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Research BRIEF

Youth Community Connections
Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Alliance

Preparing the Next Generation

Afterschool and summer programs foster positive social and emotional skills.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS PREDICT FUTURE SUCCESS

There is increasing evidence that social and emotional development is just as important as academic skills to be successful in life and work. Dr. James Heckman, University of Chicago, shows that “non-cognitive” skills are just as indicative of positive life choices and outcomes as cognitive skills. Afterschool and summer programs have the potential to impact the development our young people in many different and important ways.

Economist, Dr. James Heckman, states “non-cognitive” skills are indicative of positive life choices and outcomes – similar to cognitive skills.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL BENEFITS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Positive behaviors are associated with young people who are involved in quality afterschool and/or summer programs.

- ◆ Self Perception – young people who participate in afterschool and summer programs experience increases in self esteem. They become more confident in their abilities and have the confidence to overcome difficulties.
- ◆ Social Skills– afterschool and summer programs teach young people to interact with other young people. They learn how to work in teams, be leaders, solve problems, achieve a common goal, and respect each other.
- ◆ Attitudes Towards School – afterschool and summer programs help young people feel more connected to their schools. This makes them more likely to attend school, believe school relates to their life, and feel that school is a positive place to go.
- ◆ Work Habits – afterschool and summer programs instill positive work habits in young people, including task persistence,

- ◆ Connection to their Community – afterschool and summer programs foster greater connections between young people and their community, resulting in increased service and volunteering.
- ◆ Responsibility and Decision Making – afterschool and summer programs give young people opportunities to make decisions and learn about consequences.

DECREASING INVOLVEMENT IN NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS

Young people who participate in quality afterschool and summer programs engage in fewer negative behaviors during childhood and adolescence.

- ◆ Misconduct – decreases in the frequency of truancy, and juvenile crime (both petty crime and serious offences).
- ◆ Aggression – significant reductions in the amount of violence and fighting among young people.
- ◆ Reduction in Substance Use – decreases in drug and alcohol use among young people by giving them positive alternatives.

Afterschool and summer learning programs significantly impact positive social and emotional development of young people while minimizing engagement in negative behaviors during adolescence.