Student Safety and Out-of-School Time

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AUGUSTANA RESEARCH INSTITUTE | SIOUX FALLS THRIVE

This report presents the results of a study commissioned by Sioux Falls Thrive and conducted by the Augustana Research Institute (ARI). Sioux Falls Thrive's mission is to unite business, government, nonprofit, and faith-based sectors in initiatives that ensure all children in the Sioux Falls area have the resources they need to achieve their optimal educational and career potential. The purpose of this study is to measure supply and demand for student supervision during out-of-school time (OST) and to identify barriers to providing and accessing safe, supervised, and enriching environments during OST.

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Executive Summary

Children spend only about 14% of their time in school. Out-of-school-time (OST) programs—including afterschool and summer programs—have the potential to increase students' time in structured, educational settings by as much as 80%, adding an additional 1,028 hours on top of the school day. During these additional hours, OST programs can provide supervision, help ensure student safety, and keep students actively engaged in meaningful activities.

In a city of working parents, OST supervision is a workforce issue. Compared to national averages, Sioux Falls has a high proportion of working parents. Nationally, 65% of school-age children live in homes where all parents are in the labor force. In Sioux Falls, that rate is 84%. Parents miss an average of five days of work annually due to lack of afterschool care. Nationally, parental concern about children's safety during afterschool time is estimated to cost companies as much as $300 billion annually in healthcare and lost job productivity. OST programs—coupled with flexible workplaces that accommodate parents' reasonable needs to meet family obligations—can reduce parental stress and potentially improve productivity.

In Sioux Falls, about 21,007 school-age children (ages 6 to 17) live in families where all parents are in the labor force. However, not all children whose parents are in the labor force need or want child care. Statewide surveys suggest around 41.5% of students either do participate or would like to participate in an afterschool program—an estimated 4,436 elementary students; 2,162 middle school students; and 2,204 high school students. Given that most of the 5,000 available school-age child care spots are restricted to or available for children ages 12 and under, there is a close match between demand for elementary afterschool spots and their availability. However, an estimated 4,000 or more middle and high school students who want to participate in an afterschool program are not served by these child care spots.

Students who are not enrolled in OST programs may have alternative arrangements for supervision and enrichment outside of school, or they may spend significant time in self-care. South Dakota has the highest statewide average of students taking care of themselves after school (27% in SD versus 20% nationally) and sits below the national average in students likely to enroll in an afterschool program if one were available (32% in SD versus 41% nationally). In short, compared to residents of other states, more South Dakotans appear to believe that self-care is acceptable and afterschool programs are unnecessary.

Parent Perspectives

Parents surveyed for this study reported that, during the school year, most children (72%) spend fewer than six hours without adult supervision, and over one-third (39%) are never without adult supervision—but a majority of middle and high school students spend at least some time in self-care each week. During the summer, roughly one-third of middle and high school students spend more than 30 hours without adult supervision.

Parents report that, during the school year, 60% of students overall are meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities. But during the summer, engagement levels drop off, particularly for older students who are more likely to be engaged in school-based sports, clubs, and other activities that do not run through the summer.

Overall, about 75% of parents reported their childcare needs are met. Single parents and lower income parents were more likely to report unmet childcare needs. The most commonly reported barriers to accessing childcare are cost (65%), followed by providers' hours of operation (46%), the

availability of open spots in programs (40%), and transportation (32%) or location (23%). Parents with unmet childcare needs also commonly reported age as a barrier: their children are too old to be eligible for existing programs (over 12) and not interested in the types of activities offered. For older students, parents said providing age-appropriate activities is critical but often difficult.

Parents with unmet childcare needs identified mornings before school, late evenings, and holidays or no-school days as times they would like to have childcare but do not. According to parents, conflicts between work schedules and childcare provider schedules cause significant headaches or may lead to children being unsupervised during gap times. Many parents said they had switched jobs or shifts—or even opted out of the workforce—in order to accommodate childcare needs.

Even parents who said their childcare needs are met reported significant stress in trying to cobble together arrangements and adjust employment or other personal schedules to ensure children are cared for. Summer was singled out as especially difficult because many summer camps run for only a few weeks or part-time. Likewise, cost—a barrier year-round—is a higher barrier in the summer, when parents of younger school-age children often pay for full-time daycare.

Parents said it is especially difficult to find dependable, quality, affordable care for children with disabilities.

Student Perspectives

Students who were interviewed for this report most frequently reported spending out-of-school time with parents and siblings, extended family, and friends. For elementary students in particular, extended family play a significant role in out-of-school supervision, sometimes providing full-time out-of-school-time care, and often filling in on no-school days or during the summer. Middle and high school students were less likely to report spending time with extended family and more likely to say they spend out-of-school time with friends. Older students were also more likely to report spending time without adult supervision.

In interviews, students were asked whether they would like to participate in an out-of-school time program if one were available and what types of activities they would enjoy. Both elementary and middle school students said they would like a before-school program similar to the afterschool programs they attend. Overall, elementary students were most likely to say they would like to participate in a program, whereas middle and high school students were more likely to say no to the general idea of out-of-school time programs while at the same time noting an interest in specific types of lessons or activities, especially outdoor activities and sports or music lessons.

Stakeholder Perspectives

Stakeholders reflected that safety and supervision problems begin at home, either in chaotic households or in households where parents work long hours or multiple jobs to make ends meet. They agreed that residential mobility and housing instability are risk factors that make students less likely to apply for and successfully access OST programs.

According to stakeholders, the most significant unmet needs are an overall lack of capacity in out-of-school-time programs (due primarily to staffing difficulties), plus particular times of need (before school, on no-school days, during the summer, and into the late evening), geographies of need (areas of rapid growth on the west side of town and certain high poverty schools), and populations with special needs (including students with disabilities and students involved—or potentially involved—with the juvenile justice system).

In addition to these unmet needs, stakeholders reported that major barriers to OST program participation are (1) finding programs that are a good fit, (2) cost, (3) and behavior problems. Though older students do not necessarily need full-time care themselves, stakeholders reiterated that the cost of childcare for young children (including preschool) is a barrier to older children's participation in OST activities because they may be expected to watch younger siblings in lieu of costly daycare.

Stakeholders' top concern when it comes to OST program sustainability was staffing. Agreement was unanimous that minimizing staff turnover and investing in relationships is critical to successfully serving students. But providers struggle to retain and hire staff in order to maintain capacity; across the board, they reported staffing challenges. A few providers said they have even capped capacity below licensed limits because they cannot hire enough staff. A survey of OST providers conducted for this study confirmed that many programs operate below licensed capacity.

Stakeholders identified markers of quality programs, including a trained and dedicated staff that fosters caring relationships with students, structured programming that balances student choice and the need for structure to promote safety and enrichment, and a variety of age-appropriate activities, including especially leadership and career-focused activities for older students. They pointed out that, for older students, OST programs function more to provide enrichment than direct supervision.

Conclusions

Stakeholders highlighted the potential for community partnerships, including among schools, colleges and universities, juvenile justice, neighborhoods, transportation providers, the faith-based community, and employers. Given the cross-cutting nature of OST programming, stakeholders emphasized the importance of broad community involvement.

Like parents, stakeholders insisted that employers are a central piece of the OST puzzle, and that employer flexibility for a parent-heavy workforce is important. OST providers also said they would like to see more investment from businesses in resources for OST programs, especially access to technology or STEM and career activities.

Parents, students, and stakeholders all remarked on the importance of neighborhoods. Students almost universally reported feeling safe at school, but several said they felt unsafe in their neighborhoods. Parents and stakeholders encouraged outreach to neighborhoods to recruit and engage students in out-of-school time programs. Stakeholders pointed out that fear is a barrier for some families to participate in OST programs and they emphasized the need for culturally sensitive outreach.

In sum, Sioux Falls boasts an abundance of OST programs and supervision providers, but financial, geographic, information, and capacity and staffing barriers mean not all programs are accessible to students who might benefit most. A collective impact initiative should consider ways to target program resources to efficiently and effectively reach academically or socially vulnerable students.

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1. Why Study Out-of-School Time?

Children spend most of their time out of school

Children spend only about 14% of their time in school. In South Dakota, the state requires 176 student days annually, and 962.5 instructional hours for grades 6 through 12 or 875 instructional hours for K – 5. In Sioux Falls, students spend about 7 hours per day in school, or 1,232 hours per year. Given 8,766 hours in a year, local students spend about 14% of their time in school.

Out-of-school-time (OST) programs—including afterschool and summer programs—have the potential to increase students' time in structured, educational settings by as much as 80%, adding an additional 1,028 hours on top of the school day. Afterschool programs typically run for about 3 hours after school. A student who attended an afterschool program fulltime for an entire school year would spend an additional 528 hours in a structured, educational environment, increasing their total time spent in school or another structured environment from 14% to 20%. Students who attend a summer program fulltime for 8 hours per day for 3 months in the summer would add an additional 500 hours, yielding a total of more than 25% of their time spent in a structured, educational environment. Over the course of a year, afterschool and summer OST programs have the potential to increase students' hours of structured, educational time as much as 80%, from 1,232 hours in school to 2,260 hours in school or OST programs.

During these additional hours, OST programs can provide supervision, help ensure student safety, and keep students engaged in meaningful activity. For students, OST programs can enhance wellness and improve academic achievement. For parents, they alleviate worries about what students are doing while parents are at work. For employers, OST programs not only develop skills among students who will become the future workforce; they also help working parents remain focused and productive.

Sioux Falls' working parents

Compared to national averages, Sioux Falls has a high proportion of working parents. Nationally, 65% of school-age children live in homes where all parents are in the labor force. In Sioux Falls, that rate is 84%.

The city of Sioux Falls is home to 167,884 residents, of whom about 25% are under 18. School-age children between the ages of 5 and 17 make up about 17% of the city's population (Table 1).

Table 1. Children as a percentage of the Sioux Falls population

Total population	167,884 (+/- 45)
Under 5	7.8% (+/- 0.2)
5 to 9	7.0% (+/- 0.3)
10 to 14	6.4% (+/- 0.3)
15 to 17	3.6% (+/- 0.1)

Source: 2012-16 ACS Table S0101, Sioux Falls city

At 17% of the population, school-age children in Sioux Falls number around 28,540. Consistent with this number, the Sioux Falls School District reported first-week K – 12 enrollment in 2017-18 was 24,031.

Elementary-age children (ages 5 to 9) compose about 7.0% of the population, or 11,752 children. Middle-school age children (ages 10 to 14) make up about 6.4% of the population, or about 10,745

children. And high school children (ages 15 to 17) are about 3.6% of the population, or about 6,044 children.

In 2016-17, the Sioux Falls School District reported total fall enrollment for elementary was 10,689, for middle schools was 5,209, and for high schools was 6,640.[1]

Sioux Falls is home to about 19,690 families with children. Of those families, about 65% are headed by married couples, 26% by single mothers, and 9% by single fathers. Across all family types, about a quarter of families with children have only young children under 6. The other three-fourths have school-age children (Table 2).

Table 2. Selected Family Characteristics for Sioux Falls

	Married couples	Single mother	Single father
Total families with children under 18	12,891 (+/- 540)	5,102 (+/- 461)	1,697 (+/- 319)
Families with children under 6 only	27.0% (+/- 2.5)	22.2% (+/- 4.3)	25.7% (+/- 7.8)
Families with children 6 to 17 only	45.2% (+/- 2.4)	61.2% (+/- 5.2)	58.8% (+/- 9.4)
Families with children under 6 and 6 to 17	27.8% (+/- 2.8)	16.6% (+/- 3.4)	15.5% (+/- 6.1)
Families with all parents in labor force	10,375 (80.5%) (+/- 520 or 2.6)	4,359 (85.4%) (+/- 471 or 4.7)	1,622 (95.6%) (+/- 315 or 4.1)
Families in poverty	3.8% (+/- 1.1)	33.1% (+/- 5.8)	Not reported

Source: ACS Tables S1101, S2302, S1702 (2012-16 city of Sioux Falls)

In more than four out of five families in Sioux Falls, all parents are in the labor force (i.e., employed or unemployed but seeking employment) (Table 2).

Compared to younger children, school-age children are more likely to live in a family where all parents are in the labor force. About 75% of children under 6 live in families where all parents are in the labor force, compared to 84% of school-age children (Table 3).

[1] Fall enrollment figures are reported in the district's annual Data Profile.

Table 3. Children in families with working parents, Sioux Falls

	Married couples	Single mother	Single father	All family types
Children under 6 in families where all parents are in the labor force	7,842 (+/- 500) (74%)	2,632 (+/- 416) (74%)	900 (+/- 227) (93%)	11,374 (75%)
Total children under 6	10,625 (+/- 487)	3,570 (+/- 443)	970 (+/- 226)	15,165 (+/- 447)
Children ages 6 to 17 in families where all parents are in the labor force	13,301 (+/- 794) (81%)	5,843 (+/- 705) (87%)	1,863 (+/- 448) (95%)	21,007 (84%)
Total children ages 6 to 17	16,417 (+/- 818)	6,691 (+/- 744)	1,954 (+/- 448)	25,062 (+/- 552)

Source: ACS Table B23008 (2012-16 city of Sioux Falls)

By comparison, in the United States as a whole, about 65% of children under 6 (and just 58% of children in married-couple families) are in families where all parents are in the labor force. For school-age children, the percentage of children in families where all parents are in the labor force is 13 percentage points higher in Sioux Falls than nationally. The rate is higher in Sioux Falls across family types, but the difference is greatest for married couple families (Table 4).

Table 4. Children in families with working parents, United States

	Married couples	Single mother	Single father	All family types
Children under 6 in families where all parents are in the labor force	8,627,436 (58%)	4,677,665 (73%)	1,663,486 (89%)	14,968,587 (65%)
Total children under 6	14,783,129	6,378,402	1,864,329	23,025,860
Children ages 6 to 17 in families where all parents are in the labor force	19,989,997 (65%)	10,083,747 (80%)	3,070,167 (88%)	33,143,911 (71%)
Total children ages 6 to 17	30,894,145	12,590,079	3,485,228	46,969,451

Source: ACS Table B23008 (2012-16 United States)

In Sioux Falls, about 21,007 school-age children (ages 6 to 17) live in families where all parents are in the labor force. In order to better estimate the need for out-of-school supervision and activities, that number must be broken down by age: high school–age students do not have the same supervision needs or program interests as elementary-age children.

Table 5 estimates the number of students by school level who live in families in which all parents are in the labor force. Estimates are based on 2016-17 public school enrollment data from the Sioux Falls School District, estimating that 84% of children have all parents in the labor force.[2]

Table 5. Children in families where all parents work by school level

	SFSD Enrollment	Estimated Students in Families where All Parents Work	Estimated Demand for Afterschool Programs
Elementary	10,689	8,979	4,436
Middle School	5,209	4,376	2,162
High School	6,640	5,578	2,204

Note that these estimates exclude students enrolled in private schools, open enrolled to other districts, or otherwise educated outside of the Sioux Falls School District—an estimated 4,500 school-age students. If these students' age distribution and parental labor force involvement matches the distributions seen in the Sioux Falls School District and city, respectively, that would mean an additional 1,800 elementary students, 874 middle school students, and 1,100 high school students living in families in which all parents are in the labor force, and additional demand for afterschool programs of 889 elementary students, 432 middle school students, and 543 high school students.

There are an estimated 5,000 school-age child care spots available in Sioux Falls (Table 17), mostly for children ages 12 and under. That number suggests an undersupply of between 4,000 and 6,000 spots for elementary-age children alone.

However, not all children whose parents are in the labor force need or want child care. Statewide surveys suggest around 14% of students participate in afterschool programs, but 32% of those who do not would if one were available (i.e., 27.5% of children overall).[3] In other words, 41.5% of students either do participate or would like to participate in an afterschool program. This figure was used to calculate the estimated demand in Table 5. These estimates assume that demand is constant across school levels.

Given that most of the 5,000 available school-age child care spots are restricted to or available for children ages 12 and under, the revised demand estimates suggest a close match between demand for elementary afterschool spots and their availability. However, an estimated 4,000 or 5,000 middle and high school students who want to participate in an afterschool program are not served by these child care spots.

Even for elementary students, apparent equilibrium between supply and demand does not mean the needs of all students are being met. Survey and focus group results presented below suggest that

[2] The percentage of school-age children in families where all parents are in the labor force may vary by age and with the presence of younger siblings in the home. As Table 3 demonstrates, older children are more likely than younger children to be in a family where all parents are in the labor force. This may reflect parents' decisions to stay home with younger children at least until they enter school. Table 2 shows that more than one-third of school-age children are in homes with a sibling who is under the age of 6, so these children may be more likely to have a parent at home. Yet in Sioux Falls, even for children under 6, 75% are in families where all parents are in the labor force.

[3] http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_National_Report.pdf

geographical mismatches and transportation hurdles—among other barriers—prevent some students from enrolling in out-of-school programs.

OST programs are a workforce issue

In a city of working parents, OST supervision is a workforce issue. Parents miss an average of five days of work annually due to lack of afterschool care.[4] Nationally, parental concern about children's safety during afterschool time is estimated to cost companies as much as $300 billion annually in healthcare and lost job productivity. Afterschool programs—coupled with flexible workplaces that accommodate parents' reasonable needs to meet family obligations—can reduce parental stress and potentially improve productivity.[5]

OST programs are a safety issue

For the community at large, OST programs may improve public safety. In fact, federal funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers was originally justified in part because of the expected effect on student safety. Based on the premise that 2 – 8 p.m. is the peak time for juvenile crime, grant funding was intended to keep students engaged in learning and out of trouble after school. During the program's first few years, grantees reported drops in behavioral problems; drug, alcohol, and tobacco use; juvenile crime; and teen pregnancy.[6]

In part, OST programs promote safety by reducing the amount of time students spend unsupervised or in self-care. Self-care (i.e., unsupervised out-of-school time) is a risk factor for behavioral problems. Self-care is positively associated with child's age, maternal employment, family structure (single parents), and social networks (e.g., extended family to check in on children). Although children from middle- or upper-income white families with educated mothers are more likely to experience self-care, children in lower-income and black families may be more likely to experience *intensive* and *unsupervised* self-care out of the home. The risk of associated behavioral problems escalates with age as adolescents spend more time in unstructured self-care outside the home, but those at greatest risk are children who have persistently been in self-care since elementary. Risk is also elevated for adolescents who spend unsupervised time out of the home, and particularly in neighborhoods with high levels of crime and disorganization, or who have preexisting behavioral problems.[7]

Evaluations of out-of-school-time programs have found that programs yield significant reductions in neighborhood juvenile crime, drug use, and teen birth and improvements in behavior and school attendance.[8] Chicago's After School Matters, an apprenticeship program for high school students,

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[4] SD Afterschool Partnership Impact Report: "Creating a Powerful Picture…Why South Dakota's families, schools, businesses and others need quality afterschool and summer programs." (January 2014)
[5] Catalyst. "After School Worries; *Tough on Parents, Bad for Business*". *Catalyst*. 2006.
[6] Adriana de Kanter, et al., 2000. "21st Century Community Learning Centers: Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities for America's Families." U.S. Department of Education.
[7] Mahoney, Joseph L. and Maria E. Parente. 2009. "Should We Care about Adolescents Who Care for Themselves? What We've Learned and What We Need to Know about Youth in Self-care." *Child Development Perspectives* 3(3):189-195. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3336160/ For more on self-care, its causes, and its consequences, see Virginia Cain and Sandra Hofferth, "Parental Choice of Self-care for School-age Children," Journal of Marriage and the Family, vol. 51 (1994): 65–77; Harriet Presser, "Can We Make Time for Children? The Economy, Work Schedules, and Child Care," Demography, vol. 26 (1998): 523–543. Lynne Casper and Kristin Smith, "Selfcare: Why do Parents Leave their Children Unsupervised?" Demography, vol. 41(2004): 303–314.
[8] Allen, Patricia, J. et al. *Afterschool & STEM; System-Building Evaluation 2016.* The PEAR Institute, 2016.

has been shown to reduce drug and gang involvement and increase positive attitudes toward school.[9] In a summary of the evaluation literature, the Afterschool Alliance reports that, by providing social and emotional support, OST programs can decrease criminal activity and aggressive behavior among students; students in these programs also showed improved social skills, self-confidence, feelings of safety, and recognition of the dangers of risky behaviors.[10] As a result of these effects, the Afterschool Alliance claims, every $1 invested in afterschool programs saves at least $3 by increasing children's earning potential, improving performance at school, and reducing crime and juvenile delinquency.[11]

At-Risk Behavior

This section provides an overview of local data available regarding student safety and at-risk behavior.[12]

Teen Births

Teen births can diminish opportunities for children and mothers, especially for mothers under age 18 who have not yet finished high school. Children born to teen mothers are more likely to be born with low birth weight, have health problems, and need hospitalization.

Since 2008, both Minnehaha and Lincoln County have seen a downward trend in births to single teens under age 20. Table 6 shows the number of all live births to single females under the age of 20 and that number as a percent of total births.

Table 6. Births to single teens, Minnehaha and Lincoln County, 2008-16

	Minnehaha		Lincoln	
	2008-12	2012-16	2008-12	2012-16
Number of births	908	686	94	70
Percent of births	6.5%	4.7%	2.3%	1.8%

Source: South Dakota Kids Count and South Dakota Department of Health

Juvenile Justice Involvement

Table 7 summarizes juvenile justice involvement for youth in Minnehaha and Lincoln County in state fiscal year 2017. In that year, Minnehaha and Lincoln County together saw 2,003 youth referred to court by the states attorneys for adjudicatory action, though only 46 youth were ultimately committed to the Department of Corrections. During the same period, 374 youth were referred to court services for non-adjudicatory action, and 218 were admitted to state accredited drug and alcohol treatment (possibly, but not necessarily, as the result of a court order).

[9] https://www.childtrends.org/programs/after-school-matters/

[10] "Keeping Kids Safe and Supported in the Hours Afterschool." May 2014. Afterschool Alliance. Metlife Foundation Afterschool Report; *Issue Brief No. 65.*

[11] http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/SD-afterschool-facts.pdf

[12] For more information, see the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which provides statewide estimates of risky behavior among high school youth, including behaviors that contribute to injury, violence, or suicide; behaviors that contribute to tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use; behaviors that contribute to sexual behaviors that result in HIV or other sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy; and behaviors that contribute to dietary behavior, physical activity, oral health, and skin cancer. The latest available report, summarizing results from 2007 to 2015, is available online from the South Dakota Department of Health: https://doh.sd.gov/documents/statistics/YRBS2007-2015summary.pdf

Table 7. Juvenile Justice Involvement, Minnehaha and Lincoln County, FY2017

	Minnehaha	Lincoln
Juvenile Cases in Court (Adjudicatory Action)	1,892	111
Juvenile Cases Referred to Court Services (Non-Adjudicatory Action)	263	111
DOC Commitments	37	9
Juvenile Admissions to Drug/Alcohol Treatment	209	9

Source: South Dakota Kids Count, Court Services Department of the South Dakota Unified Judicial System, and South Dakota Department of Human Services, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Juvenile Cases in Court (Adjudicatory Action) and Juvenile Cases Referred to Court Services (Non-Adjudicatory Action) refers to juveniles referred to the Unified Judicial System (UJS) by the states attorneys. Juvenile informational complaints may be filed with the states attorney by law enforcement officials, parents, court services officers (alleged probation violations), and others. The states attorney may decide to file a formal petition (in court, adjudicated), refer the case to a court services department for a 90-day informal adjustment (court services, non-adjudicated), refer the case to a private agency approved by the court, or take no action. Numbers are for the county in which apprehension took place and represent the number of cases rather than individuals. In other words, if a child was referred to UJS for several different offenses, he or she would be counted several different times.

DOC Commitments refers to the total number of juveniles committed to the Department of Corrections during FY2017. The figure includes youth who have had multiple petitions committing them to the Department of Corrections with separate dispositional dates during the reporting period. County reflects county of record for the adjudication and disposition proceedings, which may be either the juvenile's county of residence or the county where the offense occurred. Once committed to the Department of Corrections, youth may be placed in a juvenile corrections facility, residential treatment facility, group care facility, or foster care.

Juvenile Admissions to Drug/Alcohol Treatment refers to youth who receive state accredited alcohol and drug services ranging from crisis intervention to structured treatment programs. The person is counted once for every program in which the client participated. However, if a person was admitted to the same program more than once, the person is only counted once. Admissions include both residential and outpatient treatment programs. Although the possibility of a client being counted more than once exists, it is probably uncommon.

OST programs are an academic issue

Evaluations of out-of-school-time programs have found significant positive effects on academic performance, attitudes toward school, and high school graduation.[13] In a 2010 national analysis of

[13] Baker, Stephen, and Robert C. Chaskin. *Negotiating Among Opportunity and Constraint*; *The Participation of Young People in Out-of-School-Time Activities.* Chapin Hall Center for Children. Chicago. 2006; Deschenes, Sarah N., et al.. 2012. "Engaging Older Youth." The Wallace Foundation; de Kanter, Adriana, et al., 2000. "21st Century Community Learning Centers: Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities for America's Families." U.S. Department of Education.

teacher-reported performance data, Learning Point Associates found that 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool and summer programs raised math grades 37% and English grades 38%, improved homework completion and class participation 72%, and increased positive class behavior 67%.[14] A study of California's afterschool programs found positive effects on academic achievement, attendance, behavior, and reduced grade retention, with the greatest improvements among students with lower standardized test scores and English Language Learners.[15]

Summer OST programs in particular can help remedy summer learning loss, which disproportionately affects low-income children. In general, children from higher-income families spend summer in enriching activities, such as travel, summer camps, and private lessons. Children from lower-income families may have less access to summer learning opportunities. As a results, during the summer, children from higher-income families continue to improve academic skills such as vocabulary and reading, while students from lower-income students show a loss.[16] Summer OST programs can help level the playing field by extending affordable and accessible summer learning opportunities to all children, but national surveys suggest existing programs are not sufficient to meet demand—especially among low-income youth.[17]

OST programs are a child development issue

More generally, OST programs improve child development. In addition to improving academic performance, OST programs may improve health outcomes[18] (e.g., lower obesity), foster relationships with caring adults (a precursor to a host of positive outcomes) and improve social skills and self-esteem. In the short term, these effects can lead to more school engagement and better attendance, while encouraging and supporting students as they chart a course to college; long-term, these prosocial skills may improve civic engagement (voting) and volunteering later in life. Available evidence suggests these effects are especially important for low-income children and English Language Learners.[19]

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[14] SD Afterschool Partnership Impact Report: "Creating a Powerful Picture…Why South Dakota's families, schools, businesses and others need quality afterschool and summer programs." (January 2014)

[15] Department of Education, University of California at Irvine. (2002). *Evaluation of California's after-school learning and safe neighborhoods partnerships program: 1999-2001*. Sacramento, CA California Department of Education. Retrieved June 10, 2002.

[16] Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse. "The Effects of Summer Vacation on Achievement Test Scores: A Narrative and Meta-Analytic Review." Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson. "Schools, Achievement, and Inequality: A Seasonal Perspective." Alexander, Karl L., Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda Steffel Olson. "Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap." American Sociological Review 72 (2007).

[17] http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Special_Report_on_Summer_052510.pdf

[18] "Afterschool Programs: Making a Difference in America's Communities by Improving Academic Achievement, Keeping Kids Safe and Helping Working Families." 2011. See: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/factsResearch /2011_Outcomes.pdf

[19] Mary B. Larner, Lorraine Zippiroli, and Richard E. Behrman. (1999). "When School is Out," *Future of Children, 9*(2): 4-20. Available at: http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol9no2Art1done.pdf. Jacquelynne Eccles. (1999). "The Development of Children Ages 6 to 14," *Future of Children, 9*(2): 30-44. Available at: http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol9no2Art3done.pdf. Sharon K. Junge, Sue Manglallan, & Juliana Raskauskas. (2003). "Building Life Skills through Afterschool Participation in Experiential and Cooperative Learning," *Child Study Journal, 33*(3): 165-174. Anne C. Fletcher, Pamela Nickerson, & Kristie L. Wright. (2003). "Structure leisure activities in middle childhood: links to well-being," *Journal of Community Psychology, 31*(6), 641-659. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2003). "Effects of Child Care," *Working Families and Growing Kids: Caring for Children and Adolescents*. Committee on Family and Work Policies. Eugene Smolensky and Jennifer A. Gootman, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC:

2. How many students are unsupervised during OST?

Out-of-School Time: National Patterns

The Census Bureau's periodic publication, "Who's Minding the Kids?" summarizes national data about how children spend their time outside of school. [20] The publication is based on findings from the Survey of Income and Program Participation's (SIPP) child care module, which surveys households with children under 15 years old. It was last published in 2013 based on 2011 data.

According to this report, half of school-age children were in child care on a regular basis, but they were more likely to be with relatives than in organized care. About 15% were involved in enrichment activities before or after school, such as sports, lessons, clubs, or programs.

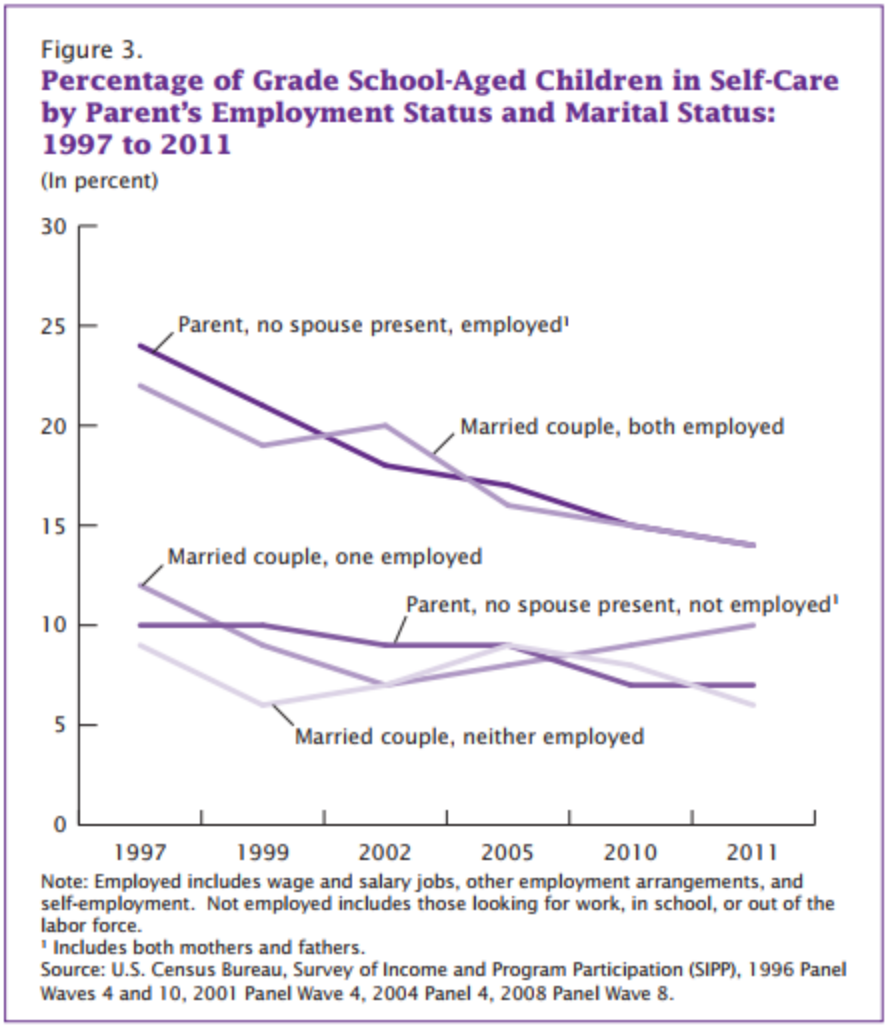
Around 11% did some self-care during a typical week (excluding children who stayed with siblings). Of children who were in self-care, 69% were middle school age and 31% were elementary-age (the survey does not include high school – age students). From among all children in the survey, about 27% of middle school students and 5% of elementary students were in self-care for some time during a typical week. Older children spent more time in self-care: children 5 to 11 spent an average of 5 hours in self-care, and children 12 to 14 spent an average of 7 hours per week.

Certain groups of children were more likely to spend some time in self-care. Children were more likely to be in self-care if they lived with a mother who was separated, divorced, or widowed (versus married or never-married) and if parents were employed.

Nationally, rates of self-care declined between 1997 and 2011 for families where all parents work (Figure 1). This trend may be related to an increase in funding for afterschool programs since 1998.

The National Academies Press: Chapter 5. Available at: http://www.nap.edu/books/0309087031/html/. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, "School-Age Children's Out-of-School Time: Expanding Opportunities," Child Care Bulletin, 23. Available at: http://nccic.org/ccb/issue23.pdf. Zaff, Jonathan, Moore, Kristin, Romano Papillo, Angela, & Williams, Stephanie. (2003). "Implications of Extracurricular Activity Participation During Adolescence on Positive Outcomes," *Journal of Adolescent Research, 18*(6): 599-623.

[20] Laughlin, Lynda. 2013. Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2011. Current Population Reports, P70-135. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.



Source: Laughlin 2013

Figure 1. Percentage of grade school-age children in self-care nationally, 1997-2011

The Census Bureau provides further analysis of the SIPP data in another periodic publication, "A Child's Day," which was last published in 2014 based on data from 2011.[21] The national survey asks parents to report on extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, and lessons) for their children, ages 6 to 17.

According to this report, participation in extracurricular activities is higher among children living with married parents and among children from families with higher incomes. Children of foreign-born parents and children who experience residential mobility (i.e., moved at least once in the three years prior to the survey) are less likely to participate.

[21] Laughlin, Lynda. 2014. A Child's Day: Living Arrangements, Nativity, and Family Transitions: 2011. Household Economic Studies, P70-139. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

Out-of-School Time: Local Patterns

Statewide surveys

The South Dakota After 3pm survey—part of a national survey effort by the Afterschool Alliance funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund—was conducted in 2004, 2009, and 2014.[22] The latest iteration, conducted in 2014, was based on an online survey of national consumer panels. In South Dakota, 200 households—home to 406 children in grades K – 12—were screened for the study.

This survey found that, statewide, 27% of children are unsupervised after school. These children spend an average of 8.15 hours per week unsupervised. Another 14% of children participate in afterschool programs. On average, these children spend 6.51 hours and 3.94 days per week in afterschool programs. The survey also found that 32% of children would participate if a program were available, regardless of their current care arrangement.

Among parents who enrolled children in afterschool programs, their top reasons for selecting an afterschool program were because they saw it as a safe haven (71%), because its location was convenient (70%), because staff were knowledgeable and well-trained (69%), because of the quality of care provided (66%), and because the hours met their needs (65%).

Parents whose children participated in afterschool programs said they believed their children would benefit from the programs. The top benefits perceived by parents were reducing the likelihood that youth would engage in risky behaviors such as crime or drugs or becoming a teen parent (70%); helping children gain workforce skills such as teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking (64%); and exciting children about learning (57%).

As to their own benefits, 93% of parents said they were satisfied with the afterschool programs in which their children participated, and 78% agreed the program gave them peace of mind. Additionally, 78% of parents agreed that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs.

Parents who did not enroll their children in an afterschool program cited a variety of reason, chief among them being lack of need for care or supervision, a preference for alternative activities, or judging that afterschool programs are too expensive.

Among all South Dakota parents surveyed, 87% said they supported public funding for afterschool activities.

Because this statewide survey was part of a national survey, the report provides comparative data. It shows that, as a state, South Dakota is below the national average in students participating in afterschool programs (14% in SD versus 18% nationally). The state is above the national average in students taking care of themselves after school (27% in SD versus 20% nationally)—in fact, South Dakota had the highest rate of self-care among students of any state surveyed. South Dakota is also below the national average in students likely to enroll in an afterschool program if one were available (32% in SD versus 41% nationally). In short, compared to residents of other states, more South Dakotans appear to believe that self-care is acceptable and afterschool programs are unnecessary.

In 2013, the South Dakota Afterschool Partnership conducted a statewide survey of students in afterschool programs, parents whose children were in afterschool programs, and school personnel. This survey revealed that, for working parents in South Dakota, afterschool programs are an

[22] http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_National_Report.pdf

essential support. Parents who responded to the survey nearly all worked full time (91%). Among parents, 84% said that having children enrolled in an afterschool program allows them to stay focused during the hours after school, and 98% said they enjoy peace of mind knowing their children are safe after school. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of parents said they would send their children to a daycare if afterschool or summer programs were not available. The survey report concluded that, for business, afterschool care can reduce childcare-related absences and distractions for employees and increase the number of future employees who enter the workforce with the skills they need.[23]

Beyond promoting their own peace of mind at work, parents said that afterschool programs benefit children. Parents reported the top three ways the afterschool program helps their child are by (1) developing social skills, (2) being physically active, and (3) staying out of trouble. Parents ranked children's interest in activities as the third most important reason for attending an afterschool program, emphasizing the importance of providing engaging and age-appropriate activities.

The report concludes with three recommendations for the afterschool sector in South Dakota:

1. Foster school-afterschool partnerships. Half of school personnel surveyed said they rarely reach out to afterschool programs about concerns with a student or curriculum. The report suggested cross-training teachers and afterschool staff so afterschool staff could understand curriculum and help students with homework. It also recommended connecting school personnel with summer program staff to connect school curriculum or create cost efficiencies.
2. Promote program quality. The report concluded that program quality is important for achieving positive youth outcomes and attracting youth involvement. It suggested creating a statewide data monitoring, evaluation, or accreditation system to encourage high-quality programming and continuous quality improvement.
3. Develop tools and incentives for programs to assess their impact. In addition to creating a system to collect information about and monitor program quality, the report recommended developing incentives for programs to assess their impact.

[23] SD Afterschool Partnership Impact Report: "Creating a Powerful Picture…Why South Dakota's families, schools, businesses and others need quality afterschool and summer programs." (January 2014)

Sioux Falls School District Activities Participation

In 2016-17, the Sioux Falls School District recorded a total of 2,244 high school sports participants, 1,648 eighth grade sports participants, and 1,901 seventh grade sports participants, plus an additional 297 club sports participants. These figures do not record unique individuals; students who participate in more than one sport are counted multiple times.

In addition, the district recorded 5,759 high school activities participants in activities such as chess club, drama, debate, band, and yearbook.[24] Once again, this total number counts students who participate in more than one activity multiple times. In terms of unique individuals, the district recorded 2,623 students who participated in at least one activity.

Total high school enrollment was 6,604, suggesting that more than one-third of high school students participate in at least one activity, and up to one-third participate in sports (those numbers may overlap). However, most high school sports and activities run for a season (i.e., a period of a few months), though some students may attend camps or lessons on their own during off-seasons.

[24] Activity enrollments are tracked at the high school level only, and tracking methods may not be entirely consistent across schools.

3. Parents' Perspectives

Parent Survey

In order to better understand parents' perspectives on out-of-school time services in Sioux Falls, ARI conducted a survey of parents who live or work in Sioux Falls and who have school-age children. The online survey was distributed to Thrive's contact list and posted on Thrive's website and social media from October 20, 2017 to January 22, 2018. On November 9, 2017, the survey was also emailed to all Sioux Falls employees of a large healthcare provider.

In total, the survey received 860 responses, of which 599 met initial screening criteria (i.e., respondent lived or worked in Sioux Falls and had a school-age child).

Representativeness

The survey sample was not randomly selected, so caution should be made in generalizing survey findings to the general population. Compared to Sioux Falls parents overall, parents who responded to the survey were more likely to be employed full-time, had higher incomes and more education, and were more likely to be white, to speak English at home, and to be married. For instance, 83% of respondents reported annual incomes above $50,000 and all but 7% had at least some college education. Detailed demographic tables for respondents are presented at the end of this section.

Survey Findings

Who are students with when they're not in school?

During the school year, when they are not in school, a majority of children are always or usually with a parent (63%) (Figure 2). The next most common OST arrangements during the school year are with another adult in the household (23% always or usually), at a childcare center (19% always or usually), or with an older sibling (19% always or usually).

Many children also spend at least some OST in school activities (44% at least sometimes) or with extended family (49% at least sometimes).

Summer OST arrangements look similar to school-year arrangements, except that fewer children are engaged in activities at schools (24% at least sometimes) (Figure 3).

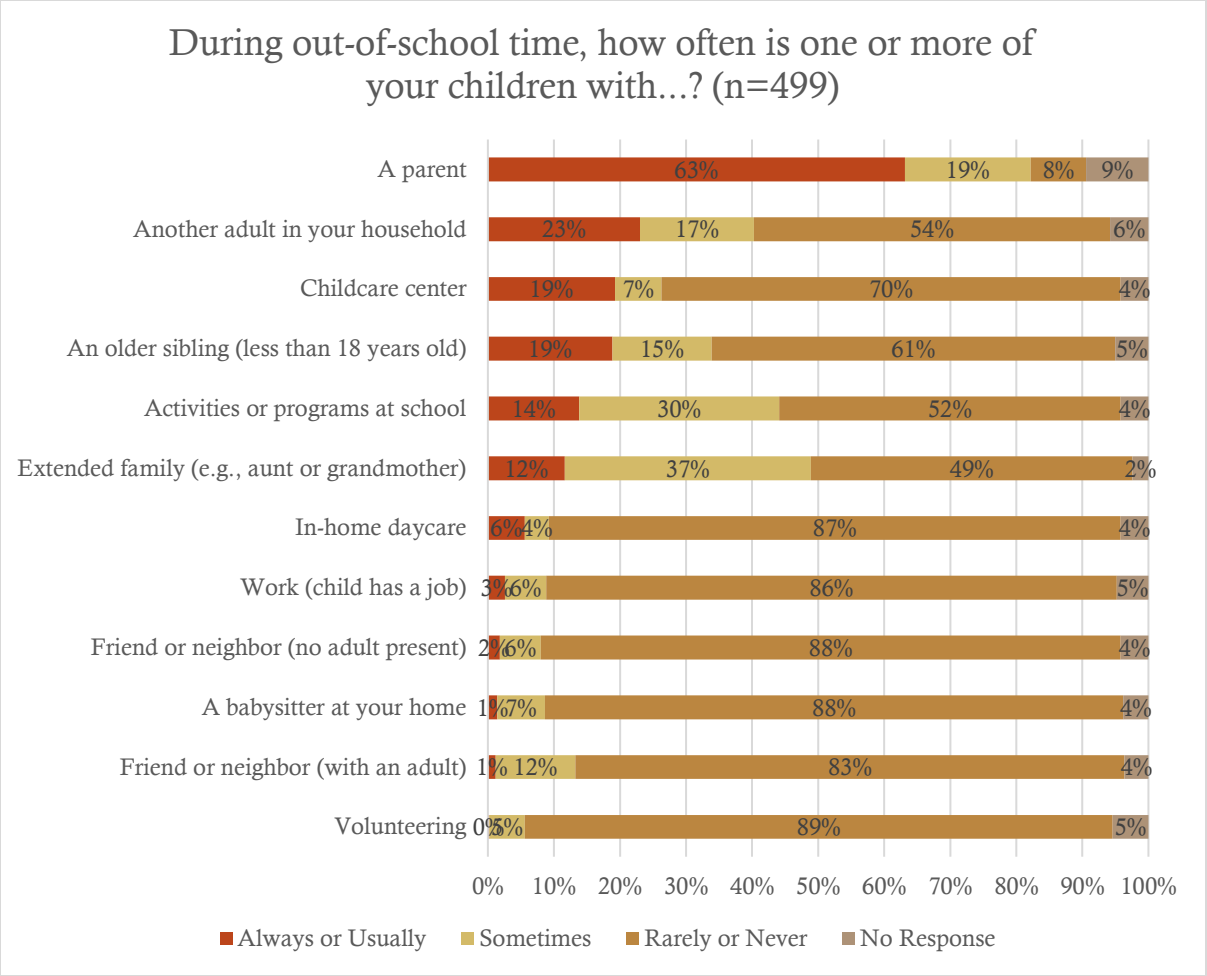


Figure 2. School-year OST arrangements among survey respondents

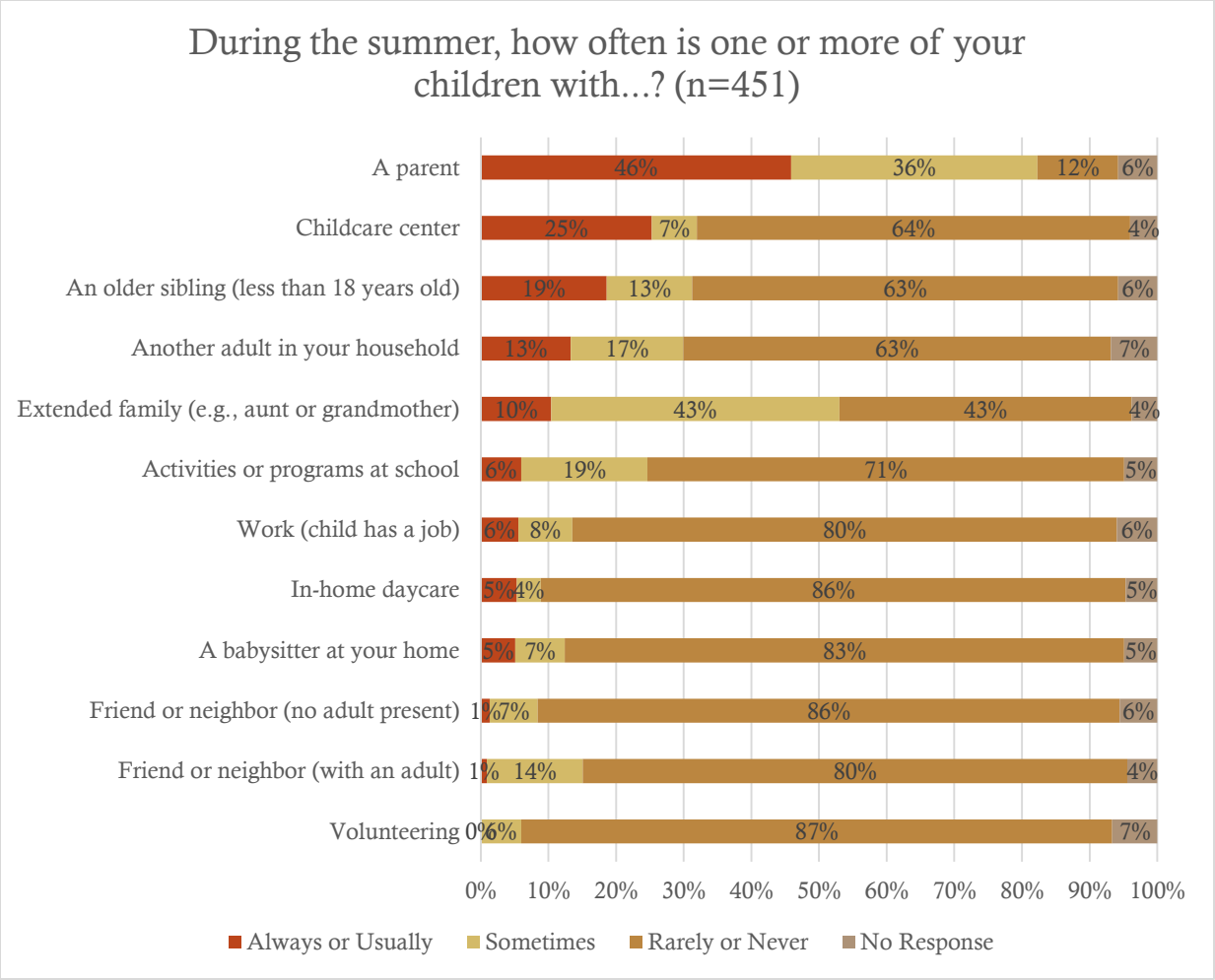


Figure 3. Summer OST arrangements among survey respondents

How much time do students spend alone?

Parents reported that, during the school year, most children (72%) spend fewer than six hours without adult supervision, and over one-third (39%) are never without adult supervision (Figure 4).

Time spent alone varies by age: According to parents, 59% of elementary students are never without adult supervision, compared to 9% of middle school students and 12% of high school students. Most middle school students (52%) spend one to five hours without adult supervision per week, while most high school students spend between one to five hours (33%) or six to 10 hours (33%) without adult supervision (Figure 5).

Compared to the school year, in the summer, a similar proportion of children are always under adult supervision (39%). However, during the summer, more children spend longer hours without adult supervision: 29% spend 15 or more hours without adult supervision each week (compared to 5% during the school year) (Figure 6).

Like during the school year, time spent without adult supervision in the summer varies by age. Around 12% of elementary students spend more than 15 hours without adult supervision, compared

to 52% of middle school students and 59% of high school students. Roughly one-third of middle and high school students spend more than 30 hours without adult supervision in the summer (Figure 7).

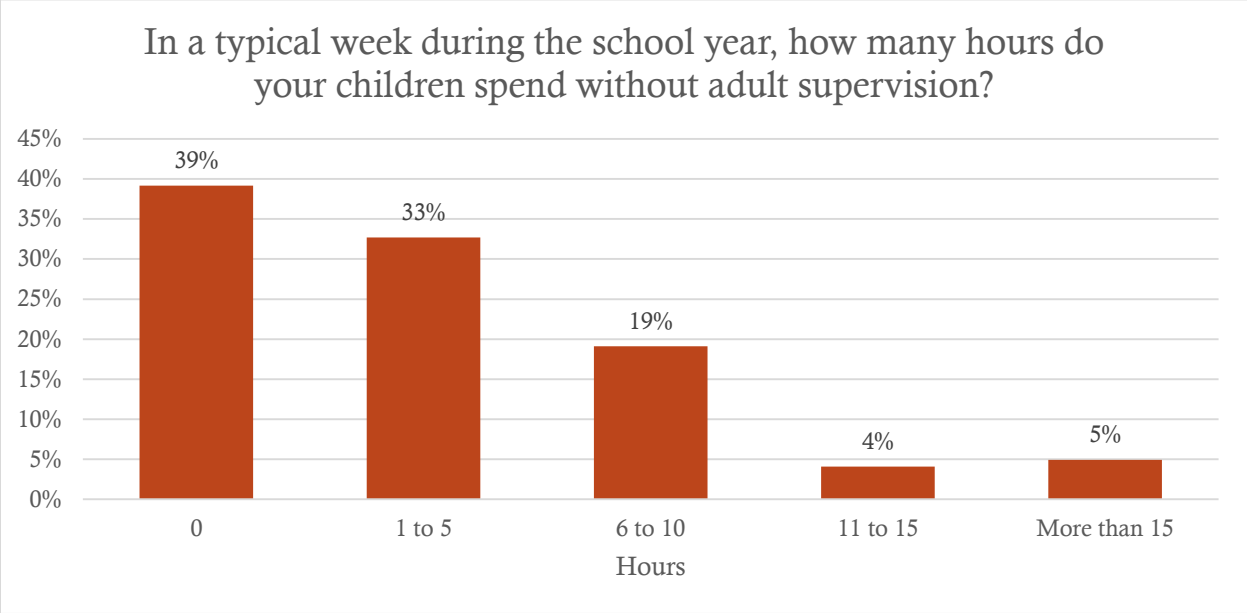


Figure 4. Time without adult supervision during the school year

Parents were asked to respond for each child individually: 480 parents responded and gave information for 853 children.

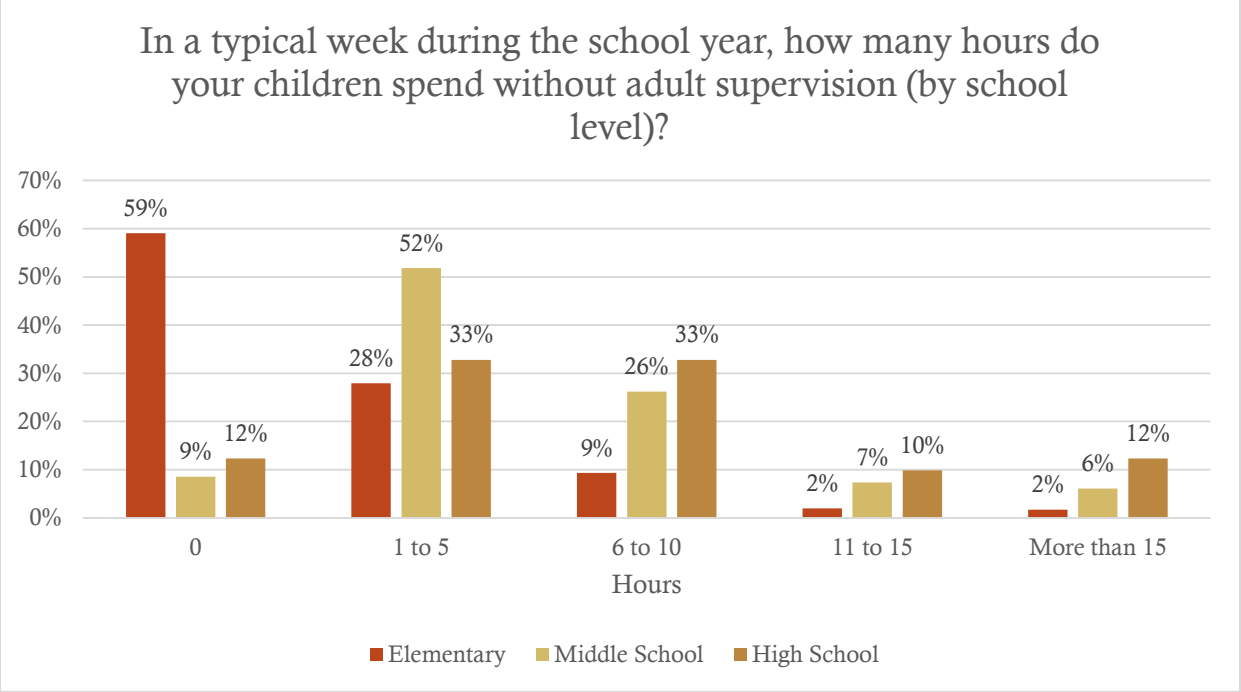


Figure 5. Time without adult supervision during the school year by school level

Chart includes only children for whom both hours spent without adult supervision and grade level were known (elementary n=408, middle school n=164, high school n=122, total children n=694).

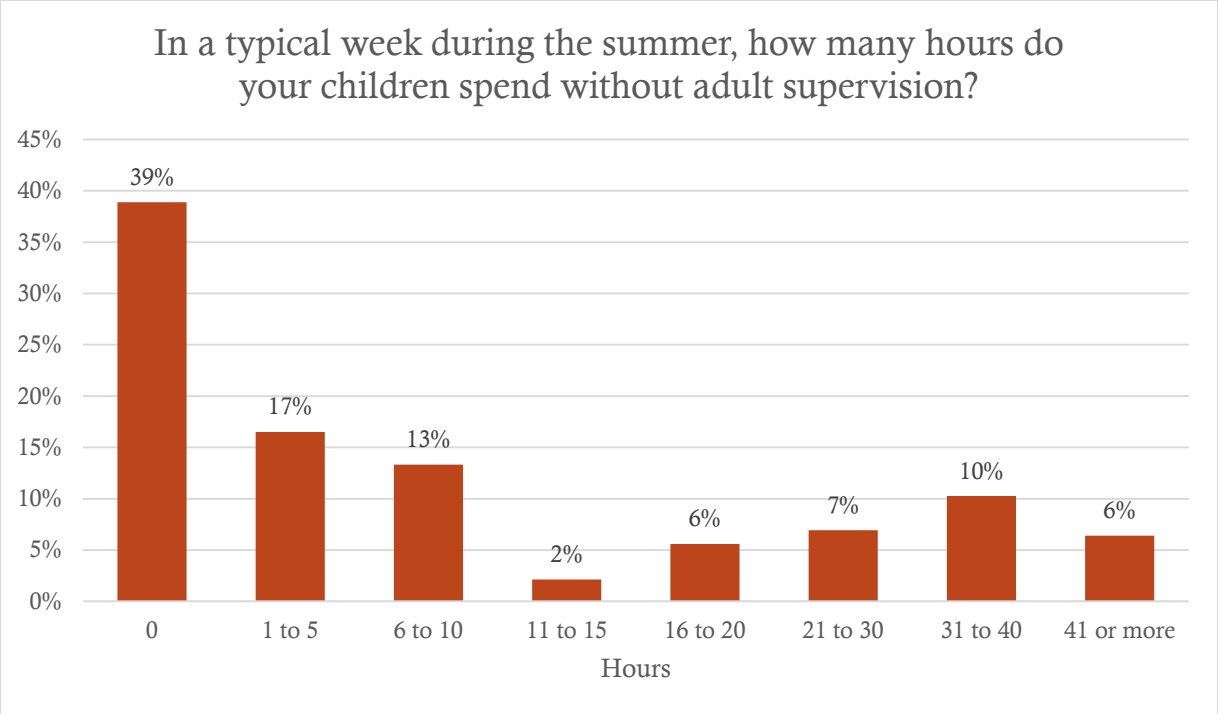


Figure 6. Time without adult supervision during the summer

Parents were asked to respond for each child individually: 435 parents responded and gave information for 751 children.

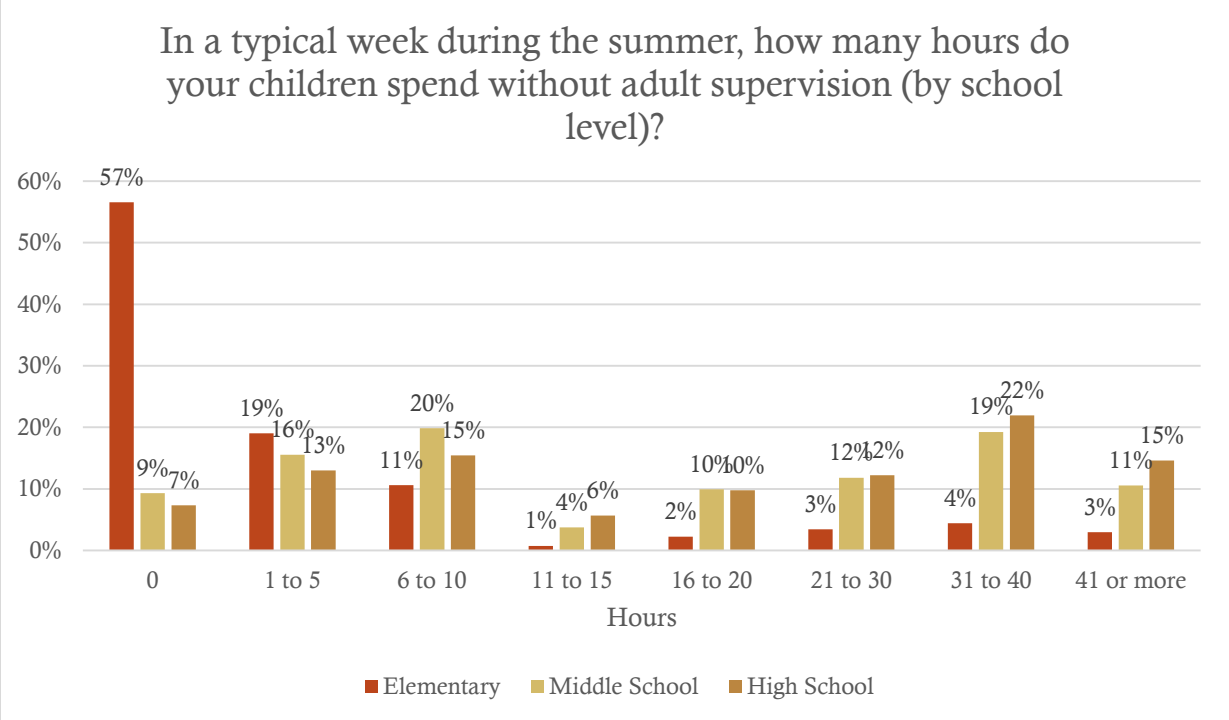


Figure 7. Time without adult supervision during the summer by school level

Chart includes only children for whom both hours spent without adult supervision and grade level were known (elementary n=405, middle school n=161, high school n=123, total children n=689).

What do students do when they're alone?

Parents report that students most commonly spend unsupervised time watching movies or TV or reading (Figure 8 and Figure 9). Activity patterns during the school year and summer are similar, with one exception: During the summer, more children choose to play outside (65% compared to 47% during the school year).

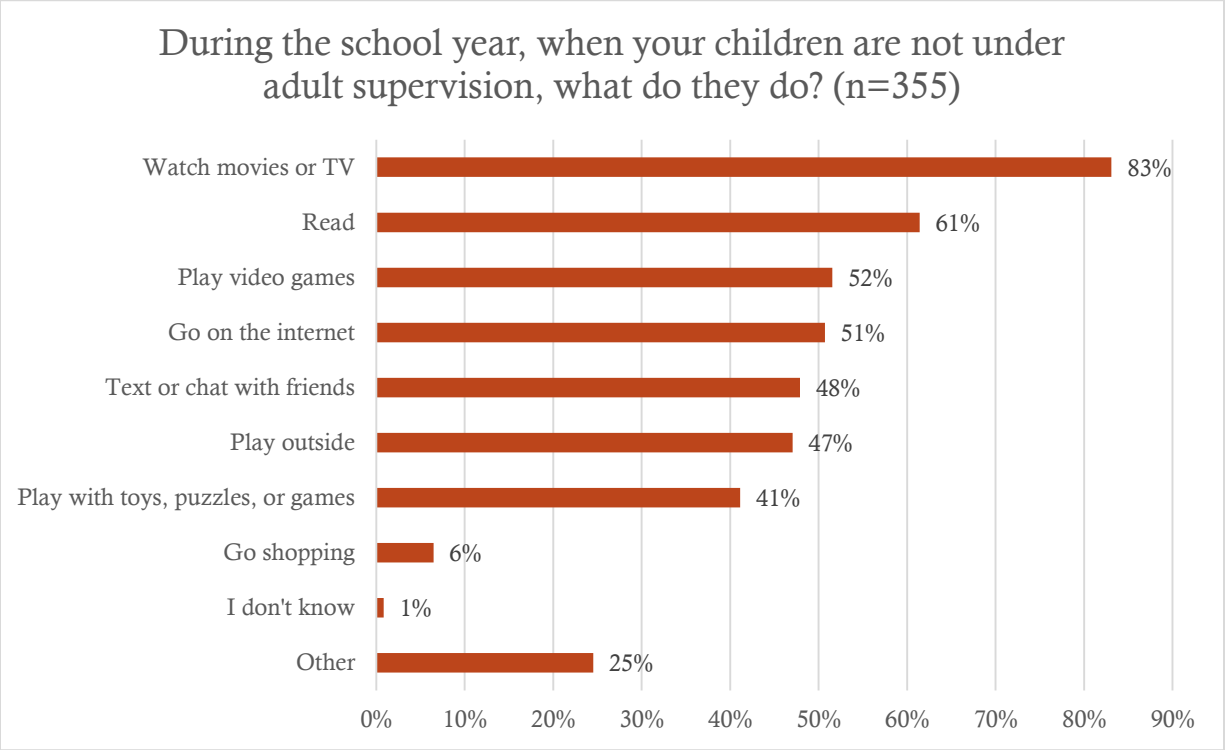


Figure 8. Unsupervised OST activities during the school year

Totals exceed 100% because categories are not mutually exclusive. Excludes "N/A" responses (n=133).

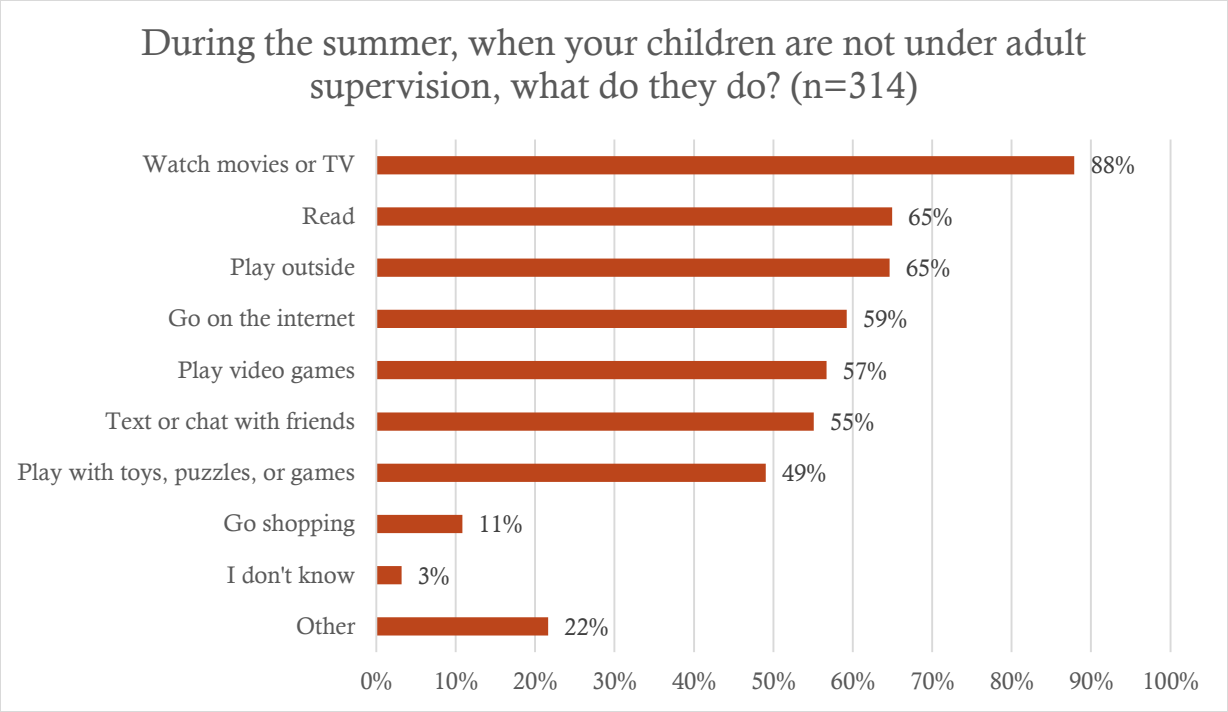


Figure 9. Unsupervised OST activities during the summer

Totals exceed 100% because categories are not mutually exclusive. Excludes "N/A" responses (n=126).

Are students meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities outside of school?

The percentage of students who are meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities outside of school offers a potential indicator of the quality and availability of OST activities in the community. To measure meaningful engagement, ARI's parent survey adapted an index used in the Minnesota Student Survey.[25] The index measures the percentage of students who participate in any combination of enrichment activities for three or more days per week. ARI's survey asked specifically about sports, school sponsored activities, community clubs, tutoring or academic programs, religious activities, leadership activities, and lessons. Students are considered highly engaged if they participate in any activity (or combination of activities) at least three days per week.

During the school year, 60% of students overall are meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities. Engagement levels vary by age, with the lowest engagement levels among elementary students (53%), highest among middle school students (79%), and high school students in between (67%). Notably, however, according to parent respondents, the majority of students at all school levels are meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities (Figure 10).

During the summer, engagement levels drop off, particularly for older students who are more likely to be engaged in school-based sports, clubs, and other activities that do not run through the summer. Overall in the summer, 48% of students are meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities, compared to 60% during the school year. Though engagement levels are fairly steady for elementary

[25] Survey results should be compared to Minnesota Student Survey results with caution: the Minnesota Student Survey surveys students directly, whereas ARI relied on parent report.

students (from 53% during the school year to 50% during the summer), they drop markedly for middle school students (from 79% to 59%) and even more dramatically for high school students (from 67% to 37%) (Figure 11).

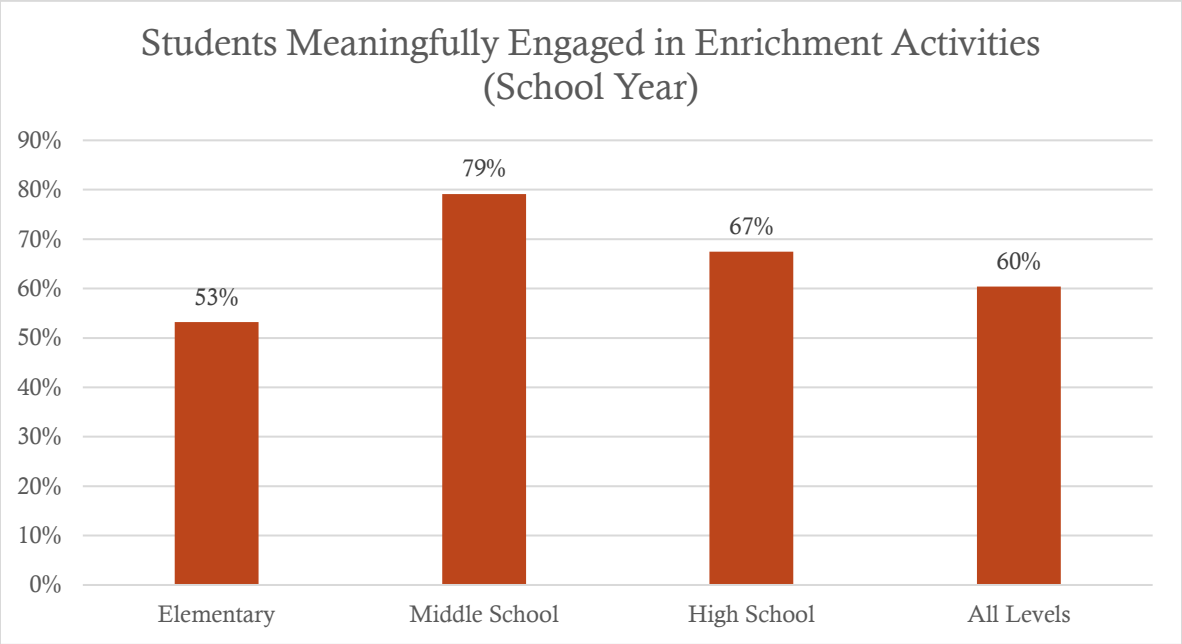


Figure 10. Students meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities during the school year

Parents were asked to respond for each child individually: 476 parents responded and gave information for 553 children overall, including 267 elementary, 115 middle school, and 83 high school students.

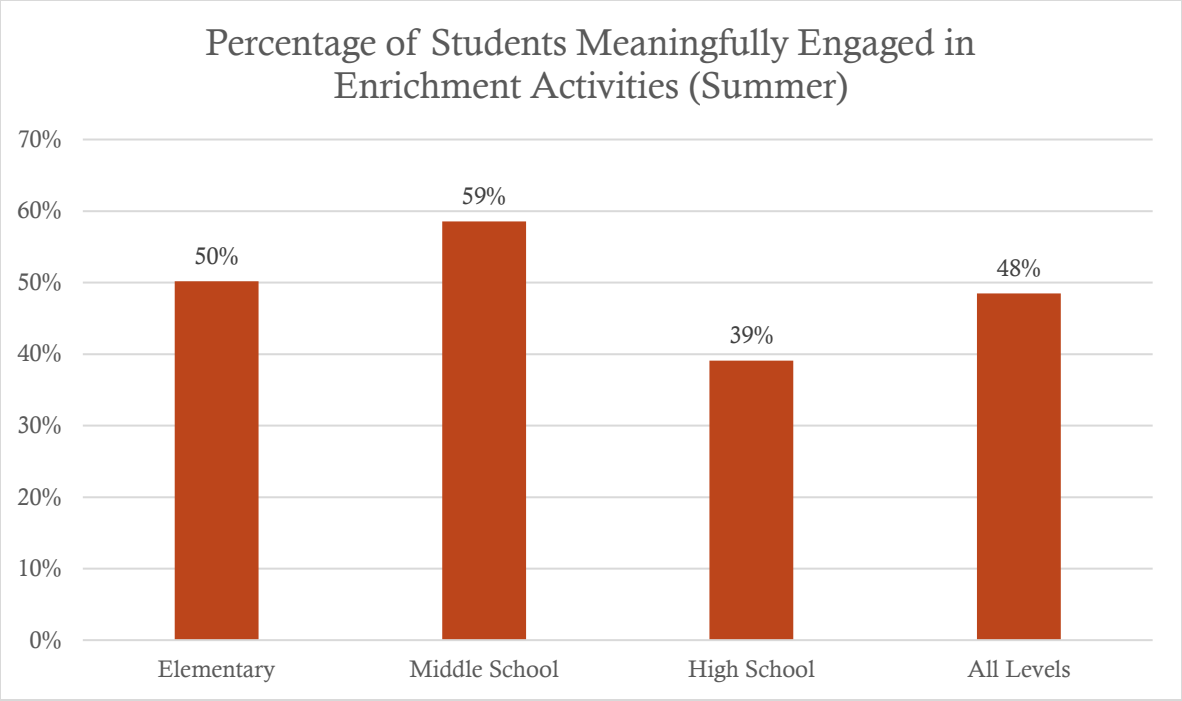


Figure 11. Students meaningfully engaged in enrichment activities during the summer

Parents were asked to respond for each child individually: 418 parents responded and gave information for 493 children overall, including 261 elementary, 111 middle school, and 87 high school students.

Do current childcare arrangements meet needs?

Overall, about 75% of respondents reported their childcare needs are met (n=431). The proportion of parents with unmet childcare needs varies by family type and income level.

Single parents were more likely to have unmet childcare needs. About 21% of married couple parents said they had unmet needs (n=320) compared to 37% of single parents (n=59).

Lower income parents were also more likely to have unmet childcare needs. Among parents with incomes of $75,000 or more, about 19% reported unmet childcare needs, compared to 34% of parents with incomes below $75,000 (Figure 12).

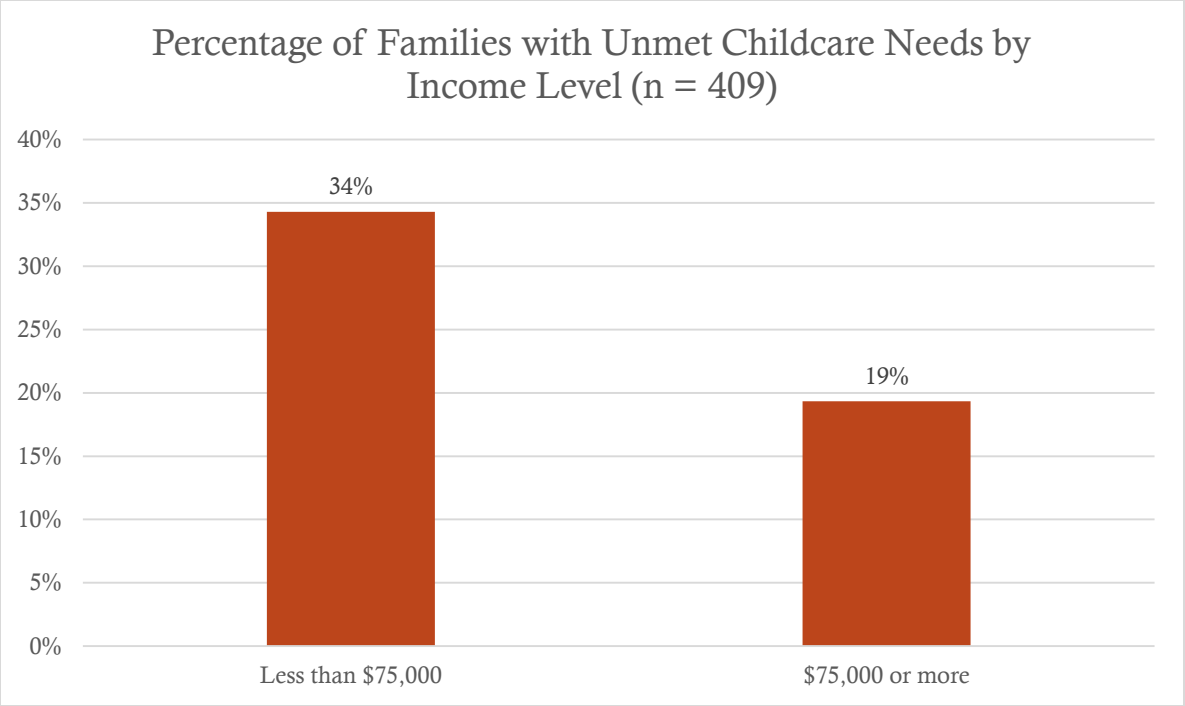


Figure 12. Percentage of families with unmet childcare needs by income level

According to parents with unmet childcare needs, the most common barrier to accessing childcare is cost (65%), followed by providers' hours of operation (46%), the availability of open spots in programs (40%), and transportation (32%) or location (23%) (Figure 13).

Parents who selected "Other" commonly reported their children are over 12 or beyond elementary school (i.e., too old for daycare or school-based OST programs such as Kids Inc.). The problem described in comments is twofold: children are too old to be eligible for existing programs *and* children are not interested in them. However, parents feel uncomfortable leaving children home alone.

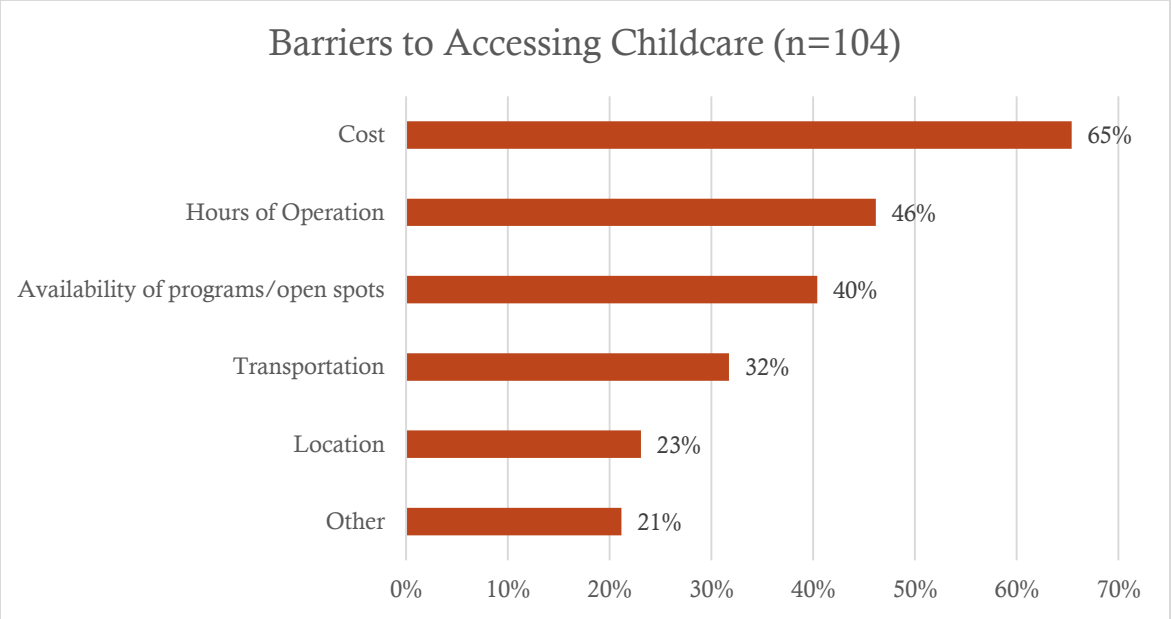


Figure 13. Barriers to accessing childcare among parents with unmet childcare needs

When do parents need childcare?

Parents who reported unmet childcare needs were asked to identify specific times when they would like to have childcare but do not. Times identified include the following:

- Mornings (4 a.m. until school start time, or later during breaks and summer)
- Late evening (6 to 9 p.m.)—identified as a need especially by parents in families where both parents work in industries like healthcare with 12-hour shifts or evening shift changes
- Holidays or school breaks when afterschool programs or daycares are closed but parents work

How satisfied are parents with their existing childcare arrangements?

Most parents reported that they are very satisfied with the hours and location of their current child supervision provider. Satisfaction with affordability was lower, with just over one-third reporting they are very satisfied and about one-fourth indicating they are very or somewhat dissatisfied (Figure 14).

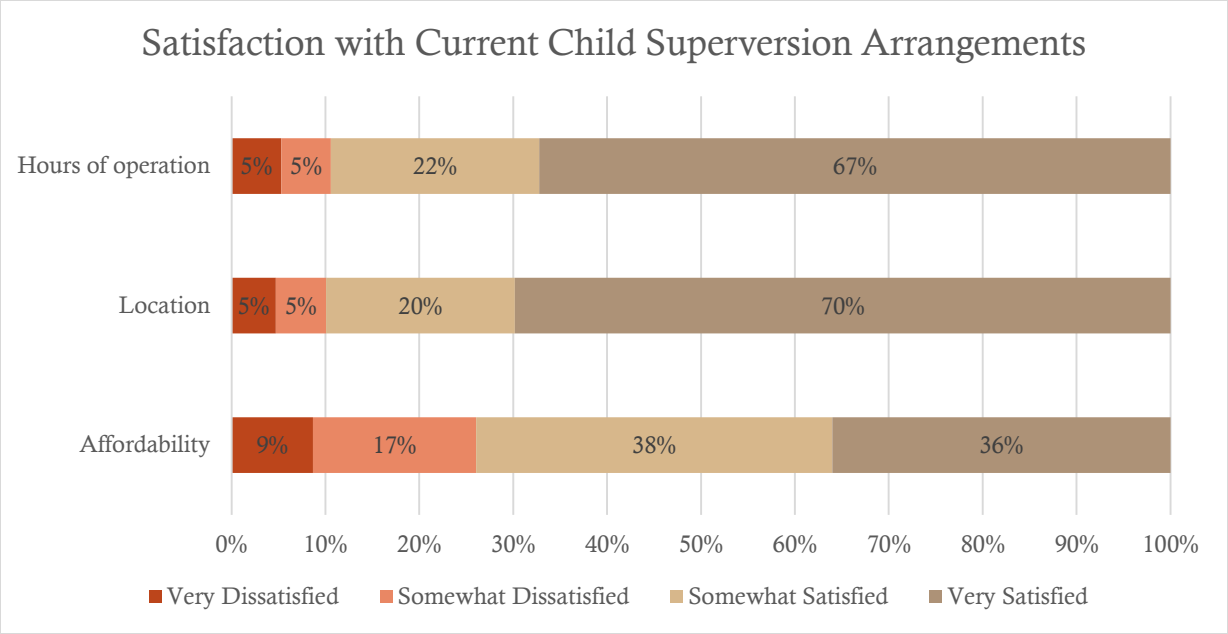


Figure 14. Parents' satisfaction with current child supervision arrangements

Hours of operation n=311, location n=308, affordability n=302 (excludes N/A for each)

How satisfied are parents with enrichment activities offered by childcare providers?

Nearly all parents reported their current child supervision provider offers snacks or meals and physical activity or exercise (Figure 15). About three-fourths also offer reading or writing practice and homework help. About two-thirds offer music, art, or drama. However, parents reported that less than half of current providers offer STEM learning opportunities, and less than one-third offer activities focused on career skills. About two-thirds of parents' current childcare providers offer transportation to or from school, while about a third offer transportation to or from a child's home.

The majority of parents are satisfied with transportation (if it's offered) and with snacks or meals and opportunities for physical activity or exercise (Figure 16). Satisfaction with academic activities is lower, but dissatisfaction is not particularly high—with the exception of STEM learning: 20% of parents say they are dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied with STEM learning opportunities offered by their current childcare provider.

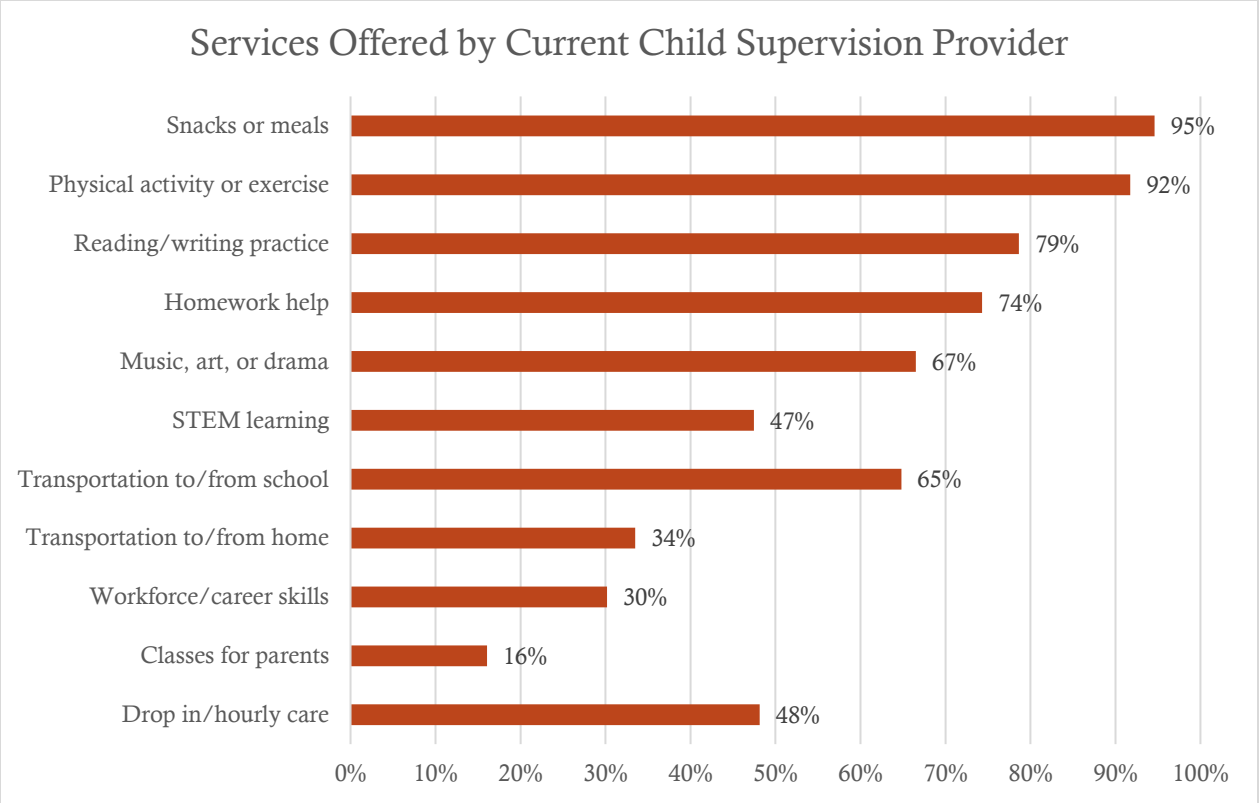


Figure 15. Services offered by current child supervision provider

Excludes parents who answered N/A (do not have a current provider). Snacks or meals n=260, physical activity n=254, reading/writing n=234, homework help n=214, music and art n=218, STEM n=198, transportation to/from school n=216, transportation to/from home n=191, workforce/career skills n=179, classes for parents n=162, drop in care n=189

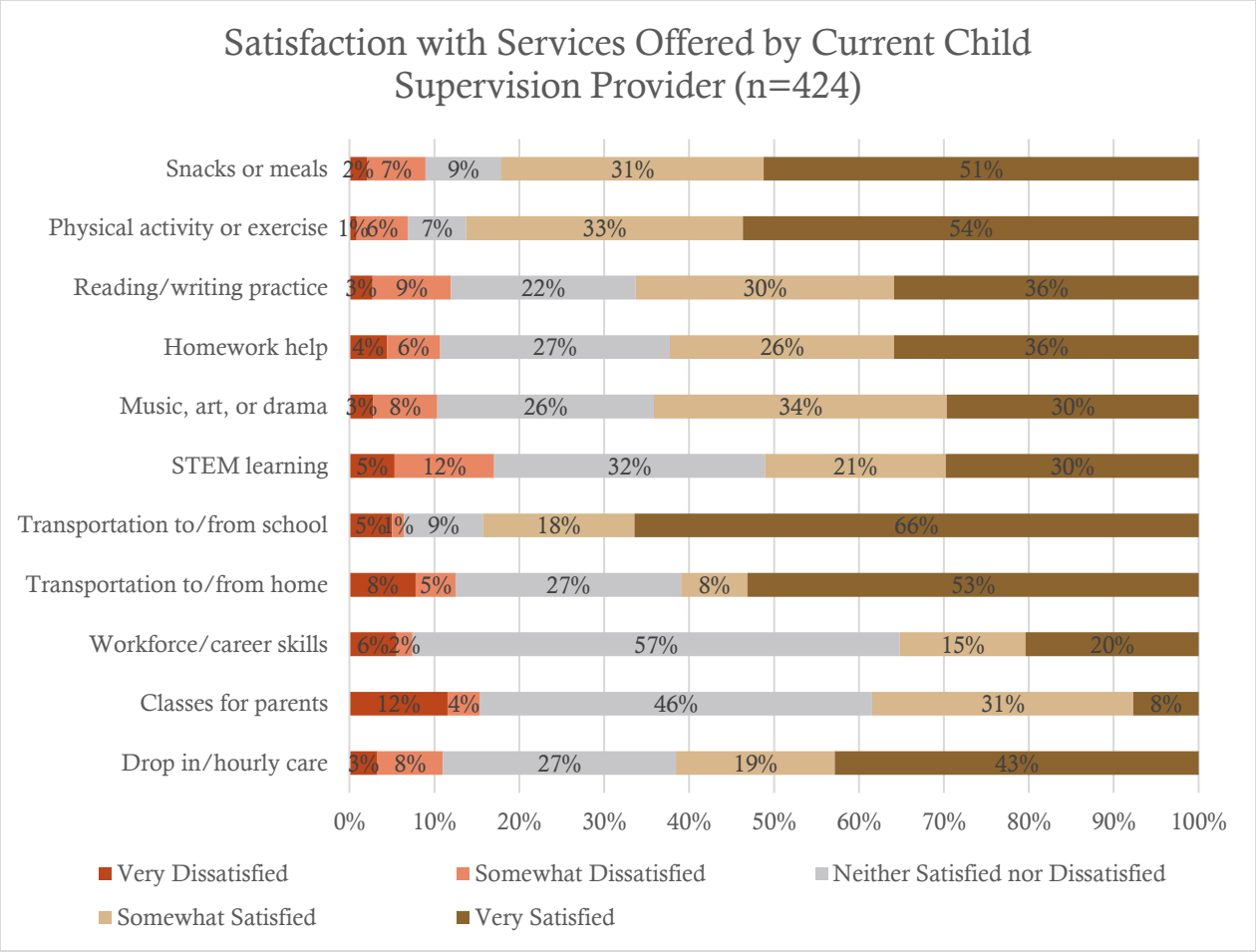


Figure 16. Satisfaction with services offered by current child supervision provider

Excludes parents who answered N/A (do not have a current provider) or who said provider does not provide a service (only includes respondents who have a child supervision provider and whose provider offers the particular service). Snacks or meals n=246, physical activity n=233, reading/writing n=184, homework help n=159, music and art n=145, STEM n=94, transportation to/from school n=140, transportation to/from home n=64, workforce/career skills n=54, classes for parents n=26, drop in care n=91

How do parents pay for childcare or OST activities?

Overall, 55.68% of respondents said they pay for child supervision (n = 431). Among respondents who pay for child supervision, nearly all indicated they pay full price; just 5% reported receiving childcare assistance and 1% have a provider who offers income-based fees (Figure 17).

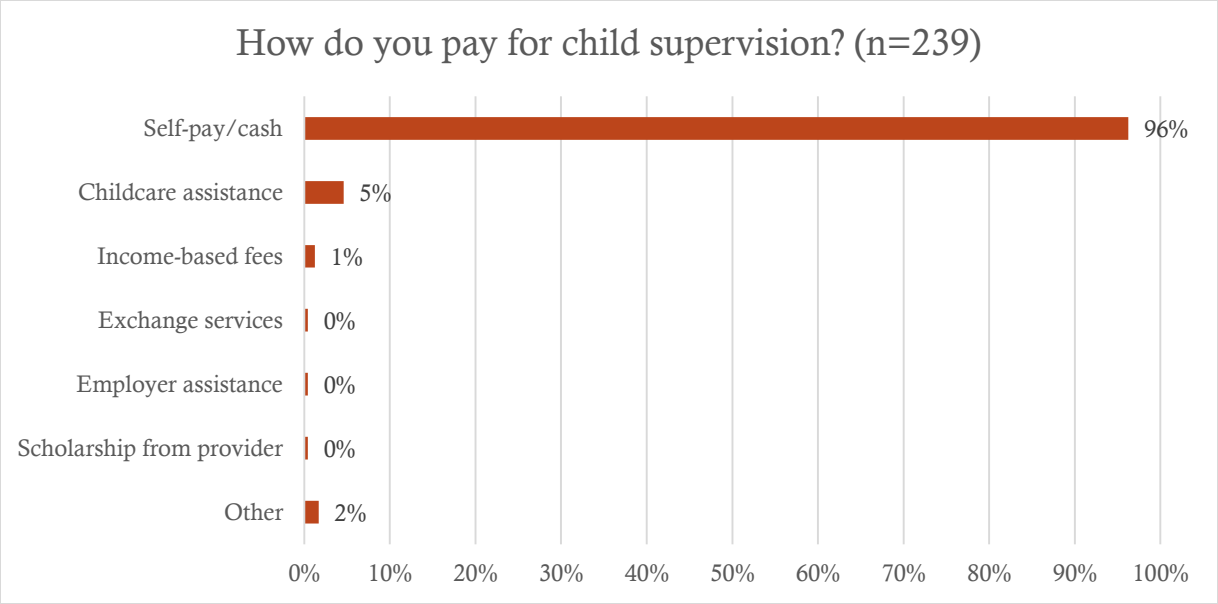


Figure 17. How respondents pay for child supervision

Totals sum to more than 100% because answers are not mutually exclusive.

Detailed Demographic Tables

Employment status. Compared to Sioux Falls families generally, survey respondents reported a higher rate of employment. Over 90% of survey respondents were employed full-time. By comparison, in the city of Sioux Falls, an estimated 77.8% of married-couple families were headed by someone who worked full-time, year-round in the year before they were surveyed, while 15.9% worked less than full-time, year-round (2012-16 ACS).

Table 8. Employment status of survey respondents

	n	%
Employed full-time	533	90.34
Employed part-time (not seeking full-time)	50	8.47
Employed part-time (seeking full-time)	2	0.34
Unemployed	1	0.17
Not in labor force	4	0.68
Total	590	100

Income. Compared to Sioux Falls families generally, survey respondents had higher income levels. Nearly 45% of respondents had incomes of $100,000 or more. Only 34.31% had incomes below $75,000. By comparison, in the city of Sioux Falls, the median family income was $71,068, meaning 50% of families have incomes higher than $71,068 and 50% have incomes lower (2012-16 ACS).

Table 9. Income levels for survey respondents and Sioux Falls families

	n	%	ACS 2012-16 % of families in Sioux Falls city
$0 - $24,999	9	2.19	11.3
$25,000 - $49,999	59	14.36	21.4
$50,000 - $74,999	73	17.76	20.6
$75,000 - $99,999	87	21.17	18.2
$100,000 - $149,999	121	29.44	16.6
$150,000 or more	62	15.09	11.8
Total	411	100	100

Education. Compared to Sioux Falls residents generally, survey respondents had higher levels of education. Over 60% of survey respondents had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33.5% for the city of Sioux Falls overall (2012-16 ACS).

Table 10. Education levels for survey respondents and Sioux Falls residents

	n	%	ACS 2012-16 % of residents age 25 or over in Sioux Falls city
Less than high school	2	0.47	8.8
High school / GED	25	5.87	26.2
Some college	49	11.5	21.0
Associate's degree / 2-year degree	82	19.25	10.6
Bachelor's degree	160	37.56	23.0
Graduate degree	108	25.35	10.5
Total	426	100	100

Gender. Compared to the population of Sioux Falls generally, survey respondents were more likely to be female. Over 80% of respondents identified as female.

Table 11. Gender of survey respondents

	n	%
Female	344	80.56
Male	82	19.2
Other	1	0.23
Total	427	100

Race and ethnicity. Compared to the population of Sioux Falls, survey respondents were more likely to identify as white. About 94% of respondents identified as white, compared to 85% of city residents overall (2012-16 ACS).

Table 12. Race for survey respondents

	n	%	ACS 2012-16 % of residents in Sioux Falls city
Asian / Pacific Islander	6	1.42	2.4
Black or African American	3	0.71	4.9
Multiple races	11	2.59	2.8
White	400	94.34	84.9
Other (please specify)	4	0.94	2.3
Total	424	100	100

Language. Compared to city residents generally, survey respondents were more likely to speak English at home. Over 98% of respondents said they spoke English at home. By comparison, in the city of Sioux Falls, about 90% of residents speak English at home (2012-16 ACS).

Table 13. Language spoken at home for survey respondents

	n	%
English	420	98.36
Spanish	3	0.7
Other	5	1.2
Total	427	100

Household size. Compared to Sioux Falls families in general, survey respondents reported larger household sizes. The mean household size of survey respondents was 4.12 (n=426) compared to an average household size of 3.09 for the city of Sioux Falls (2012-16 ACS).

Household type. Compared to Sioux Falls families in general, survey respondents were more likely to be married. About 75% of respondents were married, compared to 64% of families with children ages 6 to 17 in Sioux Falls generally (2012-16 ACS).

Table 14. Household type for survey respondents

	n	%
Single parent	60	14.05
Married couple	321	75.18
Cohabiting	30	7.03
Grandparents	4	0.94
Guardian	4	0.94
Other	19	4.45
	427	100

Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one response.

Parent Follow-up

Survey respondents were invited to submit additional comments or participate in an in-depth follow-up interview. In total, 164 respondents submitted a total of 509 comments, and three respondents completed interviews.

"Making do" with childcare arrangements

In follow-up comments, parents described the difficulty and stress of piecing together activities to ensure their children were supervised throughout the year. They often relied on a mix of childcare centers or afterschool programs, school activities, summer camps, and extended family:

> *"We go to an afterschool program…during the school year. At summer, split between time off, between my husband and I, we have grandparents in town that do some and grandparents out of town that do some, and then different camps. We rely on camps."*

Although most parents who commented said they were able to achieve coverage for all of the times they needed supervision, they still found the process stressful:

> *"My oldest child is 9, so is never without adult supervision. Doesn't mean it [isn't] tricky to line up care. We need to finalize our summer schedule and reserve time away from work, line up care and enroll the kids in activities by January to ensure this is a reality."*

Parents reported that summer, in particular, was a challenging time to piece together supervision and activities. Several parents said they signed up children—especially older elementary or middle school age children—for a variety of camps during the summer (day camps, sports camps, church camps, etc.). But summer camps typically only last a few weeks, or may only be half-day or two or three days per week. To ensure supervision the rest of the summer, some parents said they continued to pay for childcare in addition to camps. They valued the enrichment offered by camps and paid extra to get it:

> *"As our children are getting older, we have been able to sign them up for camps: basketball camps, church camps, etc. This gets expensive for us, [due] to the fact that we have to pay the childcare center so much per week."*

Others accepted that, outside of camps, their children would have some unsupervised time during the summer:

> *"Each week varies on how long our oldest (6th grade) is without supervision depending on the camps we have him in for the week."*

For supervision during the rest of the year, parents described a variety of ways in which they adjusted work schedules in order to stay home with children. Some were able to work from home, others worked night shifts or had a schedule that followed school hours and the school calendar, and some enjoyed flexible schedules at work that allowed them to be home after school. A typical comment described how working the night shift allowed parents to be home with their daughter when she was not in school:

> *"My wife works night shifts. She's seven [nights] on, seven off, so [my daughter] doesn't have to take the bus. She picks her up every single day, so they have a lot of mom and daughter time. When mom does sleep, for example on the weekends, it's a lot of daddy-daughter time."*

Other parents said they (or a spouse) chose to stay at home rather than work because the cost of childcare would trade off with their additional earnings:

> *"We've had those discussions. If it's going to cost us this much to go to daycare and you're only making nine bucks an hour as a spouse, are you better off staying home with your child and probably saving money than paying for it?"*

For two-parent families, staying home, night shifts, and non-traditional hours made it possible for one or the other parent to be home at all times. Even for two-parent families, parents said working opposite schedules put stress on family, cut into family time, and did not always eliminate the need for childcare (for example, when parents had overlapping shift changes).

For single parents, juggling schedules did not necessarily allow them to be home, but was still necessary in order to accommodate providers' open hours. One single parent said she requested a new position at work so she could pick up her daughter before her childcare provider closed:

> *"Right, I had to change to a new position [at work] because there's just not many options for evening care, you know? Most daycares do close at 6 or 6:30 in the city…. I just don't have the childcare to do it. Having to rely on family to go and pick her up didn't always pan out the way it was supposed to, so I'd have to miss a lot of work."*

Several parents said they relied on extended family—some said the arrangement was by choice, while others described it as "making do" in order to bridge the gap between providers' hours and work hours or because they were not able to secure a spot in an afterschool program. Parents relied on grandparents, older siblings, cousins, friends, and neighbors for supervision.

Cost: "It's just so expensive"

Cost was the single most frequently mentioned theme in parents' follow-up comments. Parents pegged summer, in particular, as "extremely expensive"—in part because, for many families, summer meant paying for full-time daycare. A typical comment explained, "Daycare centers are a

big expense, but they are really the only option in the summer." Several parents described how summer supervision pinched family budgets. As one parent put it:

> *"During the summer, my take home income shrinks to just over $200 for groceries, bills, clothes for growing kids and fun things. Even with my spouse's income summer is very difficult to pay but leaving even the oldest two home alone is not really an option for 8 hours a day. I wish there were better, more affordable options."*

Parents also commented that the cost of private clubs, lessons, and activities adds up—in some cases, presenting a barrier to enrolling children. One parent commented, "If gymnastics wasn't so expensive, I'd definitely put her in that, because she's a really active kid."

Location, transportation, and waiting lists

In parents' follow-up comments, transportation and location were frequently mentioned concerns, second only to cost. School-based afterschool programs (e.g., Kids Inc.) were seen as both more affordable than daycare centers and more accessible because students could stay at the school site:

> *"Kids Inc. option is the only option because I don't want my child to leave the school grounds."*

However, parents reported that school-based programs filled quickly and waiting lists were common.

> *"There is not enough openings for Kids Inc. for the number of children that need. The process isn't working for families to be able to have their children stay at their home schools for child care."*

Securing a spot in a school-based program was especially challenging for families who switched enrollment mid-year (e.g., because of a move) or who, for a variety of reasons, had delayed their application.

> *"[Kids Inc.] was full before she even got enrolled. They tell me that it usually fills up the end of the year for the next year, and I'm like holy moly!"*

A number of parents said they were on the waiting list for school-based programs at their children's schools, and in the meantime they had made alternative arrangements—typically a daycare center or extended family. These alternative arrangements frequently required arranging transportation.

Transportation was also a concern for parents who needed supervision for their children before school, when school-based programs are generally not available, or after 6 p.m., when most school-based programs end. Some families found daycare centers that provide before-school care and transportation to school; others worked with friends and neighbors or extended family to arrange rides; and others resorted to dropping students off before schools opened.

For parents of middle school and younger high school students, transportation became a challenge as students became more involved in school activities but were not yet old enough to drive. One parent described the dual challenge of cost and transportation:

> *"Activities outside of school are very expensive and require parents to transport. I work 14 hours a day between my 2 jobs and I don't have time to transport them nor do I have the extra funds available to pay for them to participate in activities."*

Extended hours

After cost and transportation, the third most frequently mentioned barrier to accessing out-of-school-time supervision was scheduling and the need for extended morning and evening hours.

While nontraditional hours made it possible for some parents to stay home with their children, for others, they complicated the task of finding out-of-school-time supervision. One parent described the challenge of finding a provider whose hours worked with her and her husband's shifts:

> *"Childcare that assisted those who work in healthcare, especially when both parents work in healthcare, would be a lucrative operation (one would think). As it stands right now, we have to hire a 'nanny' (college kid) to come into our home to get us through shift changes and around night shifts. This requires my husband and I to work alternating shifts which takes away from our family time."*

Several parents mentioned the need for before-school programs. One parent explained that, although she typically arrives home before her children in the afternoon, she must leave them home alone in the mornings:

> *"They are home alone for about 45 minutes before they get on the bus in the morning...they eat, brush teeth and get ready for school."*

Another parent said she chooses to drop her child off at school, where he waits until his day begins:

> *"My child has to wait on the steps at school until it starts at 0845, because I am at work at 0800 and there is no option for bussing. On school breaks he cannot attend my daycare my daughter attends because he is 12."*

Weekday evenings after 6 p.m. were also identified as a time of need. In a typical comment, one parent explained:

> *"Nowhere is open as late as I have to work so I rely on others in the evening until I get home at 8pm."*

Other parents said they had changed jobs or left jobs because they could not find childcare that worked with evening hours.

A number of parents identified a need for extended hour drop-in care that parents could use occasionally as needed. In discussing this need, parents said existing options for extended hour drop-in care are limited and expensive. One parent described her experience with drop-in evening care: she had tried two centers, but felt uncomfortable with the high turnover rates and what appeared to be a high ratio of children to adults.

Scheduling was also mentioned by parents concerned about school dismissal times that meant elementary-age children arrived home before their older children.

Although most scheduling comments focused on daily arrangements during the school year, a few parents also mentioned the difficulty of having children participate in summer activities or clubs that meet for only a few hours and that do not have before or after care.

No-school days, sick days, and employer flexibility

Several parents said they find it difficult to make last-minute arrangements for supervision when children are sick and cannot attend school or daycare or when a childcare provider is sick so children cannot attend. These parents related this difficulty to workplace policies:

> *"It's tough to find care on short notice for sick children when your employer immediately counts your leaving work as an absence."*

Several parents commented about the need for more flexibility from employers. As one parent wrote in a typical comment, "It is a major stressor and employers…do not care."

Parents reported that finding care for no-school days (e.g., inservice, vacation, snow days) during the school year is also particularly tough. Even parents with regular and dependable afterschool arrangements said they struggled to find full-day care for no-school days, when many afterschool programs closed but parents still had to work.

Older students: "Too old for daycare and too young for jobs"

Aside from barriers to accessing OST supervision, one of the most frequently mentioned themes in parent follow-up was the need for engaging programs for older students, ages 12 and above. The problem parents described is three-fold: Most daycare centers and OST programs serve elementary-age students; by middle school or age 12, students are not eligible. However, many parents judged that their middle school students or younger high school students were not ready to be left home alone. At the same time, parents reported a lack of affordable and engaging activities designed for this age group, especially during the summer.

Too old for daycare. According to parents, ages 12 to 15 are especially challenging: under age 12, students can go to daycare or school-based afterschool programs, and beyond age 15, many students can drive and keep busy with jobs, especially in the summer. But for the 12 to 15 age group, parents reported, "there isn't good supervision services available for families."

Not quite old enough to be alone. Some parents said they let their adolescent children stay home alone, but nearly all parents who commented—whether their children stayed home alone or not—felt conflicted about their decision. In a typical comment, one parent explained:

> *"I have teenage kids so I let them go to the pool, the library and other places close to home like that. I think it is good for them to learn responsibility. I do think it is difficult to know when is the right time to let your kids stay home. As parents we feel guilty. Or at least I do."*

Middle school and high school students might be trusted to go to parks, libraries, the pool, or around the neighborhood by themselves, but most parents said they asked their children to check in by phone and keep them apprised of where they were. A few parents wished there were more structured activities available in neighborhoods or at libraries and parks—something less formal than an OST program but more formal than children on their own.

Engagement is critical. In follow-up, parents pointed out that, for adolescents, learning independence is important (how to cook, take care of self, etc.) and engagement is key. They suggested that programs provide more age-specific activities for adolescents, including leadership, life skills, and college or career skills. Several commented about the challenge of finding activities that adolescents would find engaging. One parent reflected that, aside from aging out of being eligible for daycare, her fifth grade son was no longer interested in the types of activities and field trips the daycare center provided:

> *"Some of the centers and the activities that they do are really geared toward younger kids, and a boy going into fifth grade isn't going to like going to the Children's Museum. I mean, it's a great opportunity for a kindergartener or first grader, but... [we need different] experiences for that age, because they're in that window that's tough where they can't be home alone, but centers feel kind of babyish."*

Even parents who thought (hoped) their middle school or high school students were old enough to stay home alone still wished there were structured activities that could keep their children busy. For high school students in particular, parents said, out-of-school time is "not a matter of needing

supervision as much as it is preventing boredom, providing/promoting activity and creative stimulation."

Parents reported that finding activities for this age group is especially difficult during the summer. Of the 17 parents who mentioned the lack of activities for middle school age students, nearly all mentioned summer specifically, especially for student who do not play sports.

Childcare workforce: "It's tough, but needs to be a priority"

Several parents expressed concern about the childcare workforce, especially the rate of turnover they observed in daycare centers and afterschool programs. In a typical comment, one parent explained:

> *"It's tough, but needs to be a priority. I would like to see more quality providers and less staff turnover in this field. Last year our after school program had a bit of revolving door and this was not the best thing for the kids. Imagine if you had a new supervisor every month—it doesn't work."*

Parents drew a connection between staff retention and program quality, and some linked those concerns to pay:

> *"I think quality and staffing is a challenge…. It stems from the pay…. There's always hiring, it feels like, so I worry that staff get burnout who are there."*

One parent speculated that low wages contribute to childcare workforce shortages, but also drew the connection between wages and costs:

> *"I'm not so sure minimum wage is a fair wage for the care of our children…. Here we were just talking about the cost of it, but the reality is, where's our priorities as parents to choose what our needs versus our wants are?"*

Children with disabilities

Parents of children with disabilities said it is hard to find dependable and quality care for children with disabilities, and the care that is available is very expensive.

Underrepresented families

As noted, survey respondents differed from the overall population of Sioux Falls (i.e., respondents had higher incomes and higher levels of education and were more likely to be white and to speak English at home). In follow-up comments, some parents spoke about their experiences with and perceptions of community needs for underrepresented groups and the role the majority community could play in helping to meet those needs. In particular, parents spoke to the need for fostering neighborhood community. In a follow-up interview, one parent reflected:

> *"How do we all integrate more as neighborhoods to understand and use each other as resources? But also feel empowered to educate each other?.... How do we build community around some of those barriers so that they don't become barriers?... How do we build a culture that everybody feels trusting enough to watch out for each other?"*

Parents suggested that ensuring program availability is not enough, and that serving underrepresented groups may mean taking a proactive approach to outreach and community building. As one parent put it:

> *"When we talk about access, sure, we can give all of the access in the world for programs, but if these parents are working 16, 18 hours a day, they don't speak a word of English, they're scared to sign*

> *anything because they might be deported or whatever, I mean, there's a fear issue that's around our whole nation."*

Parents also wondered what they could do about very young unsupervised children they observed in their neighborhoods or around town. A few parents reported disappointing encounters with law enforcement where it seemed nothing was done in response to a situation that seemed, to them, to border on neglect. One parent concluded her account:

> *"There was no teeth in kind of-- I don't know if it's neglect, I mean, but there was no judicial response. And not that everything needs to be that way! There can be education first and stuff, but I just felt like it went back to normal and this 2-year old is running outside on 41st Street with a diaper on when it's 30-some degrees. And everything goes on the next day!"*

4. Students' Perspectives

In order to better understand the student perspective on out-of-school time, ARI worked with counselors in the Sioux Falls School District to interview students. An invitation letter was sent to the parents or guardians of students participating in a school-based mentoring program (n=656). This population of students was selected because they had been identified by teachers or counselors as likely to benefit from additional mentoring support. Presumably, they would capture in meaningful ways intangible characteristics that could not have been proxied by demographic information.

ARI received consent from the parents or guardians of 26 students: 11 elementary, 12 middle school, and 3 high school students. Those students were interviewed by their school counselors, who followed a protocol developed by ARI. Counselors recorded students' responses and submitted them to ARI for analysis.

Because of the selective sampling strategy and small sample size, student interview results cannot be generalized to the student population at large. Nevertheless, they offer a snapshot of what some students think about out-of-school time and student safety.

Who are students with outside of school?

Students reported a variety of arrangements for out-of-school time, including afterschool programs, daycare, and summer camps. However, students most frequently reported spending out-of-school time with parents and siblings, extended family, and friends. For elementary students in particular, extended family play a significant role in out-of-school supervision. Even elementary students who said they were involved with afterschool programs said they often spent weekends, summers, or vacation days with grandparents or other extended families. About half of the middle school students who were interviewed said they spent at least some out-of-school time with extended family—typically grandparents during the summer. None of the high school students reported significant time with extended family, aside from one student who sometimes babysits for family on weekends.

For older students, friends figured prominently in out-of-school time. Two of three high school students said they spend most of their time out of school with friends, often without the company of adults. Several middle school students also said they spend out-of-school time with friends, occasionally without adult supervision. Only a handful of elementary students mentioned spending out-of-school time with friends, typically playing outside at a park without adults. However, generally elementary students were more likely to spend out-of-school time with parents, siblings, or extended family.

Spending time without adult supervision appears to be common for high school students and not uncommon for middle school students, but rare for elementary students. All high school and middle school students reported spending at least some time out of school alone or with friends but without adult supervision. High school students reported being home alone or with younger siblings before or after school for an hour or two while parents were at work, or sometimes with friends on the weekends without adults around. About two-thirds of the middle school students who were interviewed said they spend at least some time without adult supervision, most commonly before school after parents leave for work, while with friends (especially when playing outside or at a park), or once a week or so for various reasons.

Just a few elementary students mentioned occasionally being without adult supervision. Two said they are sometimes home without adults on the weekends, but in both cases they are home with siblings (ages unspecified). Another reported being alone only occasionally and for brief periods when parents run an errand, and a fourth student reported playing with friends at the park without adult supervision. A fifth elementary student reported staying home alone once when she or he was sick and a parent could not stay home. However, for elementary students, being without adult supervision appears to be the exception, and five elementary students explicitly stated that they are never alone.

Before and after school

Most elementary students reported that they spend mornings before school at home with their parents, whereas some middle and high school students reported a gap between when their parents leave for work and they go to school, and a few older students said they are usually home alone or with siblings in the mornings. One middle school student reported waiting outside school for breakfast in the morning. A handful of students (middle school and elementary age) singled out mornings before school as a time when they would like to have a place to go or something to do.

Afterschool activities varied widely, but overall, most elementary students said they spend time after school in an afterschool program or with parents or extended family. Elementary students who were interviewed spent afterschool time at Bowden, the YMCA, Kids Inc., and in special programs such as Girls on the Run. Those who were not enrolled in an afterschool program generally reported spending time after school with extended family or at home with parents. Some elementary students mentioned specific activities they enjoy after school, including sports, outdoor activities, animals, music, movies, video games, and TV.

Compared to elementary students, far fewer middle school students participate in afterschool programs. Instead, older students more often reported participating in sports or lessons or engaging in various activities at home. Just a handful of middle school students said they participated in afterschool programs, including Boys and Girls Club, Bowden, and Y-Club. The rest said they spend time after school at home, typically with a parent but in some cases with extended family or alone. A few middle school students also reported spending time in sports practice or lessons (e.g., music). Those who mentioned specific activities they engage in after school listed sports, friends, reading, homework, outdoor activities, video games, or going to the mall, arcade, or movies.

The high school students who were interviewed said they spend afterschool time at home, often without adult supervision for at least an hour or two, or with friends or at work. Specific activities they mentioned engaging in after school include homework, reading, sports, church, listening to music, and spending time with friends or video chatting with friends.

Homework help

Students were asked whether they have help with homework when needed. Overall, students said they have the help they need—either at home from parents and siblings, from an afterschool program, or from teachers before school.

No-school days, weekends, and summer

Extended family play an important role in providing adult supervision on no-school days, over the weekend, and during the summer.

On no-school days during the academic year, many afterschool programs also close or require separate registration and an additional fee. As a result, many of the elementary students who participate in afterschool programs said they typically spend no-school days with extended family. One student reported her or his mother had to take a day off of work to cover the most recent long weekend off school. Generally, middle and high school students did not report special arrangements for no-school days, though a handful mentioned spending vacation days with friends or extended family.

On weekends, elementary students said they were typically home with parents or went to visit extended family or friends. A few elementary students reported spending some time on weekends without adult supervision, either while playing with friends or when parents left on brief errands.

Over the summer, students reported a variety of arrangements. A handful of students said they participated in Boys and Girls Club (middle school) or spent summers at Bowden (elementary), and one elementary student reported going to a daycare in the summer. Other elementary students said they stayed with extended family or parents, and one reported going to summer camp. Middle school students more often reported spending summer time with friends, often at parks or swimming, and one middle school student mentioned summer camp. All of the high school students said they spent summer working or babysitting and, in their leisure time, went swimming or to the mall or spent time at home.

Existing programs

Students who were interviewed reported participating in the following programs:

	Participating Student's School Level		
Program	Elementary	Middle school	High school
Bowden	✓	✓	
Boy Scouts		✓	
Boys and Girls Club		✓	
Summer camp	✓	✓	✓
Church			✓
Daycare	✓	✓	
Girls on the Run	✓		
Kids Inc.	✓		
Mentoring			✓
Working			✓
YMCA / Y-Club	✓	✓	

Desired out-of-school-time activities

Whereas out-of-school time supervision may be more important for younger students, for middle and high school students out-of-school time programs might more profitably focus on engagement and enrichment. In interviews, students were asked whether they would like to participate in an out-of-school time program if one were available and what types of activities they would enjoy. Overall, elementary students were most likely to say they would like to participate in a program, whereas middle and high school students were more likely to say no to the general idea of out-of-school time programs while at the same time noting an interest in specific types of lessons or activities.

While one elementary student said she or he would prefer to spend time at home than in a program, most others said they would enjoy having a place to go to play with other children. Several of those

who already participate in afterschool programs said they would like to have something similar available in the morning because they thought it would be fun to play; one elementary student pointed out that being in a program means adults are around to mediate disputes and help address bullying. Another elementary student, who does not currently participate in any out-of-school time program, said she or he would like to be able to attend the same afterschool program her or his friends do.

Middle and high school students rejected the general idea of participating in out-of-school time programs for a variety of reasons, including preferring to get more sleep or relax at home, being comfortable with current arrangements, not wanting to be "yelled at for having fun," or already having a place to go (e.g., Bowden). However, many older students volunteered that they would be interested in specific types of lessons (e.g., dance, musical instruments) or sports and outdoor activities. Middle school students in particular said they would like more opportunities to play sports at school.

When asked about the types of activities they would like available outside of school, students responded with the following, in order from most to least frequently mentioned:

1. Outdoor activities: 14 students, including all 3 high school students, 5 middle school students, and 6 elementary students said they would like to play outside or do outdoor activities (e.g., go to parks, lakes, pools, camping, walking, hiking, hunting and fishing, ride bikes, garden, ride horses, or canoe). Among outdoor activities, the most frequently mentioned activity was going to the park.
2. Sports: 14 students, including all 3 high school students, 8 middle school students, and 3 elementary students, said they would like more opportunities to play sports (e.g., gymnastics, dance, cheer, soccer, volleyball, archery and shooting, hockey, swimming, football, basketball, and tennis. Some students—especially middle school students—specifically mentioned wanting more opportunities to play sports at school, and a few mentioned wanting lessons available after school.
3. Animals: 6 students, including 3 middle school and 3 elementary students, mentioned an interest in animals, from riding horses to playing with cats and dogs to hunting and tracking or seeing wild or trained animals.
4. Music: 3 students, including 2 middle school and 1 elementary student, said they would enjoy music lessons or having available practice space after school.
5. Other interests: One or two students each mentioned an interest in games, cooking and baking, Legos, and having an open gym available before and after school.

Safety

Students almost unanimously reported feeling safe at school, aside from a handful of elementary students who said they did not feel safe at school during disaster drills or lockdowns. However, several students said they did not feel safe in their neighborhoods. A few offered explanations for feeling unsafe in their neighborhoods, including nearby violent crime or personal experiences with theft. A few middle school students said that, when they are home, they stay inside because they do not feel safe in their neighborhoods.

Transportation

Students were asked about how they get to and from school. Most elementary students said their parents (or, in a few cases, extended family) drive them to school, then go to Kids Inc. on site or ride in a program van to an off-site afterschool program until parents pick them up after work. Middle

school students used a wider variety of means to get to school: though most middle school students said they take the bus or ride with parents to school, one reported walking to school and another rode with an in-home daycare provider. After school, most middle school students said they again rode the bus or rode with parents, though a couple attended an afterschool program (Y-Club at school or Bowden, which provides transportation). Of the three high school students, one reported driving to school, one rode with parents in the morning and walked home after school, and the third rode with parents to and from school.

5. Community Stakeholders' Perspectives

A series of focus groups were conducted with stakeholders in order to better understand their perspectives on out-of-school-time supervision and student safety. Three focus groups were held with 23 stakeholders from afterschool programs, youth enrichment programs, local government, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and local school districts (including counselors, social workers, and administrators). These groups were intended to be as inclusive as possible; no interested participants were turned away. Stakeholder participants were recruited based on preliminary lists of organizations involved in out-of-school-time supervision and student safety or referrals from other stakeholders. Additional interviews were conducted with stakeholders who were not able to participate in scheduled focus groups.

Hardworking parents and chaotic lives

Stakeholders saw student safety concerns rooted in conditions that begin at home. One suggested parents lie along a spectrum from absent, chaotic parents battling addiction on one end to "really responsible parents who are working two jobs" on the other end—but, this stakeholder noted, in both cases children are left unsupervised. In the absence of adult supervision, children are expected to take on adult responsibilities, whether caring for and feeding themselves or younger siblings.

While stakeholders generally agreed that families in chaos due to addiction warranted intervention of one kind or another, they felt deep ambivalence about confronting working parents whose children were left unsupervised. As one stakeholder from the juvenile justice community put it,

> *"We all know the amount of money it takes to raise a family, so if they're actually out working and maybe having two jobs or whatever to support their family, it's tough to tell them that, you know, being involved is also equally important in raising a child."*

For parents at both ends of the spectrum, the demands of daily life contribute to instability that affects children. Stakeholders from the schools and juvenile justice community both reported that, in their experiences, mobility and housing instability are among the biggest risk factors for students. A stakeholder from an elementary school said that the students most likely to be left out of afterschool programs are those who are new to a school or who move around often because they miss the enrollment period for afterschool programs, especially Kids Inc. Another stakeholder added,

> *"It's hard to peel back the onion and know…where the greatest impact would be. Housing is certainly [one]…. I often have kids, nobody can pick them up and they can't take a child home because there are too many kids here, they just got kicked out because one kid was misbehaving. You know, they get bounced around a lot. So stable housing."*

Though causes are myriad, stakeholders agreed that out-of-school time supervision is one of the biggest issues when it comes to student safety. When asked an open-ended question about priorities for student safety, one stakeholder gave with this typical response:

> *"Supervision, I think, is a big thing. Who's monitoring the kids that are, once school is done until the time maybe mom and dad get off work or if they work evening hours, who's there?"*

Stakeholders provided abundant anecdotal evidence of unsupervised children they encountered after school or during the summer. A few told of very young children they knew who spent long hours alone:

> *"They're little. They're five years old and up, and when I say on their own, they would be at the library from until it opened until it closed. No meals. Nobody checking on them. Well, maybe a phone call during the day."*

In talking about young, unsupervised children, stakeholders again expressed ambivalence. They acknowledged the state has no minimum age under which children cannot be left home alone, and also noted that such a law would put many hardworking parents in a bind. Yet, one stakeholder from the law enforcement community said,

> *"To have a kid alone at the kindergarten level is kind of freaky, in my opinion. And again, I'm not trying to judge, but still, there's a lot of dangers in a house. If you're cooking, do you have a microwave? Are you cooking on a gas stove? Are you going to get burnt?"*

Meet them where they're at: Addressing home life

Afterschool providers and school personnel alike reflected on the complexity of addressing needs that often originate at home:

> *"That is a huge question that we run into: How do we deal with the home life situation that isn't our issue, isn't the school's issue per se, but it is very much a real-life situation of we deal with the behavior issues from that."*

Stakeholders discussed a variety of factors that might contribute to chaos at home. In some cases, parents may give children wide latitude—even lose control—because "parents feel like, well, I can't discipline my child, I can't do this because they'll call the police and say that I abused them."

In other cases, parents themselves "are just living very chaotic lives…. It's just drugs and alcohol have a lot to do with the problem with parents." One stakeholder described a home visit where she met a dozen people living in a home, "And some of them are high, and I look around and I think, where do you start?"

Even when problems at home do not rise to the level of addiction, abuse, or neglect, general chaos can be disruptive:

> *"Oftentimes they see chaos in terms of the management of their household while they try to work their jobs and kind of constant change in schedules and change in housing. They may be moving from one side of town or changing schools. In all those transitions, the kids just aren't supervised and aren't engaged in things that are helpful to the kids and help keep them out of trouble."*

School personnel said the relationship between home environment and child outcomes becomes especially clear around the winter holidays, when "things get much more stressed in school because kids don't want to be home all day. That's their worst nightmare…. We see more discipline problems, we see more anxiety."

Acknowledging that it is not always possible to address parents' chaotic lives or other troubles at home, stakeholders drove home the importance of providing structured out-of-school-time programs: "In that case, the whole structured afterschool programming would be beneficial to get them [students] out of that as much as possible."

While out-of-school-time programs can be a refuge for these students, they must be accessible. Stakeholders pointed out that students who come from chaotic home environments must often learn

to advocate for themselves or navigate systems by themselves in order to access the resources they need. For those students who need services the most, the barriers are often highest:

> *"Some of them can't [advocate for themselves]. I have kids who are tired, tired of not having food, tired of moving all the time, tired of being in charge of the siblings."*

Even in less extreme cases, students whose parents are overworked or disorganized may get left out of afterschool or enrichment activities when their parents neglect to sign them up.

In responding to the needs of parents, stakeholders urged, outreach should be supportive, not judgmental. Right now, many reflected, intervention tends to be reactionary; little preventative action is taken to support parents. They said it is important to reach parents early, before middle school:

> *"We get to that middle school age and parents have almost lost control at that point. Kids are getting bigger and bigger, too, and the parents feel like they can't control them."*

Around this age, they said, parents may give up: they feel stuck because they are afraid to discipline their children for fear they will be charged with abuse, especially in families where children speak English and parents do not. In those cases, language barriers can upset family dynamics:

> *"When you have that kid as the interpreter, now they become that parent, and the parent becomes the kid. I've been in this for over 25 years. I've never seen it flip back."*

Language barriers may also contribute to fear or confusion about the types of discipline that are legal or that might be considered abuse. Stakeholders said the community needs to be "recognizing how multicultural our community has become and how language can be a barrier to even get the resources and understand the resources." Given a divisive national political environment, a few stakeholders also said that fear and distrust are especially high and could present barriers to engaging families.

To address fear and distrust, one stakeholder suggested reaching out to communities within apartment complexes, noting that ethnic enclaves form in buildings. Outreach might consist of classes or providing resources and referrals for out-of-school-time activities and resources. But where language barriers, cultural difference, or fear are present, making programs available may not be enough to draw in participation—instead, this stakeholder insisted, "Go to them and make it welcoming and make it supportive."

More generally, noting the significance of home life and the fact that problems often arise outside of school and outside of programs, stakeholders wondered whether outreach to neighborhoods or apartment complexes could be a solution.

Whatever form outreach might take, stakeholders from juvenile justice and the schools emphasized that parents should feel empowered and supported, not judged—and reaching them early (before there is trouble) could help convey that message. A few stakeholders mused about the possibility of providing parenting classes, but worried about those classes seeming like a judgment or punishment. Instead, some suggested "a parenting support group" with a moderator where parents could "bounce ideas off of each other" and receive guidance.

A parent-unfriendly workforce

For many parents, problems at home start at work. Stakeholders voiced widespread agreement that employers have a significant role to play in the conversation around out-of-school-time supervision and student safety. One stakeholder had a room full of stakeholders nodding along when she offered this assessment:

> *"Yes, the children need services, but taking a step back from that, when you mention the workforce: What can we do as a community to make parenting a priority? And employers, you know, you look at the wage issue, you look at the time off, parents not being able to take their kids in when they're sick, and if you take a step back to the bigger picture, it's that we're talking about all of this because we're not a parent-friendly workforce."*

Stakeholders saw workplace practice as a contributing factor to a range of concerns around out-of-school-time supervision and student safety, from the growing demand for afterschool programs to parents who "can't get away from work to deal with school issues and behavior issues" and "why high school students end up driving the middle school and the elementary school kids to school." They pointed to parents working "weird shifts" and holding multiple jobs in response to low wages—or, as an alternative strategy, stakeholders reported some families on the cusp of making ends meet while balancing low wages with expensive childcare might decide to have one parent opt out of the workforce to stay home with the children.

Unmet needs

Stakeholders discussed their perceptions of unmet needs, including an overall lack of capacity in out-of-school-time programs, plus particular times of need (before school, on no-school days, during the summer, and into the late evening), geographies of need (areas of rapid growth on the west side of town and certain high poverty schools), and populations with special needs (including students with disabilities and students involved—or potentially involved—with the juvenile justice system).

Overall capacity

Among providers, the perception was that existing afterschool programs are not enough to meet demand:

> *"There are all kinds of programs for afterschool! There's Apple Tree, Montessori, the list goes on. And we still can't take all the children, unfortunately."*

Providers said programs keep their own waiting lists, and families often are on two or more waiting lists at the same time as they wait for something to open, so waiting lists are not a perfect indication of demand. Still, providers said waiting lists are common.

Most providers said they were limited primarily by staff. Representatives from Kids Inc. said they also face space limitations in some schools. They do not have access to classrooms, and though they used to be able to use computer labs, schools are doing away with computer lab rooms as they move to one-to-one technology in classrooms. Still, even for Kids Inc., staffing is a major constraint on capacity.

Times of need

In addition to a general need for expanded capacity, several stakeholders identified a need for more **before-school programs**, especially school-based before-school programs. Stakeholders who worked in schools gave multiple examples of students who arrive at school two or three hours before school

starts, often before buildings are open or supervision begins. "That's a huge safety issue," one reflected.

Kids Inc., which offers afterschool care at all elementary schools, currently offers before-school care only at R.F. Pettigrew, which has a different start time. However, representatives from Kids Inc. report the program has been "a blessing" and well received. Off-site programs (e.g., EmBe and many daycares) do offer before-school care, but stakeholders—including those from outside the school system—emphasized the importance of offering before-school care at school sites:

> *"There is a real investment in the schools with the wellbeing and the safety of the kids…we know that's a safe environment already, we know it's a good environment."*

One stakeholder, based on his experience in the middle school where he worked, even suggested schools might be able to run their own before school programs with support or pay incentives for current staff to arrive early. Locating before-school programs at schools would also eliminate the need to provide additional transportation from a care provider's location to the school.

Given the lack of before-school programs, parents who have to be to work before school starts face the decision of leaving children home alone to get ready for school by themselves or dropping them off early to wait outside the school building. "I think the families feel stuck," a stakeholder explained, "They don't know what else to do."

Stakeholders also identified an unmet need for additional care options on **no-school days** (e.g., inservice days, school vacation days, and snow days). Some programs offer special programs for no-school or vacation days (e.g., EmBe, YMCA), but many—and especially the school-based programs that share school buildings—follow the school calendar. Those school-based programs that do provide care on no-school days often operate at a limited number of sites and charge an additional fee, plus require parents to register for these days in advance

Similarly, stakeholders said there is a need for **summer programs**, which they pointed out tend to be short (e.g., 2-week camps) and sporadic (e.g., Parks and Recreation's mobile playground programs). Some afterschool programs run through the summer, but may only be open in the afternoon. For families of elementary-age children, daycares can provide all-day care in the summer, but middle and high school students have fewer options.

Finally, with regard to scheduling, stakeholders identified a need for **extended evening** care. Stakeholders said most existing programs end by 6 or 6:30 p.m., though many parents work later. Providers cautioned that evening care is tough to staff, especially because the need tends to be transient as people find family or other arrangements to care for children later in the evening (or even overnight). However, they acknowledged, it is a community need—especially given the hours worked in major industries in the city, including banking and healthcare. Attendees gave the example of the Citi daycare, which they said closes at 5 p.m., even though Citi has a shift that runs from 12 – 9:30 p.m. Likewise, hospital nursing shifts run from 7 to 7, though most childcare facilities and afterschool programs are only open until 6 or 6:30 p.m. (The Bowden youth center, which is open until 9 p.m., is one exception.) Providers reported there are just a handful of in-home providers who offer overnight care.

Some students who are not in afterschool programs or activities linger around school, but middle and high schools try to have all student out by 5 or 5:30 p.m., elementary schools by 3 p.m. (or as

late as 5 p.m. if there are staff available to supervise). In some cases, stakeholders reported, problems arise when buildings close but students have not been picked up yet:

> *"We used to have a contract with Children's Inn, so if a parent didn't pick up a child…and there's nobody else in the building that they can leave them with, then a police officer could come and take them there. And then they would have to pay a fine…. We try and get ahold of their parents, try to get someone on the emergency contacts, but if we can't, and it's becoming a growing problem …. But we can't take them anywhere if the parent isn't home!"*

In these cases, faced with a lack of alternatives, schools may call the Department of Social Services.

For children for whom afterschool programs are an escape from a less than ideal home environment, having the program run later in the evening and include supper would be beneficial:

> *"If they know that, hey, I can come shoot baskets in this gym and then at 5:30 I'm going to have supper and then I go home after that or whatever, then at least you know that there's some structure, there's a meal had, then they go home and hopefully things are OK for the next two or three hours, and then they can go to bed."*

Other stakeholders agreed, and one suggested expanding the model used by LSS's Evening Reporting Center:

> *"I would say structured afterschool programs that go into the evening that provide transportation and food and really just looking at what ERC [the Evening Reporting Center] does right now, because I think that that is a good model. But for everybody, and not just specific to kids that are in trouble."*

Geographies of need

Stakeholders also identified areas of the city that they perceived as having unmet out-of-school-time needs. Providers explained that a variety of factors contributed to variation in service availability across different areas of the community:

> *"For us in the school district, it's a different issue at each building. Because obviously some of the programs are only serving certain buildings because of transportation issues or staffing issues or what may be. So what's offered at some buildings isn't offered at other buildings, and so that obviously creates difficulties that way as well."*

Stakeholders characterized the west and southwest parts of Sioux Falls (and neighboring communities) as areas of increasing demand due to continued growth. Representatives from Kids Inc. reported their elementary afterschool programs were at capacity at nearly every school with waiting lists of 50 or more at some west-side schools. Other providers agreed that the west and southwest side is where they see highest demand:

> *"It's the growth in our city that's causing, you know, we definitely need new elementary schools…. And the programs can only take so many."*

Stakeholders also identified the area around Whittier Middle School and Terry Redlin and Anne Sullivan Elementary (roughly Cliff Ave. from 10th Street north to Rice Street) as an area of need, especially for before-school care and additional transportation options. One stakeholder speculated that part of the demand in this area is driven by the proportion of parents working early morning shifts at Smithfield Foods:

> *"I know a struggle for that population and the walk area and before school, I know a lot of them work at Morrell's, so the others, they go really early and we're having a hard time finding a location for those kids before school."*

Several stakeholders observed that many students walk from Anne Sullivan to the nearby Oak View Library afterschool. In response to the influx of students, the library launched drop-in afterschool activities and a feeding program in cooperation with Feeding South Dakota. They now see around 100 students after school.

When discussing areas of need, stakeholders also briefly mentioned McGovern Middle School and the Title I schools serving the downtown area, particularly Lowell Elementary and Hawthorne Elementary.

Populations with special needs

Stakeholders identified two populations of students for whom existing services may not be sufficient to meet their needs: students with disabilities and justice-involved students.

Students with disabilities

Although some programs (e.g., Here4Youth) are specialized and focus on serving students with disabilities, stakeholders acknowledged they have limited capacity and tend to be more expensive. Plus, providers reported, some families choose for their children be in inclusive groups of peers "that will continue to challenge them and help them grow in different ways." The challenge for providers is being able to meet the needs of students who need closer attention or specialist support:

> *"They'll have one-on-one care all day at school, and then they'll come to our program and it's 1 to 15, and we can't afford to pay for a specialist to come in to take care of that child after school, and you don't want to discriminate saying you can't take your child because they have a disability, so there's that Catch 22 thing there."*

Several providers said that, if resources allowed, they would like to be able to bring specialists in to their programs to make them more inclusive and provide additional support for students with cognitive or behavioral disabilities.

Justice-involved students

For students who are at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system, out-of-school activities can be an important tool for prevention and diversion. Unfortunately, stakeholders from the juvenile justice community explained, the students who are involved with juvenile justice already often face barriers or eligibility restrictions to participating in school-based afterschool activities:

> *"Structured, organized activities on a regular basis afterschool [beyond elementary] is really lacking and needed. From a probation standpoint, you've got sports and clubs, and things like that. Sports you need a physical, and sometimes that's where it gets lost. Also if they've been in trouble or had any sort of drug and alcohol issues, they're not allowed to participate in that. So we kind of have to look outside of the school district for activities."*

Sports and clubs outside of school may be an alternative, but in those cases, transportation and cost become an issue.

Recent juvenile justice reforms—the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Initiative, and the 2015 Juvenile Justice Public Safety Improvement Act (often

referred to as Senate Bill 73)—have put a premium on finding available out-of-school activities that can serve as diversions from detention:

> *"You don't want to push kids into that [juvenile justice] system in order to get them the services they need. That has a very, very negative impact."*

The reforms were motivated by a desire to reduce confinement of juveniles while providing supportive services:

> *"If the kids are behaving in a way that they do need something, they don't need to necessarily be locked up at a detention center, but they need structure, they need a diversion, they need something."*

However, stakeholders reported, not enough diversion programs are available, and the ones that are available are not immediately accessible to students who would benefit. "So," concluded one stakeholder, "we have a gap."

Stakeholders explained that the reforms have been criticized for establishing a "catch and release" pattern for juvenile offenders, but more adequate supportive services could help address that concern:

> *"The pendulum swung so far where we were locking all the kids up for all offenses and putting them all at JDC [the Juvenile Detention Center], and they were all together. Well, then research is now showing that putting those low-level status offenders with the kids that are actually doing the armed robberies and the murders and that kind of stuff, that's bad! … So now, the pendulum swung almost too far and only the worst of the worst are getting locked up, and we've got to figure out something to do with this demographic and this section of youth. And there's just, the programming's not there, and the stuff's not there to have them do something productive. Until that becomes a piece there, it's tough."*

Stakeholders explained that part of the problem is internal to the juvenile justice system. The referral process for diversion services is slow because of a backlog in the state's attorney's office. According to stakeholders, it can take three to four months to process a referral for diversion. And yet, stakeholders pointed out, immediacy is important so that students make the connection between offense and diversion.

But another part of the problem is a need for additional networking and coordination to facilitate the referral process:

> *"The answer is supposed to be keeping them out [of the juvenile justice system] but giving them services. And we just don't have, we haven't kept up with the types of networking and services that you can, with any ease, direct a family into between the school social workers, the probation officers, the court…. There's just this gap, you know, and we have little bits and pieces here and there."*

Leveling barriers to participation

In addition to the unmet needs described in the previous section and transportation (discussed below), stakeholders reported that major barriers to OST program participation are (1) finding programs that are a good fit, (2) cost, (3) and behavior problems.

Finding a program

Stakeholders said that, sometimes, students and parents struggle to find OST programs that are a good fit—i.e., programs they find affordable and accessible, and in which students are interested. Afterschool providers generally said that, when they cannot serve a family because they are at

capacity, they refer parents to the Helpline Center (211), which maintains a database of childcare and afterschool providers. However, a few providers speculated that the database may be incomplete because—based on their conversations with fellow providers who said they were not familiar with the Helpline—they suspect smaller providers may not know to list themselves with the Helpline.

Stakeholders pointed out that finding resources can be especially difficult for families when language is a barrier. They suggested doing more outreach to apartment complexes or neighborhoods, making connections and referrals or even offering supportive classes for parents who may not be familiar with the availability of afterschool programs.

Finally, a few stakeholders, particularly those from the juvenile justice community, said families may struggle to complete enrollment requirements or maintain eligibility for programs. For example, high school sports require students complete a physical exam, which can be a hurdle for some students to participate. Others become ineligible when they violate high school activities rules, then have trouble finding alternative programs that are not affiliated with the schools but that are still accessible and affordable.

Paying for programs

Stakeholders generally agreed that cost is a barrier for low-income families to participate in out-of-school-time programs. In the case of afterschool programs and daycare providers, high demand may exacerbate the problem. Providers report that daycare providers are increasingly moving to charging full-time rates to all families, even those who do not use care every day; demand is so high, they say, that families do not complain about this policy.

Specialized programs (e.g., programs for children with behavioral challenges or children with disabilities) tend to be more expensive and may be unaffordable even for families who are not low-income.

A variety of resources are already available to families who cannot afford the full cost of out-of-school-time programs. State childcare assistance is available and may be used for afterschool care, but stakeholders pointed out that some families near the income eligibility cutoff may not qualify for assistance, yet still struggle to pay for care. Other families may receive assistance but still struggle to pay the required co-pay.

Some programs are free or subsidized with reduced fees for low-income families. Bowden Youth Center and the Boys and Girls Club were most frequently mentioned. The YMCA's afterschool programs at Whittier and McGovern Middle Schools are also provided free of charge. Kids Inc. has a sliding fee structure based on a student's lunch status, but the lowest tier is still $49 every 2 weeks (per child), which stakeholders report can be expensive for some families. Most of the free or subsidized programs rely on external grant funding (e.g., United Way or 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants).

For older students, full-time afterschool care may not be necessary, but stakeholders reported that lessons, clubs, and enrichment activities may also be unaffordable:

> *"Good activities that kids otherwise would be involved with are out of reach because they cost too much. You know, you can't put your child in dance or have them occupied in ways that other families do."*

Several stakeholders who provide direct service to students or families said they use United Way green coupons to help families pay for enrichment activities. These vouchers, they say, are an

important community asset, but transportation can still be an insurmountable hurdle for students to participate in programs

> *"I use them [United Way vouchers] quite often, usually at the end of the year for the summer, and most of the time it's for basketball camps or camps over at Washington High School, where it's within [walking] distance. And that's the area that I find, again, we've got some amazing soccer players. But in the middle school, we don't have soccer yet. So I try to get them connected with this voucher to, you know, but then there's no transportation to get them there."*

Though older students do not necessarily need full-time care themselves, stakeholders reiterated that the cost of childcare for young children (including preschool) is a barrier to older children's participation in OST activities because their parents want them home to watch younger siblings for free.

Behavior problems

Behavior problems can be both cause and consequences of students' disengagement from out-of-school programs. On the one hand, students with behavior problems may be asked to leave afterschool programs, then have trouble finding an alternative program. On the other hand, students who lack structured programs or quality out-of-school-time enrichment activities may be more susceptible to negative peer influences that lead to behavior problems.

Afterschool providers said they have recently seen a rise in behavior problems, particularly bullying:

> *"We seem to struggle more in the last year than I ever have, where kids are just downright cruel to their so-called friend."*

Other providers concurred bullying seems to be on the rise, especially among fourth and fifth grade students. School counselors explained that, often, behavioral problems seen in OST programs are related to behaviors seen during the school day:

> *"Some of those concerns will trickle back to school…and I'm sure it goes the other way, too."*

They suggested that problems may be exacerbated by small program sizes in afterschool programs where there may be small groups of older students who cannot get away from each other.

Several afterschool providers said they have had success addressing bullying by focusing on engagement and leadership opportunities, especially for older elementary students.

However, when behavior problems escalate to the point that providers need to consider expelling a student from a program, they face deep tension. As one provider put it,

> *"We give them a couple chances. However, I think our biggest thing is when we see that they don't go. Or there's kiddos we know that their family life's not so swell. Then we're really making a decision, do we send them home where we know that's not going to be swell, or they're going to be on their own?"*

Stakeholders were also painfully aware that, if students with behavioral challenges are kicked out of a traditional program, "then that limits even more the pool of services that a parent can go towards…. It really narrows that scope for them and becomes a huge need."

When asked about what alternatives parents might have after a student is expelled from a program, providers said they refer to the Helpline Center (211), but "they're basically going to need to call around and find—and hope that they're upfront with whoever they're going to next with what their

issues are." Stakeholders recalled that some specialized programs for students with behavioral problems have existed in the past but closed due to lack of funding (e.g., Take 5 from Southeastern Behavioral Health and McCrossan's afterschool program).

Given that mid-year is the most difficult time to find new afterschool arrangements, school personnel said they have seen parents fail to find any viable program and instead have to shift their work schedules around to be home with children who have been expelled from a program and have nowhere else to go (e.g., by working during school hours and using flex time or working from home in the evenings).

While behavior problems may be a barrier to participating in OST programs, they can also be a consequence of *not* participating. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of program structure and staff in creating a healthy environment for students. They agreed that having a structured environment and trained staff are key to keeping peer influences in check or channeling them in a positive direction. Several stakeholders expressed concern about open-gym style programs and Community Centers, which are a wonderful community asset, but relatively unstructured and unmonitored compared to other OST programs:

> *"[The Community Center is] a good place for them to go, but if there's nobody monitoring what's going on there, what exchanges are being done, what are these kids that are potentially on the edge, what are they learning from other kids? And then where do they go from there?"*

Stakeholders said middle school can be an especially fraught time when it comes to peer influence and "found freedom." As many students age out of the structured afterschool programs that serve elementary students, they need positive, engaging, and structured activities to fill out-of-school time. The challenge, stakeholders said, is reaching those students who do not participate in afterschool programs:

> *"Some of the apartment complexes, not that it's an apartment manager's position, but is there a way that those kids that don't go to any program, is there a way that they can be influenced? Because that's where your drugs happen. That's where a lot of fights happen. And sometimes we're dealing with apartment issues that aren't school-related, aren't our issue."*

Returning to the importance of parents and home environment, stakeholders expressed concern about encounters they had with students from homes in which parents might be sharing drugs with children or leaving drugs out and accessible to younger children. They also worried about the lack of drug and alcohol treatment programs for younger children. They wanted to see more involvement from the drug and alcohol treatment community for both parents and students.

Building program quality

Stakeholders were asked about the features of successful OST programs in the Sioux Falls community and also asked to identify those characteristics they believe should be brought to the fore in OST programming. Although participants saw a place for a variety of programs—and in fact maintained that program variety is critical to maintain—there was widespread agreement that programs should focus on quality and structure and student engagement.

Quality and structure

Stakeholders saw quality and structure as key to the success of OST programs:

> *"I've seen a lot of the programs inside and outside. The ones that are really strong and really do a really great job are the ones that have staff that are flexible but have a schedule that they follow, have activities that are age-appropriate and not just a coloring contest for the whole group."*

These qualities, stakeholders agree, depend to a large degree on staff. Quality programs depend on dedicated, trained staff whose tenure with the program is long enough to form sustained relationships with students. In programs that lack such staff, structure—and potentially safety—suffer. One stakeholder reflected on open-gym type programs:

> *"There's no structure. There's usually one, like high school kid, early college kid that's sitting at the desk, zoned into their phone and then a hundred kids just running amok around them. There might be a fight in the gym and they don't even know it happened."*

"Right," another stakeholder chimed in, "nobody to mediate any sort of conflict."

Providers and school personnel alike pointed out that children may feel uncomfortable in unstructured programs: "nobody wants to go to that program because it's a free-for-all and it's kind of scary!"

For certain subgroups of students, structure may be especially important. For example, students on the autism spectrum or with sensory processing disorders may not do well in unstructured, informal afterschool programs that involve mostly open play or free choice time. They may do better in highly structured programs with more staff attention.

Likewise, students who are—or who may become—involved with the juvenile justice system stand to benefit from more structured programs. One participant reflected on the preventive power of structured OST programming:

> *"Having a structured environment that holds kids accountable is going to empower the kids that are on that edge of doing good."*

Another stakeholder said that, for students with unstable home environments, the stability of a structured program is an important source of support:

> *"A lot of these kids that I run into [in the juvenile justice system] go to school because they need that, and they're happy to. Now, every once in a while, they skip or what have you, but usually they like the food. They like somebody caring for them. It's when it lets out that they have nothing."*

Student engagement

While acknowledging the importance of structure, stakeholders also agreed that allowing student choice is an important tool to keep students engaged. Stakeholders gave examples of programs that allow students to choose from among a variety of activities within the program, plus programs that bring in outside organizations to offer a wider range of experiences for students to choose from. For example, one stakeholder spoke of her own son's experience in an afterschool program where he could take part in Boy Scouts once a week as an optional program, or go to his school's book club another night per week.

Providers said that, especially for older students, allowing choice and encouraging leadership help maintain engagement and reduce behavior problems:

> *"The kids are more engaged when they have a choice and voice in what's going on. Some of our sites have really grown in their—what they've developed into what they call a Junior Leader program, giving*

> *the older kids more responsibility in leading those activities, so then there's more student choice involved in that."*

A few other providers said they had also implemented leadership programs for older students to take on more responsibility and also to address bullying.

> *"We struggle with the older age group, like fourth or fifth grades, who don't want to be there. They want to hang out at home. They don't want to be in a program, but they have to be. So that's kind of why we started that Junior Leadership program."*

By providing leadership opportunities, these programs increased engagement among a difficult-to-engage age group and reduced bullying problems that stemmed from lack of engagement.

Activity types

In terms of the types of activities offered in OST programs, most providers said they incorporate academic activities, though stakeholders expressed a diversity of opinion in how intense the focus on academics should be. Most agreed that OST programs should also build in a focus on interpersonal skills or socioemotional education and physical activity.

Some programs focus specifically on academics—for example, the Multi-Cultural Center's reading and math programs serve elementary students who are referred by school personnel and are behind grade level; their focus is getting them up to grade level. Other afterschool programs incorporate short periods for reading, homework, or academic activities (e.g., 10 or 20 minutes per activity)—some do so because of licensing requirements or requirements of a parent agency. All try to encourage choice and to keep academic programs interactive and hands-on. One experienced provider reflected on the change in emphasis in OST programming over the past few decades, suggesting academics now receive less emphasis as the sole focus of afterschool programs:

> *"In the '90s, it was all about kids going to afterschool and learn, learn, learn, you know? And we've kind of backed off and maybe in the last five years…to that free choice base because the kids that—I don't want them to be stressed and have anxiety at age six!"*

Several providers also suggested a wider definition of academic focus, to especially incorporate STEM education, career skills, and life skills. Stakeholders agreed that, especially for older students and pre-employment adolescents aged 14 or 15, it would be valuable to work on career readiness. One stakeholder cited the example of a program in Rapid City that provided CTE-like technical education, but during afterschool hours. Providers saw opportunities to partner with businesses on STEM programming or training in technical trades and technology. They also saw STEM as a bridge across cultures and a way to empower young women:

> *"I want all kids to go into science and math, but especially the girls. With some of the cultural, the way they've been taught, they don't always look at that as an option. And women can go into the police field, women can go into the science field, women can become astronauts. So we try to open their eyes to that, too."*

Stakeholders involved with juvenile justice reported their experience with the LSS Evening Reporting Center, where students learn life skills, including how to budget, plan a meal, shop for food, cook for others, and fill out job applications. They said students who have participated in the program like it and sometimes even request to continue it, but it is only available as a court-ordered program. They said they would like to see a similar program available to the wider community.

Overall, most stakeholders urged balance in incorporating academics in OST programs, speaking to the importance of developing the whole student, including interpersonal skills:

> *"I think we're in such a push right now…that we just look at test score numbers…. I could care less how a kid's doing on their test if they're a good person and they're going to be a good member of society. But we're so stuck right now, and systematically, we're stuck just staring at numbers and not providing whole education."*

Stakeholders expressed fairly wide agreement that OST programs need to work on anti-bullying, conflict resolution, citizenship, and socioemotional learning—not just academics. Providers who already incorporate these ideas in their programs reported using a variety of models, ranging from Sanford Harmony to judo.

Finally, several stakeholders emphasized the importance of incorporating physical activity as part of that balance, especially in the winter when students might not go out for recess and when it is dark by the time they leave the afterschool program:

> *"I get academic time, but they have been in academics all day long. They need to run!"*

Yet, for some providers, finding space for indoor activity during the winter can be a challenge.

Age-specific programming and leadership opportunities

Stakeholders repeatedly returned to the problem of engaging students across grade levels in age-appropriate OST activities. They generally agreed that elementary-age students have the most robust afterschool programming, with some challenges in meeting the needs of both younger and older elementary students. They cautioned, however, that the transition to middle school is a critical inflection point where participation in OST activities drops off while the focus of OST programming shifts from providing basic care and supervision to enrichment. By high school, stakeholders said, engagement becomes a challenge, but age-appropriate and structured OST activities are important and an evident community need.

Of course, students are part of families, and families may have children across the age spectrum. The childcare needs of younger students are interrelated with older students' participation in enrichment activities. As some stakeholders, particularly school personnel, pointed out, some families try to solve the supervision problem by having students babysit their younger siblings. Although such an arrangement might be safer than leaving very young children home alone, stakeholders worried it limited older students' participation in out-of-school activities—or sometimes even affected their school attendance:

> *"When we find some issues with our [older] kids, it's because they're watching younger ones. You know, we will hear kids say, I'm coming late to school because I had to wait until my younger sibling…that issue of them staying home with kids and watching kids, or then I need to get home right away or I can't do certain activities because I'm watching siblings."*

Stakeholders who work in schools agreed this is a common scenario in middle and high schools. These sibling care arrangements erect an additional barrier to engaging middle and high school students in out-of-school enrichment activities. As one stakeholder put it,

> *"We could have all sorts of afterschool programs up, but if their main requirement is you come home to care for the younger children who just get home from elementary school, then it almost comes into, is there other programs that maybe those kids could participate in so those middle school to young high*

school kids have something, or middle school age late elementary have something to do after school for that time?"

In other words, for some families, addressing the out-of-school time needs of older students is a moot question until affordable, reliable childcare is available for younger siblings—and in many cases, the issue may be finding affordable or free childcare, "Because it's always going to be free if the child is doing it."

Elementary

Stakeholders agreed that elementary has the best afterschool coverage now, with every elementary school served by Kids Inc. and abundant daycares available to serve elementary-age students before and after school. They also agreed that, although transportation gaps remain, elementary students have more transportation options for afterschool programs than do older students because many students are served on the school site by Kids Inc., many daycares transport at least to some schools, and certain afterschool programs (e.g., VOA's Bowden Youth Center) also provide transportation from certain schools and to a child's home.

However, stakeholders saw a stark divide between the needs of and the services available to younger (grades K-3) and older (grades 4-5) elementary students. Older elementary students are challenging to engage because they complete activities more quickly than younger students and because they want to be home or on their own and believe they are old enough and responsible enough (though their parents may disagree). Because of this, providers explain, it is not ideal to mix K-5 students all together because of their different ages, interests, and attitudes. However, not all programs are big enough to split age groups up, so often, all afterschool students are together in one room.

Some programs do segment by age, but typically by only serving younger or older elementary students. For example, some drop-in or open gym type programs (e.g., Community Centers) do not allow unaccompanied students under age seven. Stakeholders also mentioned lots of "cool little programs" like Girls on the Run, Boys on the Run, Girls Who Code, and school chess clubs that successfully create community and engage students with a low investment from schools (because they are often parent or volunteer led)—but these programs are intended for older elementary students and generally unavailable for grades K-3. For families of older students, these programs still present a challenge because they only meet for a few months or a quarter at a time.

Stakeholders also cautioned that those programs that do serve both younger and older elementary students can be intimidating places for young elementary students. As a result, families may choose to put younger elementary students in daycares afterschool—workable when families can afford it, stakeholders say, but difficult for low-income families.

Middle school

Stakeholders from across sectors agreed that the transition from elementary to middle school is a critical point in setting students' paths. Some linked this problem to parenting challenges, noting that as middle school students become more independent, parents feel a loss of a control. At the same time, beginning at the end of elementary school, at age 10, stakes are higher for misbehavior: students can be arrested. As they enter middle school, some students will also transition to taking care of younger siblings, so may not be able to participate in school activities.

Generally, stakeholders said, without the everyday afterschool structure of programs like Kids Inc. that are available to elementary students, middle school students are granted far more independence in piecing together out-of-school activities, and, stakeholders believed, many end up unsupervised:

> *"I do think there's a different type of need for the middle school kids. We have a lot of kids who aren't involved in afterschool activities, so they don't need like basic care in the same way elementary kids do, but there are a whole lot of them that need supervision and structure. And they're just kind of running amok, I would say. They're just running amok in the neighborhoods without a lot of supervision."*

For this age group as a whole, providers said, engagement is a challenge. As one stakeholder put it, "It's hard to find what entices the middle school kids to actually go somewhere." Sioux Falls middle schools, for instance, do offer afterschool programs with the YMCA, and at McGovern and Whittier these programs are free. Stakeholders, including school personnel from schools with free YMCA programs, said the programs have been really helpful for the students who are involved. However, the free programs are unlicensed, so they cannot keep students there if they decide to leave. Providers in these programs see students pulled away to other activities or simply due to lack of interest:

> *"If there's a volleyball game or a football game or they just decide that they don't want to be there anymore, if my staff were doing an activity…that they're too cool for or they don't feel like doing it, they want to do something else, then they're out the door."*

Providers indicated that, although middle school students may judge themselves too independent and too cool for afterschool programs, their parents are desperate for more. "There's parents out there that are willing to pay for afterschool care for middle school," one explained, "but we don't have space. That's the big thing. And staff." Another stakeholder concurred:

> *"Because as my 5th graders last year, the parents will beg me to let the kids keep coming because it's something for them to do, but then I don't have the space to take the middle school and then drop off the younger ones, so that's a challenge."*

Generally, stakeholders agreed that meeting middle school needs requires a two-pronged approach: providing engaging, age-appropriate programming for middle school students and working with families beginning in elementary school on prevention and empowering parents before problems arise in middle school.

High school

By high school, stakeholders reported, out-of-school time becomes far more independent and less structured. Students who are not active in sports or school activities (year-round or out of season) may have jobs, but especially during early high school years, many face long periods of unstructured times. Some stakeholders expressed concern over high school students getting into trouble during unsupervised times:

> *"My son is a freshman, and it's kind of a tricky age, because they want to be independent and now they've met kids who have vehicles. And when they're not in sports, there are a lot of times where, if you're not in school, ok, where are you?"*

But overall, stakeholders were less concerned with supervision and care of these students and more concerned with the availability of enrichment activities that keep students engaged:

> *"I really think there is a need out there for something for the high school kids that aren't in activities to do. There's no structure. I have high schoolers right now, and they're just home doing video games or—and there's a lot more creative things or more better things they can do with their time. But you're not there to supervise and take it away."*

For this age group, stakeholders said they would like to see more OST activities focused on career readiness or technical skills.

Community partnerships to build quality and capacity

On the whole, stakeholders agreed the community needs to begin thinking about out-of-school time as a system:

> *"We're in a weird time and we need to, as a community, kind of clean up and start doing well what we are doing and recognizing some of the holes and streamlining processes."*

One provider characterized the system as consisting of schools (which set start and dismissal times), employers (and their scheduling policies and established shifts), plus conflicts between the times OST programs are needed and times when program staff might be willing and able to work. Others added school counselors and social workers, the juvenile justice system, and the Department of Social Services as important pieces of the system, too, plus neighborhoods and even apartment managers privy to the lives of students not caught by safety nets or engaged in OST programming. On top of those pieces, stakeholders identified a lack of a coherent transportation network and lack of staff coordination across OST programs. Given the cross-cutting nature of OST programming, stakeholders emphasized the importance of broad community involvement:

> *"It's going to take everybody to get as many of these families and kids taken care of as we can."*

Staffing

To providers, staffing OST programs was perhaps the top concern when it came to system sustainability. Providers and other stakeholders alike repeatedly emphasized how important trained, reliable staff are to program success and student safety:

> *Speaker A: "We need people who are very qualified, capable, trained…. And then to understand the many issues that are coming at them."*
>
> *Speaker B: "And how to work with, how to de-escalate maybe if need be, or how to build upon it, just versus somebody who can unlock the door and sit at a desk isn't creating a safe environment."*

Agreement was unanimous that minimizing staff turnover and investing in relationships is critical to successfully serving students:

> *"The middle schools that are running really well are the ones that I know that I have a reliable staff that loves the kids and is dedicated to those kids and connected to them and wants to be there with them."*

Unfortunately, in many programs, frequent turnover is endemic. One school counselor reflected on staffing challenges at the afterschool program in his school:

> *"We love our afterschool program, but we go through staff, and they're not always fully trained, so it's just sink or swim."*

Providers struggle to retain and hire staff in order to maintain capacity; across the board, they reported staffing challenges. A few providers said they have even capped capacity below licensed limits because they cannot hire enough staff—and this problem has been ongoing for the past several years.

Providers speculated that the part-time hours offered by OST programs contribute to staffing problems. They are unlikely to attract or retain employees who are seeking full-time work. One

provider said, "We've definitely gotten more creative with scheduling" by offering more flexibility to employees who need to leave early or can only work certain days of the week.

Low wages also contribute to staffing challenges, yet providers explained that they find themselves in a double bind where raising wages would mean increasing costs for parents:

> *"In order to keep the price down for parents, we can't afford to pay staff as much as…you know, Little Caesar's or somewhere else is paying more. But if we pay more, we have to increase what the parents pay, and we also need to remain competitive with other programs, too."*

While recognizing that cost is already a barrier for some families, other stakeholders also hit on pay as an impediment to attracting and retaining qualified staff:

> *"We need people who are very qualified, capable, trained. And we may have to pay them more than minimum wage, because it's an important position."*

Providers also suggested that the staffing problem might be a systems coordination problem:

> *"Do you ever think maybe we're spreading staff too thin among all the childcare places that there are? I can see, like, 40 different programs that are all struggling to get staff, where if we could all somehow join together, because we're all working on the same [problem]."*

For example, several providers told stories of employees who had applied for another childcare job to pick up more hours, but been told they would need to quit their current childcare job. Despite this apparent competition for staff, providers saw opportunity for sharing and coordinating employee schedules. One provider gave an example of one program needing more staff in the mornings in order to expand while another has an employee who wants more hours—could they share staff, the provider wondered? And how could they connect efficiently? Other providers agreed that such arrangements could help the industry as a whole.

Many providers said they already employ college students, and that in general, afterschool program hours work well for these students. However, providers also noted that college class schedules can sometimes be hard to juggle, especially because they change from semester to semester, and because students may leave for the month of January, which makes staffing very difficult during the winter holidays.

Nevertheless, providers said they value partnerships with colleges and would like to find ways to expand or formalize those relationships. Those relationships might take the form of internships or practicum options for elementary education majors, they could be integrated into classwork as field experience, or they might simply mean raising awareness on college campuses of work opportunities available to students.

Providers saw clear benefits to the college students:

> *"It's a stepping stone for those that are going into education for elementary ed."*

They wondered about recruiting nursing majors or special education majors, from whom they thought OST programs could realize benefits in caring for students with disabilities.

Community-conscious scheduling

OST programs face scheduling challenges because they must work around the constraints of school start and dismissal times, parents' work schedules, and availability of part-time staff. Providers

talked at length of the difficulties they face in navigating these different constraints. For example, because Sioux Falls elementary schools dismiss before 3 p.m., college students who work in afterschool care would need to be out of class by 2 p.m. to make it to work. For high school students to work or intern, they would need to be dismissed early because Sioux Falls high schools dismiss after 3 p.m. Complicating matters, providers reported that first 30 or 60 minutes after elementary schools dismiss is their busiest time when they need the most staff to maintain student-to-staff ratios.

In response to both parents' and stakeholders' concerns about school policies for allowing students inside buildings before or after school hours, ARI reviewed Sioux Falls schools' students handbooks and found that the handbooks give inconsistent information about afterschool program availability and policies regarding entering and leaving the school building. For example, the Edison Middle School handbook says students are allowed inside the building beginning at 8:15 a.m., and an afterschool program is available with financial assistance for those who need it. It also describes the activities bus, which takes students home from the afterschool program. The Patrick Henry Middle School handbook also describes the afterschool program, but outlines a different policy for entering the building in the morning: students can enter at 7:45 a.m. if it is below 32 degrees, at 8:00 a.m. if they go to the library, at 8:15 a.m. if they are eating breakfast, and otherwise at 8:40 a.m. However, morning library passes are limited to the first 40 students. The Memorial Middle School handbook does not mention the school's afterschool program, and the McGovern and Whittier Middle School handbooks are not available online with the other middle schools'.

As one participant noted, scheduling can be seen as a systemic concern or lack of collaboration:

> *"Part of that is, as a district, too, the hours we have set, they're not friendly for—8 to 2:45, it's not friendly for most of our employers and what a regular workday is. So that creates care issues on both ends. And with middle school starting at a different time, high school starting at a different time, and if you've got kids at different levels, and then—and I know we do it for reasons that we have to do it as well. But when you look at it as a big whole, you know, if you step back and look at it as a big whole, it's not—yeah, we're not working collaboratively in lots of ways. We're all contributing to the issues at hand."*

Coordinated transportation

Stakeholders identified transportation as a major barrier to OST program participation. For older students in middle and high school, lack of transportation may prevent participation in afterschool activities, lessons or clubs, and summer programs. For elementary students, transportation concerns may constrain a family's search for an afterschool provider.

Stakeholders explained that school-based OST programs, such as Kids Inc., obviate the need for transportation because students can stay on-site after school. However, Kids Inc. programs typically fill to capacity with a waiting list, so students enrolled in alternative programs must still arrange transportation. Further, one school counselor wondered whether better afterschool transportation could open up options for students who, for reasons apart from program capacity, would prefer not to stay on-site in a school-based afterschool program. She explained that keeping the same group of children together at school and after school can worsen bullying problems. She wondered whether "an afterschool program could combine kids from nearby schools, then those kids who feel isolated at school would have the opportunity to make new friends."

Many daycares and afterschool programs provide transportation from a subset of schools, but families must find a program with affordable, open spots that provides transportation from the

school a child attends. Stakeholders suggested this tends to be more challenging for students who attend schools without nearby afterschool programs and where Kids Inc. is at capacity.

According to stakeholders, transportation combines a logistics problem with a capacity problem: Afterschool providers recognize the need to provide transportation, especially to pick up students after school, but vans are expensive, and individual programs can rarely afford to run more than one or two. Some programs are able to run one van to multiple schools, but distance and school policy limit the number of schools a single van can reach. For example, according to providers, some area elementary schools do not require any afterschool supervision time from teachers, and others require just 15 minutes. That narrow window of time makes it difficult for providers to manage afterschool pickup, especially between multiple schools, because vans have little time to run between schools. As a consequence, afterschool programs must either buy more vans or focus on a single school or a small number of schools. Providers had ample stories of programs that exceeded their transportation capacity before they had filled all of their program slots:

> *"I met with [someone from another program] and I know they have capacity that they could fill in that program but not enough vehicles and not enough staff to transport."*

At the same time, school personnel talked about the challenge of supervising students between the time school dismissed and the time afterschool programs arrived to pick them up:

> *"That's been an issue, too, at my elementary school that I think they've resolved now. But it's waiting for the transport—for the afterschool program to come get them. And you can't just have elementary kids running amok through and around the building because—and so now I think they've provided a staff person who just comes and sits there with them and watches them until their transportation shows up. But that has been an issue as well, is waiting for that transport to arrive to come get these kids to take them where they need to go next. And then who's supervising that in-between time?"*

Providers and school personnel agree transportation timing and logistics problems are widespread across schools and programs, However, transportation can be especially tricky for specialized programs (e.g., programs for students with disabilities or behavioral challenges). These programs often serve a relatively small number of students from a relatively large number of schools

According to stakeholders, some smaller towns outside of Sioux Falls (e.g., Hartford and Humboldt) have tackled this problem by providing in-town busing to afterschool programs for a fee. Other stakeholders noted a potential need for developing regional transportation systems as Sioux Falls and surrounding communities grow closer together.

Overall, stakeholders saw transportation as one area where the community could come together to significantly reduce barriers to students' participation in OST programs:

> *"There have to be concerted efforts to remove barriers like transportation…whoever needs to be involve to do that, if it's the bussing, the metro, the mayor's office, the county commission."*

Family-friendly employers

Stakeholders talked about a range of ways in which they would like to see the business community more involved in providing OST programs and supervision, including partnerships around career and technical skills or STEM education and sponsorships or gifts of computers and technology. Several stakeholders mentioned existing partnerships with organizations such as the Washington Pavilion, Boy Scouts, and County Extension as models for building partnerships with businesses:

> *"Getting other businesses to partner with the programs that add supplemental activities, that's helpful, I think."*

However, stakeholders urged that employers look beyond curricular partnerships to support employees as parents:

> *"I know the business community cares, and they've been involved in these different efforts to make sure there's workforce development, but I think it has to go to a different level. You can't just care about what classes they're taking. At that point, it's got to come down to these other structural needs."*

As stakeholders explained, out-of-school time supervision is part of a system in which many parents work long hours for low pay; they need out-of-school-time supervision because they cannot be home, but they cannot always afford the full cost of care. Employer policies may even discourage or prohibit parents from caring for sick children or attending to concerns from school.

Several stakeholders compared Sioux Falls to other places they had lived where afterschool care was more available or even provided without charge, or to places where afterschool services were not so abundant, but employers seemed more supportive of family obligations. As one stakeholder put it, "Your workforce is composed of parents."

Faith-based community

A few stakeholders said they would like to see an expanded role for the faith-based community in out-of-school time, whether opening space, providing programs, or recruiting mentors. Stakeholders noted that churches do already provide daycare and a few afterschool programs as well as occasional weeknight programs with meals, but thought they could do even more.

Multiple stakeholders said they have seen positive effects from mentoring and would like to see it incorporated into structured programs or expanded through partnerships with the faith-based community.

Others focused on opportunities for churches to open up their gyms or recreation areas after school or in the summer. One stakeholder suggested churches might help facilitate recreational athletic leagues. Stakeholders said some churches are already opening spaces to students, at least one or two nights a week, and often providing food as well.

Patching the safety net

Stakeholders from across sectors—those involved in law enforcement, juvenile justice, social services, and the schools—agreed that better coordination is needed among agencies that serve children and families in crisis:

> *"Having people who work to help these families all on the same page in terms of what is the process in helping a family. Like, what are the police supposed to do when they get the call from the library and then they have a hungry child? What are the social workers supposed to do?"*

School personnel complained about confusion and inconsistency in the process of and follow up to mandatory abuse reporting:

> *"We're almost at a place now where CPS [Child Protection Services] tells us to refer to our SRO [School Resource Officer]. So it's really blurred, like ok, why am I even calling it in if you're just going to tell me to tell my SRO?"*

While some suggested CPS might defer to SROs because officers are often already with students and can assess immediate danger, others expressed frustration with perceived inaction or buck-passing and its potential consequences for families:

> *"DSS [Department of Social Services], they don't have a good explanation of why we've moved that way. I know our county is understaffed for the amount of cases that they get. But that's another thing, is we can identify families that they're going to have a kid in the system, because we've called them in 35 times. But that's not a high enough level of risk [for DSS to investigate]…. We're so behind the eight ball because we're waiting for a tragedy to happen, and then we come in and try to clean it up instead of being preventative."*

Yet stakeholders broadly agreed that there needs to be conversation to develop a shared understanding of how mandatory reporting and investigations of abuse and neglect should unfold:

> *Speaker C: "It'd be nice to have some sort of unified, this is how—"*
>
> *Speaker D: "Flow chart?"*
>
> *Speaker C: "—Truly!"*

Stakeholders also voiced broad agreement that the community should focus more on prevention, early intervention, and diversion from juvenile justice, including by developing more out-of-school activities for middle and high school students (including those who may be ineligible to participate in sanctioned school activities):

> *"Prevention would be amazing. I don't have answers for what that would be or what would prevent kids from coming in to the system, but I keep coming back to organized activities, the leisure stuff, the supervision after school, and, well, getting them to go to school, too."*

For students who are involved with the juvenile justice system, stakeholders said earlier and more immediate assessment and referral to diversion programming would be valuable, as would a more systematic transition out of diversion programming. When students finish court-mandated diversion programs, transitional support could help keep them engaged in out-of-school programming. Otherwise, students are on their own to find a new program, find a way to pay for it, and arrange transportation.

Finally, stakeholders from juvenile justice and the schools suggested out-of-school programming could play a role post-adjudication. One stakeholder proposed juveniles be able to work off restitution by performing community service or volunteering through an organized out-of-school program. A school counselor concurred:

> *"You're creating some purpose, because a lot of these kids don't have any purpose, they don't have any direction, they don't have a clue what they're good at or what they like, they just know they like to get high and shoot windows out!"*

6. OST Programs in Sioux Falls

Community Assets and Actor Map

The actor map (Figure 18) depicts the actors (i.e., organizations and agencies) that make up the ecosystem around out-of-school time in the Sioux Falls area. Actors are grouped according to the role they play in the ecosystem.

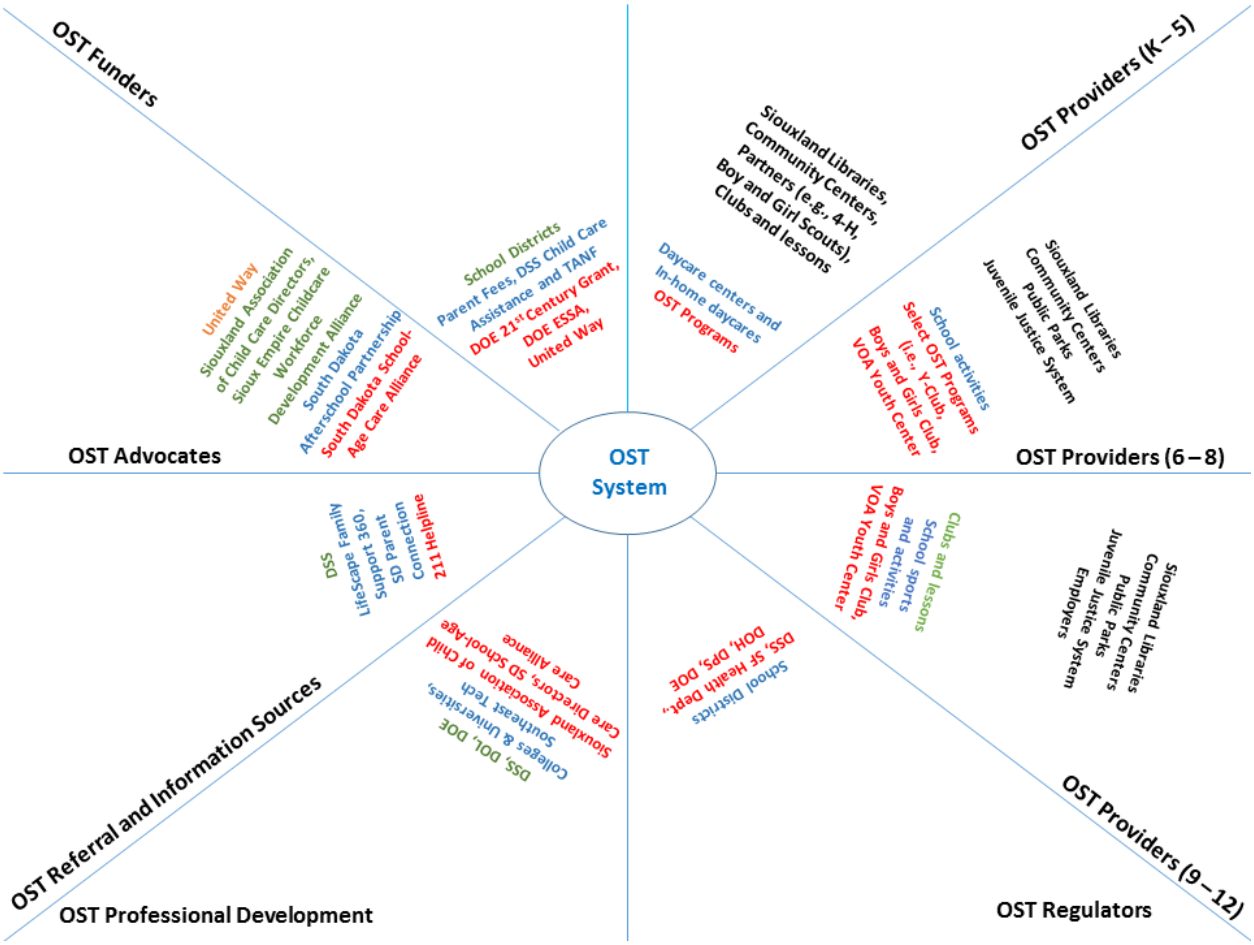


Figure 18. Sioux Falls OST Actor Map

Schools

Schools are a key point for recruiting students to participate in OST programs and connecting them with community resources to support their participation. Teachers, counselors, and social workers have regular contact with students and are essential partners in OST systems. In some cases, school sites also host OST programs.

OST Providers

OST Providers include daycare providers (both in-home and centers) that primarily serve elementary-age students and younger children as well as out-of-school time programs that serve a range of ages, from elementary (e.g., Kids Inc.) to high school (e.g., Bowden Center and Boys and

Girls Club). Because Sioux Falls is home to over 400 daycare and OST providers, they are not shown individually on the actor map.

OST Providers also include partner organizations that do not primarily provide OST supervision, but do offer OST programming (for example, 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts).

The actor map also includes informal providers in this group—organizations or agencies whose mission is not primarily to provide OST programs or supervision, but which serve that role for a significant number of students in the community. Informal providers include, for example, libraries and community centers.

Federal, State, and Local Government

A range of federal, state, and local government agencies provide support or funding to or are charged with regulating OST programs.

- The federal and state Departments of Education administer the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, a major funding source for OST programs, as well as housing Child & Adult Nutrition Services, which serves daycares and OST programs, and the State Liaison for Homeless Education.
- The Sioux Falls City Health Department is charged with daycare licensing and inspection for all daycares registered in the city, including in-home daycares. At the state level, the Department of Social Services administers child care licensing and registration for centers. In-home daycares may choose to pursue state licensing through the Department of Social Services.
- The state Department of Social Services also administers the Child Care Block Grant and childcare assistance and houses Child Protection Services, which works with law enforcement, Child's Voice (the local child advocacy center, based at Sanford), and the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment.
- The state Department of Social Services and Department of Labor both support workforce development for childcare staff. The DSS Division of Child Care has articulation agreements with SDSU, BHSU, STI, Oglala Lakota College, and Sisseton-Wahpeton College for a 120 hour Child Development Associate Training Program and a 30-hr Pathways to Professional Development Series meant to provide a pathway for the childcare workforce to enter higher education, leading to a BA.
- The state Department of Labor also administers TANF childcare assistance.
- The state Department of Human Services provides support for individuals and families of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- The state Department of Health leads safety and health campaigns, including youth-targeted efforts to promote tobacco cessation and to combat drinking and driving and texting and driving.
- The South Dakota Unified Judicial System encompasses courts, court services, and probation for juvenile justice.
- Local law enforcement works closely with the juvenile justice system, DSS, and schools to ensure the safety of children and the community, including through the placement of school resources officers (SROs) in schools.

Referral and Information Resources

In Sioux Falls, the primary resource for referral and information is the Helpline Center. In addition to its comprehensive database of community-based resources, the Helpline Center has available a childcare directory and childcare specialists dedicated to helping parents find childcare providers.

Resources are available for families of children with disabilities through LifeScape Family Support 360, which helps families access childcare assistance and find childcare, and the South Dakota Parent Connection, which provides support, referral, and information to families.

Advocacy and Funding Organizations

Advocacy and funding organizations include networks of providers and community-based funders.

- The Sioux Empire Childcare Workforce Development Alliance—formerly the Sioux Falls Child Care Workforce Alliance—was founded with support of a South Dakota Community Foundation Community Innovation Grant. Facilitated by EmBe, the alliance aims to bring Sioux Falls – area providers together to develop collaborative strategies to attract, develop, and retain a childcare workforce.
- The Siouxland Association of Child Care Directors primarily focuses on providing professional development and support for early childhood professionals, but many of the member directors also offer school-age care and are concerned with providing OST programming.
- The South Dakota School-Age Care Alliance aims to promote quality OST programs through professional development and advocacy. The alliance began in 1998 and became a National Afterschool Association (NAA) affiliate in 2000. It hosts an annual conference in October and an Afterschool Day at the Capitol in January or February; it also co-sponsors the statewide Lights On Afterschool event with the South Dakota Afterschool Partnership, a national event intended to draw attention to the importance of afterschool programs.
- The South Dakota Afterschool Partnership is the statewide Mott network and aims to bring together stakeholders around afterschool and summer OST programs to develop a statewide system and expand opportunities.
- The United Way is a significant source of funding for OST programs and childcare, especially for programs that serve low-income families.

In 2010, the South Dakota Afterschool Partnership fielded a survey and identified funding as the top challenge facing OST programs. In response, the partnership launched a fund map research project to better understand funding for OST in the state.[26]

The fund map study surveyed 148 OST programs in 2011 with a response rate of 59% (87 responses). It found that programs' primary funding source is parent program fees, but support also comes from federal programs, local government, foundations, fundraising, general contributions and United Way, in-kind contributions, and volunteers (see Figure 19). About half (47%) of the OST programs that responded rely on only one or two funding streams. The study found that the top types of donations received by OST programs are volunteer time, library access, supplies, facility space, and parks and recreation activities.

[26] http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/out-school-time-south-dakota-achieving-program-sustainability-report-and-recommendations

Older programs (more than 20 years) have more diversified funding (3 to 14 sources) and higher levels of donations, and they also tend to have a more established organizational structure, including a governing board of directors or advisory board. However, about half (48%) of the programs had been established in the decade prior to the survey.

The fund map study also revealed that OST programs in South Dakota rely heavily on part-time employees. Responding programs employed a total of 218 full-time and 816 part-time staff (and 30 programs had *only* part-time staff).

Source	Funding stream	Percent of programs reporting use	Average amount received per program:
Federal*	21st Century Community Learning Centers	39%**	$128,761
	Elementary and Secondary Education Act—Title 1	8%	$19,248
	National School Lunch Program	7%	$9,612
	Child and Adult Food Program	15%	$17,585
	Afterschool Snack Program	6%	$1,697
State	No state funds currently support out-of-school time programs in South Dakota.		
Local	Government:		
	County Support	6%	$10,700
	City Support	15%	$36,653
	School District	14%	$24,132
	Community:		
	Foundations	13%	$52,107
	Fundraising Projects/Events	33%	$49,767
	Contributions	25%	$56,394
	United Way	25%	$56,193
Parents	Program Fees*** (hourly, daily or weekly rates parents pay)	61%	$130,347

* *All the listed Federal programs are administered by the state.*

** *A large number of 21st Century funded programs responded to the survey.*

*** *Six percent of parent fees are covered by Child Care Assistance, a federal program administered by the state. See figure 16 for more information on Child Care Assistance for out-of-school time programs.*

Figure 19. Common Funding Streams for Out-of-School Time Programs in South Dakota

Childcare Assistance

Funding organizations described above make it possible for several OST programs to offer free services or income-adjusted fees or scholarships. In addition to these sources of assistance that are administered through OST programs, individuals can access childcare assistance funded by the

federal Child Care and Development Fund and administered by the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

Individual childcare assistance can help pay for childcare (including afterschool care). To be eligible, parents must be working or in school and meet income guidelines, or they must be receiving TANF. Non-TANF assistance is available for children under 13 (up to age 18 for children with special needs or under court supervision) in families whose income is less than 175% of the federal poverty level (In 2017, 175% of the federal poverty level for a family of four was $43,050.) Parents may be required to pay a copay. TANF assistance is available for families in approved TANF work activities and does not require a copay. TANF recipients whose cases close because of income may also receive transitional child care assistance for 12 months.

In Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties together, around 1,500 families receive child care assistance (Table 15).

Table 15. Families Receiving Childcare Assistance in Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties (FY2017)

	Minnehaha	Lincoln	Total
TANF/TCC	79	2	81
Non-TANF	1,067	100	1,167
Foster Care	167	41	208
Total	1,313	143	1,456

Source: Office of Child Care Services, South Dakota Department of Social Services, reported by South Dakota Kids Count

Local information was not available regarding the number of eligible families compared to the number of recipient families. However, national studies suggest one-third or fewer eligible families receive childcare assistance.[27] In its analysis of 2011-12 childcare assistance data, the GAO found that, although assistance is available for children under age 13, most who use assistance are under age 5.[28]

The Sioux Empire United Way's Connecting Kids initiative provides assistance to families to support youth participation in child development activities. The program is available for students in grades K-8.

Existing OST Program Capacity

Before and after school programs, child care centers, and group family day care homes are licensed by the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS). Family day care homes (i.e., in-home providers) may register with the state, but they are not required to do so. However, family day care

[27] Forry, N. D., Daneri, P., Howarth, G. (2013). Child care subsidy literature review. OPRE Brief 2013-60. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[28] United States Government Accountability Office. (2016). Child Care: Access to Subsidies and Strategies to Manage Demand Vary Across States. Report to Congressional Committees. GAO-17-60.

homes are required to register with the city health department. Table 16 shows the total number of providers of each type licensed by the state or registered with the city.[29]

Table 16. Sioux Falls Childcare Providers by Type, 2017

Type	Number of Providers	Percent of Total Providers	Facility Capacity	Percent of Total Facility Capacity
Before and After School Programs	37	9.1%	4,741	26.5%
Child Care Centers	67	16.4%	9,501	53.1%
Family Day Care Home	301	73.8%	3,612	20.2%
Group Family Child Care	3	0.7%	52	0.3%
Total	408	100%	17,906	100%

Source: SD Department of Social Services, Sioux Falls Health Department

Most (73.8%) child care providers in Sioux Falls are in-home providers, but in-home daycares are small (they are allowed to care for up to 12 children). Because child care centers tend to be much larger, they account for the majority (53.1%) of child care spots in the city.

Before and after school programs focus on school-age children, while other child care providers typically serve children across the age spectrum, from birth to school age. To learn more about the current *school-age* capacity of child care providers, ARI surveyed providers. The survey was fielded in September through December 2017. A link to a web-based survey was emailed to 285 providers registered in the Helpline database. Sioux Fall Thrive volunteers followed up with non-respondents by phone to encourage them to complete the survey. In total, 87 responses were received, a response rate of 30.5%

Among respondents, the number of school-age spots available were reported for 38 programs (19 before and after school programs, 20 child care centers, 10 in-home providers). The number of school-age spots available averaged 27.7% of facility capacity across all provider types (see Table 17).

The number of school-age spots available may be lower than licensed or registered capacity for a variety of reasons. Before and after school programs may operate below capacity if they are limited by staff availability or space. Child care centers devote a significant portion of capacity to younger children. Presumably, in-home providers do, too. In-home providers' percentage of capacity devoted to school-age spots may be inflated because spots that providers indicated are open to "any age" are

[29] For additional detail on capacity, including statewide averages for how often programs have openings, staffing, number of children served, and rates, see the Department of Social Service's annual market rate study, available at https://dss.sd.gov/docs/childcare/2017_report.pdf

included in the school-age count. In practice, however, many of those spots may be occupied by younger children.

Table 17 extrapolates the survey results to all child care programs in order to estimate the total number of available school-age spots in Sioux Falls. After accounting for programs operating below licensed capacity and for programs that devote only a portion of their capacity to school-age care, the total estimated number of school-age OST spots available in Sioux Falls is 4,908.

Table 17. School-age Spots Available by Program Type

Type	Facility Capacity	School-age Spots (% of Facility Capacity)	School-age Spots Available	Percentage of Community's School-age Spots
Before and After School Programs	4,741	37.8%	1,792	36.2%
Child Care Centers	9,501	18.5%	1,758	35.5%
Family Day Care Home	3,612	38.3%	1,383	27.9%
Group Family Child Care	52	38.3%	20	0.4%
Total	17,906	27.7% (average)	4,953	100%

Source: SD Department of Social Services, Sioux Falls Health Department, ARI Provider Survey

Not all providers who serve school-age children serve all ages. Table 18 shows the grade ranges served by before and after school programs and child care centers in Sioux Falls. The numbers reported are based on providers' self-report in ARI's provider survey when available; for providers who did not complete the survey, they are based on information publicly available on the provider's website or marketing materials.

As Table 18 shows, nearly all before and after school programs serve elementary-age students (grades K-5), but only three of 37 also serve middle school–age students (grades 6-8). None of the before and after school programs licensed by the state serve high school–age students (grades 9-12).[30]

Similarly, most child care centers serve elementary-age students, but just five of 67 serve middle school grades, and just three of 67 serve high school. All three of the programs serving high school—and four of the five serving middle school—are programs licensed as child care centers but more typically thought of as before and after school programs.

[30] Some programs that fill a before and after school role in the community are licensed as child care centers, so they do not show up in the before and after school program totals. For example, the Boys and Girls Club—which serves high school–age students—is licensed with SD DSS as a child care center. Information was not available for two before and after school programs and for five child care centers.

Table 18. Grades Served by Program Type

Type	Number of Providers	Grades K-2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Unknown
Before and After School Programs	37	35	35	3	0	2
Child Care Centers	67	45	45	5	3	5
Total	408	92	86	10	4	

Source: ARI Provider Survey, Providers' Public Information

Family Day Care Homes and Group Family Child Care providers are not included in Table 18 because information was generally not available. However, of the 12 Family Day Care Home providers who responded to ARI's provider survey, 75% reported that they serve grades K-2, 25% serve grades 3-5, and 8.3% serve grades 6-8 and 9-12.

Before and After School Programs

The Sioux Falls area has 37 licensed before and after school program sites; of those sites, 21 are school-based Kids Inc. programs. Each of these programs—as well as several programs that function as before and after school programs but are otherwise licensed—is described below.

School-based programs

- A program of the **Sioux Falls School District**, Kids Inc. provides after school enrichment at all Sioux Falls School District elementary schools (except Horace Mann/Bridges). Daily activities typically include snack, large muscle activities, teacher-directed activities, and free choice time. Serves grades K – 5. Hours are after school until 6:00 p.m. (before school care is offered at R.F. Pettigrew only). Care is provided on early release days. On no-school days, care is provided at two locations for an extra fee. Kids Inc. spaces are filled on a first come, first served basis. As of January 1, 2018, five schools had open spots, but 18 schools were full. $20 enrollment fee. $80 bi-weekly ($65 if eligible for reduced lunch rate; $49 if eligible for free lunch). Kids Inc. also offers a summer program.

- The YMCA offers Y-CLUB After School Programs at **Sioux Falls School District** middle schools. Y-CLUB operates unlicensed, free programs at Whittier and McGovern. At Edison, Memorial, and Patrick Henry, Y-CLUB is a licensed program with a weekly fee of $32.

- **Sioux Falls Catholic Schools** offer before and after school care at elementary schools, with annual tuition ranging from $500 (1 or 2 days before school only) to $2,210 (before and after school for 3 to 5 days per week). Serves grades K – 5. After-school care is provided until 6:00 p.m. Before-school care is offered from 6:45 a.m. Care is provided on no-school days for an extra fee (at Holy Spirit).

- A-OK (Absolutely Outstanding Kids) is a before and after school program at **Sioux Falls Lutheran School**. Serves grades K – 8. Care is offered from 6:45 a.m. before school and until 6:00 p.m. after school. $3.50 hourly fee per child. Also operates during the summer

- Kid's Corner at **Sioux Falls Christian Schools** is a before and after school program at Sioux Falls Christian Elementary. Before school care is offered from 6:30 a.m. and after school until 6:00 p.m. $3.50 per hour. Care offered on most school vacation days.

Before and After School Programs

- Volunteers of America, Dakotas Youth Center (formerly the Bowden Youth Center) relocated from downtown to 1309 W 51st Street in January 2018. The center is open until 9 p.m. after school and weekdays during the summer from noon to 6 p.m. VOA transports students from elementary schools and from a pickup location at the Downtown Library, then home at the end of the evening. The center also offers a drop-in program for students ages 7 to 17. Programs are free and include recreation, socialization, academic help, snacks, and meals.

- Lutheran Social Services School Age Programs. LSS provides afterschool and summer care at Southern Hills United Methodist Church (near John Harris Elementary), Hilltop United Methodist Church (near Cleveland Elementary), and East Side Lutheran Church (near Terry Redlin Elementary). Before school care is offered at Southern Hills only. Transportation is provided to these programs from John Harris, Harvey Dunn, Cleveland, Rosa Parks, and Terry Redlin Elementary Schools. Fees range from $40 to $51 per week for afterschool care with scholarships available.

- Here4Youth. LSS's Here4Youth program serves all children, but specializes in services for children with disabilities. The program is staffed at a 1:5 ratio and serves ages 3 to 21. Here4Youth offers before and afterschool care, summer care, no-school day care, and respite care for families on weekend evenings.

- Boys & Girls Club of the Sioux Empire. The Boys & Girls Club offers before and afterschool care, summer care, and no-school day care for grades K – 5. It also provides drop-in afterschool, evening, and summer programs for students in first grade through age 18. Before and afterschool programs are located at the 14th Street Learning Center and the Eastside Learning Center. Drop-in programs are located at The Club on South Sneve Avenue. Afterschool care is $47.50 per week plus an additional $32.50 for before school care; those fees include transportation. Drop-in programs have a $25 membership fee per trimester (plus $5 for bussing from school), which includes meals and activities. Scholarships are available. Transportation is provided from Hayward, Garfield, Laura Wilder, Lowell, Hawthorne, Robert Frost, Longfellow, Terry Redlin, Anne Sullivan, Eugene Field, Cleveland, Rosa Parks, Harvey Dunn, Whittier, and George McGovern.

  The Boys & Girls Club also provides services at Brandon's Fred Assam Elementary, Robert Bennis Elementary, and Brandon Intermediate School as well as Harrisburg's Explorer and Journey Elementary Schools.

- EmBe. EmBe provides before and afterschool care at its EmBe Avera South location on Ralph Rogers Road. Transportation is provided to or from Discovery, JFK, Robert Frost, R.F. Pettigrew, and Sonia Sotomayor Elementary Schools in Sioux Falls and to or from Explorer and Journey Elementary in Harrisburg. Full-time before and after school care at EmBe South is $72 per week (includes no-school days) or $67 (does not include no-school days). Summer care is offered from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and EmBe also offers no-school day care for an additional fee. Scholarships are available.

  EmBe provides before and after school care on-site at Harrisburg's Endeavor, Freedom, Horizon, and Liberty schools.

  EmBe also offers special session programs, such as Girls on the Run and Let Me Run. These programs meet at schools and run for several weeks for an hour or so after school for a couple days per week.

- Kidz Count at Wesley United Methodist Church, a VOA Dakotas program, is a free afterschool program for students who attend nearby Terry Redlin Elementary School. Students are chaperoned on the walk from school to the program after school.

- Kidstop at First United Methodist Church is a free afterschool and summer program for low-income, immigrant, and refugee children in grades K-8.

- Multi-Cultural Center. The Multi-Cultural Center provides several free afterschool youth programs that primarily serve English Language Learners (ELL) and Native American students. Targeted reading and math programs are offered Monday through Thursday from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. with transportation from Jane Addams, Hawthorne, Cleveland, and Rosa Parks Elementary schools and to students' homes. The purpose of the programs is primarily to improve academic performance, not to provide afterschool supervision. On Fridays, the Multi-Cultural Center offers Native Youth Club and self-defense/judo classes from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. with transportation from the same schools. In the summer, the Multi-Cultural Center hosts four two-week sessions of a STEM-focused day camp for elementary students.

- The YMCA Youth Performance Center provides afterschool programs for Discovery, JFK, Oscar Howe, R.F Pettigrew, Sonia Sotomayor, and Laura Wilder Elementary schools. Transportation is provided from those schools to the Youth Performance Center. The afterschool program runs until 6 p.m. The YMCA also offers school vacation camps during no-school days during the school year for grades K – 8. Fees are $44 per week for the afterschool program and $35 per day for no-school days (discounted for members).

Drop-in centers

Drop-in centers are not intended as child care, and some do not allow children under 7 years old unless accompanied by an adult or someone over 16. Activities tend to be unstructured, though some guided activities may be offered.

- Volunteers of America, Dakotas Youth Center. Described above, the center offers a free drop-in program for students ages 7 to 17 that includes activities, snacks, and meals. The

center is open until 9 p.m. after school and from noon to 6 p.m. on no-school days.

- Boys & Girls Club of the Sioux Empire. Described above, the Boys & Girls Club has a drop-in program located at The Club on South Sneve Ave. The Club is open from 2:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. after school. The drop-in program has a $25 fee per trimester (plus $5 for transportation). It includes meals and activities.

- YMCA Downtown Youth Activity Center opened in December 2017. The new center is free for all youth (ages 17 and under; ages 7 and under must be accompanied by a parent) and has a game room and intends to add offerings such gymnastics, dance, cheer, martial arts, and afterschool programming. Open 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and noon to 6 p.m. Saturdays (plus Parent's Time Out childcare for ages 3-13 offered from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays).

- Sioux Falls has five Community Centers, joint ventures between Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation and the Sioux Falls School District. The centers are adjacent to Anne Sullivan, Oscar Howe, Hayward, Harvey Dunn, and Garfield elementary schools. Open gym and game room activities are available for children ages 7 and up after school until 6 p.m. and on weekends until 5 p.m.

- Siouxland Libraries (Downtown, Ronning, Prairie West, Oak View, and Caille Branches) are open until 9 p.m. Monday – Thursday and until 6 p.m. Friday. Most branches offer free activities for grades K – 5 after school at least one day per week. Oak View provides a snack.

Geographies of Care: Provider Maps

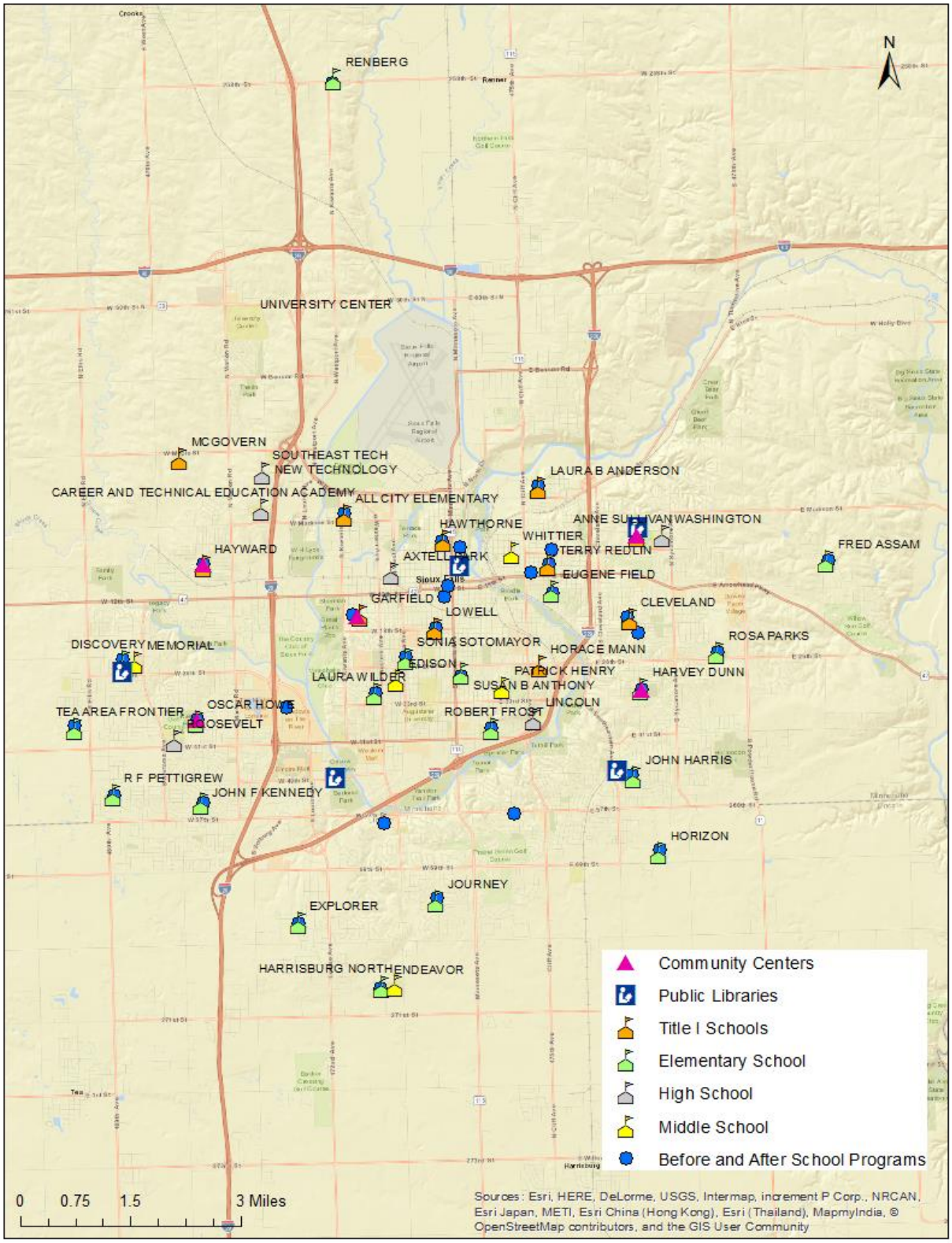


Figure 20. Locations of public schools, before and after school programs, Community Centers, and public libraries

Figure 20 shows public schools in Sioux Falls and surrounding communities, plus the location of before and after school programs, Community Centers, and public libraries. Kids Inc. provides afterschool programs on-site at all Sioux Falls School District elementary schools (except Bridges at Horace Mann). Sioux Falls middle schools have afterschool programs provided by Y-Club.

Although all elementary and middle schools are served by an on-site afterschool provider, capacity is limited. At the elementary level in particular, Kids Inc. programs quickly fill up. As of January 10, 2018, all Kids Inc. programs were full *except* Hawthorne, JFK, Laura B Anderson, and Renberg.

Families who want to enroll students in afterschool programs but who do not get a spot in a school-based program may look to nearby afterschool providers or child care centers. Figure 21 shows the locations of child care centers. However, not all child care centers are able to provide transportation. A quarter-mile radius is marked around child care centers to indicate walkability when transportation is not available.

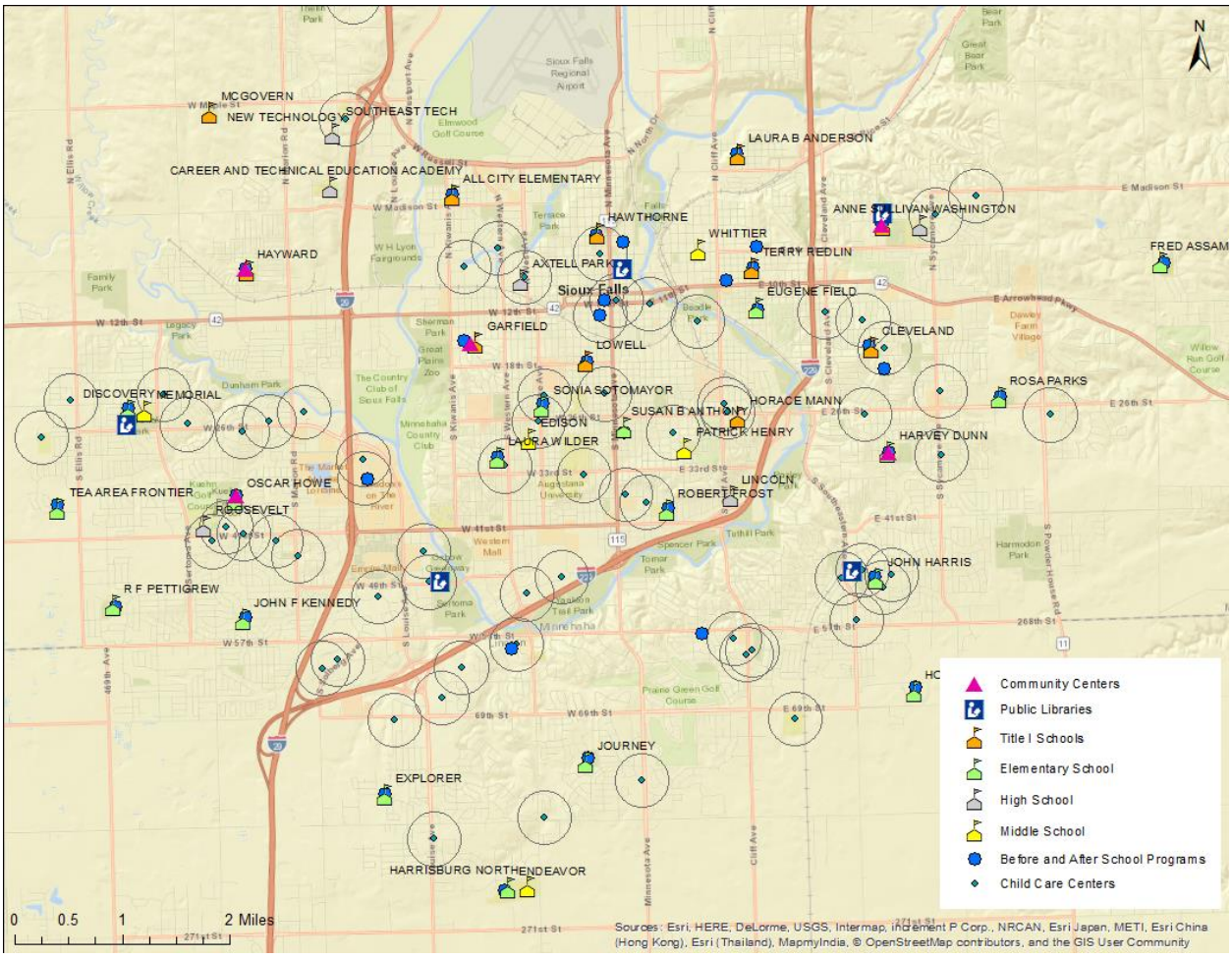


Figure 21. Child care centers in relation to schools with quarter-mile radius

In Sioux Falls, most elementary schools are near several child care centers, except for the following: R.F. Pettigrew, JFK, Harvey Dunn, Rosa Parks, Anne Sullivan, Eugene Field, Terry Redlin, Laura B. Anderson, All City at Jane Addams, Garfield, Hayward, and Renberg.

Figure 22 shows elementary bus zones (shaded). In non-shaded areas, children primarily walk to and from neighborhood schools or are driven to school by family or friends.

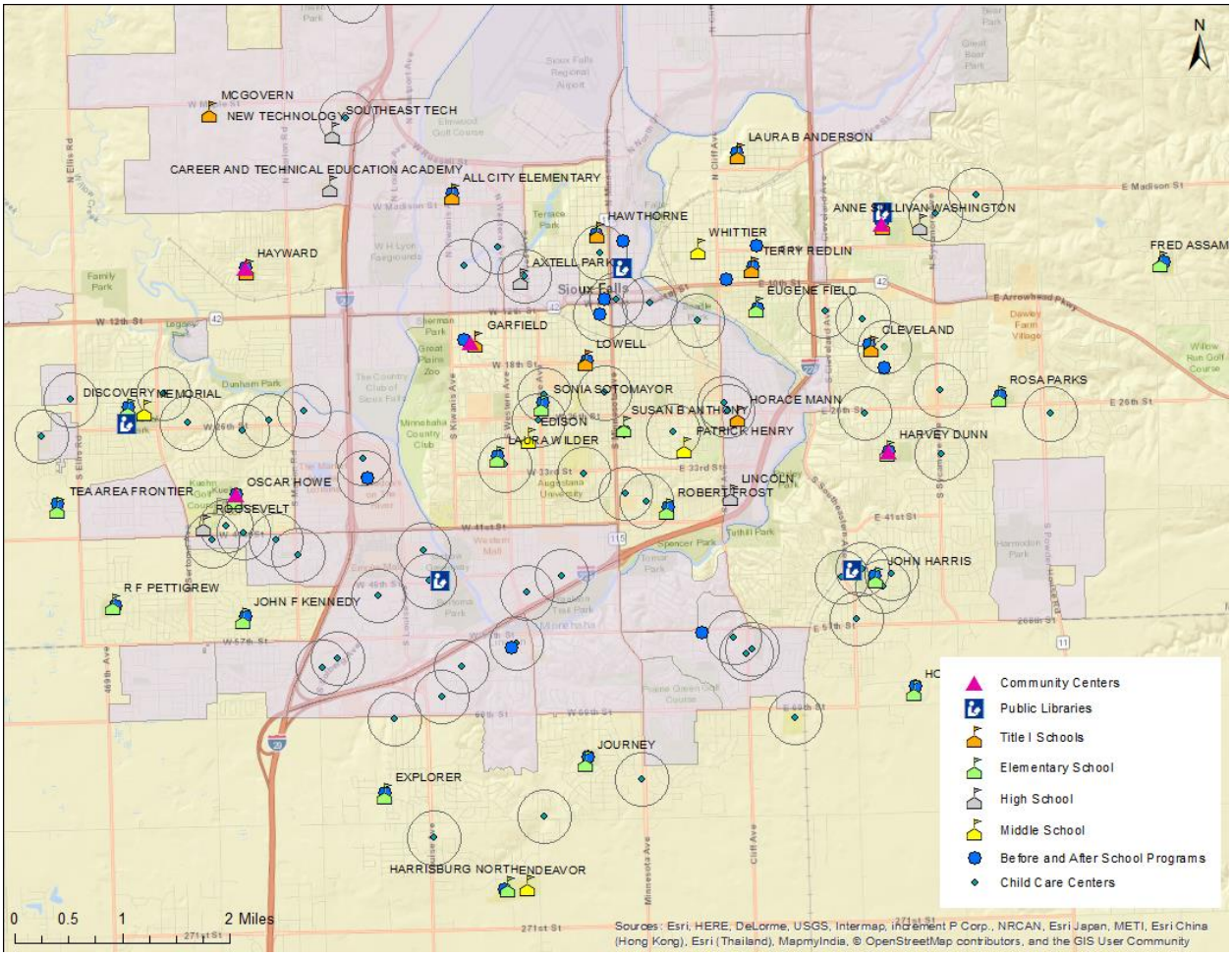


Figure 22. Elementary bus zones with schools, before and after school programs, and child care centers

In many of the densely populated areas of the city—including most of the central neighborhoods and eastern and western neighborhoods—elementary schools do not bus.

Figure 23 shows the *estimated school-age capacity* for before and after school programs and child care centers in Sioux Falls. Estimates are based on provider survey results for specific programs where available; if program-specific results were not available, estimates are a percent of the program's licensed capacity calculated as the average percent of licensed capacity allocated to school-age care for program type (see Table 17 details). Middle school Y-Club programs are not shown.

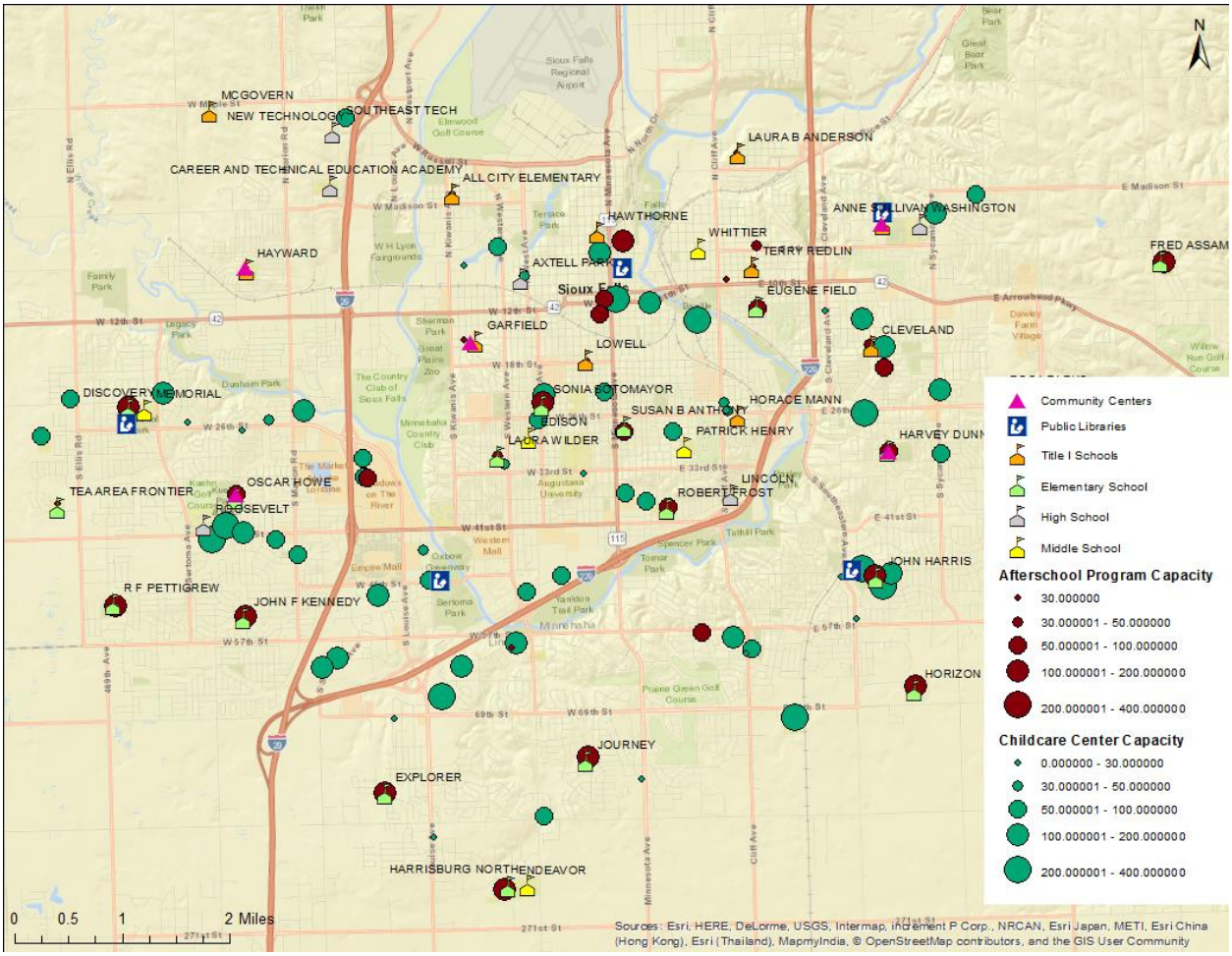


Figure 23. Estimated school-age capacity for before and after school programs and child care centers

School-age capacity is more concentrated toward the southern side of the city, and Title I schools are, in general, surrounded by fewer or lower capacity programs. Even among school-based afterschool programs, Kids Inc. programs at Title I schools have lower reported capacity (average 31) than Kids Inc. programs at other elementary schools (average 102).

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Target resources to children who need them most

Sioux Falls boasts an abundance of OST programs and supervision providers, but financial, geographic, and information barriers mean not all programs are accessible to students who might benefit most. A collective impact initiative should consider ways to target program resources to efficiently and effectively reach academically or socially vulnerable students (e.g., reduced fees, available transportation, and proactive outreach to encourage participation with home visits or phone calls).

In Sioux Falls, a collective impact initiative might consider populations of students who are not served well now, including low-income students, racial and ethnic minorities, and middle and high school students. For instance, middle school students benefit from the structure and enrichment of OST programs, but middle school is precisely the age when participation drops off—in Sioux Falls, a trend likely due to lack of available and engaging programs intended for this age group. The Providence After School Alliance (PASA) AfterZone initiative offers a model for engaging older students in OST programs. AfterZone created campus-based middle school OST programs: a variety of programs at multiple sites (e.g., libraries, recreational or art centers, and other community facilities) in a geographically clustered area with an anchor at the nearest middle school, with transportation provided among facilities in the cluster. Students at each middle school – based campus are offered a menu of activities with a coordinated schedule and centralized registration process for around 100 OST providers. To support the system, PASA makes available grants to distribute funds to programs and a transportation system to take youth to programs and home afterwards, and also engages in aggressive recruitment with recruitment fairs, targeted phone outreach, and reminder calls and follow-up calls to families.[31]

At the same time, a collective impact initiative that aims to improve provision of OST programming and student safety should be sure to make investments worthwhile. The initiative should consider, for example, whether supported programs are of high quality with a structure and content purposefully designed to impact outcomes and of sufficient duration and intensity to achieve those outcomes.[32]

Focus on engagement

In the evaluation literature, the OST programs that are reported most effective generally encourage some degree of student autonomy and leadership development. Autonomy generally leads to an increase in interest and motivation, while enjoyment leads to an increase in participation. Attendance remains a challenge when students feel like afterschool programs are "more school after school"; allowing student choice improves engagement. In one study, students reported feeling most engaged while participating in sports, and they reported highest levels of concentrated effort while participating in arts enrichment activities. These playful activities, while not explicitly focused on

[31] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Afterzones-Creating-Citywide-System-to-Support-and-Sustain-High-Quality-After-School-Programs.pdf For more on PASA's middle school approach, see http://www.mypasa.org/afterzone-middle-school/ more For PASA's high school HUB—a free OST program for high school students focused on college and career skills and hands-on learning through a network of community organizations that offer credit-bearing mini-courses and OST programs—see http://www.mypasa.org/high-school/

[32] https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED559197.pdf

academic skills, can have beneficial effects on learning while keeping students engaged.[33] A study focused on the hindsight of students who participated in an afterschool program five years previously suggested that students valued the experience because it gave them unique skills and was engaging and entertaining.[34] Overall, student engagement is the key to successful OST programs.[35]

In part, engagement depends on program structure and content. Physical activity may engage students who find it enjoyable, while offering a way to learn acceptable behavior and gain a sense of confidence.[36] For older students (i.e., middle and high school), programs that successfully engage and retain participants tend to offer leadership opportunities, make connections to youth outside of the program, be community-based, and be large (100+ youth).[37]

Engagement also depends on staff development and positive relationships between staff and students. The mood of a program and its instructors is extraordinarily influential to a student's experience, so professional development of instructors is critical to successfully engaging and retaining students.

Some evidence suggests that, although intentional family engagement strategies in OST programs are not common, they can have positive effects on both student and family outcomes. Engaging families increases family involvement in the program and the student's life, improves the relationship between the student and family, and improves the outcome of the program. To keep families engaged, programs need to support families. Focusing on families' assets rather than the negative aspect of a certain family's involvement is of great value even outside of an OST program. Keeping families engaged relies on obtaining family feedback and further implementation of their ideas. To engage families, OST programs should consider the value of communication and building trusting relationships, hiring and developing a family-focused staff, and building connections across individuals and organizations.[38]

Likewise, attending to the need for culturally inclusive programming can improve student and family engagement. As student demographics change, so do the demographics of afterschool programs. Teaching about culture and diversity can make students feel more welcome and at home, while building an overall program culture of respect.[39]

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[33] Shernoff, David J. and Deborah Lowe Vandell. 2008. "Youth Engagement and Quality of Experience in Afterschool Programs." *Afterschool Matters Occasional Papers Series*. Robert Bowne Foundation.

[34] Wright, Robin, et al. "Five-Year Follow-Up Study of the Qualitative Experiences of Youth in an Afterschool Arts Program in Low-Income Communities." *Journal of Social Service Research*, vol. 40, no. 2, Mar/Apr2014, pp. 137-146.

[35] Baldwin, C. K., Stromwall, K., & Wilder, Q. (2015). Afterschool Youth Program Design and Structural Quality: Implications for Quality Improvement. *Child & Youth Services*, *36*(3), 226-247.

[36] Ling, Fiona C. M., et al. "Children's Perspectives on the Effectiveness of the Playing for Life Philosophy in an Afterschool Sports Program." *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, vol. 11, no. 6, Dec. 2016, pp. 780-788.

[37] Deschenes, Sarah N., et al.. 2012. "Engaging Older Youth." The Wallace Foundation. On participation among older students, see also Baker, Stephen, and Robert C. Chaskin. *Negotiating Among Opportunity and Constraint*; *The Participation of Young People in Out-of-School-Time Activities.* Chapin Hall Center for Children. Chicago. 2006.

[38] Kakli, Zenub, et al.. 2006. "Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School." Harvard Family Research Project and Build the Out-of-School Time Network.

[39] Simpkins, S. D., & Riggs, N. R. (2014). "Cultural competence in afterschool programs." *New Directions For Youth Development*, *2014*(144), 105-117.

Marshal community resources to maximize collective impact

In Sioux Falls, some local and statewide networks of OST and childcare providers exist, but these networks tend to be made up primarily of providers. To build successful systems, a collective impact initiative could help expand existing networks to gain broader community investment from government and business. By building more inclusive networks, this effort might achieve the following:

- Change the attitude that self-care is acceptable and afterschool programs are not necessary, especially for older students.
- Diversify funding streams to sustain and expand OST programming.
- Build connections to school (e.g., cross-training on curriculum, communication with teachers), to employers and workforce development advocates (e.g., regarding opportunities and support for parents, future workers, and childcare providers), and to higher education (e.g., for staffing and staff development).

Significant collaboration and partnerships are important to achieve community-wide sustainability for OST programs that serve all students.[40] In its profile of 27 cities working to build OST systems, the Wallace Foundation and National League of Cities identified six action elements central to sustaining a coordinated OST system: committed leadership across sectors, a public or private coordinating entity, multi-year planning, reliable information about demand and access, expanding participation, and commitment to quality.[41] A comparative study of OST programs in Providence, New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Boston found significant benefits in program access and quality from city-wide coordinated system building to locate programs in high-need areas, provide transportation where needed, make program location and registration accessible, provide professional development for staff, and integrate data system management. But the biggest struggle for improvement in coordination in these cities was financial sustainability.[42]

Systems Data Collection

Data collection is important to building OST systems because it allows providers, advocates, and supportive networks to analyze, apply, and accomplish goals in afterschool programs. With so much turnover, it is essential to be able to connect students with programs that fit their needs. Strong data

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[40] Smith, Charles, and Laurie Van Egeren. 2008. "Bringing in the Community: Partnerships and Quality Assurance in 21st Century Learning Centers." *Afterschool Matters Occasional Papers Series*. Robert Bowne Foundation.

[41] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Municipal-Leadership-for-Afterschool.pdf; http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Sustaining-Out-of-School-Time-Learning-Opportunities.pdf

[42] Bodilly, Susan J., et al. 2010. "Hours of Opportunity: Lessons from Five Cities on Building Systems to Improve After-School, Summer, and Other Out-of- School-Time Program." RAND Corporation. On building systems for collaboration, see also McCombs, Jennifer S., et al. 2010 "Hours of Opportunity Volume 3: Profiles of Five Cities Improving Afterschool Programs Through a Systems Approach." RAND Corporation. For more on city-wide systems building for OST, see http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/opportunity-in-hard-times-building-out-of-school-time-learning-systems.aspx; http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/strengthening-partnerships-building-public-will-out-of-school-time.aspx; and http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Investments-in-Building-Citywide-Out-of-School-Time-Six-City-Study.pdf

systems support access to and participation in high quality programs for low-income youth. Developing data depends on the personnel and data collection process as much as it depends on the technology used. Thoughtful data collection can be used to improve program quality and increases access to participation as well as provide needed information about those students participating and analyses of program effectiveness.[43]

Beyond building individual program capacity for data collection, a collective impact initiative could consider city-wide, systematic data collection and data linkages to boost the effects of OST programs and help cultivate community support. Cities have demonstrated capability for use of data collection to make funding decisions and lobby for additional funding. Data collection creates a mold for greater coordination and vision from stakeholders, resulting in more efficient programs. For instance, linking OST program data to school data can help identify underserved students and measure the effects and outcomes of OST program involvement. Even without such linkages, systematic data collection can help identify student interests and demands alongside struggling programs, then place programs strategically or—at the provider level—empower programs to modify approaches midcourse, follow up with students, and plan for future programming.[44]

[43] Spielberger, Julie., et al,. *Connecting the Dots: Data Use in Afterschool Systems*. Chapin Hall University at Chicago. The Wallace Foundation. Chicago. April 2016.
[44] McCombs, Jennifer Sloan., et al. 2010. "Hours of opportunity Volume 2: The Power of Data to improve Afterschool Programs Citywide." The RAND Corporation.

Appendix A: Sioux Falls Demographic Information

This section provides a snapshot of community demographics for the city of Sioux Falls.

Table 19. Sioux Falls city demographics: Race and ethnicity

	Total	Percent
White alone	147,395	85%
Black or African American alone	9,170	5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	3,859	2%
Asian alone	5,214	3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	39	<1%
Some other race alone	3,220	2%
Two or more races	5,453	3%
Total	174,350	

Source: 2016 ACS 1-year estimates

Table 20. Sioux Falls city demographics: Median household income

	Number of Households	Median Household Income
All households	69,330	$56,867

Source: 2016 ACS 1-year estimates

Table 21. Sioux Falls city demographics: Children age birth - 17 years by poverty status

	Number of Children	Percent
Children in poverty (<100% poverty level)	4,819	11%
Low-income children (100 to 199% poverty level)	9,250	21%
Middle and upper income children (≥200% poverty level)	29,267	68%
Total children for whom poverty status could be determined*	43,336	

Source: 2016 ACS 1-year estimates

Table 22. Sioux Falls city demographics: Educational attainment for adults 25 years and over

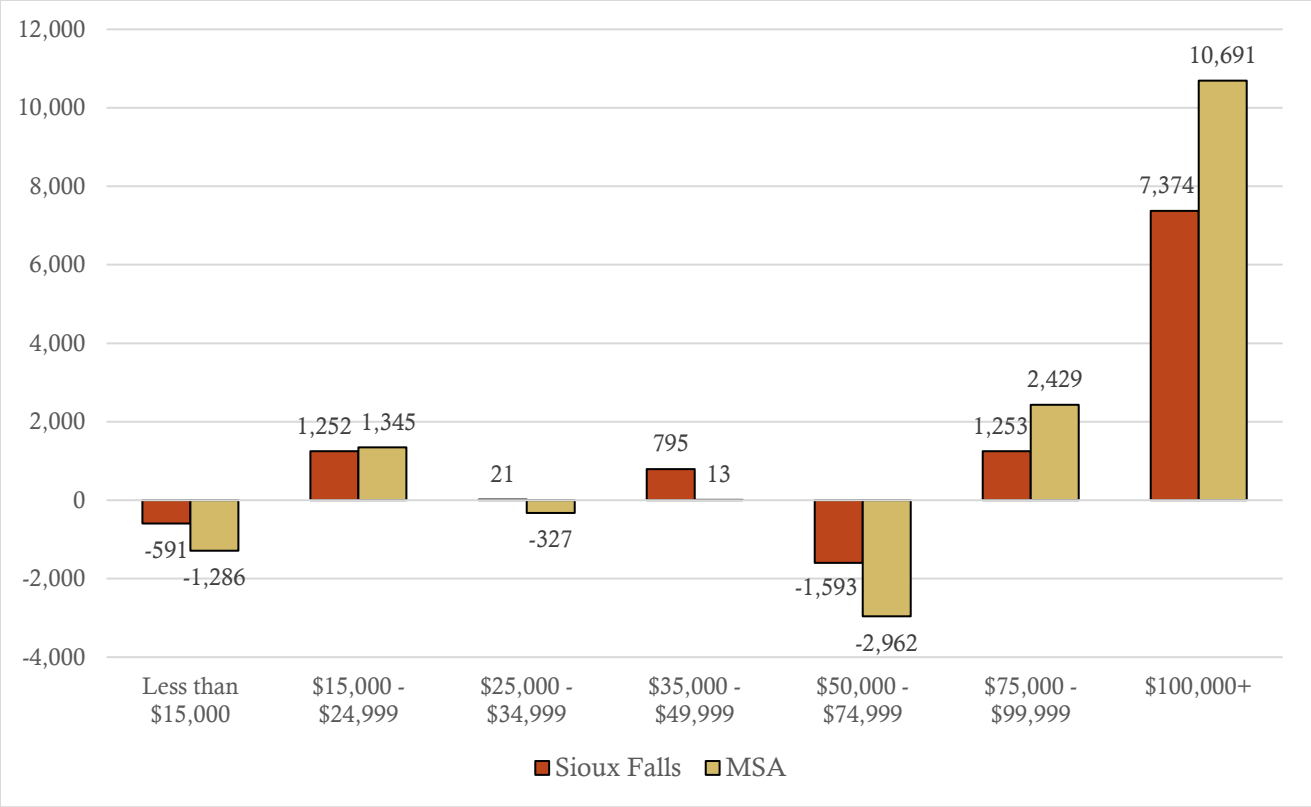
	Number of Adults	Percent
Less than 9th grade	4,306	4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5,738	5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27,056	24%
Some college, no degree	24,098	21%
Associate's degree	10,924	10%
Bachelor's degree	27,573	24%
Graduate or professional degree	13,464	12%
Total population 25 years and over	113,159	

Source: 2016 ACS 1-year estimates

Table 23. Sioux Falls city demographics: Median earnings by educational attainment for adults 25 years and over with earnings

	Male	Female	Total
Less than high school graduate	$28,425	$22,872	$27,050
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	$32,202	$28,548	$30,955
Some college or associate's degree	$46,273	$31,832	$38,143
Bachelor's degree	$50,906	$37,489	$43,945
Graduate or professional degree	$57,319	$53,249	$55,072
Total population 25 years and over with earnings	$42,298	$34,533	$38,361

Source: 2016 ACS 1-year estimates



Source: ACS 2008 1-year estimates, 2016 1-year estimates

Figure 24. Change in number of households by income, 2008-2016

Appendix B: Provider Information Summary Tables

The following tables summarize information presented in Section 6: OST Programs in Sioux Falls.

Table 24. Fees and population served for OST providers in Sioux Falls

	Fees	Income adjustments	Hours	Population served
Kids Inc.	$20 enrollment, $80 biweekly	$65 if eligible for reduced lunch rate; $49 if eligible for free lunch	After school until 6:00 p.m.	Sioux Falls School District elementary schools
Y-Club	$32 weekly	Free at Whittier and McGovern	After school until 6:00 p.m.	Sioux Falls School District middle schools
Sioux Falls Catholic Schools after school care	Range: $500 (1 – 2 days before school) to $2,210 (3 – 5 days before and after school)		Before school from 6:45 a.m. After school until 6:00 p.m.	Sioux Falls Catholic Schools elementary schools
A-OK	$3.50 / hour		Before school from 6:45 a.m. After school until 6:00 p.m.	Sioux Falls Lutheran School grades K – 8
Kid's Corner	$3.50 / hour		Before school from 6:30 a.m. After school until 6:00 p.m.	Sioux Falls Christian elementary school
VOA, Dakotas Youth Center	Free	Free	After school until 9:00 p.m. Summer weekdays 12 – 6:00 p.m.	Sioux Falls elementary schools

	Fees	Income adjustments	Hours	Population served
LSS School Age Programs	Range: $40 - $51 / week	Scholarships available		
LSS Here4Youth				Children with disabilities, ages 3 – 21
Boys & Girls Club of the Sioux Empire	$47.50/week after school $32.50/week before school $25/trimester for drop-in	Scholarships available	The Club open until 7:30 p.m. after school	Grades K – 5; serves Sioux Falls, Brandon, Harrisburg
EmBe	$72/week before and after $67/week before and after (excludes no-school days)	Scholarships available		Elementary schools in Sioux Falls and Harrisburg
Kidz Count at Wesley United Methodist	Free	Free		Terry Redlin elementary
Kidstop at First United Methodist	Free	Free		Low-income, immigrant, and refugee children in grades K – 8
Multi-Cultural Center	Free	Free		ELL and Native American elementary students
YMCA Youth Performance Center	$44/week		After school until 6:00 p.m.	Sioux Falls elementary schools

Table 25. Fees and population served for drop-in OST providers in Sioux Falls

	Fees	Income adjustments	Hours	Population served
VOA, Dakotas Youth Center	Free	Free	After school until 9:00 p.m. Noon to 6:00 p.m. on no-school days	Ages 7 – 17
Boys & Girls Club	$25/trimester		After school until 7:30 p.m.	Grades 1 – age 18
YMCA Downtown Youth Activity Center	Free	Free	4 – 8:30 p.m. weekdays Noon to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays	Ages 17 and under (ages 7 and under must be accompanied by parent)
Community Centers	Free	Free	After school until 6:00 p.m. Weekends until 5:00 p.m.	Ages 7 and up
Siouxland Libraries	Free	Free	Until 9:00 p.m. weekdays (6:00 p.m. Fridays)	All ages

Table 26. Market rates for Sioux Falls - area OST providers

	Market Rate
Out-of-School-Time Program	$3.70/hour
Family Child Care	$3.00/hour
Group Family and Child Care Centers	$3.35/hour

Market rates are based on the Department of Social Service's May 2017 South Dakota Child Care Workforce and Market Rate Report. Rates are for care of ages 6 and over in Minnehaha/Lincoln counties. See https://dss.sd.gov/docs/childcare/2017_report.pdf

Table 27. Kids Inc. reported capacity by school, Fall 2017

	Title I?	Fall Enrollment	Kids Inc. Licensed Capacity	Kids Inc. Reported Capacity	Kids Inc. Reported Waitlist
All-City / Elementary Immersion Center at Jane Addams	Yes (EIC)	142 / 110	60	30	5
Anne Sullivan	Yes	666	90	30	13
Cleveland	Yes	600	480	45	14
Discovery		928	120	100+	60
Eugene Field A+		511	150	75	31
Garfield	Yes	589	120	30	18
Harvey Dunn		733	150	90	16
Hawthorne	Yes	485	60	30	0
Hayward	Yes	765	180	30	25
John F. Kennedy		686	175	100+	9
John Harris		681	180	100+	42
Laura B. Anderson	Yes	406	60	30	0
Laura Wilder		466	225	45	44
Lowell	Yes	521	60	30	1
Oscar Howe		663	150	90	16
Renberg		225	120	30	0
R.F. Pettigrew		976	150	100+	63
Robert Frost / Challenge Center		455 / 155	120	90	40
Rosa Parks Global Studies/World Language		564	165	75	23
Sonia Sotomayor Spanish Immersion		589	120	100+	63
Susan B. Anthony		531	165	90	20
Terry Redlin	Yes	425	60	30	9

Not shown: Bridges at Horace Mann and the Elementary Immersion Center, both Title I schools. Bridges at Horace Mann does not have a Kids Inc. program. The Elementary Immersion Center is co-located with All-City at Jane Addams. Capacity and waitlist length were reported in ARI's provider survey in fall of 2017.