

Research-Based Best Practices for Out-of-School Time Educational Programs

Georgia Compensatory Educational Leaders, Inc.
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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT & DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

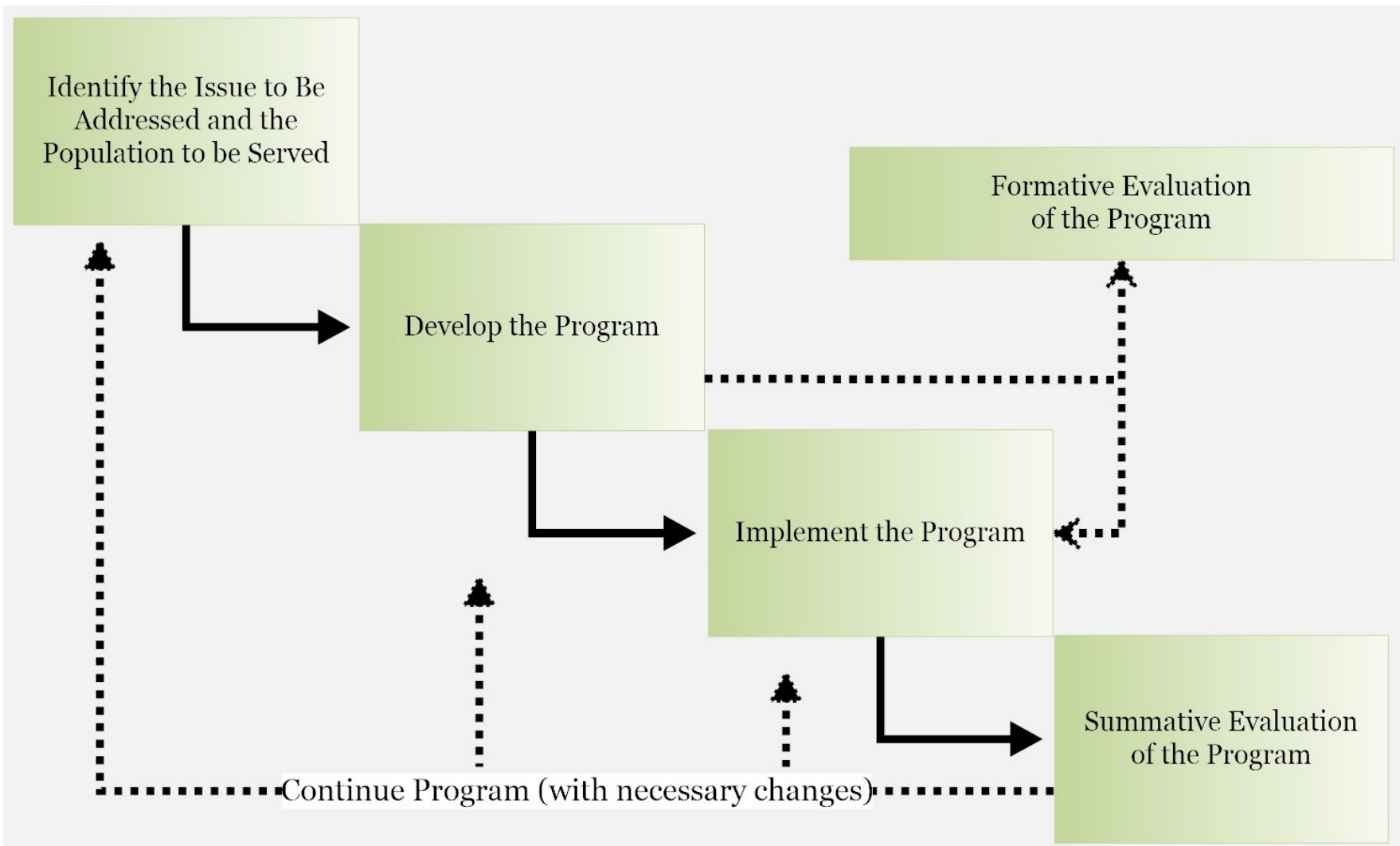




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Session Description

This session will provide attendees with *research-based best practices* for out-of-school time educational programs. A series of *recommendations* will be provided that cover program development, implementation, and monitoring. Attendees will learn how to incorporate these recommendations and how to *promote a culture of high performance* within their program. This session is designed to be beneficial to those working with educational programs regardless of prior experience.





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Identifying the Issue

- What is the change you wish to see at your school/district?
- What are the needs of the group to be served?
- What previous attempts have been made to implement programs to meet these needs?
- What were the major implementation obstacles faced by existing programs?



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Developing the Program

- Goal Setting
 - What are the reasons for having goals?
 - The program should have 5-10 goals that are *attainable* and *measurable*.
 - The goals should focus on *activities* (desired substance and levels within the program) and *outcomes* (final intended consequences).
- Resource Utilization
 - What people (staffing) will be required for this program?
 - What physical resources will be required for the program?
 - What will be the scope and intensity of the program? (How many people will it serve and how frequently will it serve them?)



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Developing the Program: Questions to Ask Yourself

- How is the theory of the program designed to achieve the intended outcomes?
- What program operations are needed to make the theory effective?
- Does the implementation setting of the program support or impede the program design? How?
- What aspects of this program design need to be modified to achieve the intended outcomes in this implementation setting?
- How will we monitor the implementation of this program and make any necessary changes?



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Program Implementation: Five Key Areas to Target

- Recruitment and training of staff
- Recruitment and preparation of participants
- Participant buy-in, attendance, participation, and engagement
- Program fidelity
- Program quality



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Program Implementation: Recruiting and Training Staff

- How are program staff recruited?
- Is adequate compensation provided to staff to keep them involved through the duration of the program?
- Does the staff receive the necessary initial training as well as continuous PD?

Program Implementation: Recruitment and Preparation of Participants



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- Is the program serving the right target group(s)?
- Do you have data on program participants to know exactly who you are serving?
- Do participants know exactly what they are participating in? How has that information effectively been disseminated prior to the beginning of the program?

Program Implementation: Participant Buy-in, Attendance, Participation, and Engagement



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- Are potential clients rejecting the program or dropping out? If so, why?
- Are target participants attending, participating, and engaging with the program?
- Are the clients receiving the outcomes they expected?



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Program Implementation: Program Fidelity

- Is the program design being implemented according to plan?
- What implementation obstacles are being encountered?
- What differences are there between sites?
- What are the differences in strengths and weaknesses between sites? Why?
- Are significant internal or external events affecting the program, its staff, or its clients?



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Program Implementation: Program Quality

- Is the program meeting its implementation goals and targets?
- Is the program producing the outputs (such as services or products) that were planned?
- Is the program meeting its standards of quality?
- Is the program producing its intended short-term outcomes for clients?
- What are the areas of requiring improvement?
- Are the efforts to improve the program working?
- What are the program's strengths and weaknesses?

IES What Works Clearinghouse: Improving Academic Outcomes for OST Programs



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1. Align the OST program academically with the school day (design)
2. Maximize student participation and attendance
3. Adapt instruction to individual and small group needs (instruction)
4. Provide engaging learning experiences (instruction)
5. Assess program performance and use the results to improve the quality of the program (evaluation)

Source: IES What Works Clearinghouse (2009)



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IES What Works Clearinghouse: Align Academics of Program with the School Day

- a. Use OST program coordinators to develop relationship and maintain ongoing communication between schools and the OST program
- b. Designate school staff person to coordinate communication with OST programs and help them support school needs
- c. Connect OST instruction to school instruction by identifying school-based goals and learning objectives
- d. Coordinate with school to identify staff for OST programs



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IES What Works Clearinghouse: Maximize Student Participation and Attendance

- a. Design program features to meet the needs and preferences of students and parents
- b. Promote awareness of the OST program within schools and to parents
- c. Use attendance data to identify students facing difficulties in attending the program



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IES What Works Clearinghouse: Adapt Instruction to Individual and Small Group Needs

- a. Use formal and informal assessment data to inform academic instruction
- b. Use one-on-one tutoring if possible; otherwise, break students into small groups
- c. Provide professional development and ongoing instructional support to all instructors

IES What Works Clearinghouse: Provide Engaging Learning Experiences



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- a. Make learning relevant by incorporating practical examples and connecting instruction to student interests and experiences
- b. Make learning active through opportunities for collaborative learning and hands-on academic activities
- c. Build adult-student relationships among OST program participants

IES What Works Clearinghouse: Assess Program Performance, Use Results to Improve Program Quality



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- a. Develop an evaluation plan
- b. Collect program and student performance data
- c. Analyze the data and use findings for program improvement
- d. Conduct a summative evaluation



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Wallace Foundation: Goals for OST Programs

- Increase access and participation
- Improve quality
- Develop information systems for decision making
- Plan for financial sustainability

Source: Bodilly (2010)

Goals for OST Programs: Increase Access and Participation



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- Address transportation
- Increase convenience
- Increase number of locations and availability for enrollment
- Ensure affordability

Source: Bodilly (2010)

Goals for OST Programs: Improve Quality



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- Create standards and assessment tools
- Monitor quality and vet providers
- Provide professional development and performance incentives
- Evaluate progress

Source: Bodilly (2010)

Goals for OST Programs: Plan for Financial Sustainability



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- Federal/state vs. private/nonprofit
- Grantwriting
- Fundraising

Source: Bodilly (2010)

CRESST: Key Indicators of Quality in Afterschool Programs



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- Program Organization
- Environment
- Instructional Features

Source: CRESST (2009)

CRESST: Key Indicators of Quality in Afterschool Programs



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- Program Organization
 - Management and administration
 - Staff support
 - Staff experience and training
 - Family and community involvement
 - Community partnerships
 - Evaluation

CRESST: Key Indicators of Quality in Afterschool Programs



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- Environment
 - Safe environment and well-equipped physical space
 - Student health and well-being
 - Positive relationships

Source: CRESST (2009)

CRESST: Key Indicators of Quality in Afterschool Programs



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- Instructional Features:
 - Quality of implementation
 - Variety of activities
 - Support for child and youth development

Challenges for OST Programs

- Going to scale
- Roles and responsibilities
- Funding and sustainability
- Intermediaries and advocates
- OST programs and academic achievement
- Challenges of local implementation



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Resources

- Bodilly, S, et al. (2010). Hours of Opportunity: Lessons from Five Cities on Building Systems to Improve After-School, Summer School, and Other Out-of-School-Time Programs. Wallace Foundation.
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<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/key-research/Pages/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.aspx>.
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