Child**TRENDS**

The Role of Frontline Staff in the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs
Report I

Contributors in Alphabetical Order:
Tawana Bandy, Lillian Bowie, M.A., Mary Burkhauser, M.A., and Allison Metz, Ph.D.

January 2008

Project Manager: Allison Metz, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator: Kristin A. Moore, Ph.D.
Co-Principal Investigator: Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, Ph.D.

Introduction

The implementation of programs and practices that reflect the best available research and evaluation is a new and very promising development in the out-of-school time field. However, successfully implementing a new, evidence-based program or practice is a major challenge for practitioners. This challenge is due, in large part, to a lack of information on strategies that promote effective and efficient program implementation. In most cases, implementation strategies have been limited to paper-based manuals that focus on describing interventions without providing complementary information on necessary implementation resources and activities. Because of this, they do not facilitate the real-world application of innovative, research-based practice.

Recently, researchers have begun to study implementation in an effort to understand the key ingredients for successful program implementation. A synthesis of implementation research *within the human services field* completed by the National Implementation Research Network identified six core components that drive successful program implementation, referred to as "drivers." A brief description of these implementation drivers is included below.

- *Staff Recruitment and Selection:* Staff recruitment and selection are key components of implementation at practitioner and organizational levels.
- *Staff Training:* Staff members at all levels require training when a new practice is implemented. Effective training involves theory and discussion; demonstration of skills; and opportunities for practice and feedback.
- *Coaching, Mentoring, and Supervision of Staff:* Whereas skills needed by successful practitioners can be introduced in training, many skills can only really be learned on the job with the help of a consultant or coach.
- *Internal Management Support:* Internal management support provides leadership to support implementation, makes use of a range of information to shape decision making, and provides structures and processes for implementing new practices and keeping staff focused on desired outcomes.
- *Systems-Level Partnerships:* Systems-level partnerships involve working with external partners to support program implementation and the frontline work of practitioners.
- *Staff and Program Evaluation:* Evaluation entails using measures of practitioner performance and adherence to the program model, along with program outcome measures, to assess overall program performance and develop quality improvement plans.

While the implementation research conducted to date has focused on a broad range of programs and services within human services field (e.g., mental health, health, substance abuse, child welfare, and education), *almost no implementation research has been conducted in the out-of-school time field specifically.* In an effort to build the knowledge-base on effective implementation for out-of-school time programs, Child Trends has prepared two special reports:

- A synthesis of implementation research in the out-of-school time field (Report 1); and
- An exploratory, descriptive study of the frontline implementation activities conducted by identified evidence-based and promising out-of-school time programs (Report 2).

Both reports build upon current implementation research findings related to the drivers of successful implementation, as well as assess the role these drivers play in the implementation of effective out-of-school time programs. Given that out-of-school time programs are a subset of human services, this work is an appropriate extension of the current field of implementation research.

This current report synthesizes findings from the meager body of implementation research conducted in the out-of-school time field and provides recommended action steps for practitioners implementing evidence-based practices in their organization. Both reports focus on the three implementation drivers related to frontline staffing practices:

- Staff selection and recruitment;
- Staff training; and
- Staff coaching and supervision.

These three drivers were chosen because research shows that the implementation of high-quality evidence-based practices cannot occur without well-trained, well-prepared practitioners who are supported by informed and competent supervisors, coaches, and program managers. In addition, staff are consistently raised by participants in the Practitioners' Roundtables conducted as part of this project. Forthcoming reports will explore the other three program-level and systems-level drivers of successful implementation.

I. Purpose

Staff selection and recruitment has been identified as a "driver" or core component of the effective implementation of evidence based practices and programs in the human services field (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). The purposes of this chapter are:

> *1. To define staff selection and to describe the research on staff recruitment and selection as a tool for implementing evidence-based practices within the field of human services;*
> *2. To synthesize the research for staff recruitment and selection as a tool for implementing evidence-based practices within the field of out-of-school time;*
> *3. To identify gaps in the current research; and*
> *4. To outline action steps that practitioners can take to support the implementation of evidence-based practices.*

II. Background

Staff selection, as defined by Fixsen et al. (2005), involves the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring and/or re-deploying of existing staff. Although only limited research exists, the selection of frontline staff (e.g., practitioners, teachers, tutors, and counselors) is considered one of the most critical components in successful program implementation (Mihalic, Irwin, Fagan, Ballard, & Elliot, 2004). It is through frontline staff that evident-based practices and programs are delivered.

It is important to emphasize that staff recruitment and selection involves an organizational intersection with a variety of larger system variables, including general workforce development issues, the demands of the evidence-based programs in terms of time and skill, and the availability of qualified staff for human service programs. Therefore, while "support, motivation, and buy-in of frontline implementing staff is crucial to program survival" (Mihalic et al, 2004, p. 5), research points to the issues of interpersonal skills, education/credentials, and specialized preparation as additional important factors affecting successful program implementation.

Implementation research on staff recruitment and selection has been conducted in the field of human services, and, in general, points to the importance of a range of staff selection criteria when implementing programs. For example, in a study to establish whether home care residents preferred trained staff (holding formal qualifications and/or National Vocational Qualifications) to untrained staff with no recognized qualifications, Godfrey (2000) interviewed and surveyed frontline staff and residents. The study found that personal qualities rather than practical skills were emphasized most. Residents wanted kind, understanding and experienced staff, which were qualities perceived among staff members who had spent more time in their position.

As another example, Olds, Robinson, O'Brien, Luckey, Pettit, Henderson et al., (2002) conducted a random assignment study comparing the effectiveness of home visiting by trained paraprofessionals and nurses from the Nurse-Family Partnership program as an independent means to improve maternal and child health. In contrast to the above study, researchers found that a nursing degree and background in nursing were necessary for successful practice in the program.

These mixed findings support and illustrate earlier research which suggests that *both* formal qualifications (e.g. education, background, and certification) and non-trainable, personal and interpersonal characteristics (e.g., kindness and commitment) may be important when recruiting and selecting staff.

III. Staff Selection within the Out-of-School Time (OST) field

In the out-of-school time (OST) field, staff persons create the environment and conditions in which a program operates (Scott-Little, Hamman, & Jurs, 2002). Some have even gone to the level of identifying staff selection as "the single most important ingredient necessary to create, sustain, and improve systems to ensure quality out-of-school-time programs for youth" (Little, 2004, Introduction section, 1). However, very little is known about the selection of frontline implementing staff in out-of-school time programs. What methods are used for recruiting and selecting staff? What staff characteristics are essential for carrying out the evidence-based practice "on the ground"? Who is qualified to carry out the evidence-based practice or program that will be implemented?

Following these questions, the main aim of this chapter is to synthesize the research on staff recruitment and selection within out-of-school time programs. While recognizing that such research is very limited, this synthesis will explore whether implementation findings related to staff selection in other areas of human services are relevant to the out-of-school time community. Below we present our methodology for conducting this synthesis of the research and evaluation literature.

A. Methodology

Our initial search was limited to research studies that addressed the effect or impact of staff selection and recruitment on the implementation of out-of-school time programs and expected youth outcomes. Search terms included: out-of-school-time, after school programs, staff recruitment, staff selection, program implementation, and implementation research on staff selection and recruitment. Given the scarcity of such studies, our search was expanded to insights from out-of-school time practitioners, and evaluation studies and reports of out-of-school time programs where staff recruitment and characteristics of program staff were described and examined as a component of the overall evaluation. In total, 10 non-experimental program evaluation studies and six synthesis reports (i.e., reports which synthesized non-experimental research findings and practitioner insights) were retrieved. We used the following sources to locate information:

- Electronic databases, including EbscoHost, ERIC, and Ingenta were used to search for research studies which examined the effects of staff recruitment and selection strategies on the implementation of out-of-school time programs.
- Peer-review journals and organizational websites were explored, including Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning; The After-School Project; The After School Corporation, Public/Private Ventures; National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Policy Study Associates, William T. Foundation, and RAND Corp.
- Reference lists of relevant articles and reports were reviewed to find additional evidence on the implementation of out-of-school time programs.
- Program and clearinghouse websites were also searched to find evidence on program characteristics and features, including Idealist.org; Girls Inc; etc.

Syntheses of these findings are provided below.

B. Findings

Akin to the findings of an earlier research synthesis on out-of-school time programs (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2004) we did not find any experimental studies where the major intervention was staff recruitment and selection. One explanation for this gap could stem from the fact that staff at many evaluated out-of-school time programs are from national organized programs that utilize volunteers, such as America Reads, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, college work study, college service learning, or religious organizations (Halpern, 2000), rather than true selection (i.e., recruiting, interviewing, and hiring paid staff). Another explanation may be that because training components are part of some programs, staff may not be selected based on any criteria (see Hoover & Pollard, 2006, for example), beyond a willingness to commit. Finally, it is possible that researchers simply underestimate the value of examining program staff recruitment and selection as part of random assignment implementation studies.

Nevertheless, evidence from non–experimental program evaluations, research syntheses, and practitioner insights provide an initial set of findings that indicate that successful program implementation and youth outcomes are contingent upon staffing (Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996; Pianta, 1999, Thomson & Kelly-Vance, 2001; and Commission on Children at Risk, 2003). Overall, these findings suggest that to be successful, out-of-school time programs must recruit and select staff who are capable of carrying out program design and tasks effectively as well as staff who are devoted (American Youth Policy Forum, 2006).

1. *Recruitment of Staff*

Recruitment of staff persons is a critical aspect in the implementation of out-of-school time programs. It directly impacts whether a program gets off the ground and has practitioners who can successfully reach the intended target population. Because turnover continues to be a formidable issue in out-of-school time programs, recruitment of appropriate and committed staff is particularly important. In *Getting It Right*, a literature review of out-of-school time research by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), staff attrition was found to be a major problem in the success of out-of-school time and after school programs. Authors noted, "Studies of after-school programs identify turnover especially among part-time staff members as one of the most pervasive challenges for all organizations serving young people. Limited funding for salaries represents the biggest culprit, resulting in low wages and reliance on part-time and temporary positions. Staff eventually find full-time, higher-paying jobs, leaving the youth disappointed and burdening remaining staff members with heavy workloads." In a case study of a multi-year after-school arts program, Quinn & Kahne (2001) conducted interviews with program staff to gain insight on staff behaviors that affected program implementation. Through the interviews, the researchers found that teaching staff were only marginally committed to the program, and that their lack of commitment led to inadequate implementation of the program. By making an investment in developing effective strategies to recruit committed and appropriate staff, out-of-school time programs may be better able to find qualified persons who are also capable of achieving program goals.

In their report, *Capturing Promising Practices in Recruitment and Retention of Youth Workers*, the National Collaboration for Youth (2006) identified several promising recruitment strategies, which we outline below.

Capitalizing on media and technology
Media outlets, including newspapers and the Internet, are major sources in recruiting staff for youth programs. To recruit qualified staff persons of color, Methodist Children's Home, a community organization that provides various services to youth and families, including an after-school program, partnered with community organizations, and used bilingual newspapers and websites to announce job openings. Idealist.org is a website widely used by youth-serving organizations as a national clearinghouse to post job announcements for those seeking to work in youth programs. The website allows job seekers to search for opportunities by type of organization, position desired, and youth work interest.

Peer Recruitment
Existing high-quality staff are often good resources for recruiting new staff. This idea stems from the philosophy that likeminded persons are more likely fraternize than dissimilar persons. According to Warren, Feist, & Nevarez (2002), identifying friends of staff in an out-of-school time program is an important recruitment tool.

Referral & Return Incentives
To help offset the cost incurred on recruitment efforts, some programs offer a monetary incentive to staff persons who refer friends. Additionally, because some programs are seasonal, staff are sometimes provided additional monies or benefits if they return for the following program cycle.

2. Selection of Staff

Selecting the appropriate staff impacts whether programs are implemented with fidelity, and the degree to which the intended target audience achieves successful outcomes. Given staff's primary role in the delivery of services, selecting staff with the capacity to carry out evidence-based practices is essential. As a key part of the screening process of Boys & Girls Club/Girls Inc of Pueblo County & Lower Arkansas Valley, final candidates are observed implementing job-related activities with youth. These observations helped to assist in making final decisions about hiring (National Collaboration for Youth, 2006). This indicates that, although job applications and profiles often portray candidates as experienced and competent, such activities are helpful to determining staff readiness and effectiveness in performing job functions. For some organizations, both youth participants and existing staff interact with staff candidates, which research suggests is very important to program success.

While we found no studies that appraised staff readiness and effectiveness through interview activities, theoretical evidence and syntheses of practitioner insights (Walker & Alberton, 2001) on out-of-school time programs point to several specific qualities and qualifications that should be assessed in the recruitment and selection process, which we outline below.

Skill/ability to connect with youth
For many out-of-school time programs, it is critical that staff are able to connect with youth. According to Grossman et al (2006)..."how well programs create high-quality learning environment is linked to staff's ability to promote supportive interactions among all youth and between staff and youth." This suggests that staff that builds good relationships with youth have been found to be more effective in achieving positive outcomes for youth. The Intercultural Center for Research in Education and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2007) in their report of Massachusetts After-School Research Study (MARS) identified staff behaviors and practices that were related to high-quality implementation. Adolescents were asked to rate staff along a variety of dimensions. Sample items included: *staff treat me with respect; staff are*

friendly with me; staff care about what happens to me; staff talk to me; staff help me improve learning; staff talk with my parent/guardians; staff involve me in planning activities; staff involve me in leading activities.

 The most highly-rated items were: 1) staff treat me with respect; 2) staff are friendly with me; and 3) staff care what happens to me. These findings indicate that staff's interpersonal skills and ability to connect with youth were salient factors for youth participants.

In a study exploring participation and potential barriers for joining after-school programs, adolescents participated in focus groups where they addressed staff characteristics that attract student participation (Miller & Hall, 2007). Themes of caring, helpfulness, and respectfulness emerged as needed characteristics for staff. Similarly, in another study, which evaluated an out-of-school time initiative, adolescents were surveyed about their interactions with program staff (Russell, Reisner, Pearson, Afolabi, Miller, & Mielke, 2006). Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents "agreed a lot" that staff treated them with respect, and 67% percent reported staff thought they could learn new things. Finally, in youth roundtables conducted by Child Trends (Child Trends, 2007), relationships and personal connections between participants and staff were a common reason mentioned by youth for joining and continuing to participate in out-of-school time programs. These positive interactions were associated with higher levels of academic self-esteem and frequency of out-of-school time attendance. Above all, these studies substantiate McLaughlin (2000) findings that youth in out-of-school time programs are most happy when they feel staff members care about them.

Credentials
Staff credentials (e.g., education, background, work experience) matter when selecting staff to implement OST programs. Morris, Shaw, and Perney (1990) in their study of the Howard Street Tutoring program for elementary school children noted that staff of high quality OST programs must possess: 1) theoretical knowledge of the reading process; 2) experience in teaching beginners how to read; 3) confidence that almost all children can learn to read and write; and 4) an ability to work constructively with adults in a mentor/apprentice relationship (p. 148). This is consistent with other research which found that high quality programs are those that have more highly educated staff.

Grossman, Campbell, & Raley (2007), examined how staff characteristics related to staff's ability to manage groups of students. Survey items elicited information on staff's professional training (e.g., adolescent development; classroom management, conflict management, cooperative learning), and education level (e.g., college, advanced/professional degree), as they were used as screening tools. To substantiate findings, youth were also surveyed. Staff who had a college education were rated by participants as being better at group management.

Teaching Experience
Selecting staff with prior teaching experience to work in out-of-school time programs and other youth-serving fields is often beneficial. Vandell and Shurnow (1999), in an article on the quality of youth's experience in out-of-school time programs, specifically argue for efforts to engage trained teachers. Similarly, in the evaluation of MARS, researchers noted that programs that utilized certified teachers tended to perform better compared with programs that did not engage teachers. Duffy (2001), in an evaluation of a summer school program emphasized the need for teachers to supervise out-of-school time tutors to ensure children received optimal services. These studies reflect findings of an evaluation of two out-of-school time programs conducted by Zimmer, Christina, Hamilton, & Prine (2006). In their evaluation, they found that having teachers on staff improved student attendance and participation.

C. Research Gaps

Staff selection remains one of the least investigated aspects in out-of-school time research. Given the issues of staff commitment and the availability of qualified staff in out-of-school time programs, a better understanding of how to recruit and select appropriate staff is crucial. Data to examine how staff affect effective implementation and, subsequently, youth outcomes are essential. Some gaps that must be addressed are outlined below.

Methods and Criteria

There is a need for evaluation and research studies to document methods and criteria for recruitment and staff selection, respectively. Studies need to examine how recruitment and staff selection affect program attendance and child outcomes. Such research may be important to achieving eventual intervention outcomes.

Frontline Implementation

There is a need for research investigating how staff recruitment and selection strategies in out-of-school time programs are related to characteristics of frontline implementing staff. The overarching questions are: What skills are important? Are education and credentials important? How can interpersonal skills and ability to connect with youth be measured? Are staff "ready" to implement services? How can the "right" staff be recruited? Do desirable staff characteristics differ by the age, gender, race/ethnicity, or family income of program participants?

Program Fidelity

There is a need for research evaluations to address the impact of staff recruitment and selection on program fidelity in out-of-school time programs. Armed with the knowledge that one type of candidate, or a candidate with particular attitudes or expectations, carries out the program more effectively than another, programs could emphasize the selection of those candidates during the screening process - such as commitment, helpfulness and respect toward youth, and having a caring attitude. Before implementing such a strategy, however, programs need firm evidence that certain behaviors and practices improve implementation.

Staff Roles

There is a need for research investigating which characteristics, practices, and behaviors are suited for varying roles in out-of-school time programs, including supervisors, tutors, and facilitators. Given that job functions differ depending on staff's role, it is important for programs to know which characteristics are most salient for the candidate's specific role when recruiting and selecting staff.

IV. Action Steps for Practitioners

Although the available implementation research on out-of-school time programs is very limited, some implications appear warranted. The results of this synthesis lead to the following suggestions for staff recruitment and selection practices in out-of-school time programs:

Multiple Factors: Out-of-school time recruitment and selection practices should consider multiple factors, such as education, interpersonal skills, commitment, and abilities. Results from this synthesis suggest that personality and behavioral characteristics may have positive influences on student engagement and participation in out-of-school time programs. Staff who demonstrate a "caring" attitude and respectful behavior towards participants appear to be important to youth participation.

<u>Comprehensive Recruitment:</u> Out-of-school time recruitment practices should be comprehensive. This might include staff referrals, Internet advertising, and hands-on interviews. Using a comprehensive approach increases the likelihood of finding persons with the skills and characteristics needed to implement the program.

<u>Consideration of Child and Youth Needs:</u> Out-of-school time programs should consider the needs of children and youth when recruiting and selecting staff. This recommendation is supported by earlier research on the importance of delivering out-of-school time program components in ways that appeal to participants (Schacter, 2001). When recruiting and selecting staff it may be important to use "hands-on" interviews to determine how well staff interact with youth, and are able to form positive relationships.

<u>Cultural Competence:</u> Out-of-school time programs should consider ethnic and cultural background of participants when recruiting and selecting staff. Research indicates that successful programs employ at least some staff who are representative of the participants' backgrounds and ethnicities. This conveys to youth and their parents that the program is knowledgeable, welcoming, and respectful of the participants' cultural backgrounds. (see Kennedy, E., et al., 2007).

<u>Standards of Evaluation:</u> Out-of-school time programs should apply consistent standards for evaluation of applicants to facilitate the decision-making process. In the out-of-school time field, more of an effort needs to be made to develop standards for evaluating candidates' ability to implement programs. We suggest that other fields, such as business, be used as a resource for this endeavor.

<u>Readiness, Motivation and Openness:</u> Out-of-school time programs should assess staff readiness, motivation, and openness to implement evidence-based practices. In the out-of-school time field, very little attention has been given to staff readiness, motivation and openness. Because staff are the primary force through which a program operates and functions, understanding their preparedness, drive and willingness to implement a program is essential.

Staff Training

I. Purpose

Pre-service or in-service training has been identified as a core component of the effective implementation of evidenced-based practice. A synthesis of implementation research conducted by Fixsen and Blasé (2006) found empirical support for staff training as a critical component of the high quality implementation of evidence-based practices in human service programs. The purposes of this chapter are as follows:

1. *To define staff training and to describe the empirical evidence for staff training as a core component of implementation within the field of human services;*
2. *To synthesize the empirical evidence for staff training as a core component of implementation within the field of out-of-school time;*
3. *To identify gaps in the current research; and*
4. *To outline action steps that practitioners can take to support the implementation of evidence-based practices.*

II. Background

Training is defined as activities related to providing specialized information, instruction, or skill development in an organized way to practitioners and other key staff members within the program (Fixsen and Blase, 2006). It is important to remember that *staff members at all levels* require training when a new practice is implemented. A synthesis of the implementation research conducted by Fixsen et al. (2005) showed that while the content of staff training may vary considerably depending upon the evidenced-based practice or program being implemented, the methods of <u>effective</u> training seemed to be less variable (Fixsen and Blasé, 2006). This finding indicates that there are key elements of staff training that facilitate program implementation regardless of the specific services provided by different programs serving children, youth, and families.

A meta-analysis of research studies carried out in the human services field by Joyce and Showers (2002) found that effective staff training consists of the following three components:
* Providing practitioners with the background information, theory, philosophy, and values of the new program or practice;
* Introducing and demonstrating the components and rationales of key practices; and,
* Providing opportunities to practice specific skills related to the new way of work and receive feedback in a safe training environment.

Workshops, for instance, are commonly used to impart important information to practitioners; however, if not coupled with practice and coaching they may not achieve expected staff outcomes or professional development goals (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Other research studies provide further empirical support for this framework. For example, Dixon et al., (1999) conducted a study on staff training where a standard didactic presentation was compared with a standard presentation *plus* intensive training where staff practiced new skills. The standard presentation sites slightly changed their approach in working with families while more than half of the sites that received intensive training enhanced their entire family services component to better meet the needs of families. These findings demonstrate the importance of providing opportunities to practice new skills.

Ross and colleagues (1991) evaluated training for health education teachers in experimental schools that adopted the Teenage Health Teaching Modules. The training involved the three components of effective staff training posed by Joyce & Showers (2006), including presenting information, providing demonstrations, and assuring opportunities to practice key skills in the training setting. The results indicated that teachers who went through 20 hours of orientation (presenting information), participated in discussion groups followed by telephone consultation, practice exercises on brainstorming (demonstrations), and role-play-instructional methods (opportunities to practice) completed significantly more of the activities required in the modules and modified fewer of them compared to the untrained teachers. Most important, students in the classes taught by trained teachers made significant gains in health knowledge and attitude scores between the pre-test and post-test, while students in classes taught by untrained teachers made no gains (Ross et al, 1991).

Kealey et al., (2000) reported that practitioner training for a smoking prevention program, which included the three components of effective staff training (i.e., presentation of theory, description and modeling of new skills, and practice with feedback) resulted in teachers feeling prepared and confident at the end of workshops. Findings showed that 89% of the teachers delivered the curriculum according to the protocol. The authors concluded that practitioners must be motivated to adopt new practices, are aware of the action that constitute the practices, be equipped with the tools to perform those actions, and have self-efficacy to perform those actions.

In summary, these studies provide further evidence that effective staff training involves building knowledge, demonstrating skills, and providing opportunities to practice new skills are critical elements to successful staff training (Joyce & Showers, 2006).

III.   Staff Training within the Out-of-School Time (OST) Field

Findings from implementation research conducted in other areas of the human services have provided evidence that staff training is critical for successful implementation. Moreover, these findings demonstrate that some types of training are more effective than others. In an effort to extend these findings to the out-of-school time community, the main aim of this chapter is to synthesize the research for staff training in out-of-school time programs to gain a deeper understanding of how effective staff training contributes to the successful implementation of evidence-based practice in these programs. This synthesis will explore whether implementation findings related to staff training in other areas of human services are relevant to the out-of-school time community. Below we present our methodology for conducting this synthesis of the research and evaluation literature.

A. Methodology

We used the following procedures to locate journal articles, program evaluations, and other relevant information on the role of staff training in implementing out-of-school time programs and, specifically, the key components of effective staff training.

- An extensive literature search in EBSCO Host, a research database that provides access to four major multidisciplinary databases relevant to our work: PsycINFO (abstracts and articles), Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Sociological Collection, and Social Science Abstracts. We employed a number of search terms from the following

categories: (a) behavior modifications, (b) personnel and staff training, (c) training practitioners, (d) pre-service and in-service training, and (e) professional development.
- Inspection of the reference lists of relevant articles.
- We also reviewed the following websites:
  o Harvard Family Research Project
  o National Institute on Out-of-School Time
  o The William T. Grant Foundation
  o The National Staff Development Council
  o Public/Private Ventures
  o Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

The review of the literature revealed that high quality experimental research in the out-of-school time program field regarding staff training or professional development is scarce (Guskey, 2001). Professional development experts agree that evaluations can and should measure the effectiveness of staff training and whether staff training affects participant outcomes. Unfortunately, the literature reveals that, if programs evaluate staffing, the evaluations are often limited in scope to the study of hiring qualifications and staff/child ratios (HFRP, 2004). To the best of our knowledge, no rigorous research study using an experimental or quasi-experimental design has been conducted to examine effective professional development efforts and their impact on program implementation and participant outcomes (HFRP, 2004).

Staff training was, however, often assessed or described as a smaller component of larger process evaluations and a number of evaluation methods were used to collect data. Almost all of the professional development initiatives used participant and trainer surveys, and a number of evaluations included interviews with key stakeholders.

In general, studies revealed that training methods and approaches similar to those used to train human service providers are also used to train out-of-school time professionals (Joyce & Showers, 2006); however few initiatives have been examined to determine whether staff training is related to achieving positive youth outcomes in out-of-school time programs. Below we present more detailed findings from this review.

B. Findings

This chapter identifies and synthesizes information regarding staff training methods used across several out-of-school time professional development initiatives. Since we were unable to identify experimental or quasi-experimental research studies where staff training was the major intervention being assessed, we reviewed several out-of-school time professional development initiatives where staff training and professional development were assessed or described as part of the larger evaluation. We examined these out-of-school time professional development initiatives to better understand the components of staff training that can affect frontline out-of-school time program staff's ability to successfully implement evidence-based programs. The three factors associated with effective staff training identified by Joyce & Showers (presenting information, providing demonstrations, and assuring opportunities to practice in the training setting) informed the current review and analysis of staff training in the field of out-of-school time programs. However, our current analysis revealed a broader number of components that contribute to effective staff training.

13

1. Overview of OST Professional Development Initiatives

Professional development was described as a structural and institutional feature in a number of the out-of-school time Initiatives. The professional development initiatives' evaluations included in this review are: Making the Most of Out-of-School Time, San Diego's "6 to 6" Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers, and New Youth City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). A brief description of the out-of-school time professional development initiatives follows.

Making the Most of Out-of-School Time(MOST)
The MOST professional development initiative was designed to build community-wide awareness and support for out-of-school time programs in Boston, Seattle, and Chicago. The initiative supported the development and availability of college-level courses, tuition assistance for front line staff, staff mentoring, on-site training, and other professional development activities (Halpern et al, 2000).

Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers (BEST)
To address issues of fragmented, disjointed training efforts that out of school time providers face, a cohesive and theory-based approach to professional development was created. The cornerstone of the BEST Initiative provided youth worker training using a research-based curriculum (Center for School and Community Services, 2002).

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)
The New York City DYCD mandated that youth workers attend a training regarding the purposes and operations of the OST city wide initiative and they also provided professional development support through program-level supervision and professional development workshops that out-of-school time frontline staff could attend on a voluntary basis.[1] (Russell, et al., 2006).

San Diego's "6 to 6"
San Diego's "6 to 6" Extended School Day Program was a partnership between the City of San Diego's Community and Economic Development Department, the San Diego Unified School District, and other community-based organizations. Program staff receive up to nine in-service trainings per year in addition to support from countywide and statewide trainings. The trainings expose staff to regional experts and "best practice" (McCormick, et al; 2002).

2. Key Findings in OST Professional Development Initiatives: Staff Training

A principal goal for staff training in out-of-school time programs is to empower staff to implement the new skills they have learned in order to positively affect youth outcomes. All of the professional development initiatives were reviewed to identify what methods were used to train practitioners in new skills or strategies. In particular, we examined whether and how staff were provided with background information, theory, philosophy, and values of the new programs. Next, we examined how components of key practices were introduced and/or demonstrated to program directors and frontline practitioners. Finally, we assessed whether and how practitioners were given opportunities to practice their newly learned skills and in what ways they receive feedback and opportunities for continued learning, reflection, and improvements of skills.

The review of the professional development initiatives demonstrated that there are several components of effective staff training that affect frontline practitioner's ability to implement evidenced-based programs in out-of-school time programs. Our review finds that effective staff training components emphasized:

14

- Workshops that clearly link theory and knowledge to practice: using research-based and theory-based training curriculum
- Interactive and introspective components: practice and reflection
- Support from program directors and supervisors
- Technical assistance and follow-up

Linking Theory to Practice: Using Theory-based and Research-based Curricula

Staff training workshops were a critical component of virtually all of the out-of-school time professional development initiatives. The most effective workshops clearly link theory and practice; without this linkage, practitioners were more likely to reject the new knowledge, assuming that it was unrealistic or too difficult to implement (Costly, 1998). For example, the evaluation of the BEST Initiative reported that youth workers were more likely to translate what they learned during training into their direct practice with youth due to the research-based and theory-based curriculum. Youth workers reported an increased understanding of youth issues following their completion of the Advancing Youth Development (AYD) curriculum used during training.[1] Evaluators attributed this to the training, which provided workers with background knowledge and information on youth development theory and research-based practices. Youth workers articulated that the theory-based curriculum broadened their perspective as to how youth develop and grow, and having a deeper understanding of developmental theory and best practices helped them to change their behavior when interacting and engaging youth. Youth workers reported that the training facilitated the development of positive adult-youth relationships, and had the greatest effect on their ability to engage youth in planning activities for the program (Center for School and Community Services, 2002).

Providing training workshops that clearly linked theory and knowledge to practice was more challenging for some professional development initiatives. For instance, the training curriculum for the MOST Initiative covered "the basics" of typical strategies for improving daily program operations and coordination of activities. However, the training did not effectively communicate *why* such changes were being suggested (theory of change), of the specific practice changes that should be made to improve the program's interpretations and ability to positively affect youth outcomes. Youth workers reported shifts in awareness and knowledge of particular issues, such as room arrangement, snacks, design and organization of particular activity areas; however, they were unsure how to actually implement these changes in their program. Though youth workers agreed that the training workshop was informative, it did not lead to changes in schedule, program activities, or in how staff related to the children (Halpern et al, 2000).

Similarly, youth workers from the *New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)* Initiative were mandated to attend a training regarding the purpose and operations of the program, but were not given guidance or clear direction on how they could change their way of working with young people to support the goals of the program. As a result, the practitioners felt frustrated that the training did not link to the information provided with steps for making practice changes which would support the program and achieve youth outcomes (Russell, et al., 2006).

Overall, these findings suggest that workshops that simply review instructional manuals or guidelines on program operations, without providing theory or linkages to practice were less

---

[1] AED's Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, in collaboration with the National Network for Youth, Inc., produced Advancing Youth Development: A Curriculum for Training Youth Workers (AYD) with funding from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

effective than those trainings that are theory-based and research- based and provide concrete guidance on implementation. In addition, the content of training workshops and methods used to provide practitioners with information determines the effectiveness of the staff training intervention and whether practitioners are equipped to implement the targeted program with fidelity during their work with youth.

Interactive and Introspective Components: Practice and Reflection

The findings also show that the most effective training sessions contain an interactive and introspective component that allows practitioners the opportunity to reflect on their current behaviors and, subsequently, role-play alternative and more effective ways of implementing the program or practice (Halpern, 2003). For example, practitioners involved in the AYD training, participate in seven workshops which build on one another and require a minimum of 28 hours to complete using the core curriculum. The training requires that youth workers reflect on their own experiences as youth, through journaling, then compare their experiences to their interactions with the young people they work with daily. The purpose of this exercise is to help program staff relate to the experiences of the young people they serve (HFRP, 2004). In addition, youth workers are asked to define the goals they have for young people and those that young people have for themselves through an interactive "youth development approach". Youth workers are also challenged to identify the barriers they bring to their work, particularly as it relates to "adultism behavior" and youth workers go through mini vignettes to identify and practice alternative caring behaviors through role playing (Center for School and Community Services, 2002). Adultism refers to behaviors and attitudes based on the assumption that adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon young people without their agreement. This mistreatment is reinforced by social institutions, laws, customs, and attitudes (Bell, 2007).

Study findings from the BEST Initiative reveal that the program staff used a youth development approach in their work after the training. They encouraged youth participation and provided youth with opportunities to develop or strengthen specific competencies because they had ample opportunities during the training to interact with one another, role play, reflect on their current behavior, and practice the youth development approach in the training setting.

Findings from the MOST Initiative demonstrate that when OST workers are not given opportunities to practice and reflect, it is challenging to implement a new program. For example, MOST Initiative staff participated in a one or two day training event in the form of a conference or workshop. Frontline staff reported that workshops were "a shot in the arm," "motivating," and sometimes increased their sense of identity as after-school providers and facilitated interactions with other providers. However, the workshops did not lead to changes in staff attitudes or how staff related to children. This may be attributable to the fact that training did not heavily emphasize practicing the techniques during the training session and lacked opportunities to reflect on the new material (Halpern et al, 2000). These findings suggest that interactive and reflective activities increase the likelihood that frontline staff members will put into action the new program or practice.

Supervisor Support, Technical Assistance, and Follow-up

Supportive feedback from program directors is invaluable to frontline program staff as they try to incorporate newly acquired skills into their everyday practice with children and youth. Taking the time to process the training allows staff the opportunity to integrate the new ideas into their work over time. For example, a critical component of the BEST training is that participant's supervisors are also offered training. Senior staff can attend two days of training where they are

exposed to the same approaches to youth development as frontline staff and, subsequently, are equipped to reinforce and support frontline staff as they implement the new program practices. The pre- and post training surveys showed statistically significant increases in the frequency with which program staff used a youth development approach in their work after the training (Center for School and Community Services, 2002). Evaluators noted that results may be partially attributed to parallel training provided to supervisors, which raises supervisors' ability to support the newly learned skills and their frontline staff.

Although MOST Initiative practitioners felt empowered after participating in the workshop or training provided to them, the workshops typically did not lead to actual changes in practice. This may be due, in part, to the lack of parallel training provided to their supervisors. Follow-up sessions rarely occurred in programs because supervisors were unaware of the specific content of the workshops and were not capable of reinforcing the newly learned approaches. These findings suggest that supervisory support of frontline staff training experiences may be just as critical as the training itself. Follow-up and technical assistance support are necessary because learning is most clearly integrated into practice when practitioners have regular opportunities to utilize new information, reflect on its application to practice, and receive constructive feedback. For example, 50% of program directors in the DYCD OST initiative reported that their program did not implement the techniques learned during training because they needed additional training (Russell, et al, 2006).

C. Gaps in the Literature

There is a growing push for out-of-school time programs and practices that incorporate evidenced-based practices. Consequently, it is important that frontline staff are effectively trained to implement high quality programs for youth. To truly understand the benefits of staff training and professional development efforts, programs must engage in more rigorous and comprehensive evaluations to assess the effectiveness of specific staff training and professional development approaches and interventions. Our review shows that evaluations of out-of-school time training and professional development efforts have often been limited in scope and, to date, no studies have reported whether professional development programs or staff training initiatives affect outcomes for the youth served by out-of-school time providers (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2007). There is a clear need to design research studies that better examine:

- How professional development initiatives for out-of-school time providers are implemented;
- The relationship between staff training and staff's ability to implement the new program practice or design;
- How out-of-school time staff experience staff training, and what influence they have on OST programs and participating youth; and
- The challenges out-of-school time staff face in implementing what they learn during training in the practice setting.

IV. Action Steps for Practitioners

A similar theme across the evaluations was that participating in staff training is beneficial but not sufficient on its own, particularly for frontline youth workers. Below we provide recommendations based on findings from the literature on guidelines for effective staff training.

Theory and Practice: Staff training should clearly link theory and practice---without this linkage, practitioners are likely to reject or ignore the new knowledge, assuming that it is unrealistic or too difficult to implement.

Interactive Component: Staff training should contain an interactive and introspective component which allows practitioners the opportunity to reflect on their current behaviors and subsequently role-play effective ways of implementing the program or practice.

Feedback and Follow-Up: Staff training should provide opportunities for feedback. Learning is most clearly integrated into practice when practitioners have regular opportunities to utilize new information, reflect on its application to practice, and receive constructive feedback.
Staff training should include a technical assistance component and follow-up to provide program staff with ongoing support.

Supervisor Training: Supervisors should be provided with training similar to that of frontline staff. Trained supervisors are better able to support and provide feedback to newly trained staff.

Staff Coaching

I. Purpose

Staff coaching has been identified as one of six core components for the effective implementation of evidence-based practices in out-of-school time programs. The purposes of this chapter are:

1. *To define staff coaching and to describe the empirical evidence for staff coaching as a core component of implementation within the field of human services;*
2. *To synthesize the empirical evidence for staff coaching as a core component of implementation within the field of out-of-school time;*
3. *To identify gaps in the current research; and*
4. *To outline action steps that practitioners can take to use staff coaching to support the implementation of evidence-based practices in out-of-school time programs.*

II. Background

Staff coaching is a broad term that includes activities for both individuals and groups, such as on-the-job observations, instruction, modeling, feedback, and debriefing of practitioners and other key program staff. Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, and Wallace (2005), after researching the role that staff coaching plays as a core component of implementation within the field of human services, defined the fundamentals of staff coaching in this way: "...teaching and reinforcing evidence-based skill development and adaptations of skills and craft knowledge to fit the personal styles of practitioners" (p. 47). Noting that behavior change under any circumstances is difficult, they described how staff coaching can help practitioners overcome three common barriers to implementing evidence-based practices:

Fragility of newly-learned behavior
Because it takes time for practitioners to become adept at using new evidenced-based practices, those affected by these practices (e.g. program participants) may react negatively to them at first. Effective coaches support practitioners through this period of getting worse before getting better.

Crudeness of newly-learned behavior
No matter the thoroughness of the initial training, newly-learned evidence-based practices will feel uncomfortable and even unnatural at first. Effective coaches teach practitioners to feel for the nuances of each practice and to find ways to work with these practices in the context of their personal style and unique circumstances.

Incompleteness of newly-learned behavior
Only so much material can be covered during any initial training. Effective coaches guide practitioners as they move from entry-level knowledge and skills toward expert-level knowledge and skills.

Fixsen et al., (2005) found that certain factors impact coaching. They mentioned the following factors:

- Amount of time and resources devoted to the coaching experience;
- Amount of training received by the coach in the art of coaching;
- Level of theoretical/practical knowledge held by the coach in his/her field;

- Services provided by the coach, such as direct observations, feedback, skill development, workshops, etc.;
- Personality of the coach and the compatibility of his/her personality with the person/people being coached; and
- Quality of the relationship between the coach and those being coached.

Fixsen et al. (2005) discuss the results of four experimental studies and/or meta-analyses, which they found "[pointed] to the importance of coaching in any attempt to complement a practice or program" (p.46). One study was from the field of education, one from the field of mental health, and two from the field of medicine. To this evidence, they added the results of surveys, literature reviews, and other pertinent, non-experimental data sources, including one evaluation, which, they noted, began the important work of looking at interactions between implementation components, intervention components, and consumer outcomes.

Fixsen et al. (2005), in finding evidence to support staff coaching as a core component of implementation, drew most heavily from the field of education, specifically from the work of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers. Indeed, Joyce and Showers have done much to promote coaching as an on-going staff development tool in schools. Because there has been significantly more research done on staff coaching in the field of education than in the field of out-of-school time and because of the similarities between these two fields, we have also decided to include some of the literature from the field of education in this chapter.

III.   Staff Coaching in the Out-of-School Time (OST) and Education Fields

Findings from implementation research conducted in other areas of the human services provide evidence that staff coaching is critical for effective implementation. In an effort to extend these findings to the out-of-school time community, the main aim of this chapter is to synthesize the research for staff training in out-of-school time and education programs to gain a deeper understanding of how effective staff coaching contributes to the successful implementation of sustainable evidence-based practice in out-of-school time programs.

This synthesis will explore whether implementation findings related to staff coaching in other areas of human services, including education, are relevant to the out-of-school time community. Below we present our methodology for conducting this synthesis of the research and evaluation literature.

A. Methodology

To learn how staff coaching contributes to the implementation of evidence-based practices in the fields of out-of-school time and education, we used the following procedures to locate articles, project evaluations, practitioner insight, and other relevant information:

- Computer searches of EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, ERIC, JSTOR, ProQuest, and Web of Science using the following search terms: "coach," "mentor," "staff coach," "staff mentor," "peer coach," "literacy coach," and "professional development";
- Inspection of the reference lists of relevant articles;
- Website searches of the Harvard Family Research Project, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the William T. Grant Foundation, the National Staff Development Council, Public/Private Ventures, MDRC, and Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

With respect to out-of-school time, we found no experimental studies in which staff coaching was the major intervention being assessed. We did, however, find one quasi-experimental program evaluation in which professional literacy coaches were placed in after-school programs for the purpose of supporting program staff. We also found four program evaluations that discussed staff coaching as a component of the overall evaluation. Of these program evaluations, one was of experimental design and three were of quasi-experimental design. In addition to individual program evaluations, we found reports reviewing shared features of high-performing after-school and early childhood programs, including staff coaching.

Within the broader field of education, we found one experimental study and three quasi-experimental studies in which staff coaching was the major intervention being assessed. We also found a synthesis of over 200 articles and a meta-analysis conducted by Joyce and Showers that supported staff coaching as an effective implementation tool. Finally, we found examples of practitioner insight supporting staff coaching as a promising practice for educators.

B. Findings

Below we present findings related to staff coaching in two sections: 1) findings for the out-of-school time field; and 2) findings for the education field.

1. Staff Coaching Within the Field of Out-of-School Time

Interestingly, although much of the research done within the field of education discusses peer coaching as way to support the implementation of evidence-based practices, the program evaluations that we found more often used expert coaching as a program component. We found one quasi-experimental program evaluation in which staff coaching was the major intervention being used and four program evaluations, one experimental and four quasi-experimental, in which coaching was one component of the overall evaluation.

Quasi-Experimental Research on Coaching

Staff Coaching as the Major Intervention

The After-school Literacy Coaching Initiative of Boston (LCI) was piloted in Fall 2003 with the goal of supporting after-school program staff through weekly coaching for a period of at least one year (Harvard Family Research Project [HFRP], 2007). Coaches were assigned at least two staff members per program, and they assisted staff by modeling effective strategies, running workshops, conducting observations, and initiating informal discussions. Coaches also met with and sometimes coached program directors. Coaches and program staff reported the following barriers to implementation: scheduling conflicts, initial resistance from program staff, and high staff turnover among program staff.

Overall, the results of the program were mixed. The majority of coaches, program directors, and program staff felt satisfied with the program. The majority of coached staff felt that their skills had improved as a result of being coached. These feelings were seconded by both coaches and program directors. Staff who reported being more involved with literacy coaching activities were significantly more likely to report skill improvement. Staff reports of working one-on-one with a coach, observing coaches model read-aloud, being observed, and getting feedback were all significantly correlated with reports of skill improvement. Only participating in workshops was not significantly correlated. Both coaches and program staff felt that children's interest in reading

improved as a result of LCI, however, matched youth surveys noted little change. Positive patterns were noted, though, on items most closely related to LCI approaches and goals.

Staff Coaching as a Program Component

We looked at four program evaluations that assessed staff coaching as a professional development tool. The ways in which these programs used staff coaching, however, varied widely by program both in the frequency of coaching interactions and in the type of coaching services provided.

After-school KidzLit, an after-school literacy program, provided staff with an initial training as well as workshops and consultant support (HFRP, 2006). Four training workshops were offered over the course of the year. Staff attended an average of two workshops and reported that, along with training, workshops were "a major factor contributing to their KidzLit success" (p. 7). Staff reported receiving consultant support with implementation once or twice every two to three months. The extent to which staff worked with a consultant was positively related with implementation quality, but this result was not significant. Some program staff also reported working informally with other staff members, sharing ideas and sometimes co-leading sessions. These activities were positively, although again not significantly, related to implementation quality.

Site directors and staff with the Sacramento START program, which offered homework help and academic enrichment, reported success with the following strategies: shadowing experienced staff, being observed by classroom teachers, and debriefing with classroom teachers (HFRP, 2004). Another promising practice and "strength of START" (as identified by site directors and program leaders) was the use of literacy coaches, elementary school teachers hired to work with site directors and program leaders. Literacy coaches performed a variety of duties—connecting program leaders with classroom teachers, facilitating communication between program leaders and site coordinators, and providing ongoing training to program leaders in effective teaching practices as well as classroom management. "Quality" literacy coaches with Sacramento START made daily contact with site directors and program staff.

The CORAL Initiative, an academic after-school program designed for youth in low-performing schools, also identified the use of literacy coaches (called "literacy directors" by this program) as a promising practice (Arbreton, Goldsmith, & Sheldon, 2005). They found that program quality was the highest when:

- Literacy directors had both literacy experience and training;
- Literacy directors had been hired during the planning stages of the program;
- Literacy directors had some authority over program leaders; and
- Literacy directors had sufficient time to work with and monitor program leaders, making frequent visits to sites for the purpose of observation and providing ongoing feedback.

When literacy directors were unable to spend enough time with program leaders, program leaders took on some of the roles of the literacy director. This worked best with program leaders who had a background in literacy and/or training in a certain task (e.g., reviewing lesson plans). Both program leaders and site directors valued the work done by their literacy directors. One program leader commented, "She makes sure we are all on target and getting what we need" (31). A site director commented, "Wow, she brings the expertise that we really, really need" (31).

The Howard Street Tutoring Program was designed to provide reading instruction to low-performing students in second and third grade (Morris, Shaw, & Perney, 1990). Instead of offering new tutors pre-service training, all training is on-the-job with a reading specialist, and the supervision of tutors was found to be "the most crucial piece of the puzzle" (p. 148). The reading specialist works with each new tutor-child pair three or four times, slowly giving the tutor more responsibility. Reading specialists model, observe, and provide feedback to the tutor. Ongoing support and communication is done through lesson planning notebooks, which are exchanged regularly.

Additional Evidence Regarding Coaching

In addition to program evaluations, we looked at four reports on shared features of high-performing after-school programs and, in one case, early childhood programs. All four reports mentioned the importance of continuous staff development, including some form of on-the-job training.

- Policy Studies Associates found that high-performing after-school programs used long-time staff and managers to mentor, guide, and work with new staff (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005). Their report on strategies associated with school-linked after-school programs supported on-the-job mentoring, peer modeling, and teamwork as effective staff development tools (Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2002).

- A report by Public/Private Ventures noted that the 'intangibles of youth work' can be passed from long-time staff to new staff through formal mentoring, informal coaching, modeling, and collaborative work (Raley, Grossman, Walker, 2005, p. 32). They also supported creating 'intentional learning communities' in order to purposefully identify and work best practices into their repertories. These communities seem similar to the coaching clusters promoted in Gingiss (1993).

- Finally, a HFRP report on successful early childhood programs found that professional development was a priority in these programs (Schultz, Lopez, & Hochberg, 1996). Teachers reported that peer observations, feedback, and joint planning improved their professional skills.

2. Staff Coaching Within the Field of Education

Much of the research that has been done on coaching in the field of education has centered around a type of coaching know as "peer coaching." Swafford (1998) defined peer coaching as "teachers supporting teachers as they apply and reflect on new ways of teaching to better meet the diverse needs of students" (p. 54). Those who participate in peer coaching may or may not be trained in peer coaching techniques and may engage in a wide variety of activities, including but not limited to: observing classroom instruction, modeling strategies, providing support and companionship, consulting one another about lesson plans and objectives, providing feedback and assistance, and encouraging reflection (Wong & Nicotera, 2003). Joyce and Showers (2002), say of peer coaching, 'As we continue to experiment with the design of coaching, *the major purpose of peer coaching remains the implementation of innovations to the extent that determination of effects on students is possible* ' (p. 83).

Experimental Research on Coaching

Even within the field of education, experimental studies---studies that use random assignment---are rare. We were only able to find one experimental study in which staff coaching was the major intervention being assessed.

Bowman and McCormick (2000) compared two groups of undergraduate education students. Student teachers who had been randomly assigned to the experimental group were put into peer coaching pairs and received some training in peer coaching techniques. Each member of these coaching pairs was observed twelve times and participated in twelve post-conferences. Student teachers in the control group received traditional university supervision in the form of a university supervisor and a cooperating teacher. Investigators measured how well student teachers were able to integrate new teaching strategies into their repertoire. The experimental group performed better than the control group on eight out of ten variables measured, indicating that peer coaching, when participants have received some training in coaching techniques and feedback is consistent, is at least as effective as traditional supervision for training prospective teachers.

Quasi-Experimental Research on Coaching

Quasi-experimental studies point to the effectiveness of peer coaching as a means of increasing teachers' willingness and ability to implement changes in their teaching practices. For example, Sparks (1986) examined the effectiveness of peer coaching as a means of changing teaching behaviors. Three groups of teachers attended five workshops on effective teaching. Because teachers were recruited from seven different schools, groups were created based on proximity and were not randomized. Teachers in the first group received no training beyond the workshops; teachers in the second group received two peer observations; and teachers in the third group received expert coaching. Although the results were not significant, perhaps due to a small sample size, peer coaching appeared to be the most effective model. It is also important to note that the peer coaching in this study was not reciprocal; that is, teachers in group two were observed by a peer but did not observe a peer.

Sparks and Bruder (1987) presented evidence supporting school-wide peer coaching initiatives. All of the teachers at two elementary schools participated in a peer coaching program coordinated by a staff development consultant. Teachers completed questionnaires before and after the initiative. Additionally, an outside evaluator interviewed the majority of the teachers in both schools. Teachers had some choice over their coaching partner, and each coaching dyad participated in four to six observations over the course of five months. The consultant was also sometimes involved in the coaching process. Teachers at both schools felt that peer coaching improved collegiality, experimentation, and student learning. More specifically, with respect to experimentation, teachers reported that they more frequently tried new techniques, felt more confident about trying something new, and were more willing to try something again that did not go well the first time. One teacher wrote, "It brought to life a lot of things I know I should do and had tried, but had not continued. It gave me an impetus, having a colleague I respect critique my teaching" (p. 56).

Two other studies also suggest a positive relationship between teacher change and student performance. Two pre-post studies looked at teacher change, student performance, and the relationship between these two variables. Kohler, McCullough, and Buchan (1995) compared teachers across three distinct phases: first, teachers individually planned and implemented an activity of their choice; next, teachers were paired up and worked with each other as peer coaches; finally, teachers again individually planned and implemented their activity. Three of the

four teachers observed made more changes during the coaching phase than during the initial phase, and these changes were maintained during the final phase. (The fourth teacher made an equal number of changes across all three phases.) Teacher changes corresponded with positive changes in children's participation. Kohler, Crilley, Shearer, and Good (1997) conducted a similarly designed study and also found that more procedural changes occurred during a peer coaching phase than during an independent phase. Again, changes were maintained over time. In this second study, however, peer coaching was not reciprocal.

Additional Evidence Regarding Coaching

In a literature review of over 200 articles, Joyce and Showers (1980) first discussed coaching as component of effective in-service training in schools. Since then, they have been at the forefront of a push to make coaching an on-going component of professional development in schools. Joyce and Showers (1982), writing in *Educational Leadership*, "a journal for educators, by educators," defined "the transfer problem" as the sometimes difficult movement of a newly learned skill into an active repertoire of skills. According to them, this problem can be overcome through effective coaching, ideally, in an environment where all school personnel are able to step into the role of coach.

The transfer of a new skill is difficult and takes a considerable amount of time. After completing a meta-analysis that examined staff development, Joyce and Showers (1987) estimated that the transfer of a complex strategy takes approximately twenty-five teaching episodes. Support from coaches, both technical and emotional, is needed during this time. But, nearly all teachers can master complex strategies if given enough time and coaching support. Moreover, with expert and/or peer coaching, teachers are likely to maintain and make use of these new strategies and concepts over time.

Joyce and Showers (1996), again writing in *Educational Leadership*, went into greater detail about the importance of peer coaching and what effective peer coaching might look like. They presented four "principles of peer coaching" and recommended their use during the implementation of new curriculum: 1) When working with an entire faculty, all teachers must agree to be members of peer coaching study teams; 2) Technical critique should be omitted as a coaching component; 3) During observations, the one teaching is the "coach" and the one observing is the "coached;" 4) Collaborative work goes beyond observing and conferring to include activities such as planning instruction, developing materials, and watching each other work with students (p. 14-15). It is important to note, however, that most proponents of peer coaching do not prohibit the use of critique as a coaching tool or stipulate such clear roles for the "coach" and "coached" (Wong & Nicotera, 2003).

Gingiss (1993) also discussed peer coaching as a promising staff development approach during implementation trials. She proposed a model for peer coaching in which teams of two or three teachers observe each other frequently (allowing between ten and fifteen sessions per strategy), collect data, and, unlike Joyce and Showers (1996), "provide feedback in a follow-up conference" (p.81). She cautioned, however, that feedback should be non-judgmental so that teachers feel comfortable experimenting. In addition to coaching teams, coaching clusters of three or four teams are formed to provide additional support. Administrators support coaching clusters and teams by helping them find time during the day to meet. Finally, the model calls for an initial in-service training as well as the continuation of the coaching framework beyond implementation trials.

C. Gaps in the Research

Within the field of education, we found one experimental study and four quasi-experimental studies in which staff coaching was the major intervention being assessed. The sample sizes in these studies, however, were relatively small, making it difficult to draw far-reaching conclusions. Additionally, all of the studies examined only one type of coaching, peer coaching, and only two of the studies explored the connection between staff coaching, teacher change, and student achievement. Joyce and Showers have done much to support coaching in schools, but their research is also mainly focused on peer coaching, which may not be as successful in out-of-school time programs that have higher staff turnover.

While there are many similarities between the fields of education and out-of-school time, rigorous experimental research is needed in both fields. Within the field of out-of-school time, we found no experimental studies in which staff coaching was the major intervention being assessed. Available evidence supports staff coaching as a core component of implementation, and out-of-school time programs are beginning to recognize staff coaching as a component of high-performing programs; however, high-quality research is lacking. Within the field of out-of-school time, we propose that research be conducted to determine the following:

- the most important qualities in a coach (e.g. content expertise, coaching expertise);
- the types of coaching (e.g. peer, expert) that work best, given the circumstances of a particular program;
- the amount of time that coaches and program staff should spend together;
- the kinds of coaching activities are most effective (e.g. modeling, observations, technical critique, collaborative lesson planning, etc.); and
- the relationship between staff coaching, staff change, and student achievement.

IV. Action Steps for Practitioners

After reviewing the evidence presented above, we recommend the following action steps to support the implementation of evidence-based practices in out-of-school time programs:

Combination with Training: Coaching should be one of multiple implementation components used. At the very least, coaching should be combined with strong initial in-service training.

Coaches' Knowledge: Coaches should have knowledge of coaching theory and technique as well as content area knowledge. If program staff are going to be coaching each other, begin by providing some initial trainings in the art of coaching. If the program is going to employ "expert" coaches, make sure that they are experts not only in their field (e.g., reading intervention) but also in coaching.

Coaching Relationships: Coaching relationships should be build on respect, trust, and collegiality. To promote such relationships, consider the following:
- Roles, expectations, and purposes for the coaching relationship(s) should be clear from the beginning, and both coaches and program staff should understand and believe in them;
- Critiques given by coaches should be as positive, nonjudgmental, and should not be used for evaluation purposes; and
- When possible and appropriate, program staff should be given some degree of choice in their coach, be it peer or expert (Sparks & Bruder, 1987).

26

Team Meetings: Coaches and program staff or peer coaching teams should meet frequently, both formally and informally, and should engage in a wide variety of activities not limited to observations and feedback. These activities might include providing emotional support and companionship, planning, and reflection.

Time: Coaches and program staff should remember that the transfer of new skills takes time, approximately 25 teaching episodes for complex strategies (Joyce & Showers, 1987). Program staff should allow themselves time to experiment, practice, and make mistakes. Coaches should be supportive during this time, both technically and emotionally.

Program Support: Any and all coaching initiatives should be fully supported and promoted by program administration. Administrators should make sure that appropriate time and resources are devoted to the coaching experience. They should cover staff when necessary and help them work coaching time into their busy schedules. Some administrators may even consider getting involved in peer coaching themselves, provided that program staff are comfortable with this.

Professional Development: Coaching can be more than an implementation tool. It may also encourage experimentation and staff collegiality (Sparks & Bruder, 1987). There is also some evidence linking effective mentoring of first-year teachers with a greater desire to remain in education (Whitaker, 2000). Consider coaching as a long-term professional development strategy.

Conclusions: Implications for Future Research and Evaluation and Action Steps for Practitioners

Our review of implementation research in the field of out-of-school time reveals that, while the research has been meager, there are consistent themes that indicate that staff selection, recruitment, training, and coaching appear to be critical to effectively implement evidenced-based programs. Moreover, findings from this synthesis are similar to findings from implementation research in other areas of human services, indicating that the current knowledge-base on effective program implementation is relevant and useful to the out-of-school time community.

Additional research is necessary to determine best practices for selecting and recruiting program staff; verifying training strategies and techniques that adequately prepare staff to implement evidence-based programs with fidelity; and developing a system of coaching where program staff are supported and have opportunities to improve their skills on an ongoing basis.

Staff selection and recruitment, staff training and coaching all play important roles in ensuring positive outcomes for adolescents participating in out-of-school time programs. Based on the review of current available research, we offer the following recommendations and action steps to support the implementation of evidence-based practices in out-of-school time programs:

Recommendations Based on Available Research for Staff Selection and Recruitment

- Recruitment and selection practices should include multiple factors, such as education, interpersonal skills, and abilities.
- Recruitment practices should be comprehensive.
- OST programs should consider youth needs when recruiting and selecting staff.
- OST programs should consider ethnic and cultural background of participants when recruiting and selecting staff.
- OST programs should apply consistent standards for evaluation of applicants to facilitate the decision-making process.
- OST programs should assess staff readiness, motivation, and openness.

Recommendations Based on Available Research for Staff Training

- Staff training should clearly link theory and practice.
- Staff training should contain an interactive and introspective component (opportunities to role play, practice, and reflect).
- Staff training should provide opportunities for feedback.
- Frontline staff supervisors should participate in training sessions when at all possible.

Recommendations Based on Available Research for Staff Coaching

- Coaches should have knowledge of coaching theory as well as content area knowledge.
- Coaching relationships should be built on respect, trust, and collegiality.
- Coaches and program staff or peer coaching teams should meet frequently, both formally and informally, and should engage in a wide variety of activities.
- Program staff should allow themselves time to experiment, practice, and make mistakes.
- Any and all coaching initiatives should be fully supported and promoted by program administration. Make sure that appropriate time and resources are devoted to the coaching experience.
- Consider coaching as a long-term professional development strategy.

References

American Youth Policy Forum (2006). *Helping youth succeed through out-of-school time programs.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Arbreton, A.J.A., Goldsmith, J., & Sheldon, J. (2005). *Launching literacy in after-school programs: early lessons from the Coral Initiative.* Retrieved October 22, 2007, from http://www.workingventures.org/ppv/publications/publications_description.asp?search_id=0&publication_id=192

Bell, John (2007). Understanding Adultism: A Key to Developing Positive Youth-Adult Relationships. The Free Child Project. Retrieved January 2, 2008, from http://www.freechild.org/bell.htm

Birmingham, J., Pechman, E. M., Russell, C. A., & Mielke, M. (2005). *Shared features of high-performing after-school programs: A follow-up to the TASC evaluation.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/fam107.html

Bowman, C.L., & McCormick, S. (2000). Comparison of peer coaching versus traditional supervision effects. *The Journal of Educational Research, 93*(4),256-261

Center for School and Community Services. Academy for Educational Development. (2002). BEST Strengthens Youth Worker Practice. An Evaluation of Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers (BEST): A Summary Report. New York, NY: The Academy for Educational Development.

Commission on Children at Risk. (2003). *Hardwired to connect: The new scientific case for authoritative communities.* New York, NY: Institute for American Values.

Costley, Joan. (1998). Building a Professional Development System that Works for the Field of Out-of-School Time. Making the MOST of Out-of-School Time. Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time

Dixon, L., Lyles, A., Scott, J., Lehman, A., Postrado, L., Goldman, H., et al. (1999). Services to families of adults with schizophrenia: from treatment recommendations to dissemination. *Psychiatric Services,* 50(2), 233-238.

Duffy, A. M. (2001). Balance, literacy acceleration, and responsive teaching in a summer school literacy program for elementary school struggling readers. *Reading Research and Instruction, 40,* 67-100. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ 625 633).

Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K.A., Friedman, R.M., & Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature. National Implementation Research Network, University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. Available online at http://nirn.fmhi.usf.edu/resources/publications/Monograph/

Gingiss, P.L. (1993). Peer coaching: Building collegial support for using innovative health programs. *The Journal of School Health, 63*(2), 79-85.

Godfrey, A. (2000). What impact does training have on the care received by older people in residential homes? *Social Work Education, 19,* 55-65.

Grossman, J., Campbell, M., & Raley, B. (2007). *Quality time after school: What can instructors do to enhance learning*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures. Retrieved September 25, 2007 from http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/213_publication.pdf

Guskey, T.R. (2001). JSD Forum: The backward approach. Journal of Staff Development, 22(3), 60.

Hall, Georgia. (2003). Promising Practices in Citywide After-school Initiatives. Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time for CityWorks.

Halpern, R. (2003). The Challenge of System-Building in the After-School Field. Lessons From Experience. A Discussion Paper. Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time for CityWorks.

Halpern, R. (2000). The promise of after-school programs for low-income children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly,* 15, 185-214. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ 633 367).

Halpern, R., Spielberger, J., Robb, Sylvan. (2000). Evaluation of The MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) Initiative: Final Report. Summary of Findings. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children.

Harvard Family Research Project. (2004). *A profile of the evaluation of Sacramento START.* Retrieved October 22, 2007, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/start.pdf (Acrobat file).

Harvard Family Research Project. (2006). *A profile of the evaluation of AfterSchool Kidzlit®.* Retrieved October 22, 2007, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/askl.pdf (Acrobat file).

Harvard Family Research Project. (2007). *A profile of the evaluation of the Afterschool Literacy Coaching Initiative of Boston.* Retrieved October 22, 2007, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/mott/lci.pdf (Acrobat file.)

Harvard Family Research Project. (2004). Promoting Quality Through Professional Development: A Framework for Evaluation. Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation. Number 8.

Hoover, W. A., & Pollard, J. S. (2006). Time for achievement: Afterschool and out-of-school time. *Southwestern Educational Developmental Library, 18,* 15-35.

Intercultural Center for Research in Education and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2005). *Pathways to success for youth: What counts in afterschool: Massachusetts after-school research study (MARS) report.* Boston, MA: United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1980). Improving inservice training: The messages of research. *Educational Leadership, 37*(5), 379-385.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1982). The coaching of teaching. *Educational Leadership, 40*(1), 4-8.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1987). Synthesis of research on staff development: A framework for future study and a state-of-the-art analysis. *Educational Leadership, 45*(3), 77-87.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1996). The evolution of peer coaching. *Educational Leadership, 53*(6), 12-16.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). Student achievement through staff development (3rd Ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kealey, K. A., Peterson, A. V., Jr., Gaul, M.A., & Dinh, K. T. (2000). Teach Training as a Behavior Change Process: Principle and Results From a Longitudinal Study. *Health Education & Behavior*, 27(1), 64-81.

Kennedy, E., Bronte-Tinkew, J., Matthews, G. (2007). Enhancing Cultural Competence in Out-of-School Time Programs: What is it and why is it important? Child Trends, Washington, DC.

Kohler, F.W., Crilley, K.M., Shearer, D.D., & Good, G. (1997). Effects of peer coaching on teacher and student outcomes. *The Journal of Educational Research, 90*(4),   240-250.

Kohler, F.W., McCullough, K.M., & Buchan, K.A. (1995). Using peer coaching to enhance preschool teachers' refinement of classroom activities. *Early Education   & Development, 6*(3), 215-239.

Lauer, P. A., Akiba, M., Wilkerson, S. B., Apthorp, H. S., Snow, D., & Glenn-Martin, M. (2004). *The effectiveness of out-of-school-time strategies in assisting low-achieving students in reading and mathematics: A research synthesis.* Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning. Retrieved from September 28, 2007 from http://www.mcrel.org/PDF/SchoolImprovementReform/5032RRROSTeffectiveness.pdf

Little, P. M. (2004). A Recipe for Quality Out-of-School Time Programs. *The Evaluation Exchange*, 10, 18-19.
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue25/expert3.html

McCormick, T., Bojorquez, J.C., & Tushnet, N. (2002). Independent evaluation of San Diego's "6 to 6" Extended School Day Program: Final Report. Los Alamitos, CA: WestED.

McLaughlin, M. (2000). *Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development.* Washington, DC: Public Education Network. Retrieved October 5, 2007 from http://www.publiceducation.org/pdf/communitycounts.pdf.
Metz, A. J. R., Blasé, K., & Bowie, L. (2007). Implementing Evidence-Based Practices: Six "Drives" of Success. (*Research-to-Results* brief).Washington, DC: Child Trends.

Mihalic, S., Irwin, K., Fagan, A., Ballard, D., & Elliot, D. (2004*). Successful program implementation: Lessons from blueprints.* Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Retrieved November 8, 2007 from http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/204273.pdf

Miller, B.M, and Hall, G. (2007). What Counts in After School? Findings from the Massachusetts After School Research Study. *Journal of Youth Development*. www.nae4ha.org

Morris, D., Shaw, B., & Perney, J. (1990). Helping low readers in grades 2 and 3: An after-school volunteer tutoring program. *Elementary School Journal, 91,* 133-150.

National Collaboration for Youth. (2006). *Capturing Promising Practices in Recruitment and Retention of Youth Workers.* Washington, DC: National Collaboration for Youth. www.nassembly.org

Olds, D. L., Robinson, J., O'Brien, R., Luckey, D.W., Pettit, L.M., Henderson, C.R., et al. (2002). Home visiting by paraprofessionals and by nurses: A randmomized, controla trial. *Pediatrics, 110,* 486-496.

Pianta, R. C. (1999). *Enhancing relationships between children and teachers.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (2002). *Sustainability in school-linked after-school programs.* Retrieved October 22, 2007, from http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/FINAL%20Issue%20Brief%20Nov2002WEB.pdf (PDF file).

President & Fellows of Harvard College (2007). Research Update: Highlights From the Out-of-School Time Database. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Quinn, T., & Kahne, J. (2001). Wide awake to the world: The arts and urban schools—conflicts and contributions of an after-school program. *Curriculum Inquiry, 31,* 11-32.

Raley, R., Grossman, J., & Walker, K. (2005). *Getting it right: Strategies for after-school success.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Russell, C. A., Reisner, E. R., Pearson, L. M., Afolabi, K. P., Miller, T. D., & Mielke, M. B. (2006). *Evaluation of the out-of-school time initiative. Report on the first year.* Washington, DC: Policy Study Associates.

Rosenthal, R. & Vandell, D. L. (1996). Quality of care at school-age-child-care program: Regulatable features, observed experiences, child perspectives, and parent perspectives. *Child Development, 67,* 2434-2445.

Ross, J. G., Luepker, R.V., Nelson, G. D., Saavedra, P., & Hubbard, B. M. (1991). Teenage health teaching modules: Impact of teacher training on implementation and student outcomes. *Journal of School Health,* 61(1), 31-34.

Russell, C., Reisner, E., Pearson, L., Afolabi, K., Miller, T., Mielke, M. (2006). Evaluation of The Out-of-School Time Initiative. Report on the First Year. Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

Schacter, J. (2001). *Reducing social inequality in elementary school reading achievement: Establishing summer literacy day camps for disadvantaged children.* Santa Monica, CA: Milken Family Foundation.

Schultz, T., Lopez, E., & Hochberg, M. (1996). *Early childhood reform in seven communities: Frontline practice, agency management, and public policy.* Retrieved October 22, 2007, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/pubs/onlinepubs/reform/index.html

Scott-Little, C., Hamman, M. S., & Jurs, S. G. (2002). Evaluations of after-programs: A meta-evaluation of methodologies and narrative synthesis of findings. *American Journal of Evaluation, 23,* 387-419.

Sparks, G.M. (1986). The effectiveness of alternative training activities in changing teaching practices. *American Educational Research Journal, 23*(2), 217-225.

Sparks, G., & Bruder, S. (1987). Before and after peer coaching. *Educational leadership, 45*(3), 54-57.

Swafford, J. (1998). Teachers supporting teachers through peer coaching. *Support for Learning, 13*(2), 54-58.

Thompson, L. A. & Kelly-Vance, L. (2001). The impact of mentoring on academic achievement of at-risk youth. *Children and Youth Services Review, 23,* 227-242.

Vandell, D. L., & Shumow, L. (1999). After-school child care programs. *Future of Children, 9,* 64-79.

Walker, K. E., & Alberton, A. J. A. (2001). *Working together to build beacon centers in San Francisco: Evaluation findings from 1998-2000.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Warren, C., Feist, M., & Nevarez, N. (2002). *A place to grow: Evaluation of the New York city beacons.* Washington, DC: Academy for Education Development.

Whitaker, S. (2000). Mentoring beginning special education teachers and the relationship to attrition. *Exceptional children, 66*(4), 546-566.

Wilson-Ahlstrom, Yohalem, N, & Pittman, K. (2007). *Building quality improvement systems: Lessons from three emerging effors in the youth-serving sector.* Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc.

Wong, K., & Nicotera, A. (2003). Enhancing teacher quality: Peer coaching as a professional development strategy: A preliminary synthesis of the literature. Vanderbilt University.

Zimmer, R. Christina, R. Hamilton, L. S., & Prine-Weber, D. (2006). Evaluation of two out-of-school programs in Pittsburgh public schools. No child left behind's supplemental educational services and state of Pennsylvania's education assistance program. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

The Role of Frontline Staff in the
Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs:
An Exploratory Study
Report II

Contributors:
Lillian Bowie, M.A., Tawana Bandy, and Allison Metz, Ph.D.

January 2008

Project Manager: Allison Metz, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator: Kristin A. Moore, Ph.D.
Co-Principal Investigator: Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, Ph.D.

Background

The implementation of high-quality evidence-based practices cannot occur without well-trained, well-prepared practitioners who are supported by informed and competent supervisors, coaches, and program managers (Fixsen et al, 2005). We believe that understanding "what works" in program *implementation* is just as important as understanding "what works" in a program *model* (Metz, et al. 2007). Knowledge of both these factors will minimize the research-to-practice gap and facilitate the application of innovative, evidence-based practices throughout out-of-school time programs.

Recently, researchers have begun to study implementation in an effort to understand the key ingredients for successful program implementation. A synthesis of implementation research within the human services field completed by the National Implementation Research Network identified six core components that drive successful program implementation, referred to as "drivers."(Fixsen et al, 2005). These implementation drivers are:

- *Staff Selection:* Staff recruitment and selection are key components of implementation at practitioner and organizational levels.
- *Staff Training:* Staff members at all levels require training when a new practice is implemented. Effective training involves theory and discussion; demonstration of skills; and opportunities for practice and feedback.
- *Coaching, Mentoring, and Supervision:* Skills needed by successful practitioners can be introduced in training, but many skills can only really be learned on the job with the help of a consultant or coach. Coaching and mentoring include activities for individuals or groups, on-the-job observation, instruction, modeling, feedback, or debriefing of practitioners and other key staff in the program.
- *Internal Management Support:* Internal management support provides leadership to support implementation, makes use of a range of information to shape decision making, and provides structures and processes for implementing new practices and keeping staff focused on desired outcomes.
- *Systems-Level Partnerships:* Systems-level partnerships involve working with external partners to support program implementation and the frontline work of practitioners.
- *Staff and Program Evaluation:* Evaluation entails using measures of practitioner performance and adherence to the program model, along with program outcome measures, to assess overall program performance and develop quality improvement plans.

While implementation research related to these six core components has yielded important information for program developers and practitioners in a broad range of programs and services within the human services field (e.g., mental health, health, substance abuse, child welfare, and education), *almost no implementation research has been conducted in the out-of-school time field specifically* (Child Trends, 2007). In an effort to build the knowledge-base on effective implementation for out-of-school time programs, Child Trends has produced two special reports:

- A synthesis of implementation research in the out-of-school time field (Report 1); and
- An exploratory, descriptive study of the frontline implementation activities conducted by identified evidence-based out-of-school time programs (Report 2).

Both tasks build upon current implementation research findings related to the drivers of successful implementation and assess the role these drivers play in the implementation of effective out-of-school time programs.

This current report synthesizes information collected from directors of evidence-based out-of-school time programs related to the implementation of innovative programs and practices. Both reports focus on the three implementation drivers related to frontline practice: 1) staff selection and recruitment; 2) staff training; and 3) staff coaching and supervision. These three drivers were chosen because research shows that the implementation of high-quality evidence-based practices cannot occur without well-trained, well-prepared practitioners who are supported by informed and competent supervisors, coaches, and program managers (Fixsen et al, 2005). Forthcoming reports will explore the other program-level and systems-level drivers of successful implementation.

Rationale and Purpose of Study
In light of the evidence that successful implementation processes appear to be independent of the content of the practice or program being implemented, we hypothesized that the frontline drivers of implementation identified in the broader field of human services would also play a critical role in the implementation of evidence-based programs in the out-of-school time field.

Findings from Report 1 indicated that effective out-of-school programs use similar recruitment, selection, training, and coaching strategies, which contribute to their successful implementation, and, in turn, positive youth outcomes. A review of the major findings suggests that:
- Selecting staff based on multiple factors such as education, connectedness to youth, and program-specific skills and abilities, is important because these factors have been shown to contribute to engagement and participation in out-of-school time programs. In addition, programs should consider the needs of children and youth when recruiting and selecting staff, as well as the readiness, openness and motivation of staff to implement specific services and activities. Finally, staff recruitment strategies should be comprehensive and consistent evaluation standards should be applied when interviewing and hiring staff (Child Trends, 2007).
- Staff training is critical to successful implementation, and the content, structure, and timing of the training affects the integrity of program implementation. Specifically, training sessions should be theory-based. In addition, training should also allow time for facilitators to demonstrate new skills and for frontline staff to practice skills and receive constructive feedback. Trainings should be at least two days long to allow sufficient time to review program theory and to practice newly learned strategies and techniques. Finally, follow-up training should be provided at least every six months (Child Trends, 2007).
- The structure of the program and how services are rendered impacts how staff coaching is implemented "on the ground." Staff coaching takes the form of technical assistance from supervisors to on-the job observation by master trainers and peers. In addition, coaches should have knowledge of coaching theory and technique as well as content area knowledge. Finally, coaches and program staff should meet frequently, both formally and informally, and should engage in a wide variety of activities not limited to observations and critique (Child Trends, 2007).

Methodology
The findings above are based on limited research within the out-of-school time field. To glean more in-depth knowledge of the role of these implementation drivers in out-of-school time programs, semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with staff from out-of-school time programs which were identified as evidence-based (i.e., experimentally evaluated and demonstrated positive results). The purpose of the interview was to gather information to better understand the ways that the selection, recruitment, training, and coaching of frontline staff facilitate the successful implementation of evidenced-based practices in out-of-school time

programs. For the purpose of these interviews, "frontline staff" refers to staff members who deliver services directly to children and youth in a program.

Program Selection
A web-based search was conducted to identify effective programs. The resources that were used to identify evidence-based programs are listed below:
- *Promising Practices Network:* This resource provides summaries of programs and practices that have been proven to improve outcomes for children. The website is organized into four main areas: programs that work; research in brief; service delivery; and partner pages. Users can search for programs by outcome area, indicator, topic, evidence level, or alphabetically. More information can be found at http://www.promisingpractices.net/.
- *Child Trends Lifecourse Interventions to Nurture Kids Successfully (LINKS):* The LINKS guide is continually updated and presents extensive knowledge about experimentally evaluated programs found to "work" (or not work) to enhance children's development in a user-friendly format. Users can search for programs by outcome, age, or developmental stage, as well as by key words. More information can be found at http://www.childtrends.org/.
- *Child Trends City Scan:* City Scan provides an overview of programs within 15 major U.S. cities and the age groups that are served by these programs. These programs for children and adolescents (ages 8 to 16) focus on a variety of outcomes over a child's life. More information can be found at http://www.childtrends.org/what_works/City_Scan/
- *Harvard Family Research Project Database:* This resource includes information on evidence-based programs that prevent and reduce delinquency and other problem behaviors in youth. Programs in the database are rated according to their level of scientific rigor in demonstrating program effectiveness. Users can search for effective programs by particular risk or protective factors. Users can also access other tools such as a guide for conducting a community needs assessment. More information can be found at http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/evaldatabase.html.

Program Descriptions
After effective programs were identified, we contacted program directors through email and follow-up telephone calls to describe the purpose of the study and setup interviews. Over 20 out-of-school time programs were contacted and nine telephone semi-structured interviews were conducted. Interviewees were assured that their comments would be kept confidential. Program directors from the following programs were interviewd:
- *Students Today Aren't Ready For Sex (STARS):* The STARS program works within a comprehensive continuum of health and sexual education programming in the public schools, building on the unique skills, experiences and knowledge base of Oregon's 6th and 7th grade population and preparing them for more in-depth classroom-based learning at the 8th and 10th grade levels. STARS is exclusively developed to be an age appropriate program specifically for the 12-and 13-year-old youth.
- *BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life) Accelerated Learning Summer Program:* BELL Summer is an ongoing initiative during non-school hours designed to increase children's knowledge and mastery of reading, writing, and math; raise children's academic expectations and self-esteem; empower parents; and develop effective mentoring relationships between children and positive adult role models.
- *National Indian Youth Leadership (Project Venture):* Project Venture focuses on preventing substance abuse and developing peer relationships and group skills among high-risk American Indian youth and other youth through outdoors experiential activities, adventure

camps, community-oriented service learning and classroom-based problem solving activities. Relying on traditional American Indian values, it focuses on engaging youth in positive, fun projects. It is part of the National Indian Youth Leadership Project, a community-based non-profit organization which focuses on developing leadership skills among American Indian youth to become capable and positive contributors to their communities.

- *Project Toward No Drug Use (PTNDU):* PTNDU is a multi-session, school-based program designed to prevent drug use among high school students. The program curriculum alerts students to the health risks associated with drug use and helps students develop skills relevant to drug-resistance. The program was initially developed for students in alternative high schools; however, it has been successfully implemented in general high schools as well.
- *Teen Outreach Program (TOP):* The Teen Outreach Program is designed to prevent adolescent problem behaviors by enhancing normative processes of social development. The program seeks to engage young people in a high level of structured, volunteer community service that is closely linked to classroom-based discussions of future life options, such as those surrounding future career and relationship decisions.
- *Summer Career Exploration Program (SCEP):* SCEP is one of several programs offered by the Philadelphia Youth Network with a vision that young people will take their rightful places as full and contributing members of a world-class workforce for the region. SCEP aims to prepare low-income youth for college and work by engaging them in a career-related summer job and providing them with a supportive adult mentor.
- *Protecting You, Protecting Me (PY/PM):* PY/PM is designed to educate elementary school students about alcohol and vehicle safety. The program uses a peer teaching system called PAL, Peer Assistance and Leadership, to present elementary school students with information on the following 8 topics: Our Brain, Growth and Development, Health and Safety, Rules and Laws, Friends, Choices and Decisions, Media Awareness, and Communication. Four sites in Texas participated.
- *Youth Corps:* Youth Corps is a full-time paid service work program for young adults out of school. It is designed to promote a strong work ethic, a sense of public service, educational and employment prospects in participants; additionally, it is designed to benefit the communities in which the programs are housed. The program also provides a variety of enrichment services, such as academic and life skills training, job search help, GED courses, and contact with outside services.
- *All Stars:* All Stars is a school-based intervention program designed to reduce adolescents' engagement in risk behaviors such as substance use, violence and sexual activity. The program is intended for middle school students and consists of a curriculum that uses class debates, games, small group activities and individual meetings. In this evaluation, schools were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: control schools, schools where All Stars is implemented by regular classroom teachers, or schools were All Stars is implemented by outside specialists.

Protocol Description
Findings are summarized here without identifying individual respondents. Our goal is to present general themes that emerged across the interviews, illustrating them where appropriate, but without identifying particular programs. Program staff were informed that the information collected was to be included in a special report on implementation to Atlantic Philanthropies, and will be disseminated more widely to the out-of-school time field. The interview was structured to focus on the following topics:
- General background of and role of the frontline staff member in the agency
- Basic program information
- Staff Recruitment and Selection

- Process for recruiting frontline staff
- Staff characteristics considered when selecting frontline staff
- The interview process
- Challenges in recruiting and selecting frontline program staff and strategies used to overcome barriers
- Ways staff recruitment and selection contribute to the implementation of high quality programs
  - Staff Training
    - Training that staff receive before, during, and after providing services to children
    - Challenges in training frontline program staff and strategies used to overcome barriers
    - Ways staff training contributes to the implementation of high quality programs
  - Staff Coaching
    - Selecting staff coaches
    - Training and supporting staff coaches
    - Challenges in coaching frontline program staff and strategies used to overcome barriers
    - Ways staff coaches contribute to the implementation of high quality programs

Study Findings

In this section we report interview findings for each of the frontline implementation drivers assessed: staff selection and recruitment; staff training; and staff coaching. Findings are presented within the context of literature review findings for each of the implementation drivers.

Staff Recruitment and Selection

Staff selection, as defined by Fixsen et al. (2005), involves the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring and/or redeploying of existing staff. Although limited research exists, the selection of frontline implementing staff is considered one of the most critical components in successful program implementation (Mihalic et al., 2004). Frontline staff deliver program services and organizational staff (e.g. trainers, coaches, administrators, and supervisors) make the organizational changes needed to support frontline staff in delivering the evidence-based practices and programs.

A review of the implementation literature (Child Trends, 2007) found that comprehensive recruitment strategies were critical, and that selection criteria for staff included staff characteristics, staff credentials and staff skills. Interview findings are reported within this framework. Challenges and barriers are also discussed.

Recruitment Strategies. Staff recruitment is described as a critical aspect in the implementation of promising and effective out-of-school time programs because it directly impacts whether a program gets off the ground, and has practitioners who can successfully reach the intended target population. Program directors noted the following recruitment strategies:
- Meeting with public school principals to identify the best teachers in their schools
- Establishing a presence on university and college campuses by participating in job fairs
- Posting ads on websites such as craigslist and idealist.org
- Participating in community outreach activities and events
- Advertising job opportunities in community and local newspapers
- Discussing job opportunities with program volunteers; the volunteers have an allegiance and affinity to the program and already believe in its mission.

- Recruiting peers – a person who has delivered the program can be one of your best recruiters.

Staff Characteristics. Given staff's primary role in the delivery of services, selecting staff with the capacity to carry out evidence-based practices is essential. Selecting the appropriate staff affects whether programs are implemented with fidelity and the degree to which the intended target audience achieves successful outcomes (Metz et al., 2007). The following staff characteristics were highlighted during the interviews as vital traits for frontline workers:
- Program directors agreed that in order to effectively implement an out-of-school time program, frontline staff need to understand and endorse the program's vision and overall goals. It is important that staff believe in the program's mission because then they are more likely to follow the appropriate program guidelines, (or what one program director described as, "The established and research-proven recipe,") for implementing the program as designed and planned.
- Commitment and passion were cited as two fundamental human qualities which were vitally necessary to building rapport with young people.

Staff skills. In addition to personal characteristics, program directors of effective out-of-school time programs emphasized that staff skills were related to the quality of youth programming. In particular, program directors mentioned that the ability to communicate effectively, solve complex problems, and present multifaceted information in a comprehensive youth-friendly format were indispensable skills for the successful implementation of evidence-based programs. Program directors noted the importance of assessing these skills during the interview process.

Staff credentials. Finally, staff credentials (e.g. education, background, work experience) were mentioned as important factors to consider when selecting staff to implement out-of-school time programs. Six of the nine programs interviewed highlighted the importance of frontline staff having bachelor's or master's degrees. One program director noted that young people often look up to frontline staff as "role models," and it is difficult to stress academic excellence if they are not college graduates themselves. In addition, worker experience was cited by seven of the nine programs as critical selection criteria. It was agreed that staff with previous experience working with youth are naturally more flexible and knowledgeable about youth development, as compared to those who have no youth work experience.

Challenges and Barriers. While staff recruitment and selection are critical aspects in the implementation of out-of-school time programs, interviewees cited the following challenges and barriers:
- Conducting background checks is crucial but sometimes presents challenges due to long waiting periods and financial constraints on the program.
- High turn-over interferes with adult-youth relationship building.
- Attracting and keeping talented staff is difficult. Bright people have options offering competitive compensation is challenging given the financial constraints of OST programs.

Staff Training
It is important to remember that *staff members at all levels* require training when a new practice is implemented. A meta-analysis of research studies carried out in the human services field by Joyce and Showers (2002) found that while the content of staff training may vary considerably depending upon the evidenced-based practice or program being implemented, the methods of effective training seemed to be less variable (Fixsen and Blase, 2006). Effective staff training consists of the following three components: 1) providing practitioners with the background

information, theory, philosophy, and values of the new program or practice; 2) introducing and demonstrating the components and rationales of key practices; and, 3) providing opportunities to practice specific skills related to the new way of work and receive feedback in a safe training environment.

A review of the implementation literature specifically in the out-of-school time field (Child Trends, 2007) found that effective staff training emphasized:
- Workshops that Clearly Link Theory and Knowledge to Practice
- Interactive and Introspective Components
- Support from Program Directors and Supervisors
- Technical Assistance and Follow-up

The interviews with program directors demonstrated that the approach to training, the length of training, and timeframe by which the training is delivered all affect frontline staff's ability to implement evidenced-based programs effectively. Interview findings are reported below within this framework. Challenges and barriers are also discussed.

Training Approach. Below we present findings related to training approaches for effective out-of-school time programs.
- *Theory-based Approaches:* All of the program staff agreed that in order to effectively train frontline staff, the training session must review program theory and provide opportunities to practice. Although reviewing program theory during training was important across programs, this process took on different forms among the programs. For example, for one program, reviewing the theory involved providing a thorough overview of the program's curriculum. For another program, reviewing theory involved going over literacy and math best practices, and for another program, this process involved teaching program staff about community traditions and cultures.
- *Interactive Approaches (e.g., opportunities to role-play and present):* Program directors reported that successful training sessions were highly interactive and provided opportunities for frontline staff to: 1) develop and present lessons plans based on the programs' curriculum, and 2) engage in role-playing activities. These activities were deemed important for the following reasons:
    - Staff were required to practice how "best" to implement the program curriculum as planned and intended.
    - Staff received constructive feedback and guidance on how to improve.
    - Staff could discuss their personal apprehensions that may hinder the successful implementation of the program model.

Length of Training. The analysis of the interviews indicated that the length of training was also perceived as important and affected frontline staff's ability to successfully implement evidence-based programs. In fact, the majority of the interviewees stressed that one-day training sessions were typically insufficient and did not provide enough time to thoroughly review the program and practice newly learned skills. Although the length of the training sessions varied across programs, all but one program conducted training sessions that spanned between two and ten days. Generally, during the first day of training, program staff conducts the following activities:
- Review the program's mission
- Review the outcomes of the program evaluation research
- Review the program's theory of change models
- Review the program's foundational curriculum or best practices

- Participate in behavioral observation and activities to learn how to interact with young people

Generally during the second day, and subsequent days of the training, program staff conducts the following activities:
- Prepare sample lesson plans
- Work in teams and learn new creative ways to communicate with young people
- Practice teaching key activities, after which they receive feedback from other trainees and the trainer
- In some cases, the supervisor is present and they participate in role-playing activities

Timeframe for Training Sessions. The timeframe for when trainings were offered was also an important component of effective implementation. All but one of the programs mandated a formal training at the start of program before staff interacted with young people. Six of the nine programs offered and mandated mid-year in-service training, and the majority of the programs offered on-going technical assistance year-round. The nature of the on-going training sessions was dependent on the emergent needs of program staff.

Challenges and Barriers. Program directors identified the following factors as challenges and barriers to training for frontline staff:
- Simulating a real interaction with young people and staff during training
- Learning as much as possible about the staff person's background prior to the training so that the training addresses his or her personal needs directly
- Renting space to conduct the training
- Setting up make-up sessions for those who are not able to attend the scheduled training

Staff Coaching
Staff coaching is a broad term that includes activities for both individuals and groups, such as on-the-job observations, instruction, modeling, feedback, and debriefing of practitioners and other key program staff. Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, and Wallace (2005) define the fundamentals of staff coaching as "…teaching and reinforcing evidence-based skill development and adaptations of skills and craft knowledge to fit the personal styles of practitioners" (p. 47).

As found in our review of the implementation literature for out-of-school time (Child Trends, 2007), program directors conceptualized and discussed the ideal of staff coaching in varied ways. Findings from the interviews indicated that the structure of the program and service delivery model affects how coaching strategies are implemented. The various structures of coaching models are described below:

- Staff coaching in a number of programs was described as technical assistance where frontline staff received training on a quarterly basis from supervisor.
- In another program, upper management staff gave front-line staff constructive feedback, management techniques, and continuous motivational support on a bi-annual basis.
- Another interviewee shared that master trainers are flown in to observe frontline staff implementing the program practices and staff are provided with feedback on their performance. In addition, the master trainers develop action plans for improvement and/or maintenance strategies for future program implementation.
- Lastly, peer-to-peer coaching, rather than top-down coaching, was deemed most effective in another program, because it supported the belief that the best coaches are those individuals doing the work on a daily basis.

The person providing staff coaching varied across the programs, but all of the coaches had prior experience in the "coaching role." For instance, coaches were either master trainers, supervisors, or staff members with years of experience working with youth.

Conclusions

The effective implementation of out-of-school time programs is as important as the components of the intervention or program itself. For example, it is possible to implement an ineffective program well, or an effective program poorly. Neither of these approaches would lead to good outcomes for children and youth. Desirable outcomes are more likely to happen when effective interventions are implemented well (Fixen et al, 2005, Metz et al, 2007).

Results from this study support what has been found in the limited implementation research conducted in the out-of-school time field. Specifically, program directors noted that selection criteria for staff should include staff abilities and interpersonal skills with youth, as well as education and background. In addition, training approaches should involve both theory and practice, and provide sufficient time for initial training and follow-up technical assistance to ensure that newly learned skills are effectively implemented on the frontline. Finally, while coaching is considered an important implementation component, the structure of coaching was dependent upon the type of program and service delivery model.

Findings from these interviews, and a review of the implementation literature (Child Trends, 2007), underscore the importance of frontline staff in the implementation of evidence-based program models. Program directors reported that staff recruitment and selection, staff training, and staff coaching contribute to the successful implementation of out-of-school time programs.

The correspondence between the meager research literature and reports from out-of-school time programs delivering rigorously evaluated programs is encouraging. It suggests that we do know something about how to select, train and coach staff. However, there is much more to learn. For example, what are the specific staff skills necessary for implementing evidence-based practices? What role does motivation play? How can training be improved? How can staff coaching models be embedded in programs? Future research on the issues that have emerged from this exploratory study is critical for the field to learn more about how evidence-based programs can be implemented and replicated successfully.

References
Bandy, T., Bowie, L., Burkhauser, M., Metz, A., (in alphabetical order) (2007). The Role of Frontline Staff in the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs: Volume I: Washington, D.C.: Child Trends

Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature. Page 5. National Implementation Research Network, University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. Available online at http://nirn.fmhi.usf.edu/resources/publications/Monograph/

Fixsen, D. L. & Blase, K. (2006). "What works" for implementing "what works" to achieve consumer benefits. National Implementation Research Network, University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. Presentation at the Treatment for the Homeless TA Workshop.

Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). Student achievement through staff development (3rd Ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Metz, A.J.R., Espiritu, R., & Moore, K.A. (2007). A 10-step guide to adopting and sustaining evidence-based practices in out-of-school time programs (*Research-to-Results* brief).Washington, DC: Child Trends. Available online at www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2007_06_04_RB_EBP2.pdf

Metz, A. J. R., Blasé, K., Bowie, L. (2007). Implementing Evidenced-Based Practices:
Six "Drivers" of Success (Research to Results Brief). Washington. Research Brief DC: Child Trends

Mihalic, S., Irwin, K., Fagan, A., Ballard, D., & Elliot, D. (2004*). Successful program implementation: Lessons from blueprints.* Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Retrieved November 8, 2007 from http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/204273.pdf