The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach

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The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth:
An Evidenced Based Approach

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Executive Summary

Youth development is:

...the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to (1) meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded, and (2) to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives.

Source: http://cyd.aed.org/whatis.html, Pittman, 1993, p. 8.

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As suggested by the opening quotation, youth are valuable resources to invest in and not problems to be solved. Adolescents want to develop their capacities, but they need opportunities and appropriate adult involvement and guidance to do so.

This monograph was written to assist park and recreation professionals and elected officials to better understand the important role of park and recreation services, facilities, and programs in the process of youth development.[1]

Park and recreation departments are ideally situated to supply the supports, opportunities, programs, and services to facilitate adolescents' development into healthy and fully functioning adults. However, adolescents do not need adults to do things "to" or "for" them, rather adolescents need to be involved in the learning and growing process—they need to have opportunities to "develop themselves," and they need adults to serve as enablers in this process.

The youth development approach is opposite of a problems-based approach, which holds that there is something wrong with the individual and that park and recreation departments need to provide the skills and knowledge to correct deficiencies. Recreation services provided by park and recreation departments need to both help reduce problem behaviors, as well as increase pro-social attitudes and skills. Critical to an understanding of youth development is the phrase "problem free is not fully prepared," which recognizes

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[1] *"Youth" refers to individuals between the ages of 12 and 19. This is also the period known as adolescence; thus, "youth," "adolescent," and "teen/teenager" will be used interchangeably. There is considerable debate at the moment about how long adolescence actually lasts. Some have argued that with youth being more dependent on their parents for longer periods of time and staying in school longer, that adolescence at least extends until one graduates from college. For the purposes of this monograph, we have used the more traditional approach of tying adolescence to the teenage years.*

that it is possible to be problem free but not grow to be a fully functioning adult. Efforts need to be made to create family structures, communities, and organizations that enable youth to move along pathways to adulthood by supplying the appropriate supports, opportunities, programs, and services.

Although park and recreation departments are significant players in providing services that promote youth development, the case for the importance of the departments has not always been fully made. The services provided by park and recreation departments are more than fun and games, or gym and swim programs. These programs—which are typically organized, structured, and adult-supervised or led—provide excellent opportunities for adolescents to develop and grow to become fully functioning adults. Participation in these activities is associated with autonomy and identity development, positive social relationships, and learning conflict resolution, academic success, mental health, and civic engagement.

Nine outcomes are particularly important results of participation in out-of-school time (OST) programs. These outcomes occur for participants, families, and the wider community and include:

1.   contribute to reducing juvenile delinquency

2.   contribute to increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors

3.   expose youth to less violence

4.   improve children's educational performance and thus impact the quality of the future work force and the national economy

5.   help decrease health care costs related to childhood obesity

6.   increase the economic contributions of young people to society when they become adults

7.   help youth develop self-confidence, optimism, and initiative

Thus, park and recreation departments have the potential to do more than keep children off the streets in a safe environment.

The departments can play an important role in achieving each of the nine outcomes by incorporating eight standards that define high-quality youth programs. These standards have been identified by the National Academy of Sciences (Eccles and Gootman, 2002) and address:

1.   physical and psychological safety

2.   structure that is developmentally appropriate

3.   supportive relationships

4.   opportunities to belong

5.   positive social norms

6.   support for efficacy and mattering

7.   opportunities for skill building

8.   integration of family, schools, and community efforts.

Achieving these standards is also critical to recruiting and retaining program participants. Many of the reasons youth join and drop out of programs are related to the perceived presence or absence of these program characteristics. Due to their growing autonomy, adolescents have considerable say regarding whether they choose to join or leave a program. The negative experiences reported by program participants are indicative of how adult leaders fail to be effective in implementing youth development practices.

Park and recreation departments can and should be important players in creating an overall youth development service system. Planned, purposive programs need to be carefully crafted and efforts need to be implemented to help young people develop the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. The work done by park and recreation departments is critical in helping youth reach their full potential.

Historically, park and recreation departments have included youth development as part of their missions, although the term "youth development" is relatively new. These historical roots will be discussed in Chapter 1, *We've Always Known the Importance of Recreation,* to provide a context for understanding the evolution of not only services to youth, but also to the youth development movement. Chapter 2, *Contemporary Youth Development,* discusses basic principles of the contemporary youth development movement while Chapter 3, *Outcome Frameworks to Guide Youth Development,* outlines frameworks for understanding key elements that should be included to guide successful youth development programs.

In Chapter 4, *The Scientific Evidence Relating to the Impact of Recreation on Youth Development,* we identify nine major outcomes associated with youth participation in youth development programs. These outcomes are most attainable when programs follow the key principles of programming identified in Chapter 3. Finally, Chapter 5, *Creating Community and Statewide Partnerships,* discusses the importance of creating community and statewide partnerships to foster powerful approaches to youth development programming.

Reference

Eccles, J., and Gootman, J.A. (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. Washington: National Academy Press.

Chapter 1

We've Always Known the Importance of Recreation

The genesis of many of the current youth-serving organizations goes back to the later part of the 1800s. A number of factors led to the development of these organizations. Looking at the history of the formation of these organizations makes it clear that the programs they were designed to offer were purposive, goal-directed efforts to address specific issues relating to youth of concern to society.

From the mid-1800s through the end of the 19th century, the United States underwent dramatic structural and economic changes, including rapid industrialization, massive immigration, migration of rural populations to urban settings, and increased urbanization. These factors greatly affected the way youth were viewed and treated by society, and they laid the groundwork for the development of a variety of organizational responses. Three main factors are important to note here: (1) industrialization led to many children being employed in unsafe factories, (2) immigration increased the size of cities without the development of the infrastructure needed to deal with the burgeoning population, and (3) the tightly packed tenement housing forced children into the streets to play. The streets were often the only refuge for youth who were orphaned or who had left their parents to move to the city. However, the streets were often unsafe and led youth to crime or other undesirable activities (Cavallo, 1976). Children were exposed to the dance halls, saloons, small theaters, and other forms of pleasure seeking during their nonwork time, and many of these establishments encouraged gambling, prostitution, and drunkenness. In addition, ethnic gangs emerged.

Many lower-class parents condoned life on the streets for their children as a means of supplementing family income. In New York, for example, boys might be involved in huckstering, scavenging, peddling, errand running, bootblacking, horseholding, and newspaper selling (Stansell, 1987, pp. 304-5). Most of these endeavors led children into contact with adults of questionable character.

While many middle-class girls became teachers and tenders of shops, unmarried working-class girls, especially immigrants, were employed in the factories. Reformers expressed concern with increased out-of-wedlock births, divorce, venereal disease, illegitimacy, and prostitution. They attributed these increases to girls having their own money and their involvements in nonwork discretionary time activities in the community. The reformers also felt that work environments subjected young women to the untoward advances of fellow workers and supervisors (what today we might call sexual harassment). Dance halls, movies, and other forms of free-time outlets were seen as contributing to girls' sexual awakening and misconduct (sometimes leading to pregnancy). Adolescent females migrating from rural areas were thought to be particularly at risk due to their sheltered upbringing and lack of exposure to city life.

These and other factors led to a reform movement. Instigated and promoted by members of the middle and upper classes, the reformers worried about the activities and morals of their own children and were concerned about the impact of lower-class children's activities on middle-class children. Their efforts were aimed at improving working conditions, making cities more livable, and ensuring that children had appropriate places to play.

The work of the reformers led to:

- Removal of children from the workplace through child labor laws that increased the age at which children could begin work and control the kinds of work that young people could do.

- Extension of education through changes in the length of compulsory schooling. Compulsory education laws worked in tandem with child labor laws to curtail the uncontrolled hours available for youth to work or be involved in "unacceptable" activities.

- Implementation of juvenile curfews as a means of controlling the street time of adolescents. Curfews were mostly implemented when a link could be made between adopting a curfew and decreased crime.
- Creation of separate juvenile cou*rt*s to deal with adolescents outside of the adult court system. (Witt and Caldwell, 2005)

In addition, the reformers sought to organize free time through the creation of youth- serving organizations. Different organizations were created to serve individuals from different social classes and different locations (e.g., urban, small town, and farm communities). In urban environments, these efforts sought to remove children from life on the streets, discourage potentially harmful adult influences, and encourage contact with positive role models and wholesome activities. Creation of organizations such as the Camp Fire Girls, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, Boys Clubs (now Boys and Girls Clubs), and the Playground Movement were some of the responses.

The reformers envisioned the creation of play spaces that had adult leaders who could provide leadership and guidance. They saw the importance of having playgrounds funded by municipal governments and making the control of play a state responsibility. City governments were often perceived as the only source with sufficient resources to accomplish this funding (Cavallo, 1976).

Reformers saw several benefits of play in an urban-industrial society, including developing moral ideals and social interaction skills, the reduction of individualism and development of an orientation toward group, means-end activities. The team was seen as the primary vehicle for acculturation of immigrants (Cavallo, 1976) and encouraging fitness and moral and social development.

As a result of this movement, peer interactions were increasingly managed by adults, thus, a cadre of "professional playground leaders" was trained to organize and manage activities. Courses were offered at a number of universities, emphasizing child development, including the social and psychological sciences. A civil service test was devised, and cities were encouraged to only hire play directors who passed the test (Cavallo, 1976, pp. 41-42).

The Special Case of Crime and Delinquency

Since the 1800s, a consistent link has been made between youth's opportunities to participate in recreation programs and the level of crime and delinquency. Thus the contemporary importance ascribed to providing recreation opportunities is not new. Early newspaper articles recognized this link. For example, an 1899 letter to the editor in *The New York Times* addressed the needs of children growing up in the tenements:

> No class has been so neglected as these boys and girls. There are asylums for the orphan and the homeless, shelters and refuges for the sinful and fallen, and missions, with reading rooms and clubs attached, open day and evening, for men and women. But in school hours there is nothing for the children but the street, with its attendant evils. The crap game, the cigarette, and the corner saloon are not so much a matter of choice as of necessity. After the boys and girls have been graduated from this school of crime the city provides for them the prison, the workhouse, and the Potter's Field. Might it not be well to begin at the other end of life by providing places of amusement and recreation for this vast army of future citizens? (Ruddy, 1899, p. 8)

A few years later, the Cincinnati Chief Probation Officer noted that:

> In 1906, there were 1,768 children legally before the Juvenile Court and 410 were handled unofficially making a total of 2,178 children. Of these, 1,450 were delinquents. In the fall of that year a beginning was made in opening playgrounds in the downtown portions of the city. In the year just closed there were 993 delinquent children before the court…we are perfectly sure that one of the main factors has been the opportunity

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afforded the thousands of children in the most congested district of the city to play in a
natural and spontaneous manner. (Weir, 1910, p. 37)

Historically, the link between recreation and crime was used to justify bond issues for recreation facilities and programs. For example, in 1926, the Los Angeles Chief of Police argued in favor of a bond issue to develop additional playgrounds, saying:

Playgrounds are more essential to the police department than any other agency dealing
with our citizens, because the work of the department now is in taking care of those
wrecks of society whose leisure was not supervised when they were young.

Forty years later, at the time of a bond issue for increased recreation services in Los Angeles, the co-chair of the Recreation for Everyone committee said:

In the city of Los Angeles alone, the cost of assigning 144 officers to the juvenile detail,
arrests, hearings, and court cases costs the taxpayers $1.60 for every man, woman,
and child in the city… it has been estimated that it costs as much to take care of one
juvenile offender in a public institution for one year as it does to provide wholesome
recreation for 100 youngsters for every day in the year at a municipal playground. (*Los
Angeles Times*, 1955, p. A1)

The theme continued in 1985 when a new program to place recreation and sports leaders at recreation centers was discussed:

…the simple hope is that, if you can provide an exciting enough, creative enough
alternative to gangs, you may just be able to get enough redirection so that they will
continue in the new activities and not the old…We're hoping to try something new, and
we're going to observe it carefully. (Reich, 1985, OC-A12)

In 1998, the Director of the Juvenile Rights Division of the Legal Aid Society in New York decried cuts in juvenile delinquency and local parks and youth recreation programs noting that: "Young people and parents cite the disappearance of community centers, playgrounds and parks as factors contributing to the delinquent behavior of area teenagers." (Driname, 1998, p. WK14).

The linkage remains strong in the current century. A 2002 survey of California's mayors and chambers of commerce found that 80% of respondents believed that recreation areas and programs reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in their communities (Department of Parks and Recreation, 2003). This perspective was supported by the drop in crimes by and against children reported in a California school district after it began an out-of-school time program for more than 1,300 students. Subsequently, lewd acts against children dropped by 46% within the district boundaries, compared to a drop of only 8% in the rest of the city (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2001).

Sidebar 1A: For more than 100 years, we have understood the link between
out-of-school time opportunities and involvements, delinquency, and crime.

History is a good teacher. The forces that brought about the reformers' efforts
to protect children, while at the same time increase their opportunities for
becoming productive, fully functioning members of society, are just as needed
now as they were then. Class, ethnicity, gender, living circumstances, and unequal
distribution of opportunity still play significant roles in society. For youth-serving
agencies, what we do keeps children and youth off the streets and leads to them
reporting they are having fun. However, the work that we do is so much more
important than safety and fun. We do ourselves a disservice and decrease our
chances for governmental and public support when we fail to fully emphasize
the importance of our work.

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Chapter 2

Contemporary Youth Development

> **Sidebar 2A:** Youth development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models that focus solely on youth problems.
>
> *Source: National Collaboration for Youth, 1998.*

For more than a century, adults have provided supports, opportunities, programs, and services to help youth develop into healthy and fully functioning adults. This approach was motivated by the belief that youth were problems that needed to be fixed. More recently, however, that perspective has evolved into what is now known as "youth development." Youth development as a term and set of practices began to emerge in the late 1980s in response to several major concerns about how "the youth problem" was being conceptualized. One concern was that the accepted practice of classifying some children and youth as "at risk" was usually only applied to persons of color and/or those from economically disadvantaged families and single-parent homes. This approach to characterizing who was at risk ignored the fact that there were youth from many other backgrounds, living in all parts of almost every community, who were demonstrating problematic behaviors or who lived in family or community circumstances that increased the potential of negative behaviors.

In addition, there was a growing professional and public backlash against only dealing with the problems of a few youth, as opposed to offering services for everyone. Many professionals argued that all youth are at risk; that youth across the entire community are in need of services; and school shootings, drug arrests, and pregnancy rates in even middle-class communities were evidence of the need to serve everyone.

The premise of youth development is that all youth hold promise, and they need supports, opportunities, programs, and services to develop into fully functional and healthy adults. This is the opposite of a problems-based approach, which holds that there is something wrong with the individuals and that they have to be provided with the skills and knowledge to correct deficiencies.

What Do Adolescents Do in Their Recreation Time?

About 40% of a young- to middle-adolescent's week is comprised of free time. If an adolescent uses this time wisely and is engaged in healthy, positive recreation experiences, he or she is much more likely to become a fully functioning adult.

A recent study examined how 15- to 17-year-old youth spent their time (Wright, Price, Bianchi, and Hunt, 2009). The most common activities were sleep (about 9.5 hours per day), school (about 5 hours per day), and watching TV (about 2.4 hours per day for boys and about 2.2 hours per day for girls). Other notable recreation activities were sports and exercise (about 1 hour per day for boys and 28 minutes per day for girls) and games (including video games: 44 minutes per day for boys and 11 minutes per day for girls). Two other notable findings were that about 61% of youth reported watching less than 2 hours of television on school nights, while youth reported spending an average of 82 minutes a day being unsupervised.

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Another study (Sax, Lindholm, Astin, Korn, and Mahoney, 2004) found that boys were more likely than girls to spend more than 10 hours per week during their last year in high school engaged in:

- socializing with friends (53.1 percent vs. 48.7 percent)

- exercising or playing sports (40.7 percent vs. 27.2 percent)

- watching television (15.5 percent vs. 9.1 percent)

- partying (13.7 percent vs. 8.2 percent)

By comparison, girls were more likely than boys to spend more than 10 hours per week in:

- nonrecreational activities such as working for pay (45.7 percent vs. 42.3 percent)

- studying and doing homework (18.5 percent vs. 11.6 percent)

- engaging in housework and childcare (5.2 percent vs. 2.8 percent)

Clearly, youth spend a great deal of time with social media and computer gaming. For example, the percentage of teens between the ages of 12 to 17 who used the Internet in 2000 was about 75%; in December of 2009, it was 93%. The *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds* report (Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout, 2005) revealed that youth spend about 6.5 hours per day involved with some type of media, and much of that time is spent multitasking (e.g., reading and listening to music).

There appear to be both positive and negative outcomes associated with screen time and media use. There is evidence that the amount of media use and screen time is related, or even a cause of the current obesity epidemic, but the evidence is inconclusive (Sisson, Broyles, Baker, and Katzmarzyk, 2010). Some research has suggested that screen time and use of media and technology are to blame for decreases in interpersonal skills, academic achievement, violence, identity confusion, and cyberbullying. However, other studies have reported that adolescents gain social skills, feelings of belonging, academic skills, leadership skills, and creativity through screen time and use of media and technology (Greenhow and Robelia, 2009).

Developmental Issues of Adolescence

There are developmental issues or tasks (e.g., establishing an identity) that youth deal with as they move from childhood, through adolescence, into adulthood. There are also biophysical changes, such as pubertal development and neurobehavioral changes. Many of these have particular relevance to recreation and park programming and services.

It is important to remember that adolescents are valuable resources to invest in, and not problems to be solved. Adolescents want to develop their capacities, and they need opportunities and appropriate adult involvement and guidance to do so. Park and recreation departments are ideally situated to afford both opportunities and adult guidance through activities that are intrinsically motivating. Adolescents do not need adults to do things "to" or "for" them; rather they need to have opportunities to "develop them-selves" through active experience or experiential learning. Too many parents hover over their children directing all their experiences, being involved with all their problems, and making too many decisions for them (so called "helicopter parents"). Children of helicopter parents often have little opportunity to make meaningful decisions on their own.

As youth move through adolescence, they tend to become less intrinsically motivated and lose interest in things that might have attracted them earlier. At the same time, they typically are learning how to act in a more self-directed manner and developing more autonomy than when they were younger. Failure to understand these stages is one reason that park and recreation departments do not attract or retain more adolescents to their programs.

The developmental issues faced by adolescents differ as they pass through three time periods: early adolescence (12 to 14 years old), middle adolescence (14 to 17 years old), and late adolescence (17 to 19 years old). At each stage, adolescents are confronted by a number of "growing-up" issues or tasks, although to a different degree during each period. Younger adolescents tend to live in the here and now,

whereas older adolescents begin to develop a sense of the future and their role in it. Thus, it is easier for older adolescents to make realistic plans and set future goals. This difference is very much connected to the developing brain. Five important developmental issues are described in the following paragraphs.

The need to establish an identity. One of the most important tasks of adolescence is to develop a sense of "who I am" as an individual. Answering this question helps youth understand how they fit into the world. It involves coming to terms with how they see themselves and how they think others see them.

Part of establishing their identity is linked with developing recreational interests and passions. Exposure to, and skill development in, a variety of activities will help youth find those things that fit with their personalities and interests. These will become activities that youth identify with and to which they can attach their identities.

The need to establish autonomy. Establishing autonomy involves learning how to be self-directed and independent, while at the same time being interdependent and negotiating within social worlds (including parents, peers, and other adults). Early adolescents have less emotional and behavioral autonomy from their parents than older adolescents. Thus, older adolescents are able to make more independent decisions.

Park and recreation departments are in an excellent position to help facilitate autonomy and decision making. As youth age, adults can provide varied levels of support and guidance to help adolescents learn to take responsibility for their actions and to make choices, even if their choices don't always lead to successful outcomes. This need of adolescents to learn independence and self-determination is one of the reasons that recreation providers should not provide for but rather consult with and provide together recreation programs and activities. This is sometimes called having "voice and choice." Those park and recreation departments that do not adopt this type of philosophy are likely to see an increased dropout rate of youth, particularly as they age.

The need for achievement. Adolescents have a strong need to perceive themselves as competent (e.g., achieving academically, developing and maintaining friendships, and developing the skills necessary to participate in recreational activities). Consequently, they strive to figure out what they are good at and what they need to work on to become competent.

Learning recreational skills provides opportunities for developing competence. In addition, learning to make decisions and being part of a project or program from its inception to completion are significant sources of achievement for adolescents. Youth find activities motivating when they perceive a balance between their skill level and the challenge at hand; learning and practicing skills that are at or slightly above their skill level helps youth focus and become engaged and interested in programs and activities. Providing youth the opportunity for experiential or active learning through recreation programs is a highly effective way to help youth develop interests and competencies, and will tend to help park and recreation departments retain youth in their programs.

The need to develop a moral compass. There is a need to develop an understanding of social and cultural traditions and norms, and a sense of right and wrong. As adolescents get older, they go through a process of rule and limit testing and experimentation. They also develop a better capacity for abstract thought.

Role models are central to development of a moral compass, and recreation staff can fulfill this need. Youth can also learn about themselves, the world around them, and various ethical and moral issues through volunteering and service-learning projects that contain opportunities to grapple with difficult decisions and weighing and discussing actions and possible consequences.

The need to develop close relationships, intimacy, and become comfortable with one's sexuality. Adolescents crave feeling that they belong. Peer groups are especially important sources of belonging. How to develop and maintain close relationships and intimacy is learned initially through interactions with same sex friends. Through these interactions, adolescents learn how to communicate honestly, build trust, and be caring friends. These skills are later learned in romantic relationships.

Through recreational activities, youth have the potential to learn how to negotiate with peers, resolve conflict, and work together for communal goals. Youth also can experience safe places to try out different roles and interact informally with members of the opposite sex. Another important role for park and recreation departments is that youth can develop relationships with nonparental adults who may serve as important mentors or role models. These relationships are often central to helping youth develop into healthy adults.

Out-of-school time also is an important context in which adolescents develop and learn about dealing with romantic relationships. Thus, puberty is of critical importance to understanding adolescent development. Puberty, typically occurring in females between the ages of 9 and 14 and in males between the ages of 10 and 17, is initiated when the brain stimulates a set of hormones that stimulates sexual maturation. Puberty affects:

- romantic interests
- sexual interest
- emotional intensity
- changes in sleep/arousal regulation
- appetite
- risk of depression in females

Of particular interest to this monograph is that during puberty there is a natural biological tendency for adolescents to seek out opportunities for exposing high intensity through risk-taking, novelty-seeking, and sensation-seeking behaviors. Park and recreation departments can provide important and safe outlets for these high-intensity experiences. For example, climbing walls, rafting trips, ropes courses, and other adventure-type activities may provide the needed thrills craved by some youth. Park and recreation staff can help youth learn to deal with their intense emotions by helping them reflect upon their behavior and understand what they are going through and why.

Recreation and the Adolescent Brain

There was a time when researchers thought the brain ceased to develop after childhood. But more recent evidence suggests that the brain continues to develop throughout adolescence. Knowing how the brain develops during adolescence has implications for understanding some of the ways adolescents approach participation in recreation activities. These include:

- Young to middle adolescents' brains promote a tendency for participation in intense and exciting situations.
- Adolescent brains propel them toward liking novelty and seeking out multiple forms of simultaneous stimuli.
- Young and middle adolescents' brains are still developing the capacity for good decision making and planning skills (sometimes known as executive functioning).
- By virtue of the ways their brains are developing, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to intense emotions and misinterpretation of other's intentions and emotions.

The adolescent brain is primed for youth to develop enduring interests because it is easily shaped by social learning through experience, direct interaction, self-reflection, education, and interaction with adults and peers. The early activation of emotions and passions can be harnessed if youth are exposed to a variety of new recreational experiences and opportunities. Goal-directed behaviors intensify during this time and are often manifested by developing passions in music, art, and hobbies.

Brain changes leading to increased sensation seeking can promote risk taking or other potentially dangerous behaviors. Executive functioning skills such as good decision making and problem solving evolve a bit after the emotion center in the brain is highly activated. The mismatch in development of emotional regulation and executive functioning explains to some degree why youth often make poor judgments in emotionally charged situations, and why they are prone to risk behaviors with peers.

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Sidebar 2B: Pondering Lost Boaters, Teenagers Call Risk-Taking a Rite of Passage

After a boating accident that left four teenagers dead, teens from Long Island, New York reflected on sensation seeking and undertaking dangerous stunts without considering the danger.

[name withheld], 16, a sophomore at Great Neck North High School, said that seeking out danger can become an obsession for teenagers in suburbs blessedly free of it. Many teenagers in Great Neck, on Long Island, do dangerous things to be considered cool, he said. Kids with rich parents sell marijuana, Ivy League-bound students throw eggs at houses and vandalize cars, and adolescents regularly take their parents' cars for joyrides.

[name withheld], 15, from Yonkers, said that he recently climbed into a trash barrel and let his friends roll him down a large hill. ''It was scary,'' he said. ''You had no idea if you were going to hit anything.''

[name withheld], said he and his friends make videos of themselves doing stunts that are both wacky and dangerous. They take turns hopping on shopping carts, skateboards, or bicycles and riding them down steep hills, all for the thrill of the crash.

''Basically we do it because we're bored out of our minds,'' said one of the friends, [name withheld]. ''We show the tapes to our parents. They think we're crazy, but they don't really mind. They know we could be doing worse stuff.''

Source: The New York Times, Kilgannon, 2003.

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Recent brain-related research about physical activity should be of particular interest to park and recreation department staff. Research suggests that regular physical activity and vigorous play among youth can actually boost brain activity and contribute to academic achievement (e.g., Hillman, Erickson, and Kramer, 2008; Sattelmair and Ratey, 2009). Likewise, Ratey and his colleagues have also contributed to understanding how physical activity and active play can reduce attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In his book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain,* Ratey (2008) suggests that exercise and physical activity helps brain cells grow, change, and work together, promoting memory retention and learning. Ratey and others suggest that moderate to vigorous physical activity promotes the production of a protein called the brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF).

Thus, the developing adolescent brain sets the stage for a period of vulnerability and opportunity in recreation. Trajectories that are set in place during this period have a major impact on adult life and are open to shaping and influence by the social situations and adult guidance to which adolescents are exposed. Vigorous play and physically active recreation can contribute to brain development, as well as academic achievement.

Transition to Adulthood

A major developmental task of adolescents is preparation for adulthood. The transition to adulthood has received increased attention in recent years due to the popular and research literature that suggests that the period of adolescence is being prolonged (e.g., Arnett, 2000). There is also a school of thought that children and youth of today are too pampered and sheltered by parents, creating a situation where adolescents have not learned to fail, learn from failure, and problem solve on their own (e.g., Marano, 2008). The term "helicopter parent" has been coined to describe this phenomenon.

Park and recreation department programs and services are thus one critical part of an adolescent's life where they can learn to make decisions and partake in activities that will help them transition more suc-

cessfully into adulthood. This transition is facilitated through a process of experiential learning. Although it is possible to achieve this transition on one's own, it is greatly assisted through the support and mentoring of adults or more advanced peers.

As an indication of the importance of recreation participation with regard to the transition to adulthood, researchers found that adolescents who had more intense involvement in activities during their first year in college were less lonely and more socially adapted than those with less intensive involvement (Bohnert, Aikins, and Edidin, 2007). Others have reported that involvement in recreation activities contributes to interpersonal skill development, teamwork, and a sense of belonging.

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Chapter 3

Outcome Frameworks to Guide Youth Development

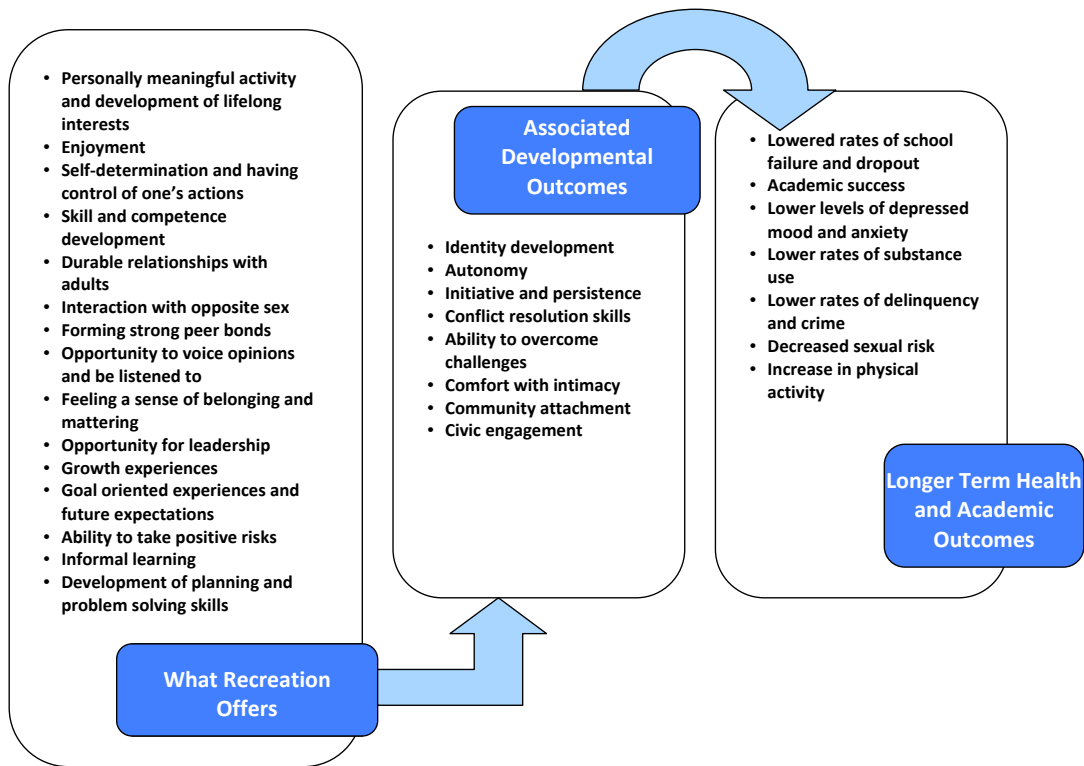**Specific Developmental Outcomes Associated with Recreation Participation**

What makes participation in recreation programs work? Why has one study found strong evidence that adolescents who participate in organized activities are less likely to engage in criminal and delinquent acts, less likely to be violent and aggressive, less likely to misuse alcohol and marijuana, and less likely to drop out of school (Bohnert, Richards, Kohl, and Randall, 2009)?

It is presumed by many that youth recreation center participation automatically leads to positive development for most adolescents. However, this may not always be the case. For example, researchers have found evidence that recreation centers with poorly structured activities attracted youth with both social and academic problems and that frequent participation at the centers were linked to high rates of juvenile offending (Mahoney, Stattin, and Magusson, 2001; Mahoney, Stattin, and Lord, 2004). These findings suggest that activities lacking structure and opportunities for skill-building attract high-risk adolescents. In these cases, the social environment may actually be conducive to the development of antisocial norms and behaviors. The combination of unstructured activities and the lack of positive adult-mediated experiences may have contributed to some youth without a history of previous problems showing problem behaviors as a result of their contact with problem-behavior peers. Thus, the centers were a potential breeding ground for socialization into negative behaviors or even criminal activities.

Figure 3-1 presents a model of the chain of events that links what recreation offers to short-term developmental outcomes and to longer term health and academic outcomes. Figure 3-1 starts with youth participating in recreation programs—this is the activating element. As a result, youth develop skills and have experiences that contribute to dealing with the developmental issues and tasks they are facing. If youth successfully deal with these developmental outcomes (or are on their way to achieving them), this will likely lead to good academic outcomes and a reduced risk of poor health outcomes.

This framework makes it clear that unless the recreation programs are intentional, it is unlikely this chain of events will unfold. Intentional means that recreation programs are designed specifically to produce the associated developmental outcomes. Thus, park and recreation department staff must be intentional in their programming, identifying specific youth development outcomes that are associated with youth participation. The shift from the traditional problem-fixing perspective to the more recent focus on resilience, strengths, thriving, and positive outcomes for youth requires that a broader range of outcomes should be sought within the supports, opportunities, programs, and services that are implemented.

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Figure 3-1: Recreation Influences on Developmental, Health, and Academic Outcomes

What Recreation Offers

- Personally meaningful activity and development of lifelong interests
- Enjoyment
- Self-determination and having control of one's actions
- Skill and competence development
- Durable relationships with adults
- Interaction with opposite sex
- Forming strong peer bonds
- Opportunity to voice opinions and be listened to
- Feeling a sense of belonging and mattering
- Opportunity for leadership
- Growth experiences
- Goal oriented experiences and future expectations
- Ability to take positive risks
- Informal learning
- Development of planning and problem solving skills

Associated Developmental Outcomes

- Identity development
- Autonomy
- Initiative and persistence
- Conflict resolution skills
- Ability to overcome challenges
- Comfort with intimacy
- Community attachment
- Civic engagement

Longer Term Health and Academic Outcomes

- Lowered rates of school failure and dropout
- Academic success
- Lower levels of depressed mood and anxiety
- Lower rates of substance use
- Lower rates of delinquency and crime
- Decreased sexual risk
- Increase in physical activity

The 40 Developmental Assets Model Framework

One of the widely used research-based conceptualizations that guide approaches to youth development programming is the 40 Developmental Assets Model framework. Youth development must involve families, schools, and faith-based and other institutions, as well as youth-serving organizations. This has been demonstrated through research by the Search Institute that resulted in the 40 Developmental Assets Model (www.searchinstitute.org). This framework contains 20 internal and 20 external assets that need to be operative for youth to grow along the pathway to becoming a fully functioning adult (See Appendix 1). These assets are concrete, commonsense, positive experiences and qualities that have the power during the adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them through the process of becoming caring, responsible adults. *The External Assets* focus on the positive experiences that young people receive from the people and institutions in their lives (e.g., Caring neighborhood: Young person experiences caring neighbors). *The Internal Assets* focus on helping young people develop the internal qualities that guide choices and create a sense of centeredness, purpose, and focus (e.g., Restraint: Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or drugs).

Sidebar 3A: The more exposure adolescents have to positive resources and experiences—and where synergy between multiple settings can be established— the more likely it is that they will develop positively.

These assets are derived from the various support systems that should be available to adolescents at home, at school, and in the community. Programs, including those offered by park and recreation departments, have a significant role to play in the process of enhancing many of these 40 assets. For example, assets include recreation personnel being part of a support team of nonparent adults, adults being good role models, leaders having high expectations, and opportunities offered for meaningful involvement in recreation settings.

To foster these assets, program planners must be intentional in their programming efforts. Intentional programming involves targeting particular assets and then designing programs to enhance them. For example, in 2006, the Boise Parks and Recreation Department conducted a developmental assets survey of more than 9,000 young people in grades 7, 9, and 12. From this survey, they were able to determine what percentage of youth experienced each of the 40 developmental assets. In most cases, specific assets were reported by anywhere from 22% to 68% of the respondents. The Boise Parks and Recreation Department used this information to develop its future programming efforts, focusing on increasing the number of assets reported by youth.

Sidebar 3B: The Boise Survey on Developmental Assets of Youth found that, on average, youth reported experiencing only an average of 19.1 of the 40 developmental assets.

- 10% reported experiencing 30 or more assets.

- 17% reported experiencing 10 or fewer assets.

- 60% reported spending three or more hours per week in organized activities at school or in the community.

- 28% reported that parents and other adult models were positive and exhibited responsible behavior.

- 45% reported they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

- 19% felt they could plan ahead and make choices.

Increasing assets is critical to reducing risk-taking behaviors and increasing thriving behaviors. For example, research by the Search Institute indicates that youth experiencing 10 or fewer assets reported significantly more risk-taking behaviors and significantly fewer positive/thriving behaviors (Search Institute, 2006). **Figure 3-2** shows that those with the least number of assets (between 0 and 10) reported a higher number of risk-taking behaviors and lower numbers of thriving behavior, while those who had 31 to 40 assets reported lower levels of risk-taking behaviors and higher levels of thriving behaviors (e.g., academic success, caring for others and their communities, the affirmation of cultural and ethnic diversity, and commitment to healthy lifestyles).

Figure 3-2: Relationship of Assets to Risk and Thriving Behaviors
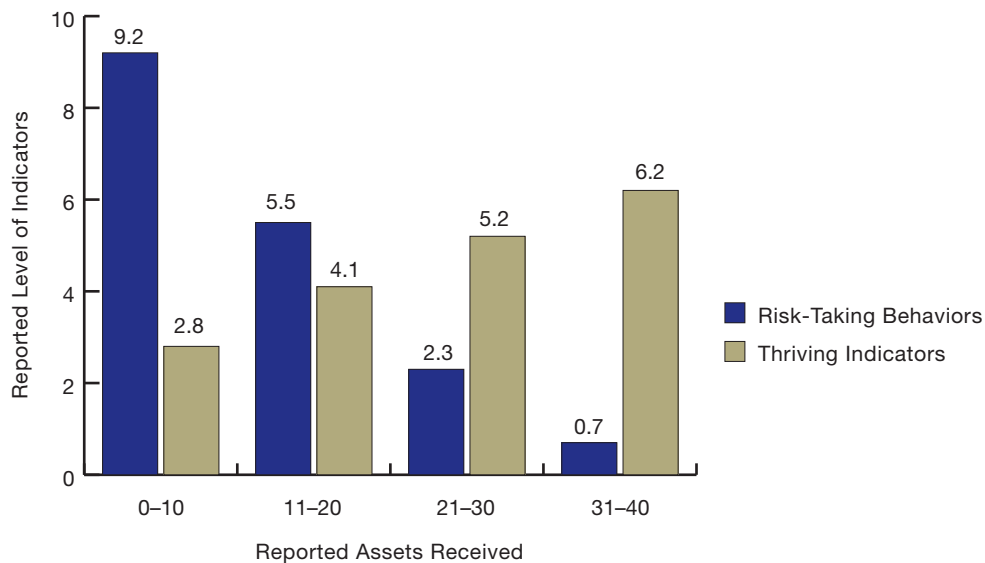
The chances are good that most teens already possess at least some of the 40 developmental assets (national average is around 20). The challenge is for park and recreation department staff to recognize ways to enhance the assets youth possess and to facilitate development of those they lack. This approach will require an assessment of youth who regularly participate in programs and an intentional plan on how to strengthen what they have and acquire what they do not have. Research has suggested that involvement in recreational activities has the most impact when supports, opportunities, programs, and services of optimal youth development programs are present. (See **Figure 3-3.)**

- *Supports*: Things done with young people, relationships, and networks that provide nurturing, standards, and guidance (e.g., mentoring). Research has shown that positive and sustained adult-youth relationships for at least one year are necessary (Rhodes and Dubois, 2002).

- *Opportunities*: Activities that the young people engage in, being able to learn, explore, earn, express themselves, try new roles, take on new challenges, and contribute to family and community. It is important to include skill-building activities by having youth participate in and lead community-based activities (Lerner, 2004).

- *Programs*: Organized and structured activities in which youth can participate.

- *Services*: Things done for the young person, elements that make it possible for youth clients to take advantage of services (e.g., transportation, health, instruction, training).

Figure 3-3: Supports, Opportunities, Programs, and Services (Adapted from Pittman and Irby, 1996)

Supports	Opportunities	Programs/Services
Affirmation and Assistance to Set and Accomplish Goals	*Chances to Learn, Earn, and Contribute*	*Receipt of Instruction and Care and Use of Facilities*

Healthy Relationships
  Nurturance
  Friendship
 	
Role Models, Resources and Networks
  Options assessment
  Planning
  Assessing resources
    Financial
    Connections
 	
High Expectations and Clear Standards
  Guidance
  Monitoring
	Quality Instruction
	Training and Informal Learning
	  Learning and building skills
	  Exploration and reflection
	  Expression and creativity
	  Leisure and play
	
	Challenging Roles and Responsibilities
	  Employment and earned income
	  Influence and advocacy
	  Interaction and membership
		Human Services
		Educational
		  Vocational
		  Mental health
		  Health
		  Social
		  Recreation and leisure
		  Law enforcement
		  Rehabilitation
		
		Infrastructure
		  Transportation
		  Public maintenance
		  Retail
		  Housing
		
		Stable Places
		  Homes
		  Neighborhoods
		  Community meeting places

Main Actor: the provider	Main Actor: the individual	Main Actor: the provider

Elements of Quality Youth Programs

A central theme in this monograph is the need for intentional programming that will produce desired outcomes. Using the 40 Developmental Assets Model as a starting point, the National Academy of Sciences identified eight features of positive youth development programs (Eccles and Gootman, 2002). This shorter list provides good guidance for developing park and recreation department youth programs. They include:

- physical and psychological safety
- structure that is developmentally appropriate
- supportive relationships
- opportunities to belong
- positive social norms
- support for efficacy and mattering
- opportunities for skill building
- integration of family, schools, and community efforts

These features are summarized in **Figure 3-4** and discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Physical and psychological safety is listed first since in order to successfully promote development, settings must be free from violence and unsafe health conditions. In addition, settings must be free from conditions that can have negative psychological consequences for participants. For example, participants must be protected from sexual abuse, exposure to environmental hazards, infectious agents, and injury.

Youth also need to be protected from bullying and physical violence, which is related to skipping school, having more negative attitudes toward school, lower levels of academic achievement, and fewer friendships (Eccles and Gootman, 2002).

Programs should be *structured in ways that are developmentally appropriate.* This means that programs should be designed to accommodate the biological and neurological developmental stage of the intended participants. For example, early adolescents may require more structure and vigilance in their activities than older adolescents. As adolescents get older, they also can profit from increased opportunities for voice and choice, and profit from more time for self-directed activities. They may be less responsive when adult leaders are too rigid and over controlling. Research also suggests that "both too little and too much adult-imposed structure is related to poorer outcomes than moderate levels of adult-imposed structure" (Eccles and Gootman, 2002, p. 93).

Figure 3-4: Features of Positive Youth Development Settings

Feature	Descriptors
Physical and Psychological safety	Safe and health-promoting facilities and practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.
Appropriate Structure	Limit setting; clear and consistent rules and expectations; firm-enough control; continuity and predictability; clear boundaries; and age-appropriate monitoring.
Supportive Relationships	Warmth; closeness; connectedness; good communication; caring; support; guidance; secure attachment; and responsiveness.
Opportunities to Belong	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities for sociocultural identity formation; and support for cultural and bicultural competence.
Positive Social Norms	Rules of behavior; expectations; injunctions; ways of doing things; values and morals; and obligations for service.
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	Youth based; empowerment practices that support autonomy; making a real difference in one's community; and being taken seriously. Practice that includes enabling, responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge. Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels.
Opportunities for Skill Building	Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural illiteracies, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	Concordance; coordination; and synergy among family, school, and community.

Source: Adapted from Eccles and Gootman (2002), Table 4-1, pp. 90-91.

Structure includes clearly delineating expectations for behavior, with consequences for transgressions enforced. Program structures need to take account of the needs, expectations, and community norms for young people from different culturally diverse groups or socioeconomic backgrounds. Activities that are popular among young people in one culture group might not be appropriate for another group (e.g., Folklorico's popularity in Hispanic communities and the importance of basketball in African American

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neighborhoods). The key point is that whatever the age, gender, or cultural group, appropriate expectations must be set and enforced.

Supportive relationships include interacting with adults who provide guidance and responsiveness. Adults must be able to supply emotional closeness (e.g., warmth and caring) and behavioral support (e.g., assisting youth in accomplishing desired goals and activities; Vaux, 1988). Youth are more likely to develop warm and close relationships with adults if they participate with the adult(s) over the long term rather than the short term (Walker and Arbreton, 2001). Adolescents' perceptions of adults and their experiences interacting with adults are more important to development than perceptions of adults about how adolescents are profiting from their relationships with adults.

Community programs can provide young people with opportunities to *experience a sense of belonging and connectedness* through the formation of a supportive group culture and activities that link young people with the broader community. Programs can provide opportunities for adolescents to develop cultural identity. Individuals who feel connected in positive ways to a larger group appear to perform better academically and undertake fewer negative behaviors (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997). Belonging creates a sense of security and provides a reference group for judging the appropriateness of one's behavior. Being an outcast can lead to feeling anxious and depressed and can be related to a lack of well-being that can have a negative consequence for immune and other health systems.

Adhering to *positive social norms* is critical to youth development. Norms and expectations are developed in families, peer groups, classrooms, and community program settings and influence adolescents' behavior. In some group settings, adolescents can experience pressure or influence to undertake negative behaviors. Youth organizations need to create settings through which positive norms can be developed and promulgated. Program leaders need to help create a positive atmosphere, one that contains messages such as the importance of getting a good education and avoiding negative or life-compromising behaviors. Leaders must also be aware that some traditional activities, such as youth sports, contain within them potentially negative messages. For example, sports might promote gender stereotypes and problem behaviors (Barber, Eccles, and Stone, 2001).

Programs also must provide *support for efficacy* (ability to produce a desired result) *and mattering* (believing one can make a difference). Conditions must be created that recognize and respect that youth are ultimately agents of their own development. It is critical to respect that what adolescents do can be meaningful, important, and can make significant contributions to others and their community. Thus, adolescents need opportunities to (a) make a real difference in their community; (b) experience autonomy; and (c) gain physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills. Experiencing efficacy and a sense of mattering is critical to growth: "It is through acting, taking on challenges, and making meaningful contributions that a person's sense of self and identity develops" (Eccles and Gootman, 2002, p. 106).

Almost all programs can build in *opportunities to develop life skills* such as decision making and leadership. This means that effective programs help participants learn more than sports skills in sports programs and acting in drama programs. These programs and settings also provide opportunities for increasing life skills in areas such as getting along with others and resolving interpersonal conflicts.

Quality programs are conceptualized as part of an overall effort to integrate *family, schools, and community efforts* that support youth development. Communication, synergy, and complementarity among the various settings that influence how young people mature and develop are necessary to maximize outcomes:

> "…when different parts of adolescents' worlds are out of touch and on different wavelengths, there is increased likelihood that developmental opportunities will be missed, that adolescents will be confused about adult expectations, and that deviant behavior and values will take root" (Eccles and Gootman, 2002, p. 110).

This coordination is best achieved when personnel adopt a youth-focused rather than program-focused approach in facilitating youth development. A youth-focused approach will maximize the inter-

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connection between families, schools, and community-based practices. For example, youth behavioral problems seen in a park and recreation department program are probably related to those being played out at school or at home. Thus, community programs need to have contact with families about developmental issues. In a similar way, school and community program organizers must be communicating about the types of supports, opportunities, programs, and services they offer and their mutual efforts to serve the needs of youth who are affected by their individual efforts. This approach can be thought of as tearing down the silos and building bridges.

In the next section, we will provide three case studies that illustrate some of the points raised thus far in the chapter. In particular, these studies illustrate how logic models can be developed and useful to intentional program planning.

Case Study 1: Using Sound Programming Principles to Improve Recruitment and Retention Practices

The following is an example of how the eight identified program elements can help shape park and recreation departments' approaches to program design. The concept of a logic model will also be illustrated in this case study. Recruiting and retaining participation are issues most park and recreation department personnel confront when programming for adolescents. Many of the reasons youth join and drop out of programs relate to the perceived presence or absence of the eight characteristics of quality programs discussed here. Due to increasing levels of autonomy, adolescents have considerable say regarding whether they choose to join or leave a program. Although many elementary school students are placed in programs by their parents, adolescents are more likely to have discretion over how they choose to use their out-of-school time. Thus, issues of recruiting adolescents to join programs and retaining them once they join become more critical (Gillard and Witt, 2008).

The importance of the eight programming characteristics for understanding the decisions youth make about joining or leaving a program is illustrated by a number of studies. A 2009 roundtable with youth ages 13 to 18 revealed a number of reasons why youth do not participate in recreation programs, how to recruit youth who do not participate in any programs, and how to make programs more accessible to nonparticipating youth (Terzian, Giesen, and Mbwana, 2009). Youth indicated that they might not enroll in programs due to lack of awareness of programs, lack of funds to enroll, and other family responsibilities (e.g., work or sibling care). On the other hand, youth indicated that they might enroll in a program due to (a) concerns about neighborhood safety and (b) lack of caring adults in their lives (e.g., adults who show respect for teens and are positive and caring role models). These findings indicate that not only are the eight programming characteristics important from a developmental point of view, but youth also consider these characteristics in their decision making about where to invest their time participating. Besides improving program quality, efforts need to be made to create a positive buzz about program offerings for both parents and adolescents (e.g., use of peer recruiters and engaging advertising, including social media).

Youth were also asked what they wanted to see in programs and what would make programs more attractive to them (Terzian et al., 2009). Again there was considerable intersection between the listed characteristics of quality programs and what adolescents said were critical factors in their decisions to attend and if attend not drop out. Their responses included:

- Flexibility of rules and program content (e.g., less structure and more youth-friendly activities).
- Variety of activities (age and gender appropriate) and for older adolescents and a better balance among academics, sports and leisure, and hands-on learning experiences.
- Opportunities to learn practical skills (e.g., opportunities to learn and practice important job-related skills), programs that connect young people with opportunities to gain professional experience, and skills that will lead to being able to support themselves after high school.
- Programs that are interesting and engaging (not boring).

- Programs that address family issues (e.g., how to deal with situations when parents are addicted to drugs, ways to improve communication with parents, and teaching parenting skills to teen parents).
- Programs offered at convenient hours, not just immediately after school (e.g., late afternoon, early evening, weekend afternoons, and during school vacation periods).

In this same study, staffing was also an important issue for whether youth participated in or left programs. Youth wanted:

- People who treat youth with respect and trust (e.g., in developmentally appropriate ways and with responsibility and freedom).
- People who are skilled at working with youth (e.g., able to maintain boundaries, are not too strict, structure program activities in an organized manner, and able to be good role models and mentors).

Several factors disrupt the processes of positive development within organized youth activities. Youth reported that their most negative experiences included formation of cliques and exclusive friendship groups, being ridiculed for undertaking a particular activity, and poor cooperation among group members. Negative experiences were also attributed to the behavior of adult leaders (e.g., favoritism, disrespect, unreasonable demands, and unethical behavior). In addition, teens noted that they had negative experiences when leaders tried to be more of a friend than a leader. In some cases, youth found a leader's attempts to relate to them on a personal level to be intrusive and disruptive to their participation in the activity.

Improving Programming Through the Use of Logic Models

Purposive approaches to programming through the use of logic models are important because they guide the development of outcome-oriented programs and use evidence-based principles. They are important as means for communicating to others the expected outcomes from youth programs. Logic models are widely used by youth organizations for developing programs.

The need to specifically identify program outcomes and demonstrate that they have been achieved has increased over the last 30 years in all human service and health-related fields. For example, beginning in the 1990s, many foundations and other community funders began to insist on intentional and results-oriented approaches to programming. In other words, funders give money specifically to achieve targeted outcomes, and they are increasingly interested in information demonstrating that programs do indeed achieve their intended outcomes (Baldwin, Caldwell, and Witt, 2005). Unfortunately, too many park and recreation departments rely on output numbers (number of programs offered, number of participants) rather than documenting what happened to participants as a result of their participation in the program.

The focus on evidence-based programming approaches and demonstrable outcomes has led funders to insist that agency personnel communicate what they do and what they expect to happen as a result of individuals participating in programs. Conceptually and through evaluation, staff should be able to link achieved outcomes with their activities using a theoretical framework. Thus, many funding agencies now require logic models to be developed before making grants. A logic model is a road map of where staff wants to go (outcomes) and the steps necessary to achieve the outcomes. It depicts visually and systematically the relationships among:

- inputs or resources needed to make the program work (e.g., staff, a facility, supplies)
- activities that will be conducted and participation rates (outputs)
- outcomes (short, medium, and long term) that the program is designed to achieve.

Logic models enable practitioners to see the big picture and can serve as effective communication tools among program staff, funders, and program participants. **Figure 3-5** provides a generalized logic model that can help guide the development of program-specific depictions.

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Figure 3-5: Logic Model Diagram
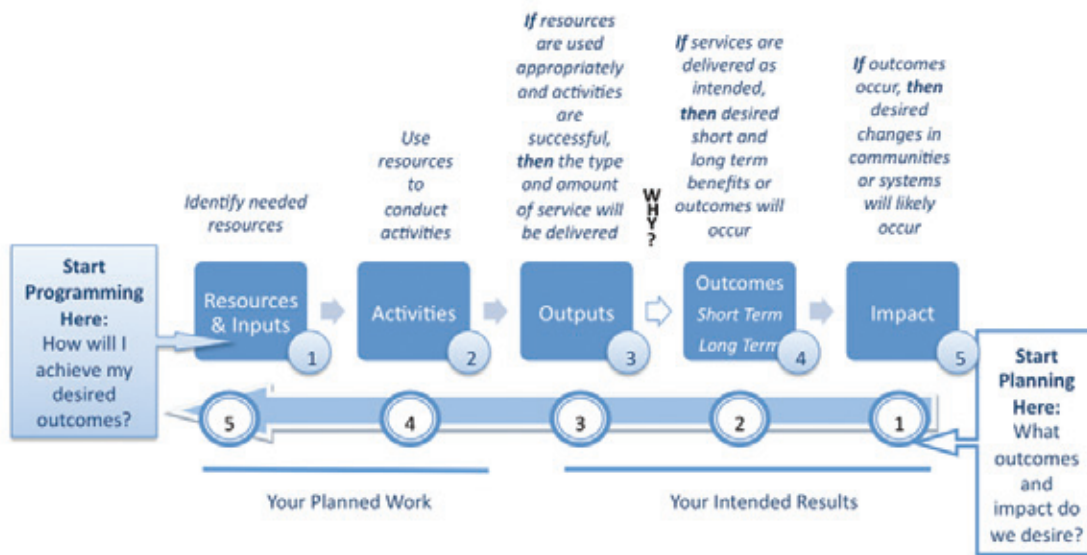
Developing a logic model and undertaking intentional programming requires that the starting point is thinking about outcomes and then working backward through the various components of a logic model. Thus, the *planning* process begins on the right-hand side of the diagram by addressing the question, "What outcomes and impact do we desire?" These outcomes and impacts drive the entire planning process. Short-term outcomes are those that are usually attainable immediately after the program, such as the development of attitudes, knowledge, or skills. These short-term changes in attitudes, knowledge, or skill are thought to then lead to more long-term outcomes, which take longer to develop. These longer-term outcomes include things such as changes in behavior and skill competence. Impact outcomes are usually assessed after more than one year and include outcomes achieved and observed in school, home, and community. These may include things such as changes in participants' condition or status.

Developing a logic model provides a means for various stakeholders in an agency and the wider community to think about what goals a specific service system and its components are intended to accomplish. Once outcomes are identified, the *programming* process addresses the question, "How will I achieve my desired outcomes." The process leads to identification of the resources and inputs needed to carry out the activities that are likely to produce the desired results. This process is depicted in Figure 3-5 beginning on the left-hand side of the model.

Case Study 2: Prevention Example: Fairfax County (Virginia) Department of Community and Recreation Services

Case study 2 further illustrates the use of logic models for planning purposes. This case study also introduces an applied example of a park and recreation department taking a prevention focus.

Fairfax County (Virginia) Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS) provides an example of one department's contribution to an overall countywide effort focused on prevention. As part of the focus on prevention, Fairfax County uses a systemwide approach called results-based accountability. Part of this process is to conduct root cause analyses and examine the indicators of the problem, all of which help in constructing a logic model. Appendix 2 provides materials that more fully describe the county's efforts.

One component of the county's prevention efforts is an annual youth survey. The survey results are a major tool that guides the work and helps the county develop logic models for results-based accountability. To get a better idea of the comprehensive nature of the youth survey, see http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/

demogrph/youthpdf.htm. The site includes considerable information about current and past surveys. The site also contains the reports that are generated that serve as guides for the prevention work.

A recommendation from the 2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey was for Fairfax County agencies to use a collaborative approach to commit resources to prevention to sustain healthy behaviors and continue positive downward trends in negative behaviors. The Fairfax County Prevention Strategy Team was created to provide the leadership, vision, and strategy needed to build a comprehensive prevention system to address the effectiveness of programs and practices, examine community impact, build capacity, and integrate prevention as a fundamental strategy. Similarly, a Prevention Coordinating Team was tasked to be the core planning and process group for prevention efforts. Members of the team are responsible for the overall design and implementation of the system components and for identifying on-the-ground strategies and support needed for system integration. The Prevention Coordinating Team is comprised of staff representing multiple county agencies (e.g., Countywide Gang Prevention, Department of Family Services, Department of Community and Recreation Services, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, and Fairfax County Police Department). Countywide prevention goals include:

- Children are physically fit with good nutritional habits.
- Children enter kindergarten fully ready to succeed.
- Children and youth are safe from violence and bullying.
- Children are born healthy—there are no disparities.
- Families have skills and supports needed to raise healthy and thriving children.
- All youth are succeeding academically—there are no disparities.
- Families are connected to their communities and schools.
- Children and youth are free from alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Children and youth are mentally well. (http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dsm/prevention/)

These prevention goals are ones to which many or all agencies could contribute. Toward this prevention effort, CRS department staff identified a series of short-, intermediate-, and long- term outcomes to work toward in their efforts to contribute to improving population-level physical well-being. The CRS staff decided to focus its efforts for this goal on three main areas: (1) Health Promotion and Education, (2) Physical Fitness, and (3) Community Access and Facilitating Social Connections. The outcomes mapped onto those general areas.

The CRS logic model in Appendix 2 provides a road map linking the targeted outcomes with the planned activities to achieve the outcomes. The Appendix 2 includes more details regarding one of the target areas: Health Promotion and Education. This section of the logic model provides information about how outputs and outcomes will be measured. These documents serve as excellent communication vehicles for all county agency staff members to communicate how and what they do contributes to a larger countywide goal. The CRS logic model provides a thorough example of how different departments may contribute to a countywide programmatic effort, such as improving physical well-being through learning the fundamentals of healthy cardiovascular behavior.

Another example related to adolescents focuses on the "3 to succeed" initiative that was based on the results of one of the youth surveys. The survey focused on good grades, involvement in decision making, opportunities to engage in community activities, strong family support and enjoying time with parents or guardians, and social competencies to make good decisions about drugs and alcohol. The team concluded youth who have a minimum of three assets have a dramatically lower probability of risk behaviors. **Figure 3-6**, taken from the 2008 Youth Survey, shows the picture that emerges of the county's youth is fairly positive.

Figure 3.6: Results from the 2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey

Fairfax County Youth Self-Reported Behavior

- 96% of youth have never been in a gang
- 43% of 10th graders have used alcohol in the past 30 days
- 73% of youth have never had sexual intercourse
- 11% of youth have experienced chronic bullying
- 31% report experiencing depression
- 40% report being active five or more days a week.

Protective Factors

Youth in Fairfax County report they:

- Have opportunities to be involved in school activities (94%), feel safe in school (89%), and have teachers who notice their good work (73%).
- Can ask parents for help (76%), have parents who notice when they do a good job (69%), and are involved in family decisions that affect them (66%).
- Believe it is wrong to cheat at school (62%), believe it is wrong to steal (85%), and are honest with their parents (81%).
- Volunteer for community service (81%).

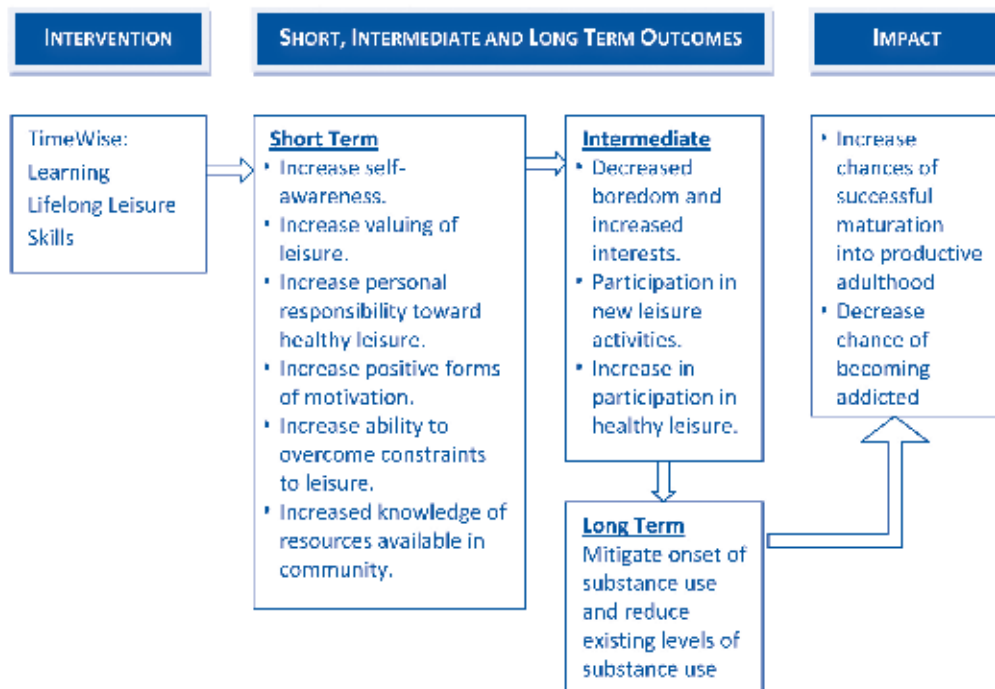**Case Study 3: TimeWise Leisure Education Program**

TimeWise: Taking Charge of Leisure Time (Caldwell, 2004) is an example of a program that takes a positive approach to prevention (increasing positive behaviors) rather than a problem-focused approach (decreasing negative or risky behaviors). Using a logic model enabled the developers to identify outcomes of interest, the literature, and theory that could help them plan the program, and the process and outcome measures to evaluate the outcomes associated with the programmatic efforts.

The curriculum was originally developed as a substance abuse prevention program implemented in middle-school classrooms and was funded by the National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Drug Abuse. TimeWise has gone through a thorough evaluation to assess whether it achieved its desired out-comes (e.g., Caldwell, Baldwin, Walls, and Smith, 2004).

To develop TimeWise, Caldwell and her colleagues used theories from a number of different disci-plines, including human development, prevention, public health, and recreation and leisure. Ecological Systems Theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998) was the overarching basis for the development of TimeWise.This theory suggests that to understand or influence an individual, several factors must be considered. These factors include personal characteristics (e.g., personality, gender, age); social factors (e.g., parents, peers, teachers, and other important adults); community factors (e.g., quality of schools, presence of parks and trails); and larger cultural factors (e.g., community values and ethnic and/or racial issues).

The developers knew from their experience and past research that out-of-school time provided a time for experimentation with and use of substances (such as alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana). They also knew that boredom in out-of-school time was considered by many to be a root cause of substance use, and in fact some of their own research demonstrated the correlation between boredom in leisure time and substance use. But, they also knew that there was more to the story than just boredom and substance use, and they identified a number of recreation-related factors that could either contribute to risky substance use or serve as a protective factor against using substances. The general chain of events they identified is pictured in Figure 3-7.

Figure 3-7: TimeWise Logic Model: General Chain of Events

INTERVENTION	SHORT, INTERMEDIATE AND LONG TERM OUTCOMES		IMPACT
TimeWise: Learning Lifelong Leisure Skills	**Short Term** • Increase self-awareness. • Increase valuing of leisure. • Increase personal responsibility toward healthy leisure. • Increase positive forms of motivation. • Increase ability to overcome constraints to leisure. • Increased knowledge of resources available in community.	**Intermediate** • Decreased boredom and increased interests. • Participation in new leisure activities. • Increase in participation in healthy leisure. / **Long Term** Mitigate onset of substance use and reduce existing levels of substance use	• Increase chances of successful maturation into productive adulthood • Decrease chance of becoming addicted

The challenge was to develop the specific lessons and lesson activities needed to bring about the desired outcomes. The first example shown in Figure 3-8 is from the curriculum's initial lesson, which was designed to (a) help youth understand the benefits of healthy leisure participation; (b) understand why leisure can be risky; and (c) explore how youth use their time, why they do what they do, and how they feel about it. The figure includes specific intervention activities incorporated in TimeWise to (a) identify leisure activity preferences and patterns, (b) build a personal value for accepting responsibility for leisure time, and (c) shape peer norms that value accepting personal responsibility for healthy leisure activities.

Figure 3-8 Time Wise Logic Model Example Lesson 1

Lesson 1: Exploring Leisure Activities Objectives	Specific Theoretical Foundation for Lesson 1
1. Identify leisure activity preferences and patterns. 2. Build a personal value for accepting responsibility for their leisure activities. 3. Shape peer norms that value accepting personal responsibility for healthy leisure activities.	This lesson is based on ideas that stem from the concept of intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Specifically, before students can make choices about their leisure-time activities, they must become aware of their current leisure patterns. Accordingly, the lesson focuses on developing self-awareness of leisure time activities. Students are taught that some activities will provide them with more benefits than others. By encouraging youth to take responsibility for their leisure activities by attempting to increase the benefits obtained, healthy behaviors will be promoted (Simeonsson, 1994).

Resources	Activities (1 & 2)	Process/Program Measures	Outcome Measures
Teachers and principals Community agencies	1a. Define and discuss words leisure, free time, and benefits. 1.b. Discuss personal leisure activities. 1.c. Discuss Transparency 1, "Learning Lifelong Leisure Skills." 1.d. Complete and discuss Worksheet, "Exploring my Free Time." 2.a. Discuss the benefits from healthy leisure and consequences from unhealthy leisure. 2.b. View Transparency 2, "Leisure Time Benefits." 2.c. Complete "My Free Time Profile" to reflect and analyze how one spends one's time and how one feels about one's time. 2.c. Discuss ways one can get more benefits out of leisure. 3. Assign homework, "TimeWise Journal."	1. Which activities did you undertake for this lesson? Activity 1 – Taking charge of free time Activity 2 – Benefits of leisure 2. Approximately how much time was spent on each of the activities you undertook? Activity 1 .... minutes Activity 2 .... minutes 3. How many contact periods did it take to complete this learning experience? Number of periods .... Duration of each period ....minutes 4. To what extent were the activities implemented as set out in the curriculum? – Exactly as planned – To a large extent – Only to a small extent – Not at all – Didn't undertake this activity 5. If you did not implement any of the activities, what are the reasons for this?	• I get a lot of benefits (good things) out of my free-time activities. • The things that I do in my free time are healthy. • I feel good about myself in my free time. • Having healthy free-time activities can help me avoid risky behavior.

Efforts were also made to determine the dosage (number) of the lessons that were received by each program participant. If TimeWise was not successful in achieving the desired outcomes, the lack of success could be due to a poorly designed or poorly implemented intervention, or it could be because an adequate amount of each lesson was not given as intended. Collecting dosage information helps to identify possible reasons a program was not as successful as anticipated.

Finally, Figure 3-8 also includes the outcome measures used in the program evaluation. Being able to demonstrate that these outcomes were achieved helps to build important credibility for and communication about the benefits of agencies' programs. Evaluation results suggested that TimeWise was fairly successful in accomplishing the desired outcomes, although not totally. Some results were more effective for girls than boys, for example.

TimeWise is comprised of six core and five booster lessons. Each lesson is broken into two core activities that take about 30 to 40 minutes to implement in a structured classroom setting. Implementers who have a background in recreation and leisure would need minimal training to implement the program. Those without this background should receive training on the content and process of the lessons. The six core lessons focus on teaching students to:

- determine personally satisfying and meaningful leisure activities and interests
- understand the benefits of participating in healthy leisure
- understand how one's motivation affects one's experience and participation in healthy behaviors
- alleviate boredom and increase optimal experience in leisure time
- learn how to take responsible action to participate in desired activities
- identify and overcome constraints that get in the way of participation in desired activities

The booster lessons include:

- educating others about leisure
- making decisions and taking risks
- achieving flow
- managing stress and becoming mindful
- friendships and leisure
- leisure and change

As an example of a TimeWise lesson, the lesson on boredom stresses the need for youth to take personal responsibility for their boredom. Youth are taught that they need to see boredom as an opportunity to engage in something interesting. They learn how to turn a boring situation into something more exciting in a positive way. They also learn that just because they think they have "nothing to do," in fact they may want to use this time to think and let their creative juices flow.

Sidebar 3C provides evidence from an evaluation of TimeWise Study Details, which indicated that the approach has promise. In this evaluation, four schools implemented TimeWise, and five similar schools served as no-treatment comparison schools. Although TimeWise has been mainly evaluated to determine its effectiveness in preventing substance abuse with rural youth, it can be considered a general youth development and risk prevention program. Thus, TimeWise may be helpful to practitioners in their efforts to conduct leisure education to bridge the gap between adolescent's interests and available opportunities.

Sidebar 3C:

Study Details

- TimeWise was delivered in the 7th grade, and booster sessions were given in the 8th and 9th grades.

- 634 7th grade students were included, of which 315 (49.7%) were female, and 95% were European American.

- 30.4% of the students lived in a rural area, 25% lived in a neighborhood but not "in a town," 25.2% lived in a town, and 6.9% lived on a farm.

- 56.7% bought their own lunch, 20.8% received free lunch, and 11.8% were eligible for reduced lunch.

Results

Those who received the TimeWise curriculum had:

- Greater interest in activities (lower rates of boredom)

- Greater levels of initiative (e.g., taking charge and pursuing an interest) and ability to restructure activities

- Higher scores on the ability to plan and make decisions in free time

- Lower levels of motivation (i.e., doing things because there is nothing else to do and lack of self-regulation)

- More awareness of leisure opportunities in the community

- Lower use of marijuana and inhalants (for males and more pronounced at the end of 9th grade)

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<p style="text-align:center">Chapter 4</p>

The Scientific Evidence Relating to the Impact of Recreation on Youth Development

> Organized activities are important contexts that help young persons build competencies and successfully negotiate the salient developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence. Participation is associated with academic success, mental health, positive social relationships and behaviors, identity development, and civic engagement. These benefits, in turn, pave the way for long-term educational success and help prepare young persons for the transition to adulthood. (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, and Lord, 2005, p. 10)

Youth spend a considerable amount of their daily lives in out-of-school settings—much of it in self-directed or organized recreational pursuits. Changing parental work patterns have transformed family life for all groups, regardless of income, education, race and ethnicity, or place of residence. An implication of this dramatic transformation is that:

> Approximately 80 percent of children ages 5 and younger with employed mothers are in a child care arrangement for an average of almost 40 hours a week with someone other than a parent, and 63 percent of these children ages 6 to 14 spend an average of 21 hours per week in the care of someone other than a parent before and after school. (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2003, p. 2)

This chapter provides the scientific evidence that supports advocacy and funding efforts. In an era of fiscal restraint, paying for recreation programs is problematic. Many foundations have reduced funding levels; states and municipal governments in many states are curtailing spending.

To successfully compete for available funding at the municipal level or compete effectively for grants, park and recreation department staff members must be able to clearly explain their ability to meet the needs that are driving out-of-school time programming. In the current political climate, making the case for the importance of park and recreation departments' contributions to youth development is best framed from an out-of-school time perspective. This is generally referred to as OST by most youth-serving agencies. Using this terminology makes it easier for park and recreation department staff to work collaboratively with staff from other agencies. From an OST framework, park and recreation staff can explain how what they do is more than fun and games and what their unique and significant contributions can be through intentional recreation programming.

Park and recreation department OST programs can make significant contributions in nine areas. They can:

1. contribute to reducing juvenile delinquency
2. contribute to increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors
3. expose youth to less violence
4. improve children's educational performance and thus impact the quality of the future work force and the national economy
5. help decrease health care costs related to childhood obesity
6. increase the economic contributions of young people to society when they become adults
7. help youth develop self-confidence, optimism, and initiative

8.   increase civic responsibility and participation

9.   help reduce parental stress and thus affect health care costs and lost job productivity.

Sidebar 4A: After-school recreational programs are a logical and inexpensive way to address crime. One California district was able to keep 231,405 youth busy on evenings and weekends by using a court grant of $13,000 in 1996.

Source: California State Parks, 2005.

Contribution 1: OST programs can contribute to reducing juvenile delinquency.

When the school bell rings, crimes by and against children soar. Millions of children and teens are turned out on the streets without constructive activities or adult supervision. On school days, the period from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. is the peak time for teens to:

- commit crimes
- be victims of crime
- be in or cause a car crashes
- smoke, drink, or use drugs
- commit a sexual assault (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2009.)

A 2006 survey of more than 600 California 12- to 17-year-olds found that those left unsupervised three or more days per week were twice as likely to hang out with gang members, three times as likely to be engaged in criminal behavior, and more than three times as likely to use illegal drugs (Fight Crime, 2009). In addition, youth who are unengaged, bored, or uninvolved can be at higher risk of undertaking negative behaviors such as delinquency (Osgood, Anderson, and Shaffer, 2005). A study of California Proposition 49 funding for after-school programs indicated that for every dollar invested in after-school programs, taxpayers saved approximately $6 in crime costs (Brown, Frates, Rudge, and Tradewell, 2002).

Sidebar 4B: The City of Fort Myers, Florida police claim a 28% drop in juvenile arrests since the inception of the award-winning STARS Program--Success through Academic and Recreational Support. Held at an expansive recreation complex built in the heart of the city's minority community, STARS provides area youth much needed recreational and artistic outlets.

Source: President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, n.d.

A 2007 study found that students who participated at a higher rate in LA's BEST (in Los Angeles) had significantly lower incidences of juvenile crime (Goldschmidt, Huang, and Chinen, 2007). In general, benefits related to crime reduction increased with engagement in LA's BEST. The study reported that every dollar invested in the program resulted in an estimated savings in juvenile crime costs of approximately $2.50. This is important because youth violence costs the United States more than $158 billion each year (Welsh, Loeber, Stevens, Stouthamer-Loeber, Cohen, Farrington, 2008).

Sidebar 4C: Some 57% of all violent crimes by juveniles occur on school days, and 19% are in the hours between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. On the other hand, students who participate in one to four hours per week of extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate.

Source: Health and Human Services, 2002.

Sidebar 4D: In a 2000 survey, more than 80% of California mayors and chambers of commerce believed that recreation areas and programs reduce crime and delinquency, and 71% of respondents felt that recreation played a positive role in tough social problems such as juvenile court, 66% about underage drinking, and 64% about illegal drug use.

Source: California State Parks, 2005.

The literature on the link between delinquency and out-of-school time provides four interrelated perspectives for understanding that relationship (Caldwell and Smith, 2006), including the:

- *Filled-time perspective*—Time filled with prosocial activities cannot be filled with deviant activities. Youth with stronger attachment, commitment, involvement and belief in positive social norms, activities and institutions are less likely to be involved in association with deviant peers (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Hirschi, 1969).

- *Association with deviant peers perspective*—Certain activities are more likely to instigate deviant behavior or association with a deviant subculture. Youth are differentially motivated or tempted by situations and those who commit crimes do not necessarily reject conventional values, but rather seek excitement, conspicuous consumption, and toughness (Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1996).

- *Activity structure perspective*—Time spent in informal and/or unsupervised activities is likely to promote deviance, while time spent in supervised activities protects against it. Structured activities offer fewer opportunities to engage in deviant behavior because youth are engaged in doing something (as opposed to nothing like hanging out, for example) that is engaging and positive.

- *Person-environment interaction perspective*—How activities are structured, organized, and led is critical. Effective programming must take account of individual factors associated with participants when planning programs. It has been reported that structured activities are linked to low antisocial behavior, while involvement at an unstructured center has been found to be associated with high antisocial behavior (Mahoney and Stattin, 2000). The researchers noted that:

> …the issue is not whether an individual is engaged in an activity—the issue appears to be what the individual is engaged in and with whom. In terms of antisocial behavior, it may be better to be uninvolved than to participate in unstructured activity, particularly if it features a high number of deviant youth (p. 123).

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Contribution 2: OST programs can contribute to increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors.

Participation in OST programs has been associated with reduced problem behaviors during adolescence and into young adulthood. It reduces the likelihood of problems with drugs and alcohol, aggression, antisocial behavior, or becoming teenage parents (Mahoney et al., 2005). One of the key ways that OST programs can help reduce negative and increase positive behaviors is the impact of program involvement on developmental assets. Youth programs sponsored by park and recreation departments can play a significant role in helping young people develop the 40 Developmental Assets outlined by the Search Institute. Search Institute research indicates that the more developmental assets that young people experience, the more they will demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors (e.g., exhibiting leadership, maintaining good health, and succeeding in school). Conversely, the fewer assets young people experience, the more they demonstrate problem behaviors such as abuse of alcohol, violence, illicit drug use, and sexual activity (Search Institute, 2010).

> **Sidebar 4E:** A 2001 YMCA study of 500 14- to 17-year-olds found that more than one-half of those surveyed desired more after school activities in their communities. Some 60% said they would participate if the activities were available. 54% said they would watch less TV and play fewer video games if they had other things to do.
>
> *Source: Penn, Schoen, and Berland Associates, 2001.*

In a study of African American youth in Chicago, youth who were engaged in a structured after-school program for one year were compared to those who participated for two years (Fauth, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn, 2007). Those who participated for two years showed greater academic improvements than one-year participants. Another study reported that the relationship between participating in three or more activities was related to a lower rate of delinquency than if a youth participated in only one activity (Fauth et al., 2007). Thus, it is important to understand how recreation activities, context, and experiences change across time in terms of intensity and duration. In general, research has found that youth who are interested in the recreation activities as young adolescents, become more apathetic and disengaged as they age (Hunter and Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Sharp, Caldwell, Graham, and Ridenour, 2006; Verma and Larson, 2003). Research also suggests that these dropouts are more likely to engage in negative behaviors, such as substance use (Tibbits, 2009). In addition, research has shown that as youth become more bored and less intrinsically motivated and more amotivated over time, the odds of using alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana increases (Sharp, Coffman, Caldwell, Smith, Wegner, Flisher, Vergnani, and Mathews, in press).

Drug use accelerates among 14- to 15-year-olds and peaks between the ages of 18 and 20 (Cartwright, Kitsantas, and Rose, 2009). Use of alcohol, cigarettes, illicit drugs, marijuana, and inhalants is higher among white 12- to 17-year-olds than among African American youth (alcohol, 35.1%; vs. 22.3%); cigarette use, 26.0% vs. 16.2%; inhalant use 3.4% vs. 1.0%, respectively). Marijuana use increased between 2007 and 2009 and is the most widely used of all illicit drugs (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, and Schulenberg, 2009). In 2009, about 12% of the nation's 8th graders, 27% of 10th graders, and 33% of 12th graders reported using marijuana in the previous 12 months.

The concept of risk prevention and harm reduction has emerged over the past two decades as the preferred perspective for dealing with problem behaviors. Prevention is geared toward preventing or lessening the possibility that something negative will happen in an adolescent's life. Preventing something from occurring is preferable to fixing it after it happens (e.g., addictions and suicide attempts), or after it leads to further complications (e.g., depression leading to attempted suicide). Consequently, many park and recreation departments have adopted a prevention focus. Prevention is concerned also with promoting things that will counteract risk factors and enhance a person's development and living situation. Thus, the positive benefits of participating in recreation programs contribute to preventing risk behaviors (e.g., substance use) and promoting health and academic success.

Contribution 3: Community provision of OST programs can lead to less youth exposure to violence.

Exposure to community violence is common among urban adolescents. It is estimated that approximately 40% of inner-city youth are exposed to a shooting and many more youth report exposure to less serious forms of community violence (Stein, Jaycox, Kataoka, Rhodes, and Vestal, 2003. Exposure to violence has been linked to behavioral problems (e.g., Bingenheimer, Brennan, and Earls, 2005). Studies have found that community violence occurs less frequently among youth who live in neighborhoods rich in youth-serving organizations. It is unclear whether this outcome is due to youth participation in organized community-based activities leading to less exposure to violence, or whether the presence of these organizations lowers crime rates (Gardner and Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Involving youth, parents, volunteers, and employees in youth-serving organizations, generates both a greater sense of mutual trust and solidarity and a willingness of residents to intervene for the sake of public order. In other words, the very existence of neighborhood youth organizations may lead to decreased crime, and thus decreased exposure to crime. Whichever the case, the existence of youth-serving organizations in a community appears to be developmentally beneficial.

Contribution 4: OST programs can help improve children's educational performance and impact the quality of the future work force and the national economy.

Young people spend only 20% of their waking hours in school (Corporate Voices for Working Families (2004). How they spend the other 80% of their waking hours makes a significant difference in their overall development. Research shows that providing a range of high quality OST experiences, including those offered by park and recreation departments, can improve young people's chances of success in school and ultimately in life.

> **Sidebar 4F:** "Quality after-school programs provide time for students to take school-based learning to a deeper and more individualized level, as well as filling many existing gaps in the typical school curriculum in the arts, sports, foreign language, and service learning."
>
> *Source: Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2004, p. 7.*

A report by Miller (2003) indicates that students who participate in OST programs experience greater engagement in learning and have higher academic performance. Students have shown improvements in standardized test performance and homework completion and quality. Participation in after-school programs has been linked to reductions in grade retention and dropout rates. When young people have access to quality programs, they have increased opportunities to succeed academically, have higher aspirations, and are better prepared to enter post-secondary school and the marketplace, where they will contribute to the growth of our economy (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2005). Research also suggests that consistent extracurricular activity participation is associated with high educational status at young adulthood including college attendance (Mahoney, Cairns, and Farmer, 2003).

Contribution 5: OST programs can help decrease health care costs related to childhood obesity.

Obesity rates for children nearly tripled between the early 1970s and the late 1990s. Researchers have found that mothers from upper income families who worked more hours than average during their children's lives were more likely to have overweight children because working left little time for mothers to supervise healthy eating habits and outdoor and indoor play and physical activity (Anderson, Butcher, and Levine, 2003). Children in lower-income families also have weight problems, but it does not seem to stem from employed mothers.

It has been suggested that obesity is related more to lack of physical activity than to an increase in ca-loric intake, and OST programs offer opportunities for children to be more physically active. As the preva-lence and severity of childhood obesity increases, concerns about adverse health outcomes in childhood and adolescence rise. Even when disorders do not present themselves in childhood, childhood obesity increases the risk of adulthood problems.

Total health care costs attributable to obesity or overweight are projected to double every decade to approximately $861 to $960 billion by 2030, accounting for 16% to 18% of total U.S. health care costs (Wang, Beydoun, Liang, Caballero, Kumanyka, 2008). The data clearly support the cost effectiveness of efforts to reduce childhood obesity rather than paying much higher health costs later (Hering, Pritsker, Gonchar, and Pillar, 2009).

Youth who engage in adequate amounts of physically active recreation are more likely to be at an ap-propriate weight and a reduced risk for later weight-related health problems. In addition, physical activity patterns established and maintained during adolescence are more likely to be continued into adulthood. On the other hand, youth who do not have a physically active recreation repertoire are more likely to be overweight, with increased risk of adult metabolic syndrome (defined as a combination of medical disor-ders that increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes) and obesity.

Aside from the clear physical health benefits of physically active recreation, there are other benefits, as well. For example:

- A study in California found that children spend over 75% of their day in sedentary activity and 1.4% in vigorous activity, yet physical activities provide a fundamental source of opportunity to challenge one's self, take risks, and develop skills.
- Students' physical well-being was associated with academic achievement (California State Parks, 2005).
- A study of North California youth indicated that youth increased their self-esteem after participat-ing in a rural recreation program, increased their commitment to education after participating in a community basketball and tutorial program, and increased their involvement with positive role models and authority figures after participation in both.

The low rates of physical activity of children are even more concerning since as adolescents get older, they are more likely to drop out of sport and physical activity programs. The California study also reported that that physical activity and/or athletic participation served as a protective factor in terms of lowering depression among children and preventing suicide among high-risk adolescent females (California State Parks, 2005).

Contribution 6: OST programs can increase the economic contributions of young people to society when they become adults.

Given the potential of OST programs to positively affect educational levels, participation in them can make a difference in annual earning levels and lifetime income. For example, based on 2006 statistics, an individual with less than a high school education will have average earnings of $22,000 per year, while a high school graduate will earn $29,000 per year, someone with a bachelor's degree $43,500, and a person with at least a master's degree, $50,000 (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).

Sidebar 4G: 2006 Average Income by Level of Education.
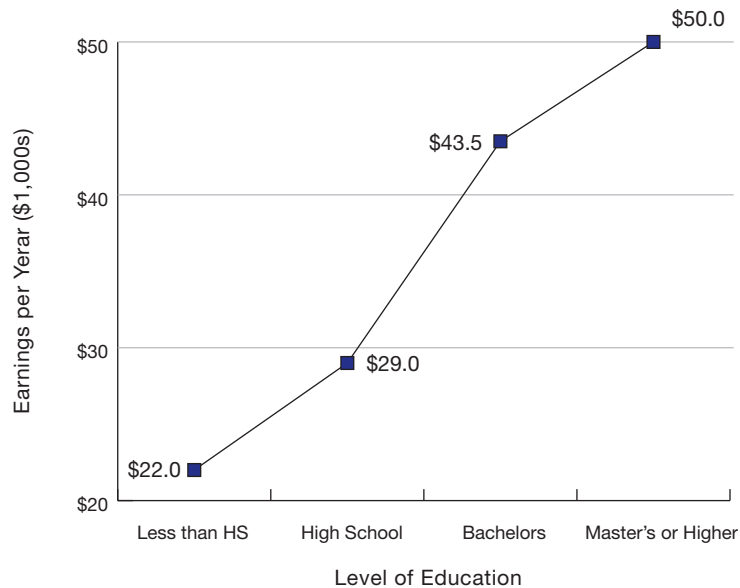
Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

If an individual's lifetime earnings are calculated, these differences in earning power influence their contributions to society through consumption of goods and services and the payment of taxes. Increased individual retirement plan contributions and personal savings also increase as one's income goes up. This makes it likely that the more educated individual makes lower demands on government and continues contributing to the tax base through expenditures.

Contribution 7: OST programs can help youth develop self-confidence, optimism, and initiative.

Lacking self-confidence and being pessimistic about one's future prospects can deter involvement in the very activities needed to be successful and contribute to developing low levels of initiative and involvement. Initiative:

> consists of the ability to be motivated from within to direct effort toward a challenging goal…and that initiative is a core requirement for other components of positive development, such as creativity, leadership, altruism, and civic engagement. (Larson, 2000, p. 170)

Many school-related and unstructured-time settings lack the conditions for learning initiative, while structured voluntary activities are powerful settings for initiative learning since they have the best chance of supporting intrinsic motivation and concerted engagement or deep attention. It is critical that these involvements continue over time. To promote initiative, there must be opportunities for sustained involvement:

> High rates of boredom, alienation, and disconnection from meaningful challenge are not signs of psychopathology, at least not in most cases, but rather signs of a deficiency in positive development. (Larson, 2000, p. 170)

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Figure 4-1 shows that:

- School class experiences are low in intrinsic motivation and moderate in the level of concentration

- Experiences with friends are moderately related to intrinsic motivation, but below average in their ability to produce concentration.

- Experiences in sports, arts, hobbies, and organizations create high levels of intrinsic motivation and concentration.

Figure 4-1: Level of Intrinsic Motivation by Activity Setting
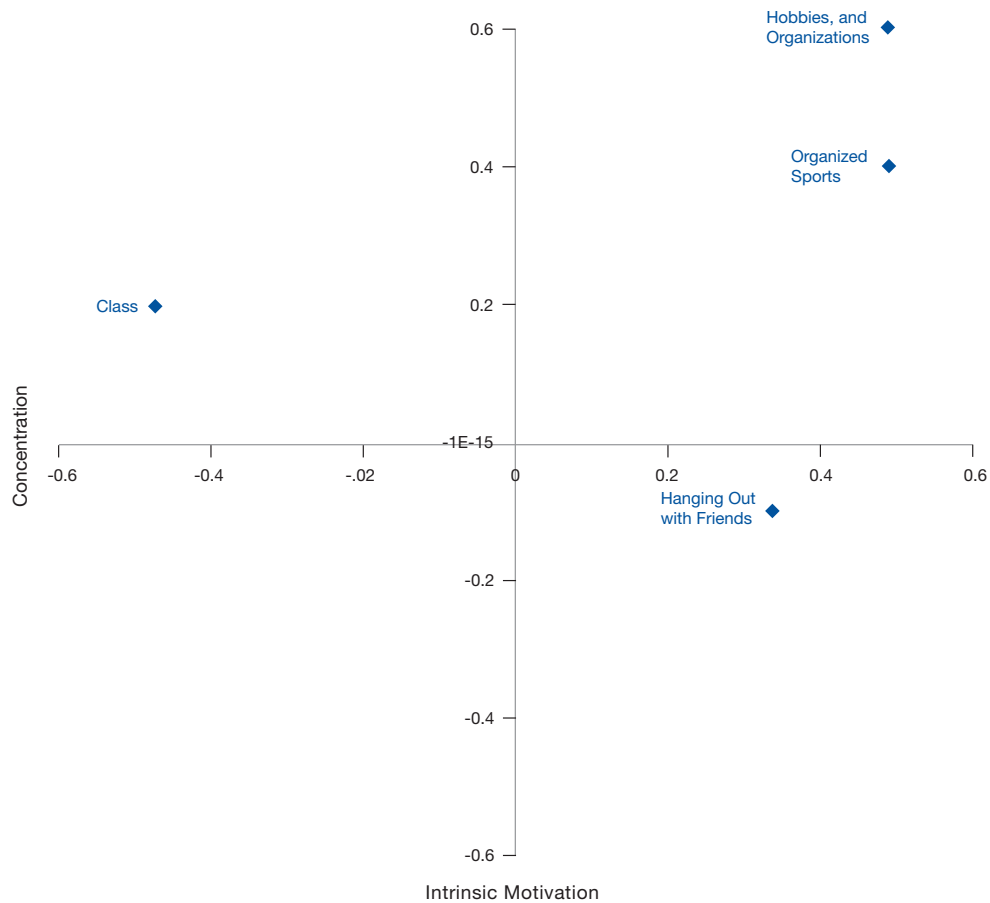
Reinforcing the importance of initiative, a study of youth participants in OST settings found that successful youth avoid "self-destructive assessments" and feel more positively about having a job they will enjoy, believe they can do things as well as others, and feel that plans they make will work out (McLaughlin, 2000). Optimism is related to strong feelings of initiative, autonomy, and hopefulness.

Contribution 8: OST programs can increase civic responsibility and participation.

Membership in a youth organization can expose young people to positive norms and the political and social skills needed for civic engagement. Service learning activities enable youth to develop and apply their skills and knowledge to real-life situations. Engaging youth in community service helps establish civic

responsibility and public service as a lifelong habit. One study found that adults who had participated in voluntary youth organizations were more likely to be involved in civic and community services in their adulthood (Benson and Saito, 2001).

> **Sidebar 4H:** Youth involved in OST programs are more likely than non-involved youth to do volunteer work and feel that they can undertake activities to make life better for other children and youth growing up in their community.
> (McLaughlin, 2000)

While participating in OST programs has been shown to increase civic responsibility (Kahne and Sporte, 2008), those opportunities are inequitably distributed and have diminished in traditional learning settings. Groups such as African-Americans, Hispanics, young people who are not college bound, those who are not Internet users, and those who have less education than others their age are less likely to have opportunities for civic education. If OST programs can involve those groups, they can be especially effective in promoting civic engagement.

Contribution 9: OST programs can help reduce parental stress and affect health care costs and lost job productivity.

A significant correlation exists between parental after-school stress and workplace behavior. Approximately 10 million youth are left home alone, every afternoon, every day of the week, and the number of latchkey children is rising. During the after-school hours, working parents may experience what has been labeled Parental After-School Stress (PASS) by having to deal with questions such as:

- Are my children safe?
- Are the after-school arrangements I've made reliable?
- Are my children using their time productively? (Barnett and Gareis, 2004)

> **Sidebar 4I:** Many parents have work schedules that prevent them from being home when their children get out of school. The gap between a child's school week and a parent's work week may be as many as 20-25 hours.
> (Barnett and Gareis, 2004)

Parents may miss up to five days of work per child and it is estimated that PASS is costing companies from $50-$300 billion in health care and lost job productivity each year (Garrels and Barnett, 2006). Parents with high PASS:

- are more frequently interrupted, distracted, and drained of energy at work by nonwork issues
- more frequently make workplace errors
- are more likely to turn down requests to work extra hours, and miss meetings and deadlines due to nonwork issues
- rate their productivity and the quality of their work significantly lower. (Barnett and Gareis, 2004, p. 2)

Providing quality OST programs during parental working hours reduces PASS. Parents have reported that after-school programs helped them balance work and family life, with 60% saying they missed less work than before their children were in the program, and 59% saying it supported them in keeping their job (Reisner, White, Brimingham, and Welsch, 2002).

Sidebar 4J: From 1976 through 2005, the Monitoring the Future study reported that the most common reason provided by high school seniors for using any illicit drug or alcohol was for social and recreation reasons. (Terry-McElrath, O'Malley, and Johnston, 2009)

Overall, park and recreation department staff members must look beyond "gym and swim" activities and engage youth with meaningful activities that are intentionally designed to develop skills, create challenges, and provide fulfilling experiences. Recreation is more than just participating in an activity; it is the nature of the experiences while participating that is critical to the outcomes achieved. The overall goal of park and recreation department OST programs is to enable young people to develop and become fully functioning and healthy adults.

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Chapter 5

Creating Community and Statewide Partnerships

As emphasized throughout this monograph, park and recreation departments should be part of a communitywide approach to implementing youth directed supports, opportunities, programs, and services. Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services' efforts noted earlier are an excellent example of that type of coordination. Mayors, council members, and other municipal leaders are increasingly aware of the power of out-of-school time (OST) programs to help meet multiple city goals—improving public safety and health, supporting the city's education system, preparing the future work force, and supporting working families—all of which improve a city's economic vitality and overall quality of life. Municipal leaders also understand that OST programs are well-positioned to help the next generation develop a comprehensive set of 21st century skills that emphasize problem solving, collaboration, use of technology, and creative thinking (Padgette, Deich, and Russell, 2010).

At the state level, 39 states have formed after-school/OST networks to help enhance the effectiveness of OST programming and to develop economic support from local, state, or federal government sources; foundations; nonprofit sector; business community; and schools. Partially funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, these statewide networks are playing a central role in extending and improving OST programs.

As an example, the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) is a statewide public-private partnership dedicated to promoting young people's safety, learning, and healthy development outside the traditional classroom. NYSAN's activities are directed toward building the capacity and commitment of communities to increase the quality and availability of programs during nonschool hours (NYSAN, 2010).

The goals of NYSAN are to:

- Foster statewide, regional, and local public-private partnerships that build upon the strengths of existing relationships at all levels and that represent a diversity of perspectives.
- Build local and state public and private support for expanding and sustaining high-quality after-school opportunities.
- Promote statewide standards of quality through a common system of self assessment of after-school programs building on existing state and national standards.
- Build the capacity of after-school program providers through coordinated training and technical assistance and collaborative learning.

To accomplish its objectives, NYSAN convenes partners at the state and regional levels to work in four main areas to support the after-school field and promote increased quality and availability of after-school opportunities:

Program Quality: Promotes the adoption of a common system of quality standards and the development of capacity-building, assessment, and evaluation tools linked to standards.

Professional Development: Coordinates existing state and regional resources and develop new resources to increase access to and effectiveness of professional development and technical assistance.

Statewide Policy Agenda: Convenes partners across the after-school field to develop and advocate for public policies and practices that build a comprehensive and coordinated statewide after-school system.

Network and Regional Communications: Provides a Web site, electronic mailing lists, and other communication tools to share information and resources and support its five regional network affiliates.

It is important that state park and recreation societies be part of these network efforts in leadership roles both at the board of directors and committee levels. Contact with other state-wide organizations is critical for park and recreation departments at the local level to be seen as critical players in fast-advancing efforts to improve and extend OST programming.

Similar efforts are also evident at the city level. Forming public-private partnerships, communities are working to:

- provide leadership and vision
- improve program quality
- expand access to and participation in quality programs
- finance and sustain citywide programming and infrastructure (Hayes, Lind, Grossman, Stewart, Deich, Gersick, MaMaken, and Campbell, 2009)

Whatever the system, however, efforts must be made to meet the following challenges (Pittman, Tolman, and Yohalem, 2005):

- Creating a strong base of high-quality programs by defining and delivering quality services, ensuring appropriate levels of services, and creating continuity in the quantity and quality of services.
- Building a city-level infrastructure, including program capacity, such as
  - identifying resources and coordinating resources across an entire community such as programs, facilities, transportation, and staff training
  - creating stable and well-trained staff, as well as well-run programs and organizations.
- Creating a climate conducive to action and investment through building and sustaining the public's will to demand and see that funding is provided for OST programs, building information systems that allow for mapping and tracking available programs, and participation patterns, and engaging local leaders from the public and private sectors.

The following represent strategies for providing leadership and vision for OST citywide efforts:

- Individual leaders, usually mayors, use their position and influence to focus attention on the need for OST programs, bringing people together; mobilizing public- and private-sector resources; and spearheading efforts to develop mechanisms for providing systematic guidance, management, and support.
- Citywide governing bodies lead, advise, and monitor system-building efforts.
- OST intermediaries, generally independent nonprofit organizations established outside city government, foster collaboration and coordination among public- and private-sector stakeholders and mobilize resources.
- Partnerships and collaborations among local individuals and organizations have a stake in OST, which enable them to pool knowledge and resources to support shared system-building goals.
- Business planning by the system leaders identifies system-building needs, priorities, and the core strategies and activities to be pursued (Hayes et al., 2009, p. 2).

Park and recreation department personnel can be prominent in providing the leadership and vision to create these types of alliances. Park and recreation department personnel cannot afford to operate their own silos. Lack of communitywide perspective will threaten their ability to appear relevant to a community's efforts to define a vision for communitywide OST services, provide a network of OST programs and services, and improve program quality.

The following are examples of citywide efforts to coordinate among agencies in a community:

Chicago has [also] been involved over a considerable period of time in major system-building efforts. Chicago's system has expanded to include all 1,300 publicly funded OST programs in the city, serving more than 25,000 children. The system is centrally but jointly coordinated by the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services, Office of Children and Youth Services, and After School Matters. The mayor, leaders from an array of city agencies, public schools, community-based nonprofit organizations, local universities, and advocacy organizations were all involved in the system. The city also received financial assistance in its capacity-building efforts from the Wallace Foundation (Hayes, et al., 2009).

Seattle is home to one of the oldest OST system-building efforts in the United States. The system is coordinated by a state-level intermediary that convened stakeholders, including staff from the City of Seattle, the Parks and Recreation Department, Seattle Public Schools, and major OST providers (such as YMCA of Greater Seattle and Associated Recreation Council). All middle and K–8 schools are associated with OST programs provided by a Parks and Recreation Department/YMCA partnership. In the 1990s, funding through the Wallace Foundation's Making the Most of Out-of-School Time (MOST) program helped increase the supply, accessibility, affordability, and quality of OST program (Hayes, et al., 2009).

Sidebar 5A: Boston After School & Beyond is a public-private partnership dedicated to supporting, strengthening, and expanding Boston's out-of-school time (OST) system. By aligning school and out-of-school efforts, Boston Beyond seeks to advance the development of a unified system of high-quality and engaging opportunities that meets the needs of Boston's youth. Boston After School & Beyond collaborates with the City of Boston and a diverse group of philanthropic, public, and community organizations that are committed to tackling a wide variety of issues affecting the youth of Boston. Their partners bring valuable resources and provide expertise that not only helps shape and extend their efforts but also strengthens the efforts, of all committed to the success of Boston youth. Visit www.bostonbeyond.org.

Sidebar 5B: In 2008, the mayor of Southfield, Michigan, announced plans to create a partnership in her city: "Once completed, parents and children in Southfield will have a complete listing of all afterschool programs that serve our youth, as well as several new opportunities to get involved in extra-curricular and summer activities. We are looking forward to working with the Parks and Recreation Department, the City Council, our new Youth Center, the Southfield Community Foundation, and our Southfield Public Schools, as well as our entire city, to get this initiative moving forward" (Hayes, et al., 2009).

Concluding Remarks

Young people will be our future business and public leaders. They will pay taxes, raise families, and undertake volunteer and other community service activities. Out-of-school time settings are important venues for helping youth successfully navigate their adolescent years and develop the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors they will need to be fully functioning adults. In particular, there is strong evidence that out-of-school time activities and contexts are significant contributors to the promotion of youth development. Park and recreation departments are key resources for providing the supports, opportunities, programs, and services to facilitate this process through recreation. The unique programs and contexts offered by park and recreation departments contribute to the larger effort to promote youth development in out-of-school time.

In order to develop and promote successful youth development programs, park and recreation professionals need to enhance their knowledge of the processes of adolescent development, the principles of youth development, and the ultimate objectives of their planning and service delivery efforts. Their work must be intentional and strive to meet youth development-related outcomes through supports, opportunities, programs, and services as outlined in this monograph. Enabling youth participation, voice and engagement are critical in these processes.

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Appendix 1: 40 Developmental Assets Model

Search INSTITUTE

40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets**®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
HEALTHY YOUTH®

External Assets

Support
1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication**—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate**—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

Empowerment
7. **Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries & Expectations
11. **Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School Boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence**—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time
17. **Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. **Religious community**—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

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Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning
21. **Achievement Motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School Engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. **Reading for Pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values
26. **Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty**—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. **Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. **Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies
32. **Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. **Interpersonal Competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. **Cultural Competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. **Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity
37. **Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. **Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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Appendix 2: Fairfax County After-School Program Logic Model

Goal: To provide comprehensive, high-quality after-school activities that provide opportunities for middle school youth to feel safe; improve academic development and performance; improve social, emotional, and physical well-being while establishing healthy behaviors; improve school and community connectedness; reduce the potential for risk-taking behaviors; and reduce interest in gang involvement or delinquent activities so that youth have greater opportunities for success in developing the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and abilities to live healthy lives, become productive adults, and thrive in the workplaces and communities of the 21st century.

Program Strategies	Description	Program Elements
Academic Support and Enrichment	Quality after-school programs can address the two strongest predictors of substance abuse and behavioral issues: (1) academic difficulties and (2) unsupervised time after-school. Research indicates that after-school programs can markedly increase engagement in learning, improve academic achievement, narrow the achievement gap, and reduce behavioral issues.	Homework Assistance; Tutoring; Math and Literacy Programs; Clubs and Associations; Technology; Fine and Performing Arts; Board Games
Social Skills and Youth Development	The after-school environment enables youth to interact among themselves and with adults in a more relaxed atmosphere. Research shows that youth with the opportunity to build positive peer and adult relationships have better school and community connectedness, higher self-confidence, increased social competence, and less substance abuse and behavioral issues including gang involvement.	Mentoring; Service Learning; Leadership; Violence Prevention; Substance Abuse Prevention; Gang Prevention; Peer Mediation; Character Education; Career Preparedness: College Readiness
Physical, Health, and Recreational	After-school programs provide the opportunity for youth to participate in activities and projects that promote and reinforce physical fitness, team-building, healthy nutrition and wellness, and emotional well-being.	Recreation Activity; Intramurals; Sports Opportunity; Exercise Activities; Team Building; Health and Wellness Activities
Family and Community Involvement	After-school programs depend on and draw upon family and community support for program development, volunteer staffing, and capacity building. Strong collaborative partnerships drive program quality and sustainability and help leverage school, family, and community strengths to support student success and life-long learning opportunities.	Partnership Building; Volunteer Recruitment; Parent Education; Family Engagement; Community Outreach

Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Those that are usually attainable within a year and are observable within the after-school program	Those that take less time to develop and some may require communitywide effort to affect. Intermediate steps are necessary to achieve long-term outcomes.	Usually assessed after more than one year and include outcomes achieved and observed in school, home, and community, as well as the after-school program and many need a community-wide effort to affect.
• Improved homework completion rates (quantity/quality) – Improved class participation – Students know assistance is available • Improved interactions with staff – Improved positive social skills – Improved attitude toward self, school, and community • Increased time spent in physical activity – Improved peer-peer relationships – Increased willingness to assume responsibility • Improved communication and networking – Increased outreach – Increased number of program offerings	• Improved course grades and SOL scores – Increased engagement in learning – Higher school attendance rates • Increased number of positive peer and adult relationships – Reduced discipline and substance abuse referrals – Increased involvement with school and community • Improved understanding of healthy diet and exercise – Improved team-building skills – Improved adult-youth relationships • Increased collaborative partnerships – Increased parent and family involvement – Improved program quality	• Improved academic performance – Higher aspirations for the future – Better attitudes toward school • Reduced gang activity and recruitment – Reduced substance abuse rates – Improved school-community connectedness • Improved health and wellness – Improved sportsmanship and self-confidence – Improved leadership skills • Sustainable financial support – Improved parenting skills and family literacy – Increased participation in after-school

Example for the Social Skills and Youth Development Objective

Social Skills and Youth Development Objective:	Students participating in social skill and youth development activities will show improved social and emotional well-being as demonstrated by improved healthy behaviors, improved school and community connectedness, and reduced participation in gang or delinquent activities.					
Resources	**Activities**	**Process/Program Measures**	**Short-Term Outcomes**	**Intermediate Outcomes**	**Long-Term Outcomes**	**Outcome Measures**
Programs/tools/resources that promote the development of social skills	Mentoring	• # of youth participating in prevention activities	• Improved positive interactions with staff	• Increased # of positive peer and adult relationships	• Reduced substance abuse rates	• 15% reduction in unexcused absences
Staff with knowledge, skills, and strategies to promote social skills	Service learning projects	• # of mentees	• Displayed more positive social skills	• Improved school attendance	• Reduced violent incidents	• 20% increase in substance abuse awareness and resistance
Evidence-based prevention programs	Violence/gang prevention programs	• # of adult and peer mentors	• Improved attitude toward self and school	• Increased social competence	• Reduced suspensions and expulsions	• 10% reduction in substance abuse & behavior referrals
Trained adult and peer mentors	Substance abuse prevention programs	• # of evidence-based prevention programs delivered	• Improved regular attendance in after-school	• Improved refusal skills	• Reduced bullying activity	• 40% of participants report increased self-confidence
Partners to support service learning	Character education	• # of staff training sessions	• Improved written and verbal skills	• Reduced referrals for discipline issues and substance abuse	• Reduced gang participation and recruitment	• 40% of participants participate in volunteer/service learning activities
Partners to support career readiness and college preparation	Peer mediation	• Rate of parent and teacher satisfaction with social skill and youth development activities		• Increased involvement with school and community	• Improved school and community connectedness	• 60% of staff, teachers, parents report increase in positive behavior
	Leadership development activities				• Increased parental involvement	
	Career readiness programs				• Higher career aspirations	
	College preparedness programs					

External Factors

Available and trained adult and peer mentors.	Communitywide support for positive youth activities and gang prevention.	Staff trained in evidence-based prevention programs.
Collection and use of evaluation information for continuous program assessment and improvement.	Culturally relevant and diverse programs.	Business, CBO, and FBO partners providing service learning opportunities.

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The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

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Dr. Peter A. Witt has been active in the youth development field for more than 40 years. He is currently a Professor and holder of the Bradberry Recreation and Youth Development Chair at Texas A&M University in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences. He is also co-chair of the Youth Development Initiative www.ydi.tamu.edu. Dr. Witt has written extensively about youth development issues and received a number of grants to support his work. For the past 10 years, he has served as the external evaluator for Fort Worth After School, and has also conducted evaluation studies for municipal park and recreation departments and other youth-serving agencies. He has also given presentations to numerous professional and academic audiences. Dr. Witt has won a number of awards for his commitment to teaching, research, and public service. He was the 2010 receipt of the Bush Faculty Excellence Award in Public Service and has also received the Robert W. Crawford Youth Prize from the National Recreation Foundation and the Roosevelt Research Award from the National Recreation and Park Association. He is a fellow and former president of both the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration and Academy of Leisure Sciences.

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