



Dear Educators:

In the summer my 2½ year old daughters want nothing to do with being inside. They enjoy the chance to play in the little blow-up pool, to swing, to ride horses, and to help dad with his chores. So far their helping dad means more work for dad. The first time this happened, I was a little frustrated because I had much to get done. Thankfully, I heard a country song shortly after that experience that made me stop and think. The song talked about a man being busy with important things (work) and putting off his family; then he has a transformation. The song reminded me that the most important thing to get done is to spend time with your family. I mention this to remind you to take time for yourself and your family.

I think the most exciting piece of information in this issue of the newsletter is the research brief on behavioral issues. The brief describes some techniques found in research to effectively address youth who present behavior challenges. While a research-based document, there is a practical bent to it.

As always, I welcome your comments and wish you well in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Daniel F. Perkins
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FAMILY ACTIVITY

Educational research has made it clear that parents who are actively involved in their children's learning at home help their children become more successful learners in and out of school.



Ice is Nice: Improve observation and questioning skills by freezing and melting ice. Add water to an ice cube tray and set it in the freezer. Ask your child how long it will take to freeze. For variety, use different levels of water in different sections of the tray. Set ice cubes on a table. Ask your child how long they will take to melt. Why do they melt? Place the ice cubes in different areas of the room. Do they melt faster in some places than in others? Why?

Create a miniature golf course: Make a golf club using a dowel rod or yard stick and tape an empty juice box to the end. Make a golf ball using a tightly crumpled piece of paper. Now design the course using empty shoe boxes, cereal boxes, and cans with both ends cut out (adults should check to make sure there are no sharp edges). Blocks and other toys that children already have can be used to build obstacles for the ball to move around.



Found in: Pulay, A. (1999). FLM-AC-3-99. <http://ohioline.osu.edu/flm99/ac03.html>

RESEARCH BRIEFS

Effect of Digital Technology on Children

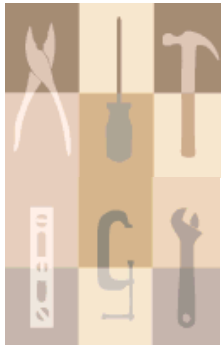
A study entitled *Digital Opportunity Study* examined if and how technology tools help children (1) increase educational achievement; (2) lead healthier lives; (3) prepare for the workforce; and (4) become engaged in their communities. The Internet's use among children has grown faster than any other communications medium in history. Over the past ten years, the number of kids accessing the Internet from home has grown from 15% to 68%.

Of the 46 million children ages 7 to 17 living in the United States, 77% live in homes with a personal computer and 90% use a computer at school.

Despite this tremendous growth in Internet use, efforts are still emerging to assess how and whether information and communications tools actually help children and young adults succeed.



A major finding of this study is that digital tools are now helping kids in a number of ways, including managing their chronic health conditions, improving their educational achievement, and enhancing their job



skills. While digital tools are enhancing successful outcomes for young people, they are also seriously disadvantaging those young people without access and the skills to use them.

However, the report also found that when low-income children do have these tools, they use them to gain opportunities for themselves at higher rates than wealthier young people.

Major findings:

- There is a digital opportunity gap for low-income and some ethnic minority children. For example, 77% of children ages 7 to 17 from higher-income households (more than \$75,000 annually) use a home computer to complete school assignments compared to 29% of children from households earning less than \$15,000 annually. Also, white and Asian American children ages 7 to 17 are much more likely to use a home computer for word

processing or desktop publishing (45% and 41%) than Latino (23%), African American (22%) or Native American (21%) children.

- When access is available to low-income and disabled youth, information and communications technology (ICT) is beginning to level the opportunity playing field for them. For example, young adults who identified themselves as "lower class" are slightly more likely than others to visit a doctor or clinic because of information they obtain online. Also, ICT devices, such as voice recognition devices, screen readers and special keyboards, can help the more than four million young people ages 5 to 20 who live with a disability to learn, work and live more independently.
- Home computer and Internet access has become a prerequisite to children fully realizing digital potential. Some of the most severe disparities facing low-income and ethnic minority children were clearly a function of limited access at home to computers, the Internet and high-speed connections.



Adapted from Lazarus, W., et al. (2005). *How can the Internet help America's children succeed?* Santa Monica, CA: The Children's Partnership. Retrieved June 10, 2005 at: www.contentbank.org/DOMS/overview.html.

Adolescents and Work

The common perception that most American teenagers go to school, engage in extracurricular activities such as sports, and hang out with their friends is missing one crucial and time-consuming element in their lives--work. In a recent study of 2,100 high school seniors from a metropolitan school district in Washington State's Puget Sound area (51% white and 49% "other" racial and ethnic groups), Hirschman and Voloshin found slight differences in employment based on race, ethnicity or gender.



More than half (56%) of high school seniors reported that they were working in the spring of their final year of school. This figure excludes working at home and volunteer activities. Most working teens had jobs paying close to minimum wage. For every ten high school seniors, four were not working, two worked at jobs 15 hours a week or less, and four were working more than 15 hours per week. Indeed, we know that youth working more than 15 hours a week are at the threshold of where work can interfere with being good students.

Overall, more than 70% of the employed students had what are considered to be typical teenage jobs: working in restaurants, including fast-food outlets, and as sales clerks in stores. These are often minimum-wage jobs.

Smaller percentages were able to find so-called "pink-collar" (clerical, childcare and technical work) and blue-collar jobs (manual labor such as construction, farm laborer, equipment operator and stocking warehouses).



Hirschman said students working the typical teen jobs tended to work longer hours (more than 20 hours) and for less pay than those who had clerical-technical or manual labor positions, which tended to pay slightly higher wages.

Adapted from Hirschman, C. & Voloshin, I. (2005). *More than half of high school seniors employed, mostly in near minimum-wage jobs*. Pullman: Washington State University. Retrieved on February 21, 2005.

Why Youth Participate

Do I wish to participate or not to participate in this program? That is the question young people ask themselves when considering a new opportunity.

What, then, can be done to increase the likelihood that they will choose to participate? Research literature provides evidence that participation in out-of-school programs can benefit the young people who choose to participate. In addition, observations by teachers, parents, youth group leaders, and other adults who work with youth point to the need to offer more opportunities for young people to become involved in youth programs in their neighborhoods and communities. This research used qualitative data to examine youth's reasons for participating or not

participating in out-of-school time programs. While some common reasons emerged, the study also revealed differences between youth from different ethnic groups. It is clear that those individuals who design and conduct programs must understand the processes through which diverse adolescents initiate their participation in programs and either persist or drop out. Given the apparent benefits of active participation in youth programs, it is important to remove barriers and to increase access and, equally important, to design programs that are of interest to youth in the contexts in which they live.

The research team searched out ethnic-oriented, community-based organizations (CBOs) that provided neighborhood-based after-school programs for youth; nine community-based organizations were identified. The criteria for representative CBOs were that they serve one or more ethnic minority populations and provide services that include structured programs for youth living in an urban setting. Eight of the nine CBOs offered drop-in services for youth during the school year and summer. Study participants were young people between the ages of 9 and 19 who participated in some type of organized youth programming and identified their ethnicity as African-American, Latino, Arab-American, and/or Chaldean. Participants included 33 females (median age 14 years old) and 44 males (median age 13 years old), of which over half reported that they attended the programs at least three times a week. Due to space limitations, I only review the findings for Latino youth.



The authors conducted eleven brainstorming sessions with youth using an adaptation of concept mapping analysis using Concept Systems methodology. Concept mapping is a structured methodology that initially involves brainstorming, sorting, and ranking to develop a conceptual framework. Each session lasted about an hour and was audiotape recorded for transcription. One member of the research team acted as facilitator to direct the discussion, while a second member took written notes. The young people were asked to share the reasons that motivated or inhibited

their own participation, as well as reasons that they perceive might motivate or inhibit other youth. The two interview probes were: (1) “One of the reasons young people take part in youth programs is ____.” and (2) “One of the reasons other young people are NOT involved in youth programs is ____.”

Not all of the participants in the brainstorming phase participated in the sorting task because it appeared to be too difficult for younger members (i.e., younger participants tended to simply create piles at random whereas older youth tended to exhibit more strategic and thoughtful sorts). Given these facts, only the sorts created by older youth were utilized in this study. The median age of these youth was 16 years, and 60% of the participants were female.

These youth were asked to rate each of the youth-generated statements based on its personal importance to them. Each item was rated on a 1-5 scale with Likert-type responses, where 1 = “this isn’t important to me” and 5 = “VERY important reason.” Latinos from the urban high school Latino club as well as youth who participated in the brainstorming sessions completed rating questionnaires. Eighty Latino/a individuals rated the importance of the reasons youth participate, and 70 Latino/a individuals rated the importance of the reasons youth do not participate.

Notable differences emerged in how Latinas and Latinos rated the importance of the various reasons (see Tables 1 and 2).

These in-depth qualitative studies offer insight into what influences young people to participate and what inhibits their participation from the perspective of minority youth, and thus offer initial understanding of the influence of culture on these decisions. Clearly participation is not just dependent on a young person’s understanding of the benefits of participation, but also on contextual variables such as resources, family, culture, religion, and outside responsibilities. The challenge, then, is to offer programs that can be free of some of the barriers identified and to provide opportunities that can more closely align with individuals’ personal responsibilities.

Adapted from: Borden, L.M., Perkins, D. F., Villarruel, F.A., & Stone. M. A. (2005). To participate or not to participate: That is the question. In Weiss, H. & Little, P. (Eds.) *New directions for youth development: Conceptualizing participation in out-of-school time Programs. New directions for youth development: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 33-50). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Table 1. Ranking of the top 5 reasons why youth chose to participate by gender.

All Latino Youth	Latinas (females)	Latinos (males)
1. Personal development/confidence	1. Personal development/confidence	1. Personal development/confidence
2. Improve self/community	2. Improve self/community	2. Increase social life
3. Learn life skills	3. Emotional regulation	3. Learn life skills
4. Emotional regulation	4. Learn life skills	4. Improve self/community
5. Safe haven/respite	5. Learn job skills	5. Safe haven/respite

Table 2. Cluster ranking of the top 5 reasons youth do NOT participate in youth programs by gender.

All Latino Youth	Latinas (females)	Latinos (males)
1. Home/school/work	1. Home/school/work	1. Home/school/work
2. Lack money/transportation	2. Lack money/transportation	2. Lack money/transportation
3. Don’t like people who run program	3. Family/religious priorities	3. Don’t like people who run program
4. External constraints	4. Safety issues	4. External constraints
5. Safety issues	5. Peers not involved	5. Safety issues

WEB RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Digital Safety

<http://www.digitallivingproject.com/>

The National PTA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and Girl Scouts of the USA have aligned to launch a technology and digital media education program for families nationwide. The new program--the Digital Living Project--includes an introductory, [downloadable handbook](#) about the importance of digital safety and ethics for children. The guide includes topics for family discussion about various technologies used by kids, and how to create a plan to protect and keep children safe from inappropriate online material.

How Middle School and High School Students Learn

academicresources.org/learning.html

Staying involved in the education of middle and high school students can be challenging for many parents. The article introduces a model that helps parents understand how older students learn. It explores the roles that parents can play in supporting the learning.



RESOURCES FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

Strategies Document Community Connections

<http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/mc/readingroom/documents/influenceleveragemanual.pdf>

This guide offers practical guidance to capturing and documenting influence and leverage in *Making Connections* communities. It provides clarification, concrete examples and suggested approaches for documenting these often elusive concepts. This guide is intended to be versatile to meet a wide variety of specific audiences and needs. Importantly, each community will decide for itself what matters most on its path to powerful and sustainable changes.

Youth Conducting Evaluations

www.theinnovationcenter.org

Two user-friendly tool kits help community organizations work with young people and conduct successful evaluations of community-change work. Developed by the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, the tool kits are *Reflect and improve: A tool kit for engaging youth as partners in program evaluation*, and *Learning and leading: a tool kit for youth development and civic activism*. The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development connects thinkers and leaders of all ages to develop fresh ideas, forge new partnerships, and design strategies that engage young people and their communities.

The Building Partnerships for Youth (BPY) Project

bpy.n4h.org

There are many resources at this site including a new fact sheet on *Leadership* and a new curriculum entitled, *Cultivating Kindness in School*.

School-Age Child Care Technical Assistance Papers

<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/store/customer/product.php?productid=16758&cat=271&page=8>

Cornell Cooperative Extension is pleased to introduce a set of five information bulletins developed to help school-age child care providers offer structured programs and safe environments, while considering compliance, space, legal, funding, marketing, and community needs issues. Bulletin titles include: *Developing school-age child care programs*, *Conducting a needs assessment and developing a marketing plan*, *Registering school-age child care programs*, *Legal options for establishing school-age child care programs*, and *Finding appropriate space for a school-age child care program*. The cost is 19.95 (76 pages; 3-Ring Binder; [321SATAP-S1](#)).



Learning After School

<http://www.asbj.com/current/research.html>

The right kind of after-school programs can make a big difference for kids and communities. The best programs incorporate self-directed play and time to "dawdle and daydream" as part of the learning process. The good news: Congress and state governments are allocating more funds for out-of-school time programs--but program quality varies widely, with two-thirds of those observed in a recent study earning only poor to fair ratings on three quality indicators: facilities, staffing, and funding. The American School Board Journal looks at the research on what works.

21st Century Afterschool Evaluation Phase 2

<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/21stnewfindings.pdf>

The second phase of Mathematica Policy Research's evaluation of the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool initiative finds that it has had only limited influence on academic performance. The Afterschool Alliance responded that the study will be of little help to the afterschool community because the data were collected more than two years ago and the program has changed dramatically since then. For the Afterschool Alliance's response, http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/mat_h_oct_2004.pdf

Information about Families for Local Legislators

<http://www.nlc.org>

A new National League of Cities report offers policy and program options to local officials seeking better outcomes for children, families, and neighborhoods. In addition to introducing a new way of doing business, it provides suggested action steps organized around three key connections for families--to economic opportunities, to effective services and supports, and to social networks. For a free copy, send a message to iyef@nlc.org, or call 202-626-3014.



National PTA Survey on Local Impact of the No Child Left Behind Act

www.pta.org/aboutpta/pressroom/pr050217.asp

The National PTA surveyed its members about the impact of the No Child Left behind Act (NCLB) on local schools and districts. Eighty-five percent of respondents believe that NCLB is having a positive impact on student achievement. Fifty-five percent of respondents said that parent involvement provisions of NCLB are being implemented in their school or district, but 32% were unsure of the level of implementation and 13% believed that no provisions were implemented in their school.



Children's Eating Habits in the U.S.: Trends and Implications for Food Marketers

<http://www.packagedfacts.com/corporate/press/pressview.asp?Article=403>

A new survey by Packaged Foods finds that per capita soft drink consumption among U.S. children has increased by nearly 500% over the past 50 years. After children reach age ten, soda is their most commonly consumed beverage. The report suggests giving kids flavored dairy and yogurt drinks instead of soft drinks to provide both the flavor and nutrients growing bodies crave.



POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

Venture Grants: Pro-social Grant Opportunity for Young People

<http://www.youthventure.org/>

As part of an effort to encourage its audience to become more proactive in their communities, MTV has teamed up with Youth Venture, a movement of youth social entrepreneurs, to offer think Venture Grants to young people who are making a difference by creating and leading organizations, clubs, or businesses that address a need in their communities. Grants of up to \$1,000 each will be offered each week to a group of young people with the most compelling and sustainable community service project concept in one of the five primary think MTV issue areas: discrimination, education, the environment, global issues, and sexual health. The program is open to groups of two or more individuals who are legal residents of the United States and at least 13 years of age or older at time of entry. The deadline is rolling, through December 31, 2005.

Sam's Club Foundation: Community Matching Grant

http://www.samsclub.com/eclub/main_foundation.jsp?stg=STG0

The SAM'S CLUB Foundation develops and implements programs that support children and families in the company's local communities. The Community Matching Grants Program, the Foundation's largest program, provides grants of up to \$1,000 to match the funds raised by nonprofit organizations at SAM'S CLUB locations. Local nonprofit organizations, including public schools, churches, and government agencies in communities with a SAM'S CLUB are eligible to participate. To learn more about receiving a grant from your local SAM'S CLUB, please see the community involvement coordinator at the location closest to you. There is no dead line for these rolling grants.

Starbucks Foundation

<http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/grantinfo.asp>

The Starbucks Foundation supports community organizations working with youth. They are in the process of redesigning their application procedures and guidelines and will be posting new grant criteria and guidelines on **July 27**. The Starbucks Foundation will resume their application process at that time.



Please check out the FYRP website:

<http://resiliency.cas.psu.edu>



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