

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

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Community-Based Summer Learning Programs for School-Age Children: Research-to-Policy Resources

Research has demonstrated the substantial decline in proficiency in reading and mathematics during the summer months for children from low-income families and that these losses are cumulative from year to year (McCombs et al., 2011). As recently noted by Rachel Schumacher, director of the Office of Child Care, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), access to high quality summer opportunities for learning during the summer is critical to avoiding loss of key academic skills acquired during the school year (Schumacher, 2016). While the exact number of children who are in community-based summer learning programs cannot be determined based on available national data (Laughlin, 2010), analyses of the 2006 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) indicate that school-age children from families living in poverty are substantially less likely to have these and enrichment learning opportunities (Laughlin, 2014). By funding the new National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment, the Administration for Children and Families in DHHS has invested in training and technical assistance to a wide range of stakeholders – including Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies, statewide afterschool networks, state and local education agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, and out-of-school-time provider associations – with the goal of increasing low-income families’ access to high-quality summer learning experiences.

Summer learning experiences for school-age children can be provided in a variety of ways and settings, including summer school programs (often remedial), community-based programs (often a continuation of afterschool programs), and home-based programs (in which families are provided with information and resources to encourage reading, often run by libraries). Research has indicated that all three types of summer learning programs can have a positive impact on children’s retention of key skills when these programs are of high quality, recruit vulnerable children, and engage families in ensuring consistent attendance (Kim & Quinn, 2013). Having an impact on a broad scale requires that policies and infrastructure, including funding, are in place to expand effective programs.



This **Research-to-Policy Resource List** compiles publications and documents published in 2010 and later on the following topics related to community-based summer learning programs for school-age children:

- Effective curricula, best practices and exemplary models
- State policy options

Research on Effective Curricula, Best Practices, and Exemplary Models

Evaluations of the following summer learning programs have been conducted and the results published:

- **Building Educated Leaders for Life** (Somers, M., Welbeck, R., Grossman, J., & Gooden, S. (2015). *An analysis of the effects of an academic summer program for middle school students*. New York: MDRC.)
- **Electric Company Summer Learning Program** (McCarthy, B., Michel, L., Tiu, M., Atienza, S., Rice, J., Nakamoto, J., & Tafoya, A. (2011). *Evaluation of The Electric Company Summer Learning Program*. San Francisco: WestEd.)
- **Higher Achievement** (Herrera, C., Linden, L. L., Arbretton, A., & Grossman, J. (2011). *Summer snapshot: Exploring the impact of Higher Achievement's year-round out-of-school time program on summer learning*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.)
- **One City Summer Initiative** (DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation. (2013). *The District of Columbia One City Summer Initiative: 2013 report of findings*. Washington, DC: DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation.)
- **Smarter Summers** (National Summer Learning Association. (2011). *Smarter Summers: Results in brief*. Baltimore: National Summer Learning Association.)
- **Summer & School Break Programs** (Public Profit. (2013). *K-8 Summer & School Break programs: Summer 2012 program evaluation*. San Francisco: San Francisco, Department of Children, Youth and Their Families.)

Summaries of effective program models are available in:

- Augustine, C. H., McCombs, J., Schwartz, H. L., & Zakaras, L. (2013). *Getting to work on summer learning: Recommended practices for success*. (RR-366-WF). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- Deschenes, S., & Malone, H. (2011). *Year-round learning: Linking school, afterschool, and summer learning to support student success*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.
- McCombs, J., Augustine, C. H., Schwartz, H. L., Bodilly, S., McInnis, B., Lichter, D. S., & Cross, A. (2011). *Making summer count: How summer programs can boost children's learning*. (MG-1120-WF). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Research on State Policy Options

The National Summer Learning Association tracks state policy developments. Its most recent summary of key state bills affecting summer learning is the *State of Summer Learning 2015 State Policy Snapshot* (National Summer Learning Association, n.d.). The Association in consultation with the White House, the Department of Education, and Civic Nation developed a guide to potential funding sources for summer programs with examples of blended public-private financing strategies (National Summer

Learning Association, United States, White House Office, United States, Department of Education, & Civic Nation, 2016).

Research in three states – Massachusetts, Michigan, and Rhode Island – illustrate state initiatives to expand access and increase impact of summer programs:

- Massachusetts:
 - Love, M. (2011). *Evaluation of summer 2010 Out-of-School Time Literacy and Learning Promotion Grant*. Boston: Massachusetts, Department of Early Education and Care.
 - National Institute on Out-of-School Time (U.S.). (2014). *Summer Enhancement Grant Programs 2014: Prepared for: The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*. Malden: Massachusetts, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Michigan:
 - Van Egeren, L. A., Bates, L. V., Lee, K., & Sturdevant Reed, C. (2011). *21st Century Community Learning Centers summer expansion grant: Final evaluation report*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, University Outreach and Engagement.
- Rhode Island:
 - National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives. (2014). *School-age success story: Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance summer learning model*. Washington, DC: National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives.

References

- Kim, J. S., & Quinn, D. M. (2013). The effects of summer reading on low-income children's literacy achievement from kindergarten to grade 8: A meta-analysis of classroom and home interventions. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 386-431.
- Laughlin, L. L. (2010). *Who's minding the kids?: Child care arrangements: Spring 2005/Summer 2006*. (Current Population Reports, P70-121). Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census.
- Laughlin, L. L. (2014). *A child's day: Living arrangements, nativity, and family transitions: 2011 (selected indicators of child well-being)*. (Current Population Reports, P70-139). Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census.
- McCombs, J., Augustine, C. H., Schwartz, H. L., Bodilly, S., McInnis, B., Lichter, D. S., & Cross, A. (2011). *Making summer count: How summer programs can boost children's learning*. (MG-1120-WF). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- National Summer Learning Association. (n.d.). *State of summer learning: 2015 state policy snapshot*. Baltimore: National Summer Learning Association.
- National Summer Learning Association., United States. White House Office, United States. Department of Education, & Civic Nation. (2016). *Summer opportunities: Expanding access to summer learning, jobs and meals for America's young people: 2016 funding resource guide*. Baltimore: National Summer Learning Association.
- Schumacher, R. (2016, July 14). *Communities across U.S. celebrate National Summer Learning Day* [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/blog/2016/07/communities-across-us-celebrate-national-summer-learning-day>

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