

Chronic School Absenteeism and the Role of Afterschool



A Briefing Paper

By Sam Piha and Samantha Fasen

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Sam served as editor and contributing author of several important practice guides and journal articles on afterschool programming. Sam holds a master's degree in Social Welfare.



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Ren (Stacey) Daraio brings over 35 years of experience working in the field of youth development as a facilitator, trainer, and coach. She has experience training and coaching diverse audience groups, from afterschool practitioners and parents to funders and technical assistance providers. Prior to her work with Temescal Associates, Ren was the Deputy Director at the Community Network for Youth Development and a consultant for the Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

Temescal Associates is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who organizations, and policy makers.

The How Kids Learn Foundation (HKLF) is a 501(c)(3) organization. It is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of settings that support the education and healthy development of youth. This includes schools and out-of-school time programs. The HKL Foundation provides educational and training activities that promote the capacity of organizations that support the education and healthy development of youth. Examples of activities include conferences, speaker forums, screenings of relevant films, training sessions, coaching sessions, the awarding of digital badges to acknowledge exemplar programs and the learning that happens within these settings. Activities also include the development and distribution of educational materials (papers, self-assessment tools, videos, program guides, etc.). You can see a catalogue of the resources we've produced for the afterschool field.

Cover Photo: www.unsplash.com.

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CHRONIC SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM AND THE ROLE OF AFTERSCHOOL



Source: www.pexels.com

INTRODUCTION

We know that school attendance is key to student success. *“Students who attend school regularly are more likely to master academic content, get good grades, feel connected to their community, develop healthy habits, and ultimately graduate from high school.”*¹

The COVID pandemic resulted in a spike in school absenteeism. Before the pandemic, about 8 million U.S. students were considered chronically absent, according to the research group Attendance Works. By spring 2022, that number had doubled to around 16 million. (You can read or listen to this NPR piece on absenteeism post-COVID, [*3 Years Since the Pandemic Wrecked Attendance Kids Still Aren’t Showing Up to School.*](#))



*“The absences come on top of time students missed during school closures and pandemic disruptions. They cost crucial classroom time as schools work to recover from massive learning setbacks...Absent students miss out not only on instruction but also on all the other things schools provide — meals, counseling, socialization.”*²

Afterschool programs are particularly well positioned to reduce chronic absenteeism by focusing efforts on ensuring the quality of their programs and partnering with the school, families, and the community.

*“Leveraging the power of afterschool programs to reduce chronic absence is especially important now given the economic challenges facing communities and schools and the growing number of students at risk of academic failure and dropping out. By having an impact on attendance, afterschool programs can clearly demonstrate how they benefit students and schools and better justify their own funding.”*³

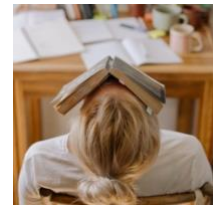
HOW TO USE THIS BRIEFING PAPER

The contents of this paper are drawn from existing writings on chronic absenteeism. This paper is designed to raise understanding and awareness of the impact of chronic absenteeism and how afterschool programs can positively impact this crisis. It also provides resources for afterschool and organizational leaders. We recommend that program leaders share this paper with organizational leaders (school leaders and staff, supervisors at the parent non-profit org, etc.) and program staff as they consider the best ways to respond to chronic absenteeism.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The definitions provided here are to assist in understanding some frequently used terms in this paper.

Chronic absenteeism- *“Chronic absence is a measure of the total instructional time missed by a student and is defined as individual students missing at least 10 percent of school for any reason. If students miss one day every other week, that’s 18 absences annually, or 10 percent of the year.”*⁴



Source: www.pexels.com

School refusal- *“This is a term used to describe the signs of anxiety a school-aged child has and his or her refusal to go to school. It is also called school avoidance or school phobia. It can be seen in different types of situations, including: Young children going to school for the first time.”*⁵

Exclusionary discipline practices- *“Exclusionary discipline, which involves removing students from the classroom through punishments such as suspensions and expulsions, deprives students of the opportunity to learn.”*⁶

Punitive policies- *“Imposed punitive consequences have the effect of shaming and stigmatizing students who have caused harm. Restorative processes offer an opportunity for students who have caused harm to understand the source of their behavior, take responsibility for their choices, and to learn and grow from the experience.”*⁷

Bullying- *“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.”*⁸



Source: [PBS Newshour](https://www.pbs.org/newshour)

The PBS News Hour recently reported on chronic school absenteeism. You can view this informative segment [here](#).

More About Chronic Absenteeism

Sweetwater Union High School District writes,
“Chronic Absenteeism:

- *Is a primary cause of lower academic achievement, even when the absences are “excused” or understandable.*
- *Is a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school. This affects an estimated five to seven and a half million students each year.*
- *Can even affect students in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade, who are then much less likely to read at grade level by the end of third grade.*
- *Is caused by a variety of issues, including chronic health conditions, housing instability, involvement with the juvenile justice system, and unsafe conditions in school, among many others.*
- *Is particularly prevalent among students who are low-income, students of color, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth—in other words, those who already tend to face significant challenges and for whom school is particularly beneficial.*
- *Is particularly prevalent among those students who are homeless or reside in public housing.*
- *May lead to substance abuse. When students are skipping school, many of them become engaged in risky behavior such as substance abuse and delinquency.*
- *Affects other students, too. Not only are frequent absences harmful to the absentee, but they also have a negative effect on the achievement of other students in the classroom.*
- *Can negatively influence future adult health outcomes. Indeed, the mortality rate of high school dropouts is over two times greater than that for adults with some college education.*
- *Can increase likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system.*
- *Is not measured by most states or school districts in this country, which leaves many educators and communities without information they need to identify students who could use additional support to maintain regular attendance.”⁹*

“For many low-income students, chronic absence in kindergarten can translate into poor academic performance throughout elementary school (Chang & Romero, 2008). By sixth grade, poor attendance is a proven indicator of whether a child will drop out of high school, regardless of economic background (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007). By ninth grade, missing excessive amounts of school can predict the likelihood of dropping out with more accuracy than past test scores (Allensworth & Easton, 2007).”¹⁰

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM: MYTHS AND CAUSES

Myths Of Chronic Absence—And How to Counteract Them

According to an article published by American Institutes for Research (AIR), *“Standing in the way of truly addressing chronic absence are three harmful myths. These myths can be counteracted by using evidence-based approaches grounded in the seminal body of knowledge known as the conditions for learning. A safe, supportive and engaging environment for learning buffers against widespread chronic absence, and educators must examine these conditions to appropriately address this issue.*

- **Myth 1:** Invoking legal consequences is an effective response to poor attendance. Counter Action: Refrain from relying on punitive policies that create additional obstacles to attendance.
- **Myth 2:** Attendance is simply a reflection of how much students and families value education. Counter Action: Get to know your students and their families better.
- **Myth 3:** Improving student attendance is beyond educators’ sphere of influence. Counter Action: Provide support when possible and counterbalance external factors by creating a supportive school environment.”¹¹

Causes Of Chronic Absenteeism

“Once you better understand the ‘why’ then you can consider community resources and other supports that can assist the family and begin to improve school attendance. Developing a supportive relationship and maintaining regular contact will show the family this is about long-term change and that they could on rely on you as a support system. They need to see you working with them as a positive partnership. Your relationship and work with them needs to be seen as an ally.”¹²

There are many causes for absenteeism, and they involve issues concerning the individual child, the school and/or family. *“These included barriers like illness, caring for another family member, mental or emotional health issues, involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice system, difficulties with housing or food, or no safe path or transportation to school; aversions like bullying, bad grades, or ineffective or exclusionary discipline practices; and disengagement factors like lack of engaging or culturally relevant instruction or poor school climate. Moreover, low-income students are four times more likely to be chronically absent.”¹³* (See appendix 1 for an assessment sheet to identify the causes for a young person’s absence.)

Myths	Barriers	Aversion	Disengagement
Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused	Chronic disease (asthma) or lack of health/dental care	Academic or social struggles	Lack of engaging and relevant instruction
Okay to miss a day here or there	Caring for siblings or other family members	Being teased or bullied	Peer pressure to be with peers out of school vs. in school
Attendance only matters in the later grades	Unmet basic needs: transportation, housing, food, clothing, etc.	Poor school climate or unsafe school	No meaningful relations with adults in school
PK and K are seen as daycare, not learning	Trauma	Parents had negative school experience	High suspension rates and disproportionate school discipline
	Feeling unsafe getting to school		

(Attendance Works, 2014)

When looking at causes for absenteeism, it is important to look at the **individual child**. Causes include:

- School avoidance- The child may not want to leave home due to various reasons because of a change in their life, such as a new school or just moved or issues cited below.
- Academic struggles
- Disabilities
- Trauma
- Safety concerns at school (This could be a result of bullying at school.)
- Social dynamics involving other youth
- Health issues (This could involve emotional health, such as depression or anxiety. Note: Childhood asthma is a leading cause of chronic disease-related school absenteeism in the U.S., associated with over 10 million missed school days annually.)

Issues can be rooted in the **family**. Causes might include:

- School safety concern
- History of negative school experiences
- New child (by birth, adoption or placement)
- Illness or death in the family
- Divorce or separation
- Problems with transportation
- Mental or emotional health issues in the household
- Children caring for others (siblings or adults)
- Housing insecurity
- Food insecurity
- Lack of school clothing
- Beliefs that schools can't be trusted
- A preference for home schooling
- Cultural or language barriers

Issues can also be rooted in the **school**. Causes might include:

- Unwelcoming school climate
- Concerns about physical and emotional safety
- Lack of connectedness and belonging
- Academic challenges
- Lack of social-emotional support

CONNECTION BETWEEN AFTERSCHOOL AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Research: How Good Afterschool Programs Improve School-Day Attendance

For decades, research has confirmed that participation in quality afterschool programs improves school attendance. This is dramatically increased when afterschool programs, schools and the larger community work together collaboratively.

(See appendix 4 for some program evaluations of how afterschool programs impact school attendance.)

“Research shows that good afterschool programs can not only improve academic performance but also influence school-day attendance, even when most don’t appear to make it an intentional goal. They accomplish this by:

- *Providing socialization and peer attention in a supervised venue. Re-establishing the link between effort and results—first in a non-school activity.*
- *Engaging students in challenging activities that help them develop persistence, a trait critical to later success in school and life.*
- *Providing consistent contact with caring, stable adults.*
- *Increasing the sense of belonging at school.”*¹⁴

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

There are many strategies to address the various causes of chronic absenteeism. There are different strategies for different settings and stakeholders.

*“Throughout the country, schools and communities have been able to reduce absenteeism when they monitor attendance data and work together to identify and address barriers that keep children from getting to school every day. Afterschool programs are particularly well positioned to make a difference. In addition to providing good programming, afterschool leaders can help schools partner with parents and build good attendance habits.”*¹⁵

School Level Strategies

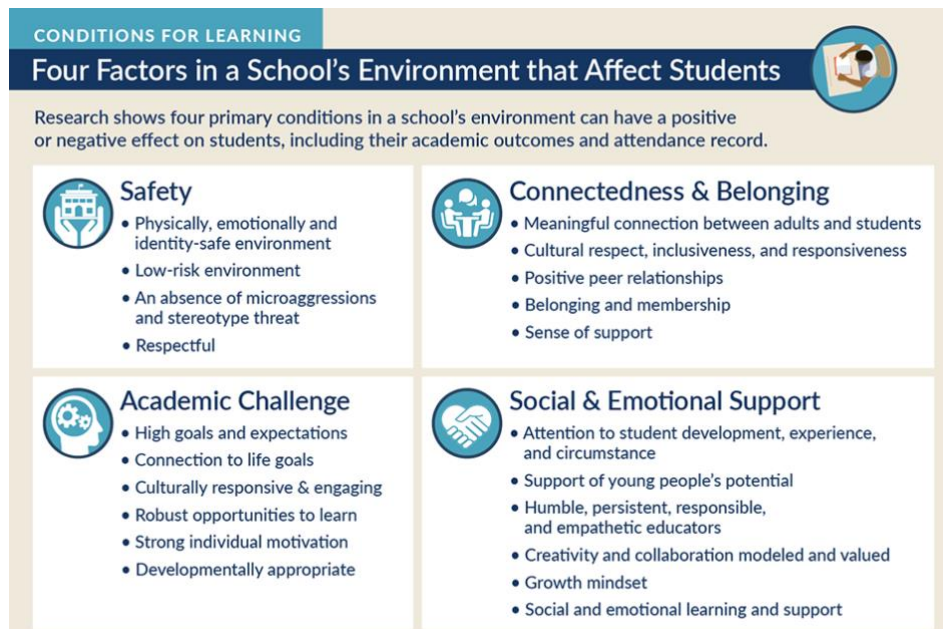
We know that the school climate and the individual classroom practices can have a large effect on youth absenteeism. Schools can reduce these negative factors through a program improvement process. However, afterschool programs often have little control over school day practices. Afterschool programs can still partner with schools in many ways, including serving on Care Teams or IEP committees.



Source: www.pexels.com

*“Educators must recognize that external factors are not the only deterrents to attendance. Educators’ role is to address what sits squarely in their control: the conditions for learning. A supportive, culturally responsive school environment is one that fosters strong relationships and draws students into school. Strong conditions for learning can buffer against external factors that affect chronic absence, while weak conditions can heighten chronic absence. All four conditions are critical to improving student outcomes, especially for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.”*¹⁶

To reduce chronic absenteeism schools must promote positive “Conditions for Learning”. They can accomplish this through school improvement efforts.



Source: American Institutes for Research

“Educators can also work to remove obstacles to attendance, such as helping a student who has moved obtain a bus pass, adjusting a course schedule for a student who works an early morning shift, or activating social services to provide temporary relief for homelessness. It is wise to intervene strategically (i.e., for groups of students) and early (i.e., at the first sign of disengagement or a few absences).”¹⁷

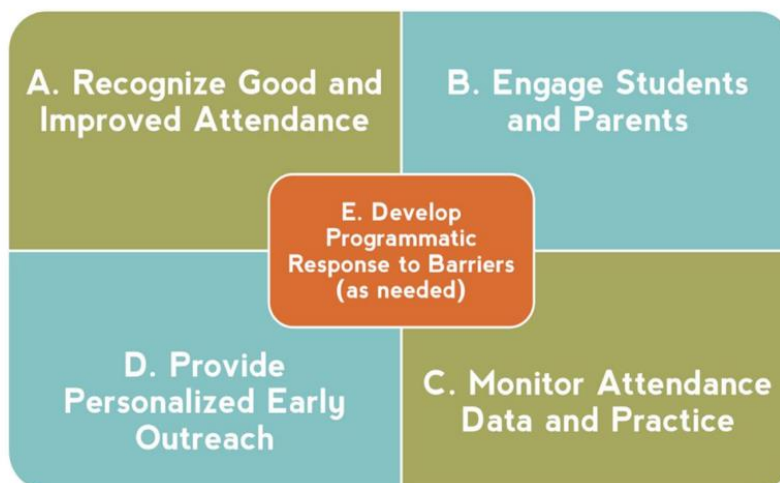
Afterschool Program Practices

“Leveraging the power of afterschool programs to reduce chronic absence is especially important now given the economic challenges facing communities and schools and the growing number of students at risk of academic failure and dropping out. By having an impact on attendance, afterschool programs can clearly demonstrate how they benefit students and schools and better justify their own funding.”¹⁸



Source: Edutopia

HOW AFTER SCHOOL SUPPORTS ATTENDANCE [iii]



Source: [Supporting Attendance Through After School Programming Mini-Guide](#)

Staff Development

- Meet with staff and provide training to build awareness of the importance of school attendance, share school and program data.



Source: Temescal Associates

- Conduct a program self-assessment to determine the strengths and weaknesses of addressing absenteeism. See Appendix 2 for a program assessment tool. Tally the results and discuss. Make an improvement plan, implement, and assess progress.

Program Practices

- Send a Clear, Consistent Message-

“They [youth] need to begin with a strong and clear message that attendance is important and why. This message needs to be consistent with messages from the school, and also communicated to both youth and parents. Likewise, in order to get staff buy-in, they need to understand the importance as well.”¹⁹

- Improve Program Quality- *“Afterschool programs impact attendance through the hands-on, creative learning approaches that tend to be more prevalent in after school programs than in more traditional classroom settings. The relationships between youth in afterschool programs with the staff tend to be far different than those with their teachers.”²⁰*

Review local, state or national quality standards and use these to assess where you can strengthen your program.

- Offer Academic Support- *“Some of the ways that after school programs impact attendance include tutoring and homework assistance – forms of academic support.... This support network both assists the youth with the content area, but also increases their self confidence in the work they are completing.”²¹*
- Recruit School-Day Teachers- Having teachers be part of the afterschool program strengthens the connection with the school. *“When teachers do come into the afterschool environment to work with youth, they also tend to feel they can interact differently and on a different level than the typical formality of a classroom.”²²*
- Incentives, Contracts and Recognition- After identifying youth participants who are often absent, develop ways to incentivize attendance. Consider working with the youth to develop a contract related to attendance. According to the Colorado Department of Education, *“Recognition is an important motivator, especially for youth.”²³* Afterschool programs, often times, in and of themselves, are a reward to youth who participate and is something they look forward to at the end of their school day.
- Monitor Attendance Data and Practice - *“In order to know the extent of the issue and where to focus your efforts, it’s important to track attendance and progress. Be sure that staff take and maintain records on attendance daily. This should also be coordinated by talking with the school attendance office regularly.”²⁴*

“Attendance is an area of focus in the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, which funds afterschool and summer learning opportunities in almost 11,000 low-income sites across America. At the end of the year, sites are required to submit data to state education officials, including school-day attendance data for participants in the afterschool program. Local afterschool leaders could be using this data gathered during the school year—both the in-school attendance data and afterschool attendance data—to make improvements in afterschool programming and to enhance partnerships with schools, families, and other child- and family-focused community organizations in order to address poor attendance.” ²⁵

- Provide Personalized Early Outreach- Notice absenteeism and intervene early on. Don’t wait for it to become “chronic”. Identify these youth and see if you can identify and mitigate some contributing causes.



“By providing a personalized and early outreach approach you can increase your chances of success. Someone reaching out to a family regarding attendance issues should already have a relationship with them. There needs to be some rapport that enables open conversation and trust. Knowing the issues that are impacting attendance is important to begin to consider ways to help. Are there health issues, transportation issues, shelter issues?” ²⁶

- Involve Parents and Guardians- Often it is not enough to engage youth alone. We need to involve parents and guardians to address chronic absenteeism. According to the Colorado Department of Education, “Sometimes programs don’t spend enough time, or the right effort in engaging parents in the program. To begin, consider first impressions. Are your entrances warm and welcoming? What do your brochures, websites and literature look like? Is it a place you would want to go? How can you improve that initial impression someone interested in, or coming into your program? How do staff greet them at the door?”

Some programs, when they stop and consider it, haven’t really invited parents to the program. They assume parents know or have read that particular section of the 35-page parent handbook, that they are welcome. Reach out and invite them to the program. Hold a parent meeting, host a dinner or reception where they meet staff and youth show off their work or an activity. Consider the time of an event and how you can support the parents, especially those with other young children, to maximize attendance. Some programs offer day care for younger siblings or offer dinner during the event, so they don’t have to rush out and worry about that afterwards.

Parents will tend to be more invested when they know and better understand the positive impacts and negative consequences of attendance at school. This includes both excused and unexcused absences, which collectively, when they increase, have an impact on the youth. A positive program culture that is inclusive of youth involvement, increases youth commitment and ownership in the program, and enables youth to feel like partners with the staff and adults.”²⁷

- Enlist Additional Partners- Schools and afterschool programs cannot solve absenteeism alone. They do not have control over many external factors that affect student attendance. *“Some remedies to chronic absence may require a web of human resources, including pediatricians, mental health providers, schools, public health partners and others.”²⁸*

Decide who are appropriate partners, consider how they can help, and contact them with your ideas.

“Students, especially those at risk, will not be in school and engaged unless we work together to uncover and remove the barriers to good attendance. In Connecticut, we see this work as the responsibility of multiple community partners.”²⁹



Source: www.pexels.com

“Improving student attendance is the responsibility of an entire community, not just schools. Community partners (parents, neighborhood residents, civic organizations, businesses, city and county agencies, faith leaders, etc.) are instrumental to every level of a tiered approach. Community partners can help send the message that missing just two days a month can hinder a child’s success in school. Additionally, partners can provide recognition for good and improved attendance as well as address common barriers to getting to school such as poor health, unreliable transportation, or the lack of a safe path to school. If larger numbers of students are chronically absent, then it is a sign that you may need to cultivate additional adults who can help mentor and support students.”³⁰

Policy And Advocacy

While schools and afterschool programs can reduce absenteeism, they need policies that support and do not hinder this work. It is important that you know who the policy making bodies are at the local, state and national levels and how you can learn from them. It is also important to know what actions to take to advocate for favorable policies.



Source: California YMCA Youth & Government

According to [Attendance Works](#),

“Policy Makers Can:

- *Adopt a standard definition of chronic absence (missing 10% or more of school), whether the school is in person, virtual or a blend, support daily attendance taking.*
- *Ensure the state has a longitudinal student database—ideally beginning in preschool—that tracks attendance for each student using a unique identifier.*
- *Make chronic absence a policy priority and direct districts and schools to identify contributing factors to student absenteeism.*
- *Promote the adoption of learning opportunity metrics (contact, connectivity, attendance, participation and relationships) in addition to chronic absence.*
- *Require that school improvement plans include prevention-oriented strategies to reduce chronic absence and improve attendance.*
- *Sponsor legislation that sets a common definition for chronic absence, promotes monitoring and public reporting of data, and requires schools and districts to address high levels of chronic absence.*
- *Support data sharing between education, health and social service agencies and other community-based youth and family organizations to target intervention efforts.*
- *Ensure adequate and equitable resources so that all students have a substantially similar opportunity to meet performance standards regardless of geographic location, and that state and local funding are sufficient to reasonably expect that all students can meet academic performance standards.*
- *Coordinate and secure resources to eliminate the digital divide.*
- *Use chronic absence data to identify districts, schools, student populations and communities that need additional resources to remove barriers to attendance and ensure positive conditions of learning.*
- *Build public awareness and consensus about addressing chronic absence.”*³¹



Source: www.pexels.com

TO LEARN MORE

In the end notes, we have linked all the articles that we reference in the paper to allow easy access. In the Appendix we also offer several useful tools. Below are some additional resources.

Articles

- [*Six Causes—and Solutions—for Chronic Absenteeism*](#)
- [*Implications of Chronic Absenteeism for Student Learning*](#)
- [*Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates*](#)
- [*Millions of Kids are Missing Weeks of School as Attendance Tanks Across the U.S.*](#)
- [*What Educators Need to Know About the Intense Anxiety That Keeps Students Home From School*](#)
- [*3 years since the pandemic wrecked attendance, kids still aren't showing up to school*](#)
- [*School Avoidance: Tips for Concerned Parents*](#)
- [*It's not just the office people don't want to go to: COVID looks to have permanently severed something as school attendance plummets and keeps dropping*](#)
- [*Signs of Bullying: Important Questions for Parents to Ask*](#)

Websites

- [*Attendance Works*](#)

Worksheet: Understanding the root causes for student absenteeism

Use these questions to help identify the likely causes of absenteeism for a student who is chronically absent in your class. Understanding the root causes for missing too much school can help determine the best course of action. Is this something that you can help your student and his/her family overcome? Or is there an underlying issue that requires additional support, perhaps from the school social worker or guidance counselor?

Academic Conditions	
Is the student struggling academically? Consider what skills and content the student has missed as a result of his or her absences as well as other instructional needs.	Y / N
Does the student need accommodations to benefit from classroom instructions? (e.g. peer support, access to computer, breaks, material presented in different ways)	Y / N
Does the student have language or communication challenges?	Y / N
Does the student struggle with organizational tasks?	Y / N
Are there barriers to homework completion?	Y / N
Do you suspect that the student has an unidentified disability?	Y / N
Safety Concerns	
Have there been any reports of bullying?	Y / N
Is the student exposed to race, disability, cultural or LGBTQ biases?	Y / N
Social Dynamics	
Does the student get to avoid difficult social or academic situations by staying away from school?	Y / N
Are transitions difficult for the student? (e.g. entering the school building, moving from class to class)	Y / N
Home Situation	
Do the parents/guardians recognize the importance of and support regular school attendance?	Y / N
Are there problems in the home that contribute to frequent absences? (e.g., parental illness, homelessness, joblessness, child care, needed health or mental health services for parent/caregiver)	Y / N
Health Status	
Are there conditions in the classroom, cafeteria or other school areas that affect the student's health or safety? (e.g. mold or other asthma triggers, animal dander, food allergens)	Y / N
Does the student exhibit anxiety due to separation from parent / caregiver?	Y / N
Does the student require health or mental health-related treatment that interferes with attendance?	Y / N
School Culture	
Are there any clubs, programs or resources during the school day and after school that might help engage the student?	Y / N
Is there a caring adult at the school that could mentor the student?	Y / N
Student Voice	
Has the student identified the reasons for missing school?	Y / N
Parent Voice	
Have you met with the parent/caregiver to discuss attendance concerns?	Y / N
Has the parent/caregiver identified specific barriers to attendance?	Y / N
Are there cultural, language, or other types of barriers that require extra effort on the part of the school to work with the parent/caregiver?	Y / N
Attendance Barriers for Students with Identified Disabilities	
Has the IEP/504 team met recently to review and revise the student's educational plan?	Y / N
Are the instructional and behavioral supports the rights ones?	Y / N



APPENDIX 2: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT ³³

Does Attendance Really Count in Our Expanded Learning Program?

A Tool for Self-Assessment - (Revised February 25, 2022)

Key Practices	Strength	OK for Now	Could be Better	Urgent Gap	Don't Know	Implication(s) for Action
1. Every day we take roll <i>accurately</i> and in a <i>caring</i> manner.						
2. We enter our attendance data into an electronic data base that can generate regular reports.						
3. We have a team in place that reviews data and organizes our attendance strategy.						
4. We have a clear policy expressing the value of regular attendance and clearly communicate this policy to students and families.						
5. We acknowledge and affirm students who attend our program regularly.						
6. We provide a warm and welcoming climate for students <i>and</i> their families.						
7. We offer enriching and engaging program activities that motivate students to show up.						
8. We build strong relationships with students and families and help them meet their basic needs.						
9. We use our attendance data to identify problematic situations and promising approaches for improving attendance in our program.						
10. We track and reach out to students who have poor attendance in our program and their families.						
11. We partner with school day staff to inform families about the importance of attendance and to help students experiencing challenges.						
12. We evaluate the impact of our work on improving our own program attendance and school day attendance.						

APPENDIX 3: Instructions for Using the Program Assessment Tool ³⁴

1. **Complete the assessment:** Bring together a team of key stakeholders to complete the self-assessment tool. Each person should complete the assessment separately to reflect on strengths and opportunities for improvement. a. If you are meeting in person, give each participant a copy of the self-assessment to complete on their own. b. If you are meeting virtually, create an online version of the self-assessment using applications like Google Forms or Survey Monkey.

2. **Tabulate the results and share with the team** so they can see how everyone responded to each question. a. If you used a paper-and-pencil version, collect/summarize the results using a clean copy of the self-assessment or have participants transfer their responses to a wall chart (see example below using dot stickers on the “Large Chart” version).

Example: Print out the “Large Chart” version of the self-assessment, which has one question per page, and post them around the meeting room. Using dot stickers or some other type of marker, ask everyone to record their answers on large chart paper so that the group can see how everyone responded to each question. This approach allows everyone to see the collective responses without the need for additional copies. b. If you used an online version, download/print out the summary reports and share with the team.

3. **Discuss:** Convene the group to review what the combined data reveal about strengths, gaps and differences of opinion. Use the results to identify practices that should be continued and to flag potential areas for improvement. Consider these questions:

- What overall patterns do you see?
- Where do people differ in their overall assessments of the current situation? • Discuss their reasoning behind their responses. Keep in mind that the goal is to deepen the group’s understanding of why the differences of opinion might exist; agreeing on a rating is not essential.

4. **Set goals:** Once team members have agreed on initial priorities, get feedback from key stakeholders, then finalize your goals.

5. **Make a plan:** Discuss what you see as the biggest gaps or priorities to address in the near future. Consider the existing resources that could be leveraged to address these priorities. If needed, use the dot stickers, or take a hand vote to identify the top three to five priorities for action. Then discuss the following questions to help you develop the next steps.

- Who needs to be involved in advancing these priorities?
- What are immediate next steps?
- Who can take responsibility for ensuring follow-up occurs?
- Outline a clear plan for moving forward, including deliverables, timelines, key groups involved, and who owns each piece.
- Determine how to stay in communication with each other about progress on the next steps and decide whether a follow-up meeting is needed.

6. **Communicate the results:** The team should communicate the results of the assessment with staff where appropriate -- including district, school, and community partners -- and engage them in executing the improvement plan.

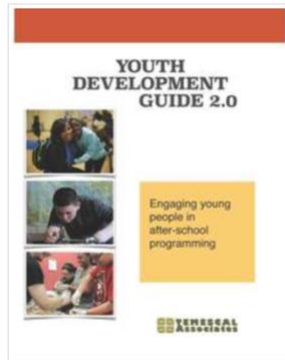
APPENDIX 4: Research on the Connection Between Afterschool Programs and School Attendance³⁵

Research studies have for decades shown that quality afterschool programs improve school attendance. Below are a few of those studies:

- “AfterZone, an afterschool program in Providence, R.I., delivered many educational benefits including better attendance, according to a 2011 study by Public/Private Venture. **Middle school students in the program had a 25 percent lower absence rate than their peers.** What’s more, the improvement in attendance increased with the amount of time in the program. (Kauh, Tina J., *AfterZone: Outcomes for Youth Participating in Providence’s After-School System*, Public/Private Ventures, August 2011)
- A 2009 study of 322 7th and 8th grade students at Boys & Girls Club for 30 months found that **those attending afterschool programs skipped school fewer times, increased school effort and gained academic confidence.** The first two indicators increased with the number of days attending afterschool programs. The Public/Private Ventures study focused on 10 clubs across the country. (Arbreton, Amy et al, *Making Every Day Count: Boys & Girls Clubs’ Role in Promoting Positive Outcomes for Teens*, May 2009)
- Middle-school students attending the Citizen Schools afterschool program in Boston **attended school 11 more days than their peers** who did not participate, according to a 2009 study. They also were more likely to attend high school regularly, even though the program stopped in middle school. For example, in the 11th grade, participants attended school 13 more days than their peers. (Vile, J.D., Arcaira, E. & Reisner, E.R. *Progress toward high school graduation: Citizen Schools’ youth outcomes in Boston*. Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2009)
- The California Afterschool Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program found that **regular school-day attendance improved for students participating in its afterschool programs.** Students who had previously missed 5 percent of the school year turned up an extra 5.6 days. Those absent 10 percent of the year came another 11 days, according to the 2002 evaluation. (*Evaluation of California’s After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2001*; Department of Education, University of California at Irvine with the Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office, California Department of Education, Feb. 2002)
- A 2002 evaluation of The After-School Corporation (TASC) programs found **improvements in both school attendance and academic achievement for students who participated for two consecutive years.** The study compared attendance and school achievement for participants to students who were not involved in the afterschool programs, which were offered in 143 public schools in New York City and 73 others elsewhere in the state. (Walsh, Megan et al; *Promoting Learning and School Attendance Through After-School Programs: Student-Level Changes in Educational Performance Across TASC’s First Three Years*, October 2002)
- The Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project found that students who joined the program in **1st grade missed three days of school, compared to an average eight absences in kindergarten.** Eighth graders joining the program went from missing 18 days in the previous year to 5 days in the 1998-1999 year. (*Evaluation: 1998–99 School-Year Program Evaluation, Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Expansion*, College of Education, University of Cincinnati, 1999)
- Pathways to Progress in Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools found **“dramatically better school attendance,” with afterschool participants coming to school an average 18.4 more days than their peers,** according to a 2004 report. (Wahlstrom, Kyla, *21st Century Community Learning Centers, Pathways to Progress, Saint Paul Public Schools, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota*, March 2004)
- L.A.’s BEST program found that **students’ regular school-day attendance improved once they began participating in the afterschool program.** That led to higher scores on standardized tests of math, reading and language arts. The June 2000 report summarized five studies and findings from tracking BEST students in 2nd and 5th grades in the 1993-94 school year. (Huang, D et al. *A decade of results: The impact of the L.A.’s BEST after school enrichment initiative on subsequent student achievement and performance*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, University of California, 2000)”

APPENDIX 5: PROGRAM QUALITY ³⁶

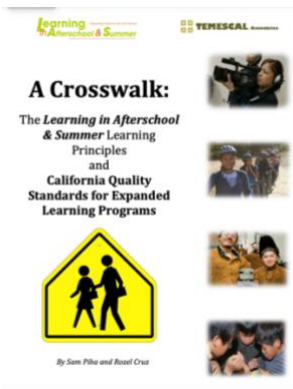
There are many resources on afterschool program quality. Below we list two resources developed by Temescal Associates.



Youth Development Guide 2.0: Engaging Young People in After-School Programming

This Guide is designed to offer an introduction to youth development principles and practices to the diverse group of people involved in creating and implementing afterschool programs—program directors, school administrators, teachers, staff, volunteers, community partners, and others. We believe that adopting a youth development approach when designing and implementing afterschool programs can help ensure that young people get the most out of these programs.

To view and download, click [here](#). To purchase spiral-bound hard copies of the guide, please contact info@temescalassociates.com.



The Learning in Afterschool & Summer Learning Principles and California Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs

In 2010, the Learning in Afterschool & Summer (LIAS) project was launched to offer five research-based principles that serves as a guide for programs wishing to increase the engagement, motivation, and learning of their young participants. Four years later, the California Department of Education (CDE)/After School Division released the California Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs (CA Quality Standards). Many afterschool and summer leaders asked how the LIAS learning principles correspond to the CA Quality Standards.

To address this question, we offer this crosswalk paper. Please note that the Quality Standards are focused on points of direct service with youth (#1-6) and that are intended to guide program managers (#7-12). This crosswalk only addresses the points of service standards. The objectives of this paper are to 1) introduce afterschool and summer program stakeholders to both the LIAS principles and the CA Quality Standards; 2) offer a comparison as to how the LIAS principles correspond to the CA Quality Standards; and 3) how both speak to the quality equation.

To view and download, click [here](#). To purchase spiral-bound hard copies of the guide, please contact info@temescalassociates.com.

END NOTES

- ¹ [*Afterschool Focus: The Role of Attendance in Afterschool*](#)
- ² [*It's not just the office people don't want to go to: COVID looks to have permanently severed something as school attendance plummets and keeps dropping*](#)
- ³ [*Building a Culture of Attendance: Schools and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make a Difference!*](#)
- ⁴ [*Chronic Absence: Busting Myths and Helping Educators Develop More Effective Responses*](#)
- ⁵ [*School Refusal*](#)
- ⁶ [*Pushed Out: Trends and Disparities in Out-of-School Suspension*](#)
- ⁷ [*Punitive vs. Restorative Approach to School Discipline*](#)
- ⁸ [*Our Definition of Bullying*](#)
- ⁹ [*Chronic Absenteeism*](#)
- ¹⁰ [*Building a Culture of Attendance: Schools and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make a Difference!*](#)
- ¹¹ [*Chronic Absence: Busting Myths and Helping Educators Develop More Effective Responses*](#)
- ¹² [*Supporting Attendance Through After School Programming Mini-Guide*](#)
- ¹³ [*Afterschool Focus: The Role of Attendance in Afterschool*](#)
- ¹⁴ [*Building a Culture of Attendance: Schools and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make a Difference!*](#)
- ¹⁵ [*IBID.*](#)
- ¹⁶ [*Chronic Absence: Busting Myths and Helping Educators Develop More Effective Responses*](#)
- ¹⁷ [*IBID.*](#)
- ¹⁸ [*Building a Culture of Attendance: Schools and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make a Difference!*](#)
- ¹⁹ [*Supporting Attendance Through After School Programming Mini-Guide*](#)
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- ²³ [*IBID.*](#)
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- ²⁸ [*Chronic Absence: Busting Myths and Helping Educators Develop More Effective Responses*](#)
- ²⁹ [*Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts*](#)
- ³⁰ [*IBID.*](#)
- ³¹ [*Policy Makers*](#)
- ³² [*Worksheet: Understanding the Root Causes for Student Absenteeism*](#)
- ³³ [*Does Attendance Really Count in our Expanded Learning Program?*](#)
- ³⁴ [*Instructions for Using the Self-Assessment Tool*](#)
- ³⁵ [*Making the Case: How Good Afterschool Programs Improve School-day Attendance*](#)
- ³⁶ [*Resources from Temescal Associates*](#)