Supporting Children, Youth, and Families:

A Critical Look at Afterschool in Missouri

Quality afterschool programs prepare tomorrow's leaders.

"Engaging students in afterschool activities is a critically important strategic part in improving a school's performance, and in helping schools that have historically struggled go to the next level."

- Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education

Missouri's Afterschool Programming

Informed Missourians understand the long-term impact of youth development on communities and the State. In fact, 91% of adults surveyed believe that there should be "a place for children and teens to go after school every day that provides opportunities to learn."[1] A growing number of people understand that children and youth throughout the state benefit from the enriching activities and safe environment that afterschool programs offer. Additionally, afterschool programs provide needed jobs and opportunities for both entry level and professional workers.

Quality Programming Matters

While only 12% of Missouri's K-12 children participate in afterschool programs, quality afterschool programming matters to Missouri's approximate one million youth as it has the potential to promote positive youth development and their continued success in school[2]. In addition to keeping children safe, research indicates that quality afterschool programming plays a part in reducing negative juvenile behaviors, increasing academic performance, and supporting the growth of social and emotional well-being.[3, 4, 5]

Did you know?
Missouri has been a national leader in building system of supports for professionals and programs to improve program quality and youth outcomes. Missouri was one of the first states to develop afterschool program quality standards and Core Competencies outlining staff expectations and is now tackling issues such as engaging youth in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), supporting the Common Core State Standards, providing more snacks and meals to children, and developing higher education coursework for the field.

Academic Benefits of Afterschool Programming

Afterschool programs provide a full range of academic support including homework help, tutoring, academic enrichment, and comprehensive integrated units directly tied to the state standards. They provide activities that **complement rather than replicate the school day**.

Children benefit from programs that link to the school day through sharing information about students, conducting common professional development activities for school day and afterschool staff, and having coordinated planning and communication to align instruction.[6, 7] This includes working together to identify gaps in student achievement and to coordinate activities and themes to meet the school and state standards.

Afterschool provides a proven practice for helping students learn, change their behavior, and improve their educational outcomes (attendance, grades, etc.)[8, 9]. The federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program provides data to support these types of benefits and impacts that can be seen with quality afterschool programming. The figure to the left provides both Missouri and national results.

21st Century Community Learning Center Results[10]

Missouri:
- 71% of regular 21st CCLC students showed improvement in student behavior (21% remained the same)
- 95% arrived motivated to learn
- 98% improved regular class attendance

Nationally:
- 75% of regular 21st CCLC students showed improvement in homework completion and class participation
- 72% showed improvement in student behavior

Non-Academic Benefits of Afterschool Programming

Afterschool programs also offer non-academic benefits that support the children's development and families.

Social and Emotional Development: Youth participating in afterschool programs have better social and emotional relationships not only with their peers, but also with the adults in their lives. This results in **fewer behavior referrals**, **better attendance rates**, and **improved communication skills** compared to youth who do not participate in afterschool programming.[11, 12, 13]

Supporting Families: Afterschool programs help working families and **improve Missouri's economy**. More than 65% of parents with minor children work full-time leaving millions of children on their own between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., the hours when youth are most likely to commit crime -- or be victimized by it. Without afterschool programs, job productivity decreases during the hours children are out of school as parents are on the phone checking on their students, costing billions to businesses.[14] Afterschool programs also **help parents to support their child's educational success** by providing homework help and tutoring that may be out of the skill range of the family.[15]

> "Not only is a quality afterschool program a bridge of supervision for the hours between school's dismissal and parents' return from work, but it is also a crossroad where children/youth can be provided with **quality mentorship and activities that enrich their lives** like homework help, life skills, career and character education."
>
> - Charity Stillings, Unit Director, Boys & Girls Club of the Ozarks, July 12, 2011

Families Value Afterschool:[16]

The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs – if programs were available.

9 in 10 parents are satisfied with the afterschool programs their children attend.

The Role of the Afterschool Workforce

To reap the benefits associated with quality afterschool programs, afterschool staff must have the knowledge, skills, and ability to design and facilitate quality learning experiences.

The afterschool workforce is extremely diverse, pulling from education, social work, recreation, psychology, and many other fields; while at the same time, employing many staff with no formal education. In some instances, afterschool staff see youth development as their chosen career, while others view it as a stepping-stone to another field, and others as a source of supplemental income. These variances continue to be a challenge when creating a professional standard in regard to recruiting, hiring, and maintaining staff in this profession.[17]

The reality is no matter who makes up the workforce in afterschool programs, staff members who are provided with a **solid foundation of training and support**, coupled with **positive working conditions** create programming that is superior to those who lack these critical inputs.[18]
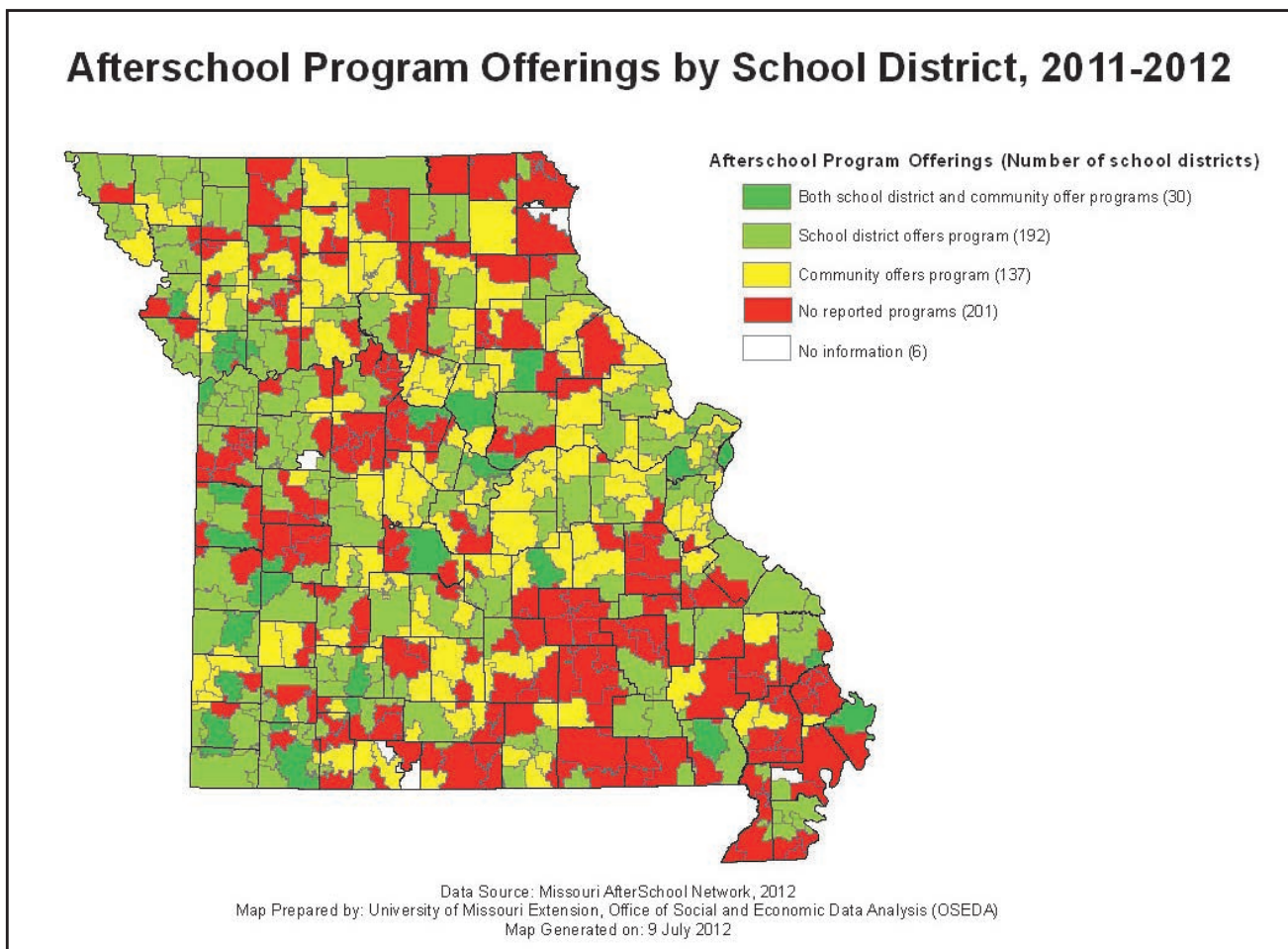
> "To be effective, afterschool programs must be staffed by people who are **trained to work with rich curriculum and forge strong and supportive relationships with children**. As they gain experience and undergo required training, afterschool educators develop an understanding of youth development and the skills to engage students in curricula of many kinds, including arts, fitness, literacy and science. "[19]

Availability of Afterschool Programs in Missouri

While the total number of afterschool programs in Missouri is unknown, we do know that there are more than 3,100 licensed and self-reported unlicensed programs in the state that *can* serve school-age children and youth (e.g., serving children birth through age twelve).[20] The subset that focuses *only* on school-age children and youth is significantly smaller.

From January to May 2012, the Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN) conducted a survey focused on learning more about afterschool program availability. Using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Core Data school district list, MASN contacted over 500 school districts to ask if afterschool services were provided in their community. Responses were categorized according to the entity offering the afterschool program: the school district, community partners, or both the school and community partners. For this survey, the definition of afterschool programming did not include 'tutoring only' services offered through Title 1 or Supplemental Education Services (SES) funding unless these were incorporated into a program that offered additional content in an afterschool setting.

Afterschool Program Offerings by School District, 2011-2012

Afterschool Program Offerings (Number of school districts)

- Both school district and community offer programs (30)
- School district offers program (192)
- Community offers program (137)
- No reported programs (201)
- No information (6)

Data Source: Missouri AfterSchool Network, 2012
Map Prepared by: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSEDA)
Map Generated on: 9 July 2012

State Funded Afterschool Programs in Missouri

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) distributes federal funds to provide programming during non-school hours that supports the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of students.

For the 2011-12 school year, DESE funded 50 School Age Community (SAC) Sites and 221 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) sites. The 21st CCLC programs have served 61,199 Missouri students since funding began in 2003, while SAC Programs have served 18,961 since 2003. [21]

Reporting Workforce Trends: A Snapshot of Missouri's Afterschool Workforce

A sample of ~225 professionals who work in programs that exclusively serve school-age children before- or after-school was provided by the Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) Registry to highlight workforce trends. It is important to note that these data are not necessarily representative of the entire afterschool workforce in Missouri as registry participation has not reached a critical mass. Additionally, many of the programs that were previously required to participate as part of their funding were located within public schools, skewing the data to school-based program staff. Expanding afterschool workforce participation in the MOPD Registry is necessary in order to provide a more complete accounting.

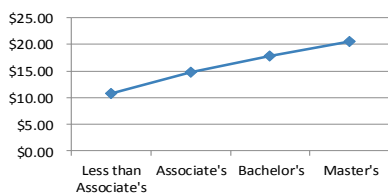Following the national trend, the afterschool workforce in Missouri is mainly comprised of women (86% women). The average age of the afterschool workforce in the sample is 40 years old. As noted in the table to the right, 53% of the sample is between 25-44 years of age, an age range when most professionals are working in their chosen career.

Age Range	# Within the Category	Percent
Under 25	24	11%
25-34	69	31%
35-44	50	22%
45-54	43	19%
55-64	33	15%
65 and over	6	3%
Total	225	100%

For most afterschool programs, staff members' responsibilities fall within three main position categories: administrators who manage the program or multiple sites, lead staff who are in charge of the children and activities, and assistant staff who work directly with children under the supervision of the lead staff or administrator. A review of the years of education completed by the sample (n=75) yields a progression of formal education by role. The average number of years of education for an assistant staff member is 12.9 years, with 20% of the sample verifying some college coursework completion.   The average number of years of education for lead staff members is 14.3 years, with 48% of the sample completing an associate's degree or higher. The average number of years of education for an administrator is 15.7 years, with 70% of the sample completing a bachelor's degree or higher.

Role	Average Years of Education Completed
Assistant Staff	12.9
Lead Staff	14.3
Administrators	15.7

While a review of wages earned by educational attainment for the sample (n=91) also follows a logical progression, it is important to remember that the current sample includes a disproportionate share of certified school-day teachers working in afterschool programs on a part time/hourly basis at their regular school day rate. When looking at wage by position, administrators are more often full time employees who do not teach in the classroom during the school day; whereas, the lead staff wage in this sample is impacted by the high percentage of classroom teachers also working in the afterschool programs.

Average Wage by Highest Level of Education

Role	Average
Assistant Staff	$10.28
Lead Staff	$16.83
Administrators	$16.64

Unfortunately, Missouri does follow the national trend when it comes to the transitory nature of afterschool employment. High turnover is one of the challenges that Missouri is attempting to address with a comprehensive professional development system and the support it provides.

Afterschool offers opportunities to **develop the workforce** in communities throughout the state. All communities have children and youth that could benefit from afterschool programs offering adults **purposeful, engaging work**.

Maintaining the Momentum

Missouri's success and national notoriety is due in part to the infrastructure development for its profession development system. This development was essential as it is these resources that support professionals and programs. Best practices call for a coordinated afterschool professional development system that provides opportunities and resources for professionals and promotes quality programming throughout the state. Multiple resources are available to afterschool staff and programs in Missouri. While many of these supports are outlined below, additional resource information can be found at the Missouri Professional Development Portal www.mopdportal.org.

Standards

Missouri strives to maintain relevant standards for professionals and programs based on research and best practices. To that end, Missouri was one of the first states to develop professional and program standards which serve as the foundation of our system. Both of these documents are also available in Spanish.

Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals: Kansas and Missouri
The Core Competencies define what professionals need to know and do to provide quality services to children and youth. An online self- and staff-assessment tool is available in the Toolbox.

Missouri Afterschool Program Standards
The Missouri Afterschool Program Standards (MAPS) identify the expectations of high quality programs serving school age children and youth. A program self-assessment tool based on the MAPS is available online in the Toolbox.

Technical Assistance

Missouri strives to capitalize on new research regarding best practices while supporting quality implementation of afterschool programs. To that end, Missouri offers the following technical assistance resources.

Missouri Afterschool Resource Center (MOARC)
The Missouri Afterschool Resource Center (MOARC) provides technical assistance to SAC and 21st Century grantees. In addition, non-state funded programs may attend MOARC trainings and events.

Education Supports and Credentials

Missouri strives to provide education supports and recognize attainment of competencies by professionals. To that end, Missouri offers the following education supports and credentials.

Youth Development Credential
The Youth Development Credential (YDC) is a school-age specific vocational credential. The YDC is recognized by the Department of Health and Senior Services –Section for Child Care Regulation in the licensing Director Certification process.

> "I have noticed a general improvement in my program because of the YDC class. … I have watched diligently how I perform my duties. The tone of my voice has changed and how I interact with the children has been altered, especially when I deal with conflict."
> - YDC Candidate

Director Credential
The Missouri School Age Program Director Credential validates leadership and management competencies achieved by school-age professionals through education, experience, and professional service.

T.E.A.C.H. MISSOURI Scholarship
Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H®) is an educational scholarship opportunity for professionals who work in licensed programs. In 2010, T.E.A.C.H®Missouri piloted a scholarship for those serving school-age children.

Basic Knowledge Curriculum for Youth Development Professionals

The Basic Knowledge Curriculum for Youth Development Professionals (BKC-YD) is an entry level training series designed to help program staff gain additional knowledge and skills while enhancing their comfort and confidence when working with children and youth.

Youth Development Academy

The Youth Development Academy is an upper level training that provides research-based education and resources for site directors and program administrators as they implement a comprehensive approach to fostering positive growth and development for youth.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Trainings

A menu of STEM training curricula are available for individual program staff to complete or in a train-the-trainer format for program leaders to become Endorsed Trainers and provide the trainings to their staff.

Online Resources

Missouri strives to use technology to cost effectively support programs and professionals. To that end, Missouri offers the following online resources.

Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) Portal

The MOPD Portal is a single point of entry for afterschool and early childhood professionals. It has many of the links that program staff, directors, and trainers need on a regular basis in order to navigate the professional development system.

Missouri Workshop Calendar

The Missouri Workshop Calendar lists trainings that are approved by the Department of Health and Senior Services – Section for Child Care Regulation to meet the annual clock hour training requirement. These high quality workshops are available to both licensed and unlicensed programs.

The Toolbox

The Toolbox provides for streamlined data collection across several quality initiatives for program staff and administrators including access to a variety of online tools to support individual professional development (e.g., MOPD Registry, Core Competencies self-assessments) and program improvement efforts (e.g., Missouri Afterschool Program Standards program self-assessment tool).
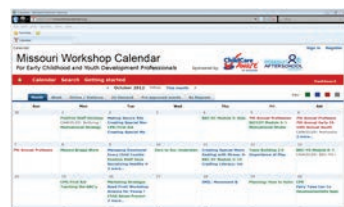
Data Collection and Assessment

Missouri strives to collect valid and meaningful data about the workforce and quality programming. To that end, Missouri offers the following data collection and assessment services.

Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) Registry

The Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) Registry collects data about professionals who work in both afterschool and early childhood program settings. While, participation in the MOPD Registry is voluntary, many programs that receive state and federal funding are strongly encouraged to enroll staff members and Registry membership provides access to the tools in the online Toolbox.

STEM Assessments

Youth engagement surveys, professional surveys, and on-site observation instruments are available to help programs determine their STEM needs or to measure change when implementing STEM activities.

Continuing to Set the Standard

While Missouri can be proud of the achievements in school-age systems development and support for professionals and programs, we cannot be lax about our intentions as we move forward. Implementation of the following recommendations is essential in order to realize the State's ultimate goals for afterschool.

1. Educate afterschool professionals about the newly released Core Competencies and support their use of the Core Competencies and Missouri Afterschool Program Standards. *(Standards)*
2. Increase funding to support MOARC technical assistance to non-grantees. *(Technical Assistance)*
3. Develop a career lattice outlining a progression for career advancement for professionals working with children and youth. *(Education Supports)*
4. Coordinate a system of training that ensures staff at all levels have access to quality training based on the Core Competencies. *(Education Supports)*
5. Secure the commitment of two- and four-year institutions to develop and offer youth development specific coursework in an articulated pathway. *(Education Supports)*
6. Secure funding to support scholarships for afterschool staff to attain youth development related credentials and degrees leading to increased education, compensation, and retention in the field. *(Education Supports)*
7. Promote use of the online Toolbox, Missouri Workshop Calendar, and MOPD Portal. (*Online Resources*)
8. Increase the rate of participation by the afterschool workforce in the MOPD Registry. *(Data Collection)*
9. Continue data collection efforts to identify afterschool programs operating throughout the state. *(Data Collection)*
10. Select consistent measures and tools for all state funded afterschool programs to use in their program improvement and grant evaluation processes. *(Data Collection)*

Endnotes

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