It’s about time for quality afterschool
Quality out-of-school time (OST) programs inspire and promote learning and increase positive youth development by providing opportunities for youth to develop autonomy and leadership skills, build caring relationships with peers and adults, and participate in interest-driven activities. High quality OST helps youth succeed and strive to reach their fullest potential.

High quality programs have six key practices in common:

- Foster positive relationships between participants and staff
- Build positive relationships among program participants
- Offer a blend of academic and developmental skill-building activities
- Promote high levels of student engagement
- Maintain an orientation toward mastery of knowledge and skills and
- Provide appropriate levels of structure as well as opportunities for autonomy and choice (Eccles & Gootman, 2002)

Students spend 80% of their time outside of the classroom during the year, yet not all students have the same access to out-of-school time learning opportunities. By the 6th grade, a middle-class youth will have 6,000 more hours of out-of-classroom experiences than a youth in poverty, with 3,060 hours missed in afterschool and 1,080 hours missed in summer learning.

People Make the Difference

Quality OST programs start with knowledgeable, dedicated people. Professional development that improves the skills of youth practitioners is a key strategy for building program quality. APOST offers professional development workshops to youth-serving organizations, as well as professional development opportunities through community partnerships.

- Professional development is associated with positive social and cognitive outcomes for youth²
- When staff and providers have the skillset and tools that are advanced through professional development opportunities, youth benefit by improving school performance and social and emotional development³
- 585 adults who work with youth participated in APOST learning opportunities this past year to improve their skills. This demonstrates their desire to continuously improve their impact on youth and learning best practices.


“Having safe and nurturing spaces for children and youth that allow them to discover more about who they are and will be is what saved me when I ventured into the Boys & Girls Club. It’s what will allow us to save others like me by ensuring and expanding quality out of school/after school time programming!”

— PA State Representative Jake Wheatley

Professional development is associated with positive social and cognitive outcomes for youth.
The OST space is different. There is no focus on preparation for standardized tests, so professional development for OST instructors is different. Kids can still be inspired through OST and gain the resources to build connections to content and materials they may not have access to, and it all starts with professional development.

When there are quality OST instructors, kids gain experiences through activities, instructions, content, and interactions that will help them be more successful in life.

— Patrick Dowd, Allies for Children Executive Director

“Each and every [professional development] opportunity throughout the years has inspired me in some manner to continue to strive for excellence in myself, in my staff team, and in the youth we serve.”

— Leah O’Reilly, Youth Programs Director, Human Services Center Corporation
Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST) is a partnership of funders, intermediaries, and providers dedicated to increasing quality and access of out-of-school time programming for children and youth in our region. Formed in 2009, APOST is an initiative of the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The ultimate goal of APOST is to build a quality out-of-school time (OST) network that will contribute to the healthy, successful development of young people as they progress through their school years, graduate, and enter adulthood.

Currently 28% of youth in Allegheny County participate in an afterschool program compared to 17% statewide (an 11 point difference). However, the demand is for more afterschool programs in Allegheny County because 70% of parents are unable to send their children to an afterschool program because of the lack of supply.

In 2014, 18% of children were unsupervised after-school for an average of 2.94 hours per week. On average, children spend 6.91 hours and 3.49 days per week in an afterschool program. In Allegheny County, 86% of parents support public funding for OST because parents understand the benefits that OST brings to their child’s life.

As of September 2015, there are 35 APOST Quality Campaign Members.

Art Expression, Inc.  
The Bible Center Maker’s Clubhouse  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh  
Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania  
Boy Scouts of America – Laurel Highlands Council  
Brashear Association  
Center of Life  
Center that CARES  
Communities in Schools of Pittsburgh-Allegheny County  
The Consortium for Public Education  
Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania  
Higher Achievement  
Hilltop YMCA/Y-Creator Space  
His Place Community Center  
Homewood Children’s Village  
Human Services Center Corporation  
Investing Now  
Mattress Factory  
Melting Pot Ministries  
MUSA  
Neighborhood Learning Alliance  
Ozanam  
The Pittsburgh Project  
Project Destiny  
Propel Schools  
Providence Family Support Center  
Ruth’s Place  
Sarah Heinz House  
Saturday Light Brigade  
School 2 Career  
South Hills Interfaith Ministries  
YouthWorks, A Program of Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Youth Enrichment Services (YES)  
YouthPlaces  
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh
Join the movement to increase quality opportunities for youth. Become an Activator today!

- Share success stories from Quality Out-of-School Programs
- Encourage programs to become quality campaign members
- Advocate with your colleagues and constituents to support access to quality out-of-school programs

Here’s how you can make a difference.

86% of Allegheny County residents would support public funding for afterschool.

Afterschool and summer programs keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families. Activate your network to meet the needs of Allegheny County families.

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