



Developmental Research Support for Participation in Enrichment and Extracurricular Activities for Youth in Foster Care

Below is a list of resources that illustrate the importance and benefits of enrichment activities for young people. For additional discussion and research, please see Youth Law Center's report [*Closing the Extracurriculars Gap: Prioritizing Extracurricular Activities as a Key Intervention for Children and Youth in Foster Care and Juvenile Justice \(2022\)*](#).

I. Adolescent Brain Development and the Impact and Mitigation of Trauma

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, *Issue Brief No. 4: Promoting Development of Resilience Among Young People in Foster Care* (2012),

<https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/JCYOI-PromotingDevelopmentofResilience-2012.pdf>.

Child Welfare Information Gateway, U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Servs., *Understanding the Effects of Maltreatment on Brain Development* (2015),

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/brain_development.pdf.

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, *The Road to Adulthood: Aligning Child Welfare Practice with Adolescent Brain Development* (2017),

<https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-theroadtoadulthood-2017.pdf>.

II. The Importance of Building Connections for Youth in Foster Care

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, *Issue Brief No. 2: Social Capital: Building Quality Networks for Young People in Foster Care* (2012)

<https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/jcyoi-IssueBrief2SocialCapital-2012.pdf>.

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, *Fostering Youth Transitions: Using Data to Drive Policy and Practice Decisions* (2018),

<https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-fosteringyouthtransitions-2018.pdf>.

III. Youth with Experience in Foster Care Face Increased Risk of Poor Outcomes



Mark E. Courtney, et al., *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 26* 113 (2011), <https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Midwest-Eval-Outcomes-at-Age-26.pdf>.

IV. Benefits of Extracurriculars: Reducing Risky Behavior and Improving School Performance

Jonathan Zaff, et al., *Implications of Extracurricular Activity Participation During Adolescence on Positive Outcomes*, 18(6) *J. of Adolescent Rsch.* 599 (2003), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200031279_Implications_of_Extracurricular_Activity_Participation_During_Adolescence_on_Positive_Outcomes (finding that consistent participation in extracurriculars from eighth through twelfth grade predicts academic achievement and prosocial behaviors in young adulthood, and noting additional benefits of keeping youth off the street during high-risk hours and increasing civic involvement).

Amy J. A. Arbreton, et al., *Beyond Safe Havens: A Synthesis of 20 Years of Research on the Boys & Girls Clubs* (2005), <http://admin.issuelab.org/permalink/download/1180> (summarizing research finding participation in Boys & Girls Clubs was linked to reduced delinquent behavior, higher academic achievement, increased access to and safer use of technology, and higher career goal settings).

Patricia A. Lauer, et al., *Out-of-School-Time Programs: A Meta-Analysis of Effects for At-Risk Students*, 76(2) *Rev. of Educ. Rsch.* 275 (2006), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/216501140_Out-of-School-Time_Programs_A_Meta-Analysis_of_Effects_for_At-Risk_Students (examining 35 out-of-school-time studies and finding statistically significant positive effects of out-of-school-time programs on both reading and math skills).

Joseph A. Durlak, et al., *A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents*, 45 *Am. J. of Cmty. Psychology* 294 (2010), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/42346373_A_Meta-Analysis_of_After-School_Programs_That_Seek_to_Promote_Personal_and_Social_Skills_in_Children_and_Adolescents (evaluating 75 reports on after-school programs and finding statistically significant increases in participants' self-perceptions, school bonding, and social behaviors, reductions in problem behaviors, and improvement in academic performance).



Seth J. Schwartz, et al., *Promotion as Prevention: Positive Youth Development as Protective against Tobacco, Alcohol, Illicit Drug, and Sex Initiation*, 14(4) *Applied Developmental Sci.* 197 (2010),

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10888691.2010.516186?scroll=top&needAccess=true> (studying youth from fifth through tenth grade and finding that “positive youth development” was negatively associated with sex initiation and use of tobacco, marijuana, and hard drugs, and was positively associated with condom use).

National Collaboration for Youth, *The Impact of Youth Development Programs on Student Academic Achievement* (2011),

<http://nationalassembly.org/Uploads2/Resources/SchoolSuccessBrief.pdf> (summarizing different youth programs that improved participants’ academic performance, sense of well-being and social outlooks, and lowered risk of pregnancy, suspension, and course failure).