistical analysis – Assessment of fidelity – Balanced data and/or techniques to adjust	12 (27.9%)
Excellent	– Randomized – Appropriate research design & statistical analysis – Assessment of fidelity – Balanced data and/or techniques to adjust	5 (11.6%)

## Conclusions about ASPs to date

ASPs are in the unenviable position of needing to: (1) ensure student safety; (2) improve behavioral-social outcomes; and (3) improve academic achievement, *especially in at-risk groups*.

*Challenge:* Can ASPs achieve this in 2-3 hours per day? There is an achievement gap of .74 sds (NAEP, 2008). If ASPs are to address the gap, they need to increase substantially annual math and reading progress. That requires a potent intervention. Effect sizes for academic interventions average .23 (ES), .51 (MS), and .27 (HS; Bloom et al., 2008).

## Now Underway

Despite some discouraging initial conclusions, we continue to work toward using PBIS to improve ASP quality. SDE wished to produce a staff to orient ASP staff on basic strategies for promoting positive student behavior and positive interactions across all levels of interaction. Objectives: ASP staff will...

- identify 4 main strategies for promoting a positive culture in ASPs.
- operationally define and give examples of active, positive, and proactive.
- articulate specific student behaviors to be reinforced.
- Provide developmentally and culturally appropriate labels and praise.

## Video Content

1. "Set the stage." Teach, model, and establish climate for desired behaviors.
  - High level of structure and predictability
  - Positively stated expectations are taught, practiced, visible, reinforced
  - Consistent adult behavior
  - Teach the desired skills
  - Calm, brief responses to problem behavior
2. "Be active." Active supervision.
  - High levels of engagement and supervision, interaction
  - Positive feedback to students and staff
  - Precorrect problem behavior
  - Calm, brief responses to problem behavior
3. "Be positive." *Positive reinforcement.*
  - Look continuously for desired behavior
  - Label appropriate behavior and provide ample positive reinforcement
  - Problem behavior: Remove attention, reinforce alternative, prompt
  - Use upbeat, natural, positive tone
4. "Be proactive." *Remind, reinforce, precorrect.*
  - Remind: Use neutral tone to remind students of expected behaviors
  - Reinforce: Positively reinforce displays of desired behavior
  - Precorrect: Problems recurring problems; identify triggers and functions; set modifications that prevent the behavior

## Next Steps

- Provide technical assistance on video content. Develop outline for training curriculum to be expanded and refined in subsequent phases.
- Develop training materials; propose a study to examine the effectiveness of the video: with and without staff training, with and without follow-up on-site support; with and without explicit connection to PBIS activities during the school day.
- This will require multiple measures of program characteristics, specific measures of staff implementation and fidelity, and examination of immediate and more proximal outcomes.