



SUMMARY OF THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS RESULTS TO DATE

Since the opening of its first Community School in 1992, the Children's Aid Society (CAS) has made a strong commitment to evaluating results through studies conducted by Fordham University, the Education Development Center, ActKnowledge and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Our intent has been to document results across multiple domains because our goal is to affect the following spheres: youth, families, and schools by reducing barriers to learning so that children are physically, emotionally and socially prepared to learn. As Community Schools have evolved, the research methodologies and models used to evaluate them have evolved as well. The following outcomes are results of many studies over a 13-year period. It should be noted that findings have consistently shown that the comprehensive, coordinated services offered in schools as part of a community schools strategy are most effective when partnering schools have stable leadership and a strong core instructional program. Support services cannot compensate for weaknesses in these areas, however when integrated into a school with a stable leader and a strong instructional program, they add great value. In addition, community schools' extended-day programs are most effective in offering enrichment rather than remediation services.

OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH

Increasing Academic Achievementⁱ

- ❑ Over a three-period (1993-1995), the number of third grade students at a CAS Community School improved by 25 percentage points in reading at proficiency (from 10.4% to 35.4%) and 33 percentage points (from 23.3% to 56%) in math proficiency by the fifth grade.
- ❑ Academic achievement was positively correlated with the number of days students attended Community school extended-day programs in 1997-1998.
- ❑ In 2004-2005, middle school youth were significantly more likely to achieve proficiency on standardized test scores if they participated regularly in Community School after-school programs. Students participating for two years were even more likely to achieve proficiency.
- ❑ Seventh- and eighth-grade students participating in Community School after-school programs did significantly better than non-participants on reading and math tests during the 2004-2005 school year.
- ❑ Middle school youth who participated regularly in Community School after-school programs had significantly better school attendance than non-participating youth in 2004-2005.
- ❑ There was a correlation between self-esteem, career aspirations and reading scores; middle school youth who had higher self esteem and higher career aspirations had higher 2005 reading scores.

Reducing Special Education Referralsⁱⁱ

- ❑ Effective school-based services can reduce special education referrals: School report card data from the five oldest Community Schools have shown that over a four-year period (2001-2004) rates of referrals to special education were 24.4% lower at CAS Community Schools than at comparable schools.

Improving Mental and Physical Healthⁱⁱⁱ

- ❑ In a study of two middle schools, mental health services demonstrated impressive progress in helping students deal with mental health issues. The evaluation documented improvements on a wide range of mental health problems, and many were totally resolved within the school year. In addition, students in the study maintained their grade point average – a significant achievement for students facing multiple mental health challenges.
- ❑ A recent study of early outcomes at one of the newest elementary-level Community Schools showed that the presence and intentional integration of a full-service medical clinic into a high-poverty elementary school resulted in dramatic increases in children's access to quality health care, and better student and family management of chronic illnesses (particularly asthma).

Fostering Social and Emotional Development and Community Engagement^{iv}

- ❑ Middle school youth who participated in after-school programs at CAS Community Schools reported spending less time per week watching TV or playing video games than did non-participants. They also reported spending more time reading.
- ❑ Middle school youth in after-school programs at CAS Community Schools scored significantly higher and showed greater increases on career/education aspirations than non-participating youth.
- ❑ Middle school youth in Community Schools after-school programs scored significantly higher on community engagement than non-participating youth.
- ❑ Behavioral conduct of elementary school students at a CAS Community School improved significantly more than did that of students at a comparable elementary school.
- ❑ Elementary school students at Community Schools had more positive attitudes toward school than comparison students.

OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES

Increasing Parent Involvement^v

- ❑ Parents were significantly more involved, took more responsibility for their children's school work, felt welcome and were observed to be a presence in the Community Schools more than in comparison schools.
- ❑ Parental involvement was significantly higher in CAS Community Schools than in comparison schools – 78% higher in a CAS elementary school and 147% higher in a CAS middle school.

Benefits of Early Childhood Education in Community Schools^{vi}

- ❑ Mothers in the Early Head Start program showed decreases in depression and stress over the course of participation in the program. They reported increases in the quality and size of their social support networks.
- ❑ Parents maintained high levels of parent involvement during Head Start and continued to be highly involved in their children's education afterwards. In addition, Head Start increased parents' social networks and these early relationships were sustained through elementary school years.

OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOLS^{vii}

- ❑ The atmosphere of Community Schools was found to be markedly different from other schools. They appeared more busy and cheerful, and also exhibited almost no signs of violence or graffiti. Parents, students and teachers reported feeling welcome.
- ❑ Teachers in Community Schools had better attendance than teachers at comparison schools.
- ❑ Teachers in Community Schools reported being able to spend more time on teaching than their counterparts in comparison schools were able to do. This included spending more time on class preparation and more time working directly with students.

ⁱ *21st Century Community Learning Centers at Six New York City Middle Schools Year One Findings*, prepared by Kira Krenichyn, Heléne Clark, Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel and Lymari Benitez of ActKnowledge, September 2005. See also *Summary of Fordham University Research Findings 1992-1999*, prepared by ActKnowledge.

ⁱⁱ Unpublished paper: *A Call for School-Based Student and Family Support Services*, by James Langford, October 2005.

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Children's Aid Society's Community School Mental Health Services Analysis of Progress in 4th Year of the New York State Education Department's VESID – Effective Practices Contract*. Evaluation conducted by Heléne Clark and Robert Engle of ActKnowledge, November 2003. See also *PS 50 Evaluation of the Health Component in its First Year*. Evaluation conducted by Heléne Clark, Melissa Extein, and Robert Engle of ActKnowledge, September 2003.

^{iv} Op cit., *21st Century Community Learning Centers at Six New York City Middle Schools Year One Findings*. See also op cit., *Fordham University Research Findings 1992-1999*.

^v Op cit., *Fordham University Research Findings 1992-1999*.

^{vi} Op cit., *The Children's Aid Society's (CAS') School-Based Zero to Five Head Start Programs at P.S. 5 and P.S. 8. are the Spring Board to Children's Success in School and Form the Base of Real Parent Involvement*. See also Unpublished paper: *Children's Aid Society Community School Head Start Program – Retrospective Study*, by Margaret Caspe and Dr. Andrew Seltzer, October 2005

^{vii} Op cit., *Fordham University Research Findings 1992-1999*. See also Op cit., *21st Century Community Learning Centers at Six New York City Middle Schools Year One Findings*.