



HOPE THROUGH HOUSING FOUNDATION'S

After School & Beyond

2009-2010

Program & Evaluation Report



Acknowledgements

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Lastly, we would like to express a deep appreciation for the children, youth, and parents of After School & Beyond for their participation, support, and feedback.

About This Report

The After School & Beyond Program and Evaluation Report serves as a summary of program activities and development, as well as an evaluation of program impact. The purpose of this report is two-fold: 1) to be accountable to the participants and funders of After School & Beyond and 2) to continually improve the program to ensure it positively and meaningfully impacts the lives of participants and remains a wise investment of resources. As such, this report includes recommendations for program improvement created jointly by the program and evaluation teams with the intent of not only improving After School & Beyond, but also advancing the field of housing-based after school services.

The data referenced in this report comes from a variety of sources, including program records, surveys (conducted with participants, staff, and parents), focus groups, and structured site observations (conducted by trained evaluation staff). Wherever possible, psychometrically valid and reliable instruments were utilized.

About Hope Through Housing Foundation

Hope Through Housing Foundation (HTHF) was established in 1998 as the social services provider for National Community Renaissance, a nonprofit that develops, builds, and manages affordable apartment housing. Hope Through Housing Foundation seeks to create community change by providing services that are proven to have long-term benefits to individuals and neighborhoods threatened by crime, poverty, blight, and isolation.

While the organization has been offering services for 12 years, HTHF’s approach underwent a significant shift in 2006. HTHF organized its programs around three initiatives: Child Development, Youth Development, and Senior Health & Wellness. All services offered within each initiative utilize evidence-based strategies and discipline-specific best practices shown to have a measurable impact on low-income children, youth, families and seniors. After School & Beyond is the key service strategy within the Youth Development Initiative.

About the Youth Development Initiative

Key Milestones in Youth Development Initiative

2005-2006

- New VP of Programs and Services (later Executive Director) is hired for Hope Through Housing Foundation.
- HTHF restructures its model away from site-based service coordination to evidence-based services. Three initiatives are created: Youth Development, Child Development, and Senior and Disability Services.

2006-2007

- Assistant Director (later Director) of Youth Development Services is hired to develop the program model.
- Nine after school programs are implemented with third-party providers.
- HTHF hosts the first gathering of after school staff to discuss Hope’s vision and plan for program improvement.

2007-2008

- HTHF launches its evaluation system with a focus on documenting characteristics of participants’ attendance and tracking program quality indicators using the Interpersonal Relationships subscale of the School-Aged Care Environmental Rating Scale.
- The PeaceBuilders violence prevention program is introduced into the curricula.
- HTHF expands to 17 programs. All are implemented by third party providers.
- HTHF publishes its first evaluation report.
- HTHF is awarded the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant and launches a high school program in Rialto, California that serves Eisenhower High School youth offsite.

2008-2009

- HTHF expands to 27 programs. 23 are implemented by third party providers; 4 are self-delivered by HTHF staff.
- Youth Development staffing expands to include a full time Program Coach and two Program Coordinators.
- The program evaluation is expanded to include all SACERS dimensions. Daily attendance goals are established for each site.

2009-2010

- 33 after school programs serving 37 properties are offered. 21 of them are self-delivered.
- KidzLit and Virtual Vacations are introduced into the after school curricula.
- Implementation evaluation of KidzLit is conducted at four pilot sites.
- HTHF launches a comprehensive staff training program that emphasizes curricula, program operations, youth development, and staff leadership.
- The high school program moves into a retail space in Rialto, California. Programming is also offered on the campus of Eisenhower High School.
- 15 summer programs are offered.

About After School & Beyond

INTRODUCTION

After School & Beyond (AS&B) is the signature out of school time program provided by Hope Through Housing serving youth from kindergarten through 12th grade. Nearly all AS&B programs are located onsite of affordable housing communities, ensuring that children and youth receive services where they live and all programs are offered at no cost to participants and their families. While most AS&B programs are delivered directly by HTHF staff (under the Youth Development Initiative) a handful of sites are delivered in partnership with community based organizations including the City of Montclair, National City Community Collaborative, Rialto Unified School District, Pazzazz, Family YMCA of the Desert, Corona/Norco YMCA, YMCA of Riverside City and County, Camp Fire USA – Compton Council, and Camp Fire USA – San Diego and Imperial Counties Council.

COMMUNITIES SERVED

In 2009-10 AS&B programs were offered in 33 locations in five counties, including Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego. Twenty one (21) program sites are delivered by HTHF staff and 12 in partnership with third-party providers.



This represented a significant shift from 2008-09 when Hope self-delivered only four programs. The decision to transition away from third-party service delivery to self-delivery was based on several factors:

Commitment to Program Quality

Some third-party providers did not meet attendance or program quality performance goals. Today, HTHF still partners with third-party organizations that share HTHF's vision, provide cost-effective services, and have demonstrated an ability to meet program standards.

Cost

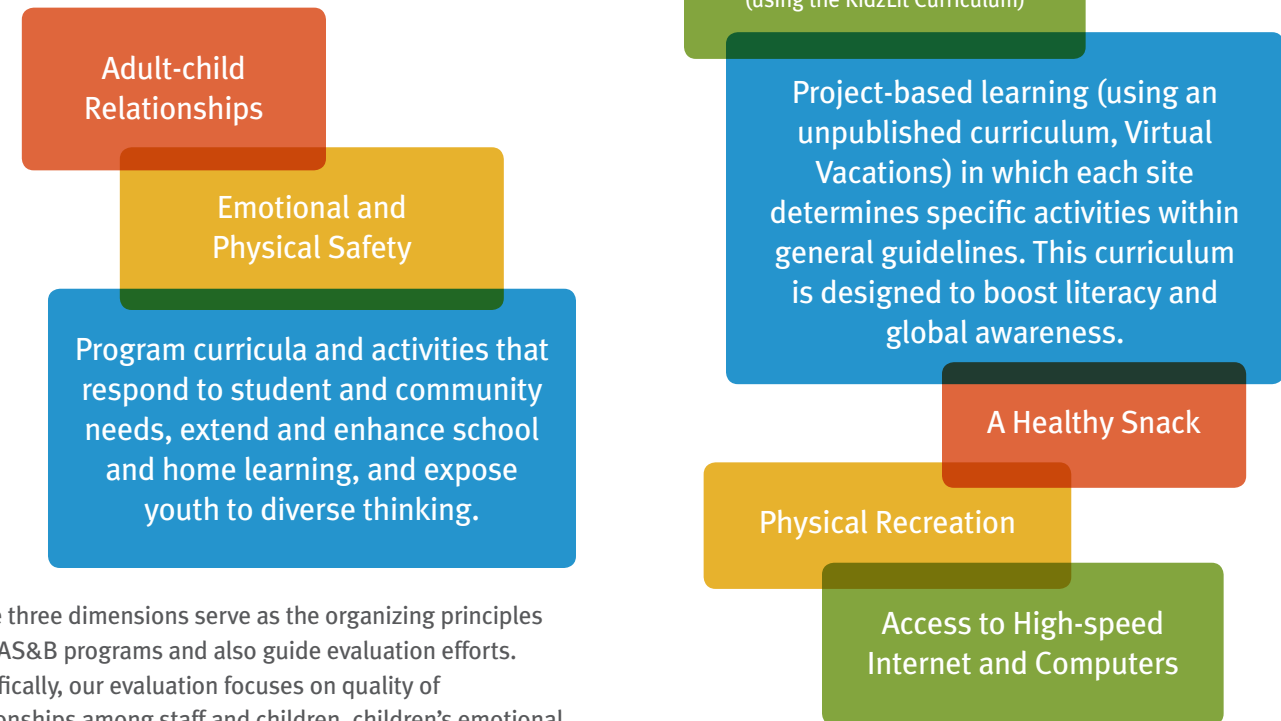
Self-delivery was less expensive than contracting with a third-party provider.

Mission Conflict

Third-party providers felt torn between implementing HTHF's model and staying faithful to their organization's structure, mission, or vision.

THE AS&B PROGRAM MODEL

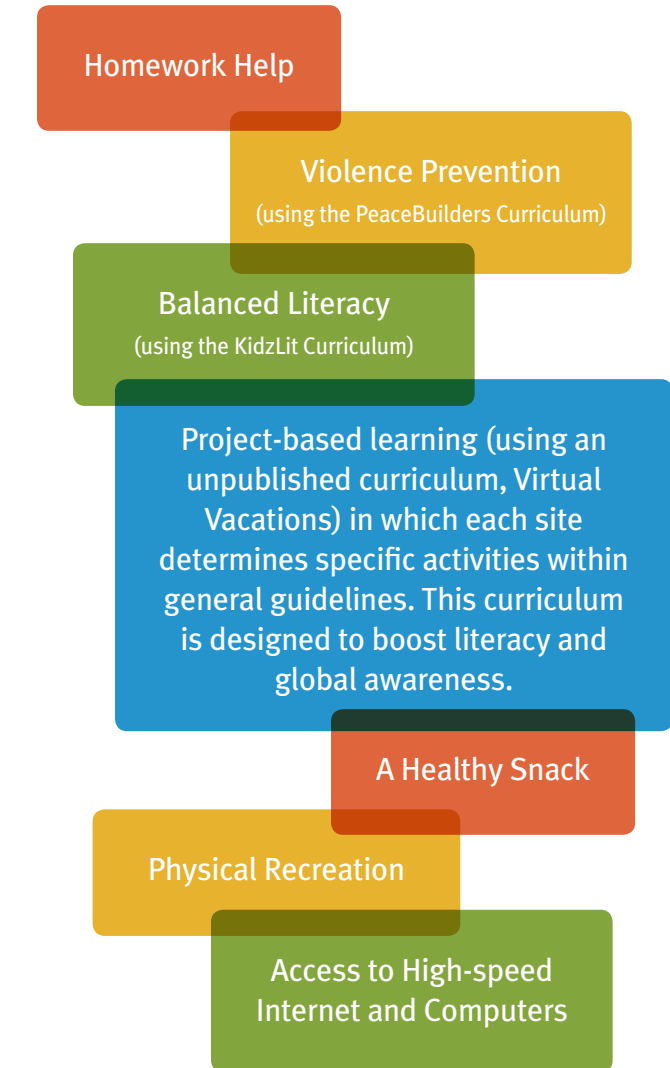
The purpose of AS&B is to help youth achieve social, academic, and life success by providing supports and opportunities for learning and positive development. This larger mission is based in the Community Action Framework for Youth Development developed by James Connell, PhD and Michelle Gambone, PhD. This research-based framework stems from longitudinal findings that youth who are successful over the long term have opportunities to be productive (do well in school, develop other interests and skills), connect with others (form positive peer relationships, participate in civic groups), and navigate various settings (interact appropriately, take responsibility for their choices; Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002). In this framework, programs that make a difference emphasize:



These three dimensions serve as the organizing principles of all AS&B programs and also guide evaluation efforts. Specifically, our evaluation focuses on quality of relationships among staff and children, children's emotional and physical safety in program, and the impact of the evidence-based curricula selected for implementation because research has shown time and again that these are the hallmarks of impactful programs.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

While individual sites retain the latitude to customize the program day to meet the unique needs of their community, the basic program model for After School & Beyond is consistent across sites and is comprised of the following components:



A handful of AS&B sites operate as "tutoring only" programs which offer the program components of homework help, snack and internet/computer access. This program variation is offered at sites that lack adequate space and/or have too few children to operate a full service program. Regardless of format (enrichment versus tutoring only) all programs have the same expectations for quality relationships among participants and staff, and to create an environment that is emotionally and physically safe for children and youth participants.



Program Goals

Program goals for the 2009-10 year were:

GROW program sites and number of youth served

INCREASE the number of participants attending program regularly to maximize impact

CONTINUE to improve program quality as measured by the SACERS (School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale)

ASSESS the ongoing implementation and impact of PeaceBuilders, an evidence-based violence prevention curriculum in its third year of use in AS&B

ASSESS the implementation and impact of KidzLit, a balanced literacy program being implement for the first time at AS&B sites

Growth

GROWTH: WHY (RESEARCH AND WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OUR POPULATION)

Most geographic regions served by AS&B already experienced a severe shortage of center-based slots for school-aged children. For example, in Riverside County, there are center-based slots for only 23% of kids ages 6 years and older (2009 Child Care Portfolio). Other sources of low and no-cost school-based after school care (ASES, 21st CCLC) are now operating at capacity with substantial waiting lists due to increased levels of parent need. In this climate, it is our belief that low-income families are now competing with middle class families experiencing temporary changes in economic status for services, especially in the arena of after school care.

GROWTH: HOW

In 2009-10 AS&B grew through the addition of program sites, increased enrollment, more consistent youth attendance, and expansion of summer program offerings (see figure 1).

GROWTH RESULTS: NUMBER OF PROGRAM SITES AND YOUTH SERVED

In academic year 2009-10, AS&B offered a total of 33 program sites – an increase of 22% from 2008-09 (see figure 1). This expansion reflects the addition of six new programs. Two existing programs were converted into homework and tutoring-only programs to better serve community needs.

Based on needs assessment, staff observation and parent request, AS&B expanded summer program offerings, operating some form of programming at 15 sites, including a high school focused program, for a one year growth rate of 36%.

figure 1 **Program Growth 2008-2010**

ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAMS	08-09	09-10	ONE-YEAR GROWTH RATE
Enrichment Programs (K-12th)	24	29	21%
Tutoring Only Programs (K-12th)	2	3	50%
High School Programs (9th-12th)	1	1	0%
Total Academic Year Programs	27	33	22%
SUMMER PROGRAMS			
Enrichment Programs (K-12th)	11	15	36%

GROWTH RESULTS: YOUTH SERVED

The number of youth served by all programs increased dramatically in 2009-10 due to the combination of program site growth, more aggressive outreach and enrollment and emphasis on more consistent attendance of existing participants (see figure 2).

Full Service Enrichment Programs

- Served 1,681 youth, representing a 70% increase over last year
- The average number of youth served per program site increased from 41 to 58 youth

Homework and Tutoring-only Programs

- Served a total of 85 youth, an increase of over 170% from the previous year

High School Program

- Served 2,403 youth, a 435% increase over the 449 youth served during the same period last year
- Served 319 youth during the summer, including providing transition-to-high school programming for incoming freshmen that would not have been otherwise provided by the district

Summer Programs

- Served 996 youth (inclusive of high school youth) for a one year growth rate of 227%

figure 2 **Growth in Youth Served 2008-2010**

ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAMS	08-09	09-10	ONE-YEAR GROWTH RATE
Enrichment Programs (K-12th)	988	1681	70%
Tutoring Only Programs (K-12th)	31	85	174%
High School Programs (9th-12th)	449	2403	435%
Total Academic Year Programs	1468	4169	184%

SUMMER PROGRAMS			
Enrichment Programs (K-12th)	305	996	227%

GROWTH RESULTS: WHY ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Attendance matters. It is one of the easiest ways to measure a program’s success – children and youth tend to “vote with their feet”, meaning they don’t attend when program doesn’t meet their needs. Low attendance can be indicative of other issues, such as poor quality facilities, inappropriate staffing or non-engaging curriculum.

While attendance alone is not a definitive indicator of quality, it is an important program “vital sign.” Attendance is also important because it affects the cost effectiveness and, subsequently, the sustainability, of after school programs. In addition, attendance was identified as an area of challenge in last year’s evaluation, so there was a strong focus on attendance by program and evaluation staff this year.

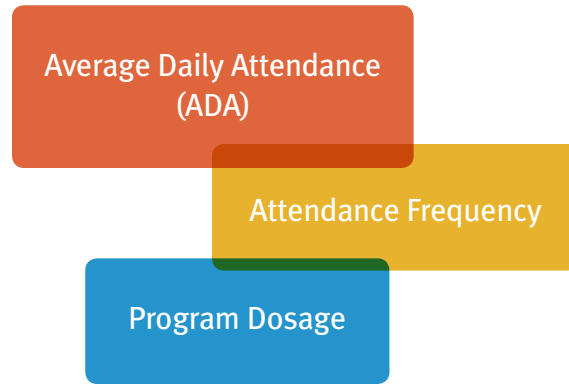




Attendance

ATTENDANCE: HOW WE MEASURED IT

Attendance was examined using three different measures in this report:



While ADA focuses on attendance at a “site” level, both frequency and dosage consider attendance at the youth participant level. All three are important and provide complementary perspectives about how families and participants are utilizing the program. ADA can be used to assist program leaders by providing real-time feedback about program performance. ADA is most useful as a measure of operational efficiency; programs operating near capacity are more efficient in terms of staffing and other program costs. However ADA is also related to program quality and can serve as an early indicator of quality concerns that may warrant further attention.

Out-of-School-Time (OST) research suggests the amount of time youth spend in program (also known as “program dosage”) plays an important role in determining program impact. While youth who attend program infrequently or sporadically still benefit, several thresholds have been suggested as benchmarks. Some studies find that program benefits are maximized when youth participate 3 days a week or more, which translates to 60% of days offered during a 5 day a week program. Over the course of a program year, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST) researchers found a significant difference between program impact for youth who attended 100 days or more and youth who attended less frequently.

ATTENDANCE: HOW

Program leadership focused on attendance in three ways this program year:

Monthly Accountability

An attendance goal (roughly 80% of center capacity) was established for each site. Program staff reported their monthly attendance-to-goal each to the Youth Development leadership team and Hope Through Housing Foundation executive team.

Monthly Acknowledgements

Sites that showed significant improvement or met their attendance targets received certificates of achievement and public recognition for their accomplishments.

Coaching

Sites that consistently fell short of their targets received coaching on marketing and recruitment. In one case, an analysis revealed that parents preferred a homework-only program to a full after school program. This shift was made and attendance improved dramatically.

ATTENDANCE RESULTS: ADA

Programs significantly increased ADA this year as reflected in the Figure 3. While attendance has increased overall, there is room for growth as few centers are operating at full capacity.

figure 3 **Average Daily Attendance Comparison 2008-2010**

	% TO GOAL 08-09	% TO GOAL 09-10
SEPTEMBER	58%	77%
OCTOBER	60%	81%
NOVEMBER	60%	66%
DECEMBER	59%	76%
JANUARY	61%	75%
FEBRUARY	60%	74%
MARCH	60%	80%
APRIL	62%	85%
MAY	63%	86%
JUNE	66%	82%

ATTENDANCE RESULTS: DOSAGE AND CONSISTENCY

Attendance dosage was examined using the 100 day threshold previously discussed. Across all sites, 19% of youth attended program 100 days or more. This was a substantial increase over last program year where only 10% of youth attended program 100 days or more.

Attendance consistency against the 3 day a week threshold (60% of a 5 day a week program) was also examined. This approach takes into account the total number of days of possible attendance based on program enrollment date. While it may not be possible for children enrolling later in the program year to achieve 100 days of attendance, they may have very consistent attendance during the period in which they are enrolled. Forty-eight percent (48%) of youth attended 60% or more of program days for which they were enrolled.

Since there is little published evidence of attendance patterns in housing-based after school, we conducted an exploratory analyses to better understand the way parents and students utilize the program. Actual attendance data was used to create four groups. The 25% of participants who attended most consistently were grouped together; the next 25% were grouped together and so on, forming four groups of roughly equivalent size. Groups were designated as Consistent, Regular, Inconsistent and Drop-in.

As illustrated in table 3, Consistent attendees participated in program an average 91% of their total days of enrollment while Regular attendees came to program on average 69% of days of enrollment. Inconsistent participants attended program less than half (43%) of the time that they were enrolled. Drop-ins came to program sporadically during the enrollment period for an average of 17% of total days enrolled.

Percent and days of attendance were strongly related. Consistent attendees participated in an average of 96 days of program while Drop-Ins attended an average of 26 days.

figure 4 **Program Attendance Patterns**

ATTENDANCE PATTERNS	AVERAGE % OF DAYS ENROLLED ATTENDED	AVERAGE # OF DAYS ATTENDED
Consistent (N=345)	91%	96
Regular (N=330)	69%	82
Inconsistent (N=331)	43%	55
Drop-In (N=342)	17%	26

Further analyses examining grade, gender and program site were conducted to see if groups based on attendance patterns differed in any meaningful ways. Kindergartners were found to be relatively more frequent among the Consistent attendance group. Although Kindergartners were 13% of the total participants from K through 12th grade, Kindergartners accounted for 17% of all Consistent program attendees. There were no statistically meaningful relationships between gender or program site and attendance groups.

Program Quality

HTHF programs are held to highest industry standards of quality. Quality has been assessed biannually over the past three years using the School Aged Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS).

QUALITY: RESULTS

Over the past three years HTHF has made great strides in improving program quality, both within each program year and over time. In 2009-10, 19 sites were evaluated for quality during both the fall and the spring. Of these sites, 84% showed increases in quality from fall to spring.

CURRICULUM EXPANSION

KidzLit was added to the AS&B program model this year in an effort to address the literacy needs of children and youth served by the program. Our preliminary research found that at four pilot sites nearly half of program participants were at risk for reading below grade level. Furthermore, research shows that kids from low income households are less likely to be exposed to literacy rich environments.

About the SACERS

The SACERS measures program quality across six domains of after school using a total of 43 items. All items are measured on a 1 to 7 scale ranging from inadequate to exceptional quality. HTHF has established a benchmark score of 5 on each scale. This represents “good” program quality.

Space and Furnishings

Appropriateness of the physical environment for various types of indoor and outdoor activities (11 items)

Health and Safety

Policies and practices that ensure the physical safety of participants and staff (8 items)

Activities

The variety of age-appropriate activities available in the curriculum (8 items)

Interactions

Quality of behavior management, peer relations, parent relations and staff relations (9 items)

Program Structure

Scheduling, flexibility and the use of community resources in program (4 items)

Staff Development

Opportunities for professional growth, evaluation and quality of staff supervision (3 items)

Each SACERS scale yields a score that can be used to target areas for improvement and all scores can be averaged together to create a single program quality measure.

About KidzLit

KidzLit (Developmental Studies Center) was selected for implementation and pilot evaluation at four program sites. KidzLit utilizes read-alouds and accompanying activities to increase youths' motivation to read and build literacy skills. KidzLit was selected after careful review of commercially available programs because it:

- *is developed specifically for the after school setting*
- *is results and standards-based*
- *has promising published evaluation findings*
- *doesn't require specialized education or skill set for staff (i.e., doesn't require trained teachers)*
- *is flexible and can be incorporated easily into the existing program structure*
- *dovetailed well with other curricula that AS&B has committed to implementing (e.g., PeaceBuilders & Virtual Vacations)*

KidzLit provides books for use in program with a leaders' guide that utilizes a structured process that can be adapted to use with any book once staff are skilled implementers.



KIDZLIT RESULTS: OUTCOMES

As part of the ongoing evaluation, four pilot sites were selected to evaluate implementation fidelity, staff and student satisfaction with the KidzLit program and to conduct baseline measurements of motivation to read, basic literacy levels, and reading habits of youth. KidzLit was implemented at various points in the fall with most sites beginning implementation in November. Baseline evaluation data was collected during the first 30 to 60 days of implementation and post-implementation data was collected in April/May, so on average there were about 5 months between the collection of baseline and posttest data.

Almost half of the 94 youth participants (48%) were found to be at risk or at some risk of reading below the benchmark of proficiency per grade on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).

Consistent with research findings, at-risk readers in the program showed lower motivation to read scores, had lower self-concept as a reader scores and engaged in less out of school reading than peers reading at grade level at baseline assessment.

In the spring, evaluators reassessed motivation to read and reading habits in 66% of the original 94 evaluation participants (the remaining 32 participants either attended program sporadically or had stopped attending program) by the time of retest. Motivation to read scores increased significantly for participants who were initially classified as at-risk and not at risk on the DIBELS; however there was no change in motivation to read for student classified as at some risk. Reading habits did not change significantly from pre to post assessment in any group. These findings may reflect inconsistent and infrequent implementation of KidzLit or too little time between measurement periods.

KIDZLIT IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation was examined to understand how to take KidzLit to scale across the entire AS&B program. Our previous experience implementing PeaceBuilders taught us the benefit of taking new curricula to scale thoughtfully. We examined implementation to assess the adequacy of staff training, to identify obstacles to implementation and to further assess the appropriateness of the curriculum for the setting.

Information about the implementation of KidzLit came from three sources: unstructured observations by evaluation staff, focus groups with staff and focus groups with students.

During the pilot evaluation we observed low levels of implementation and inconsistent implementation both across and within sites. For example, KidzLit sessions ranged from as frequent as twice a week to as infrequent as once every two weeks across the four pilot sites. Some sites used only KidzLit provided literature, other sites used a combination of KidzLit and outside books and there was disagreement about whether utilizing non-KidzLit books was "allowed."

Based on staff focus group data, implementation challenges likely emerged for four reasons:

Lack of staff buy in

Too little training

Staff turnover

Unclear expectation around frequency of implementation

While all of these challenges are readily addressable by the program, the lack of staff buy-in warrants special attention. The purpose of KidzLit is to foster literacy development by creating a love of literacy and reading in children. A critical program component is that staff model strong value of literacy and the activity of reading. Observation data and follow-up questions posed to staff during focus groups illuminated the fact that many staff members viewed the KidzLit curriculum as just something else they were "required" to implement and resented having to do it. This attitude was transmitted to the program participants who were likely to see the task as "like school" at those sites where staff members were not supportive. Staff reported that students resisted participating in the activity and were therefore not inclined to implement it even if they knew they were supposed to do it.



Curriculum: PeaceBuilders

ABOUT PEACEBUILDERS

PeaceBuilders is an evidence based curriculum designed to prevent violence by supporting children’s appropriate emotion regulation and by encouraging prosocial behaviors. While the program includes specific activities, such as a daily pledge and thematic projects, the real thrust of the program revolves around creating shared values and positive behavior, healthy emotion expression and clear communication. PeaceBuilders has been used in AS&B programs since 2007.



PEACEBUILDERS RESULTS

AS&B is in its 3rd year of implementation of the PeaceBuilders violence prevention curriculum. This year 19 sites participated in the PeaceBuilders Program. Site observations were used to establish the implementation level at each site. Implementation was rated using multiple sources of information: presence of PeaceBuilders’ materials in the program space, observation of staff and participant behavior, and follow-up interviews with staff.

As illustrated in figure 5 below, PeaceBuilders implementation increased between fall and spring; by the spring nearly all sites had posted the pledge, were reciting the pledge on a daily basis, and had PraiseBoards present and maintained with current PraiseNotes (suggesting consistent implementation of that program element). Only 26% of sites participated in a PeaceBuilders activity during the observation visit.

figure 5 PeaceBuilders Implementation

PEACEBUILDERS ELEMENT	% SITES	
	FALL	SPRING
PeaceBuilders Pledge Posted	79%	95%
Pledge recited daily	63%	84%
PraiseBoard in program	74%	84%
PeaceBuilders activities observed	16%	26%

The consistency of implementation also showed increases over the program year. Sites engaged more consistently in critical PB activities more frequently as the year progressed but do not yet approach maximum levels of implementation (see figure 6).

figure 6 Consistency of PeaceBuilders Implementation

PEACEBUILDERS ELEMENT	AVERAGE RATING (0 TO 3)	
	FALL	SPRING
Signs & Posters illustrating PB Principles displayed	.78	1.06
Students give PraiseNotes to one another	1.58	2.32
Students give PraiseNotes to staff	1.05	1.53
PB Principles evident in students’ work that is displayed in program	.89	1.21

PB implementation level was not related to any student outcomes measured this year. However it was strongly related to program quality at the site level – sites with more consistent PB implementation scored higher in overall program quality as measured by the SACERS. This was due to a strong correlation between PB implementation and the Interactions subscale of the SACERS. Sites consistently using PB principles are creating warm, emotionally safe programs, more effectively managing student behavior and having more positive interactions than sites with lower levels of implementation, a finding that has been consistent across three program years. It is likely that PeaceBuilders provides staff with effective tools for working with students and likely decreases incidents of challenging student behavior (something not currently measured).

It is challenging to interpret the lack of relationship between PeaceBuilders implementation and student outcomes this program year when they have been robust in the past (such as student ratings of trust in staff and trust in other students). However one factor that may have influenced impact this year was the amount of staff turnover. Due to HTHF’s transition to direct service provider, there was a very high level of staff turnover and staff members were transferred between sites frequently. This may have impeded children’s ability to form close relationships with staff and each other, an integral component of the curriculum’s success.

Youth Workers

YOUTH WORKER COMPETENCIES: WHY

Research shows that quality, sector focused trainings that develop staff knowledge, skills and abilities in after school produces a set of competencies for staff to create a climate that is more inviting and open for children to learn. This deliberate focus on staff training and development comes from a belief that quality staff builds the foundation for quality programs.

YOUTH WORKER COMPETENCIES: HOW

Hope through Housing has made a deliberate commitment to focus on staff competency this year, beginning with the hiring process. Thirty six percent of staff possessed a Bachelor's degree, representing an increase of 100% compared to last program year. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of staff had more than one year of experience working with youth prior to joining AS&B, and 48% of staff had three years or more of experience. Nearly 25% of staff had five years of more of experience in the youth development field.

Staff were slightly more female and Caucasian than program participants (see figure 7). More than 50% of staff were under the age of 25 years, 26% were between 25 and 35 years and 16% were 36 years or older.

Thirteen training days (11 full-day, 2 half-day) were offered throughout the program year ranging in content from youth development, first aid, behavior management and leadership development; all staff attended at least one day of training.

figure 7 **Staff & Program Participant Characteristics**

CHARACTERISTIC	PARTICIPANTS	STAFF
GENDER		
Female	51%	73%
Male	49%	27%
ETHNICITY		
Hispanic/Latino	58%	38%
Caucasian/White	9%	30%
African American/Black	31%	22%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	2%	5%
Other	1%	3%

YOUTH WORKER PREPARATION AND SATISFACTION

Based on responses to staff surveys, most program staff felt well prepared to guide children's behavior (81%), help children problem-solve (97%) and provide project based learning activities (86%). However, 44% of staff reported that their program site did not have enough materials, supplies and equipment to support program activities, and 30% felt that they did not have enough scheduled time to plan activities with other staff.

Parent Needs and Program Satisfaction

Parents are important program stakeholders. Parents typically choose what after school program younger children will utilize and can play an important role in encouraging older youth to attend and participate in program. Thus AS&B values parent perspectives on the program and actively solicits parent feedback about the program. Parent surveys were conducted in the spring of 2010. Nearly 300 surveys were returned representing the parents of more than 500 children and youth.

Why AS&B?

Parents have many options for their child's care after school. Ninety percent of households that responded to the survey reported that an adult is home when children return from school and 59% reported that an after school program was available at school. Parents' primary reason for choosing AS&B was proximity to home (67%). Cost and transportation reasons increased this year for parents and over 40% of parents had used AS&B in 2008-09.

We asked parents what their children would be doing if AS&B were unavailable. Parents responded:

"I have no idea. I would have to change my work schedule if I could."

"Honestly, it's sad to say they would be watching television or playing video games."

"(They would be) sitting around doing nothing productive."

"Running in the streets worrying me about where they are and who they're with."



Program Value

We asked parents what aspects of program matter most to them. Homework help continues to be an important component to parents. Although most parents reported that they had time to help children with their homework (85%) and know how to help children with their homework (89%), parents still wanted all homework completed during program hours (85%). Access to computers and the internet continues to be an important need, with 39% of households lacking a computer and 44% lacking internet access.

Parents are also interested in supporting their children's social and physical development through AS&B (see figure 8). While 54% of parents ranked homework help as the most important reason for sending their child to program, the next three highest ranked parent priorities were learning to get along with other, get exercise/recreation and form relationships with staff who are positive role models.

figure 8 **Top 3 Reasons Parents Send Their Children to AS&B**

RANK	REASON	% PARENTS RANKING MOST IMPORTANT
1	My child gets help with homework	54%
2	My child learns to get along with others	39%
3	My child gets some exercise/recreation	36%
3	My child forms relationships with staff who are positive role models	36%

Parent Satisfaction

Parent survey respondents reported being familiar with both the program and the staff; over 85% of parents have visited program facilities this year and 92% have talked with staff at least a few times or more over the course of the year.

Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the facilities and content of program (see figure 9) and feel staff are competent to work with their children and make them feel welcome at program (see figure 10).

figure 9 **Parent Satisfaction with Program**

THIS PROGRAM...	PERCENT AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE
Spends the right amount of time on academics	90%
Has many interesting activities for my child to participate in	95%
Has good equipment and facilities	97%

figure 10 **Parent Satisfaction with Staff**

STAFF AT THIS PROGRAM...	PERCENT AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE
Make me feel welcome	98%
Know my child well	98%
Make sure I am informed about how my child is doing	90%
Give my child individualized attention	94%
Respect me and my opinions	97%
Know how to work with kids	97%

Summary and Recommendations

AS&B continues to grow and expand to meet the needs of the children, youth and families it serves. The program is clearly valued by participants and families and plays an important role in supporting academics and social development. However the program aspires to be much more – it strives to provide supports and opportunities to ensure the life success of the youth it serves. While the program has a great deal of promising infrastructure in place, the evaluation findings suggest two key areas of focus needed for the program to reach these ambitious goal: more consistent attendance, and more faithful implementation of the two key, evidence-based curricula that the program has adopted.

ATTENDANCE

The program was very successful at increasing overall numbers of youth served and ADA through regular performance monitoring and intervention by the Leadership team. However most sites do not operate near capacity and many sites are still not regularly attaining benchmark levels. Half of program participants attend program on an inconsistent or drop in basis and there is a trend for the most consistent program attendees to be younger children. These performance patterns may be endemic of participation rates in housing-based settings (or a consequence of lots of extracurricular offerings for kids); at this point there is simply too little research evidence to know. But attendance should continue to be an important area of focus since it directly affects the program's ability to impact participants as well as the program's financial sustainability.

Recommendations

1. Continue to closely monitor attendance performance on a monthly basis and to provide support and intervention for low-performing sites. Study and disseminate best-practices of high performing sites in relation to attendance.
2. Set explicit goals around the percent of consistent, regular, inconsistent and drop-in attendee mix. While there is a place for all types attendees in the program, given that less than 20% of all participants achieved the 100 day of services benchmark, the program would likely increase impact by serving more participants more regularly.
3. The Leadership team may want to explore the finding that a disproportionate percent of consistent and regular attendees were Kindergarteners. This could be an area to capitalize on (The Program Director has reported that many school-based sites are not serving Kindergarteners due to the early release time) or an area of concern. The program may be perceived as catering to younger children and this could deter some older children from regularly participating.

CURRICULUM: KIDZLIT IMPLEMENTATION

The pilot implementation of KidzLit showed promising results. Baseline reading assessments established that about 48% of program participants are at some risk for reading below grade level, a piece of information that the program has never had before. And despite challenges to implementation including very inconsistent implementation, promising increases in Motivation to Read were observed over a relative short program period. Provided that program leadership can create staff buy-in around the curriculum, KidzLit likely has the potential to significantly impact participant's self-concept as a reader and motivation to read which has been shown to increase reading frequency, leading to increased reading performance over time.

Recommendations

1. Create minimum implementation requirements for KidzLit at all sites and set up systems to report actual implementation so this may be more closely examined in subsequent evaluations.
2. Create staff buy-in for the program by sharing data that illustrates the need for this type of intervention among the youth served by the program as well as the evidence that KidzLit is an impactful program.
3. Provide adequate training early in the program year, including training about how to adapt outside books for the Five Part Process which will make KidzLit easier to fit seamlessly into other program themes and activities.
4. Spot check implementation frequently during the beginning of the program and throughout the implementation period

CURRICULUM: PEACEBUILDERS IMPLEMENTATION

PB continues to show increases in implementation from fall to spring, but spring gains are consistently lost by the following fall, largely due to the high rate of staff turnover that is typical in the youth development workforce. This year the program experienced high levels of staff turnover and staff transfers that will likely be uncharacteristic in future years. Given the strong relationship between effective behavior management and the creation of a warm emotional climate in program and the implementation of PB curriculum, it is worth pursuing more even and faithful implementation of this curriculum and strengthening measurement of program impact.

Recommendations

1. Stabilize staffing at program sites. While the youth development field experiences high turnover across the board, and this was a highly unusual year for the program, program leadership should be judicious in transferring staff among sites given the potential to interfere with relationship formation.
2. Offer PeaceBuilders Training before the program year begins so that strong implementation may begin earlier in the program year so the intervention has ample opportunity to create an impact. The program has made a strong financial commitment to the curriculum so it should be a priority for training all staff. This also includes offering opportunities for new staff entering during the program year to receive training in a timely manner.
3. Create minimum standards for implementation of PB at each site and document activities implemented so that this information can be considered in future evaluations of program impact. Based on anecdotal data from staff during observations and follow-up interviews, there is little shared understanding of how frequently PB activities should be implemented on a weekly basis. It is difficult to know how accurately site observations capture annual implementation patterns of PB at this time.
4. Increase the rigor of the evaluation of this curriculum's impact by adding an observational measure of children's behavior that can be completed by staff, parents and possibly even classroom teaches. It will complement existing self-report data from children and program observational measures.



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