

Supply and Demand of Out-of-School Time Youth Programs EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prepared for

State of Utah
Department of Workforce Services
Office of Work & Family Life
140 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111



Prepared by

BBC Research & Consulting
3773 Cherry Creek N. Drive, Suite 850
Denver, Colorado 80209-3827
303.321.2547 fax 303.399.0448
www.bbcresearch.com
bbc@bbcresearch.com



In association with

Garner Insight, LLC
1410 St. Paul Street
Denver, Colorado 80206
303.321.7636
jen@garnerinsight.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supply and Demand of Out-of-School Time Youth Programs

In 2006, BBC Research & Consulting (BBC) and Garner Insight were contracted by the State of Utah, Office of Child Care, to assess the supply of and demand for out-of-school time programs for the state's children who are kindergarten age through 12 years.

This study was conducted to determine how many out-of-school time programs exist in Utah, how many families use out-of-school time care and the types of care used by Utah families. The study used this information to analyze and assess the supply of and demand for additional out-of-school time programs at the regional level and statewide. This executive summary presents the key findings from the study.

Do Out-of-School Time Youth Programs Matter?

Recent research into how school-age children occupy time when they are out of school has demonstrated far-reaching benefits of participation in out-of-school time programs. On the flip side, the research also shows that there are serious public costs associated with the lack of programs for youth when they are out of school.

For example, a recent study prepared by the nonprofit organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids reports that more juvenile crimes are committed during the hours after school ends and before parents return home from work—approximately 3 to 6 p.m.—than in any other time during a 24 hour period. In addition to committing crimes, during these afterschool hours, children are also more likely to become victims of crime, be in or cause a car crash, be killed by household or other accidents, get hooked on cigarettes and/or experiment with dangerous drugs.¹

The study also reports that afterschool programs have been proven to reduce youth crime and violence; drug use and addiction; cut other risky behaviors; and boost school success and high school graduation. The RAND Corporation compared the cost-effectiveness of an afterschool program with that of California's Three Strikes Law, which requires mandatory sentences for persons convicted of three serious crimes. The study found that, per dollar spent, the afterschool program was 5 times more effective in preventing serious crime than the Three Strikes Law.²

Investment in afterschool programs has also been demonstrated to save taxpayers money. Afterschool programs keep students busy during the periods when they are most likely to engage in deviant behavior, and lessen such behavior. Quality afterschool programs provide homework assistance, tutoring, and/or social programming that help build friendships. Children who attend quality

¹ America's After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime, or Youth Enrichment and Achievement, published by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, www.fightcrime.org, 2000.

² Ibid.

afterschool programs have better grades and personal conduct in school, are more likely to graduate and have lower incidences of drug use, violence and teenage pregnancy—all of which help to make them more productive, caring and economically strong citizens.³

Other benefits include reduction of obesity and character building. Many afterschool programs involve recreational activities that give children the exercise they need. Many other programs involve community service and self-esteem building activities, teaching children to be respectful of others, be committed to their community, and provide them with the values and habits that help them succeed.⁴

The Afterschool Alliance sums up the research best: “Afterschool programs...provide kids with academic support that inspires them to learn. It helps keep them safe and healthy during the afternoon hours when juvenile crime rates soar, and constructively engaged when they might otherwise be getting into trouble on the streets, or perhaps taking drugs, joining gangs or engaging in other inappropriate behaviors.”⁵

Recognizing the importance of out-of-school time youth programs for Utah’s children, the Office of Child Care undertook a study to understand the availability, accessibility and demand for out-of-school time programs in the state.

Primary Findings

In 2005, there were approximately 321,500 children ages 5 through 12 in Utah. Between 2005 and 2010, Utah’s population of children between the ages of 5 and 17 is expected to grow by 13 percent. By comparison, the population between the ages of 5 and 12 is projected to increase by 17 percent.

Many school-age children have parents whose work hours extend beyond the school day and, as such, require some type of out-of-school time care. Other students may have parents available but choose to participate in activities when they are not in school.

The findings in this report are largely based on a survey of Utah families. A sample of 785 parents throughout the six regions who have children in kindergarten through age 12 were surveyed by telephone and asked about their existing use of out-of-school time programs and other types of informal and formal care.⁶

For the purposes of the study, out-of-school time programs were divided into two general types: 1) Formal programs, which includes regularly scheduled, structured after school programs with set hours of care; and 2) Informal programs, which include lessons, clubs, religious activities offered on different days at different times of day.

³ Afterschool Alert, Issue Brief No. 22, published by the Afterschool Alliance, November 2005.

⁴ Ibid and Afterschool Alert, Issue Brief No. 14, published by the Afterschool Alliance, July 2003.

² Afterschool Advocate, published by Afterschool Alliance, Volume 7, Issue 4, May 22, 2006.

⁶ This survey was statistically representative of households with school-age children statewide. That is, a large enough number of households were interviewed that they represent all households in the state, within a small margin of error.

What do Utah's children do when they are not in school?

There is no one, principal way in which Utah's children age kindergarten through 12 years are cared for when the school day ends or during summer and session breaks. Utah's families with children who are kindergarten age through 12 years old ("school-age children") use a variety of ways to provide care for their children during the times when they are out of school. Utah's school-age children might attend a formal care program, might take lessons or participate in church activities, or come home and be cared for by a parent, guardian, neighbor or sibling. That said, there are some common elements to out-of-school time care:

- **Twenty-five percent attend formal programs.** One-quarter of Utah's children who were kindergarten age through age 12 participate in a formal care program when they are not in school. This is equivalent to about 79,500 children statewide. However, Utah's children attend these programs only one or two days per week.
- **More than half attend informal programs.** About 184,000 or children, or 57 percent, participate in some type of informal activities when they are out of school.
- **Many do not participate in programs.** The remainder—about 58,000 children or 18 percent—do not participate in any type of activities or care.

Formal programs. Of the 79,500 children who participate in a formal out-of-school time program:

- **The largest proportion receive care in elementary schools.** Seventeen percent of school-age children participating in formal out-of-school time programs, or about 13,800 children, do so in elementary schools. Private schools provide out-of-school time programs to 5 percent of Utah's children participating in care programs (4,000 children). Combined, public and private schools provide care to more than 22 percent of Utah's children in formal care programs.
- **Many more participate in programs offered by recreation centers or religious institutions.** Twenty percent of school-age children in formal care are in recreation programs (about 16,000 children); another 20 percent are in religion-based programs (15,600 children).
- **Residential/home-based providers are another important provider of care:** 19 percent of children receive out-of-school time care in residential/home-based programs (14,800 children).
- The balance of children participating in formal out-of-school time programs include programs provided by local governments (10 percent or 7,800 children); institutions of higher education (3 percent or 2,400 children); and child care centers (2.7 percent or 2,100 children).

Days per week attended. Most of Utah’s school-age children who attend formal out-of-school time programs typically attend one or two days per week. About 23 percent of children in formal programs go four or five days a week (equivalent to 18,000 children). Most children attend the program for only 1 hour a day (53 percent) or 2 hours (33 percent). Nine percent attend for 3 hours; 5 percent attend for 4 or more hours.

Children who attend formal out-of-school time programs participate in a range of activities from organized sports (29 percent of activities) to arts/crafts/dance (28 percent) to homework/educational programming (15 percent of activities).

Informal activities. About 57 percent of Utah’s children in kindergarten through age 12 participate in informal programs when they are out of school. This is equivalent to 184,200 children. The most common informal activities include: Lessons, making up 62 percent of the informal activities in which children participate, Boys/Girls Scouts at 50 percent; church/religious activities at 56 percent; organized sports at 67 percent; and homework/chores/play, 17 percent.

Other care arrangements. On those days when their children come home after school, about 20 percent of households with school-age children have someone other than a parent or guardian watch their children (the remainder, 80 percent, are cared for by a parent/guardian). Of those households with someone else watching the children, nearly half (46 percent) entrust an older sibling with the care of younger children⁷. Caregivers in the “other” category include brother-in-law, nanny, babysitter, other unrelated employees and tutor.

What do parents value when looking for care? The family survey asked parents what was most important in choosing out-of-school time programs for their child(ren)⁸. Their top answers included:

- Cost/affordability = 18 percent
- Learning activities offered = 16 percent
- Location/convenience = 15 percent
- Wanted supervision of providers = 10 percent⁹

Is it difficult to find care in Utah? Slightly more than 30 percent of all Utah households with school-age children reported some type of challenge in accessing out-of-school time care (both formal and informal care). The types of challenges that parents had encountered in the past 12 months included cost, availability, hours of operation and a lack of knowledge of available programs.

⁷ Parents did not define the age of the “older sibling.”

⁸ This survey was statistically representative of households with school-age children statewide. That is, a large enough number of households were interviewed that they represent all households in the state, within a small margin of error.

⁹ “Supervision of providers” is interpreted in this context to indicate that the parent prefers his/her child to be in a setting where there are multiple staff responsible for the care of the children, with a manager/executive director overseeing the program.

All parents were asked whether they would change their child's out-of-school time care arrangement if they could. One in five parents would change their arrangements. About 25 percent of households would like "more activities to choose from" and 11 percent would like to access less expensive programs.

Nearly 70 percent of all parents with school-age children said that it makes a difference to them if the program they use is licensed or not. Interestingly, a slightly greater proportion of parents whose children are *not in formal programs* consider licensing important.

Who do parents think should provide care? As part of the survey, all parents were asked their opinion about which organizations in the State should be providing care.

- More than 40 percent of parents with school-age children thought that public elementary schools should be providing out-of-school time programs.
- 20 percent of parents thought that the city or county should provide programs.
- Less than 2 percent of parents interviewed said child care centers should be providing out-of-school time care.

SECTION V.

Recommendations

This section summarizes the strengths and weaknesses in Utah's current system of out-of-school time care for children kindergarten age through age 12. It also provides an analysis of best practices and concludes with recommended strategies for the state to address out-of-school time care needs.

Strengths

Overall, Utah's current system of out-of-school time care appears to work well. An estimated 60 percent of parents with school-age children have not had trouble accessing care. There is no "one size fits all" approach to the needs of Utah's families with school-age children and this is reflected by the care system. Parents appear to maintain work schedules that work with their children's school schedules. Providers are also very proud of the programs they run and many complimented their staff in the provider survey.

Weaknesses

Still, there are parents who have trouble finding the care they need. An estimated 59,000 households have encountered some type of problem for a variety of reasons ranging from affordability and availability, to hours of care, to transportation constraints. These households represent almost one-third of Utah's households with children between the ages of 5 and 12. The various challenges encountered by these households underscore the importance of maintaining a variety of program types.

Lack of supply. Supply of programs is not as much of a problem in Utah's out-of-school time care system as are other factors. The providers surveyed for this study had wait lists averaging 10 to 12 children and many had vacant slots. Some providers identified "lack of demand" as the reason they did not provide certain types of care.

Challenges. The non-supply challenges that *providers* report are many. For child care providers, the top challenges include finding and keeping qualified teachers, program cost/lack of funding, providing transportation and covering transportation costs, and providing enough and appropriate activities for children. Specifically, transportation concerns included the high cost of busing, UTA/bus routes not far-reaching and gas prices increasing.

Elementary schools' challenges differ somewhat from the child care centers. Like child care centers, the top challenges were funding and finding quality teachers. Another top need not mentioned by child care centers was scheduling, largely around parents picking up their children on time. Schools also expressed challenges with adequate space and facilities, mostly related to having adequate space for different age group activities.

Overall, the weaknesses in Utah's current out-of-school time programs concern sustainability and quality, rather than availability. However, in the future, with the expected growth of 59,000 school-age children between 2005 and 2010, supply may become more of a factor. As noted in the needs

analysis, the constraints on supply will largely depend on how working women adjust their schedules to accommodate their children's schedules.

Best Practices

A literature review of best practices in out-of-school time programs nationwide was conducted to assist with the recommendations for Utah's programs. This section summarizes some of the more innovative and successful programs and components identified.

General program characteristics. A recent study, "Shared Features of High-Performing After-School Programs" identified key characteristics that made programs successful, which included the following:

- A focus on enrichment activities such as dance, music, art and organized sports. The arts-based programs focused on practicing a skill to the point of mastery, which built students' confidence and was transferable to other areas.
- Where programs were academic, they were literacy-based and focused on structured and formal curricula.
- The successful programs had a strong, experienced leader/manager with a trained staff and low staff-to-student ratios. The leader had consistent coordination with the community, engaged in parent-relationship building activities and a provided a constant opportunity for feedback and program adjustment.
- The successful programs had the administrative, fiscal and professional development support of a sponsoring organization.

Dedicated funding source. In the City of Baltimore, the Child First Authority (CFA) developed a dedicated stream of funding for citywide afterschool programming, which eliminated the competition for funding among providers. The CFA is a legal partnership that has bonding authority and that receives and deploys a dedicated funding stream for afterschool programs in the city.

Sharing facilities. In San Francisco, program providers have developed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) about use of space, which define when certain programs can occupy facilities and rooms within facilities.

Parent building activities. A program evaluation in Chicago found that student attendance in programs was related to how much they perceived the program as welcoming to their families. Parent/family-building activities such as open houses, picnics and related activities improved parent's and children's ownership and involvement in programs.

And, finally, a unique best practice described by one of the survey respondents: "Our newest addition is our 'breakfast mom.' Next year, we want to have her come early and read to the children who come before breakfast begins."

Recommendations and Strategy

A variety of strategies are needed to meet the needs of Utah families' complex system of out-of-school time care. Based on how parents use care, it is important that care is available when needed and flexible enough to accommodate other activities scheduled during a typical week.

As a reminder, Exhibit V-1 shows the primary types of out-of-school time care used by Utah's children kindergarten through age 12, along with the estimated number of children who spend the majority of their time out of school in these particular settings.

Exhibit V-1. Types of Formal Care Arrangements, Utah Children Ages K-12 Years Old, Based on Family Survey

Type of Care Arrangement	Number	Percent	Percent of All Children 5-12
Recreation-based	15,961	20%	5%
Religious organizations	15,643	20%	5%
Residential/home-based	14,770	19%	5%
Public elementary schools	13,817	17%	4%
City/county programs	7,861	10%	2%
Other arrangements	5,162	6%	2%
Private school programs	4,050	5%	1%
Child care centers	2,144	3%	1%

Source: Garner Insight, LLC and BBC Research & Consulting.

As demonstrated by the exhibit, recreation centers and elementary schools are the largest institutional providers of out-of-school time care in the state. Although child care centers serve a proportionately low number of children in out-of-school time care, they are an important part of the care system because the care they provide is unique, relative to elementary schools. Child care centers provide care for longer hours and on a more structured basis. The use of elementary school programs appears to be more supplemental, with parents combining care at the schools with lessons, clubs and other activities their children participate in during the week.

Overall Strategies

Strategy No. 1. Ensure that Utah's out-of-school time programs are of the highest quality.

- *Assist providers with recruiting and maintaining quality, trained staff.* Finding and keeping quality staff was a top concern of the providers surveyed for this study. The State should identify opportunities to collaborate with community colleges and universities to create student work-study positions for staff of out-of-school time programs. These students should receive training in elementary education and early childhood programs. Tuition forgiveness, in addition to a small stipend, could be provided for students who agree to work in out-of-school time programs for a set time

period. The state could assist providers with making hiring decisions by providing questions to ask to ensure quality staff, developing a model staff development work plan and evaluation tool for providers to use, and providing funding for team-building activities/consulting.

- *Improve program quality.* The state should enhance regional training, conferences and outreach about model programs for teachers and residential providers, including special training courses on working with children with special needs.
- *Help with discipline and behavior concerns.* The state should develop a guide for providing discipline and working with misbehavior for care providers and provide training to child care center teachers. Although “discipline/behavior problems” was not one of the top challenges cited by child care providers, it was mentioned fairly frequently. Given the importance of dealing appropriately with the issue, this warrants attention.
- *Explore increased licensing.* The family survey demonstrated that licensing is very important to families with school-age children. The state should consider creating a new licensing category for the currently unlicensed out-of-school time programs. Licensing would help to ensure that staff receive background checks and are appropriately trained, facilities meet code and are well-kept, and that programming (including discipline techniques) are age-appropriate and meet the academic and recreation needs of attending students. If licensing can be linked to quality indicators, this would communicate the advantages of licensing to parents of school-age children in non-metropolitan regions.

Strategy No. 2. Improve the activities and programs offered in out-of-school time care settings.

- *Provide funding for ESL out-of-school time programs in the state’s urban area schools with out-of-school time programs.* Just 6 percent of care centers and elementary schools reported that they include English as a Second Language (ESL) training in their out-of-school time program curriculums, although many provide Spanish language programs to English-speaking students. Although this study did not examine the need for ESL training in particular, the growing number of Spanish speakers in the state and nationwide suggests that there may be some unmet demand for ESL services as part of out-of-school time youth programs. (That said, out-of-school time care providers did *not* identify ESL as an unmet need in the provider survey).
- *Encourage programs in elementary schools statewide.* The surveys expressed a strong preference for out-of-school time programs to be provided by elementary schools. Elementary schools are currently one of the largest providers of care in the state and their demands are likely to increase with growth in the school-age population. Elementary schools also receive large amounts of federal funding, which leverages state funding for out-of-school time programs. In addition, elementary school providers need to be educated about Utah families’ use of out-of-school time care and work more closely with families to understand their needs.

- *Improve the quality of tutoring/homework assistance programs.* The provider survey suggests that elementary school programs provide a great deal of homework assistance and tutoring for students with such needs. Students attend the programs somewhat sporadically however, and might benefit from more structure. The state should provide staff training and guides for innovative, activity-based programs for school-age children that incorporate homework assistance and tutoring.

Strategy No. 3. Work to keep programs available, flexible and sustainable.

- *Assist care providers with transportation costs.* The state should provide a transportation-specific program that assists care providers in purchasing shuttles and supplementing operational costs of transportation services, since this was a budget item that care providers had trouble covering.
- *Educate elementary schools about scheduling issues.* Parents not picking up their students on time is a significant issue for elementary schools providers of out-of-school time care. The provider survey did not ask if the schools have fines for late pick ups (as many child care centers do), but the schools should consider implementing such a program; the fees collected would go toward purchasing program supplies.
- *Examine funding priorities.* Finally, the state should prioritize out-of-school time program funding in the state’s more urban regions, where wait lists are the highest and a higher proportion of parents have expressed challenges in accessing care.
- *Work to keep work schedules flexible for Utah families .* As discussed in Section V (page 3), part-time and flexible work schedules are a major factor in determining the need for out-of-school time programs in Utah. Utah’s families use a variety of programs to provide their children with care when they are not in school, and this system appears to fit well with the work schedules of Utah’s working women. We recommend that the State support flexible work arrangements for Utah parents and conduct outreach to employers, local and state leaders, families and out-of-school programs to help them appreciate the important of flexible work schedules in Utah.

Strategy No. 4. Educate families and providers about the benefits of out-of-school time youth programs.

The Executive Summary that is part of this report discusses the benefits of out-of-school time programs—and the costs of not having such programs available to children, particularly at-risk youth. The Office of Child Care should conduct outreach to parents and elementary schools who do not currently provide programs about why out-of-school time programs are important. The outreach should be conducted through preschools, elementary schools, via community activities and through churches. In addition, the state should develop a resource that helps parents locate out-of-school time programs in their communities (e.g., web-based application as well as a resource guide available to appropriate points of contact such as elementary schools and preschools).

The State should also consider working with the Red Cross, health care and youth organizations to offer programs that train older siblings in the care of their sisters and brothers. The family survey conducted for this study found that, of households with someone else watching their children when

they are out of school, nearly half (46 percent) were cared for by older siblings. At a minimum, these siblings should have first aid and emergency response training.

Recommendations for Future Analyses

The Office of Child Care requested input into how to monitor and update this out-of-school time program needs assessment in the future.

We recommend that the state continue to maintain the database of providers assembled for this project, through a shortened semi-annual survey on the types of care provided, wait lists and vacancies and continued challenges in providing care. The state should also build a database of residential care providers and religion-based providers of out-of-school time activities (to the extent a formalized system exists), to ensure that the database of programs is as comprehensive as possible.

Parents should be surveyed about their satisfaction with their current use of out-of-school time care and challenges in accessing care. This survey effort should not be as comprehensive as the survey completed for this study, but should incorporate the questions on changes and challenges in finding care so the state can track this information over time. The survey should have a section that focuses on the quality of out-of-school time programs used by parents, including teacher and program quality.

Finally, because our geographic scope was statewide, this study was limited in its ability to evaluate the specific needs of out-of-school youth program needs in the State's larger, urban areas. Because urban areas often have higher rates of poverty and more dual-earner families, these areas have a greater need for out-of-school youth programs. In addition, successful programs in urban areas are often structured to address the educational needs of youth who are living in poverty or are from disadvantaged backgrounds. To the extent that the State and its urban areas desire to quantify and understand the out-of-school youth program needs in Utah's urban environments, a study geared to answer these questions should be conducted.