

Partnering with Afterschool Providers

Introduction

Partnering to expand 4-H Science afterschool program delivery can leverage networks, resources and opportunities to reach youth traditionally overlooked by science programs. Strong partnerships are a hallmark of successful afterschool programs. However, afterschool partners do not typically have the expertise, resources, or program design to support delivery of science, engineering, and technology learning experiences.

There are a variety of afterschool providers within most urban areas: schools, youth organizations (Boys & Girls Clubs, Ys), city parks and recreation departments, faith-based organizations, and so forth. This presents a tremendous opportunity to reach urban youth with 4-H Science programs. The purpose of this chapter is to provide promising practices that will help develop and sustain successful 4-H Science afterschool programs in partnership with afterschool providers.

The afterschool field has certainly evolved. Initially, afterschool sites were merely custodial agents (child care), providing a safe place for youth to finish homework and simply “hang-out” until parents arrived. It was soon recognized that youth needed something more to occupy their time – so sites began to include recreational and arts & crafts activities – which often meant simply providing youth with access to recreational equipment and/or a “craft station.” The evolution continued as sites began to offer youth enrichment activities, and often invited 4-H to present one-time activities to youth.

The goal for 4-H Science programming in afterschool venues is to move beyond offering activities to providing youth with ongoing, sequential programming that leads to mastery of *4-H Science Abilities*. The key to success for achieving mastery is to intentionally design programs of appropriate duration and frequency, and to sequence program activities to build upon previously learned skills. (For more information on what constitutes a 4-H Science program, please see the chapter on *4-H Science Program Design*.)

There are two models for delivering 4-H Science programs in afterschool settings: direct delivery and training collaborating staff. The direct delivery model utilizes 4-H staff and volunteers under the direction of the 4-H professional. Direct delivery provides the greatest opportunity for fidelity of implementation, and allows for ongoing, continuous training (content and context) for program facilitators. Program staff are paid from grant or subcontract funds, or with other incentives for teens.

In the training collaborating staff model, 4-H provides the science curriculum, training, and other resources and support for on-site staff to deliver programming. Depending on the degree of site readiness, this model can be difficult to implement (and evaluate) with a high degree of confidence. It can also prove difficult to provide continuous, ongoing training to site staff due to a number of motivational and logistical factors. However, with the right sites and collaborating staff, the training model can be an excellent way to extend the reach of 4-H Science programs in urban communities.

Programming success is also related to the type of afterschool site. For example, partnerships with school-based sites tend to better support structured programs. School-based providers require youth to enroll in their program, and in most cases the same youth attend on a fairly regular basis. Drop-in, non-school based afterschool





sites may not have consistent youth attendance. These sites also tend to offer more recreational activities than opportunities for sequential programming.

Promising Practices

The promising practices for *Partnering with Afterschool Providers* are subdivided into four categories: (a) Program Planning and Evaluation, (b) Developing and Sustaining Partnerships, (c) Staffing, and (d) Training.

Program Planning and Evaluation

1. *Read the chapter 4-H Science Program Design – 4-H Science Checklist.* This chapter provides fundamental program planning and evaluation information required for successful 4-H Science programs. The information contained here is specific to planning afterschool programs.
2. *Develop and implement 4-H Science “programs.”* See *4-H Science Program Design*.
3. *Develop measurable process and outcome objectives.* See *4-H Science Program Design*.
4. *Identify evaluation (success) criteria for all objectives.* See *4-H Science Program Design*.
5. *Obtain funding to support a direct delivery programming model.* Direct delivery (using associate staff) of 4-H Science programs greatly reduces problems related to fidelity of implementation (see also *Item #1* under *Staffing* below).
6. *Structure weekly, sequenced 4-H afterschool sessions as part of a larger multi-week program.* Programs can be implemented for 10-12 weeks (works well with trimester scheduling), a semester, or over the entire school year. Programs should be project-based. Consistency helps all involved with scheduling and avoiding conflicts.
 - Divide the school year into semesters or trimesters (September-December, January-March, April-June).
 - Offer *different* 4-H Science programs during these trimesters (will depend upon on how the collaborating afterschool site structures their programming).
 - Include a closing showcase at the end of the multi-week program (see *Recognizing Youth and Showcasing Programmatic Efforts*).
7. *Consult the afterschool calendar when scheduling programs and determining months and days of the week for implementation.* Take into consideration the school’s calendar, school breaks and holidays, and teacher in-service days.
 - Work with the collaborating provider to schedule everything upfront and avoid conflicts with other program providers, field trips, and so forth.
 - Provide the afterschool site and parents with a typed schedule of the 10-12 week program.
8. *Pre-determine the number of youth to recruit and enroll in the program.* Refer to program objectives, and consider the curriculum, materials, and staffing level required.
 - Work with providers to ensure youth are available for the multi-week session (day and time).
 - Provide enrollment packet (program flyer, schedule, and 4-H enrollment form) to collaborating provider at

least three weeks prior to the program.

9. *Increase the capacity for sustained involvement of youth participants in 4-H Science by rotating programs and staff each semester/trimester.* Provide opportunity for youth to age-out of a site before returning program to that site.
10. *Include Family Science Nights.* Involve the entire family in 4-H Science programs. Serve dinner, provide activities (activity stations work well), and distribute take-home activities to extend the learning. Use a science theme such as flight or recycling.
11. *Evaluate the program against program objectives.* See *4-H Science Program Design*.
12. *Share evaluation results.* See *4-H Science Program Design*.

Developing and Sustaining Partnerships

1. *Read the Section Introduction to Partnerships, Resource Development, Program Growth and Sustainability.* This introduction contains critical “overarching principles” that are vital to developing and sustaining program partners. The information included here is specific to partnering with afterschool providers.
2. *Explore opportunities to partner with state afterschool organizations.* For state afterschool associations see National AfterSchool Association State Affiliates. There are also state afterschool networks. Offer to provide science training to site directors and front line staff.
3. *Explore partnerships with 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC).* The 5-year federal 21stCCLC grant provides funds for direct delivery of programs that support academics, as well as training (see 21stCCLC in Resources below). 4-H subcontracts with the 21st Century grantee to provide science programming for collaborating afterschool sites.
4. *Attend community-wide out-of-school time (OST) summits, conferences, etc.* Increase 4-H visibility in the OST community. 4-H Science is rapidly becoming known for providing excellent science programming, so being at the table will lead to opportunities for collaborations, grants, and so forth.
5. *Assess the potential provider’s readiness for 4-H Science programs.* Not all sites are interested in or structured for this type of programming. Signs of readiness include:
 - The site wants to include science “programs,” not just activities and events.
 - Collaborating staff are fully committed to providing necessary support to 4-H program staff (direct delivery model). Site staff should be engaged in the lesson/activity and ready to assist youth in an appropriate manner and/or handle any disciplinary challenges. This should not in any way be construed as a “free” period for “hanging out” or engaging in personal activities (e.g., breaks, phone calls, texting).
 - Collaborating staff are fully committed to fidelity of implementation (training model). They must be willing to attend trainings and implement lessons and activities appropriately.
 - Site administrators are fully committed to providing support to site *and* 4-H staff as needed. If the site’s staff/youth ratio is 1:15, and 15 youth are enrolled in the program, then at least one staff person should be present during 4-H Science programs. Administrators should be willing to commit to release time for site staff to get training (training model). They must also be willing to hold site staff accountable for successful program implementation *regardless of model used*.





6. *Offer to host a Family Science Night for a potential afterschool site.* This will provide the site with a glimpse of what 4-H Science has to offer. Clearly state, however, that 4-H Science is about *programs*, not activities and events.
7. *Commit to lengthy, regular, face-to-face (and other) contact with new site directors.* It is usually quite time intensive to prepare a new afterschool site for 4-H Science (assuming the site is science ready). It takes time to develop the relationship and to ensure the partner understands all aspects of the program design (e.g., objectives, scheduling, etc.) and implementation (e.g., enrolling youth, evaluation, etc.).
8. *Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).* See the [Section Introduction to Partnerships, Resource Development, Program Growth and Sustainability](#).
9. *Identify up front how 4-H is to be recognized in the afterschool program.* It is important that afterschool program participants and their parents know they are participating in 4-H Afterschool. For additional information on co-branding and marketing please see the [Section Introduction to Partnerships, Resource Development, Program Growth and Sustainability](#) and [Marketing and Branding 4-H in Urban Communities](#).
10. *Work with collaborating providers to identify and agree upon appropriate program space.* Many afterschool programs occur in large multi-purpose rooms, cafeterias, and gymnasiums. This kind of multi-use space is not suitable for 4-H science programs (lack of focus, distractions, etc.).
11. *Keep in constant communication with implementation sites.* All required documentation must be precisely communicated to all volunteers and staff members. Follow through on stated deadlines by sending frequent reminders about needed information. Visit sites and reassure staff and volunteers of continuous support and availability.
12. *Be willing to walk away from an unproductive situation.* Partner sites may fail to live up to expectations, or may not be as ready to support 4-H Science programs as originally anticipated. Terminate the relationship (without burning bridges) and focus on developing and sustaining programs with other partners.

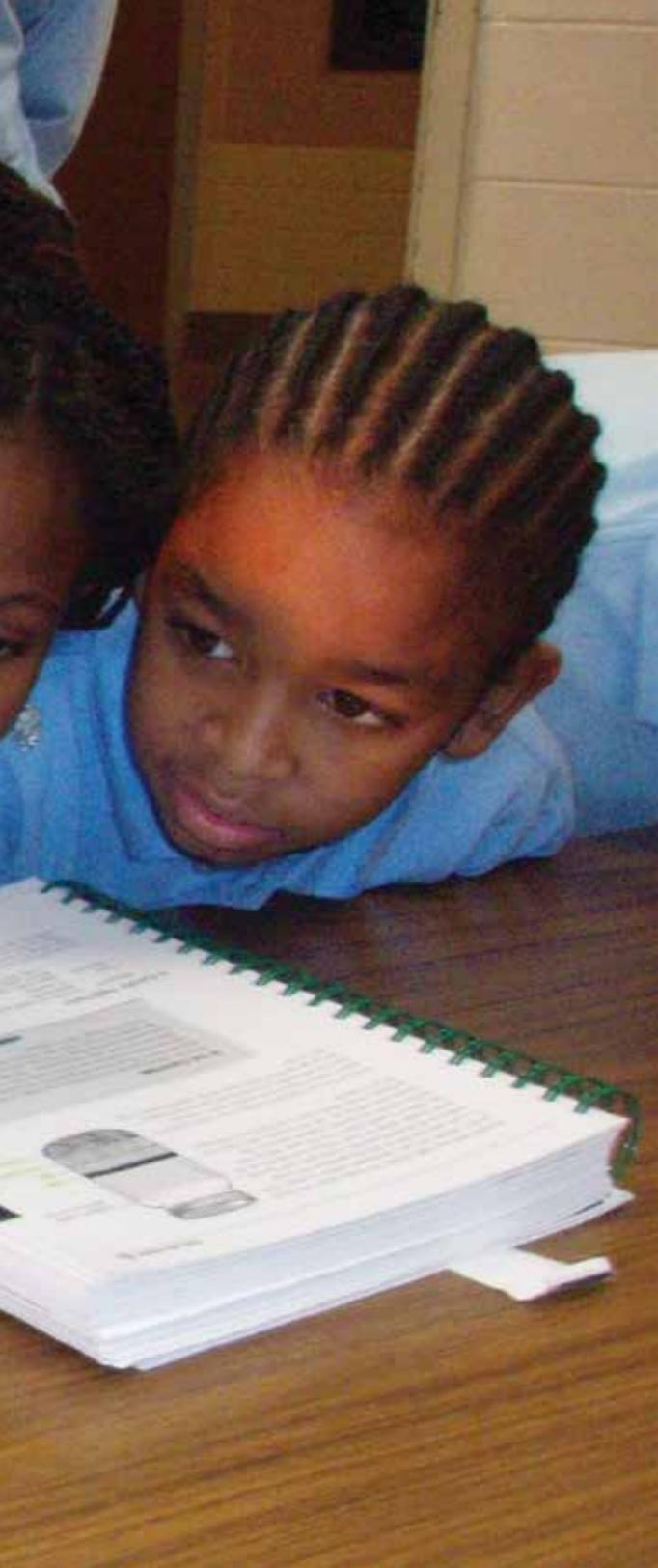
Staffing

1. *Utilize temporary, part-time 4-H program assistants (direct delivery).* Hire part-time staff for a particular program or curriculum and then rotate him/her through the afterschool sites. Position(s) can be funded by a joint grant or subcontract.
2. *Recruit teens as program facilitators.* Teens, under the leadership of 4-H staff doing direct delivery, are a great way to improve the facilitator/youth ratio. Place afterschool youth in teams, and assign a teen to each team or pair of teams (for more information see [Staffing with Teenagers and Teens as Cross-Age Teachers](#)).

Training

1. *Read the chapter [Training Others to Deliver High Quality Science Programming](#).* This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of promising practices for training staff and volunteers. The promising practices contained here are geared specifically to training staff/volunteers to deliver 4-H Science programs in an afterschool setting.
2. *Assess the skills and interests of the collaborating afterschool staff.* Every afterschool site will be unique. It is important to plan appropriately for the staff you are training. Ask staff to complete the *4-H Science Core Competencies Self Assessment Tool* (see chapter [4-H Science Program Design – 4-H Science Checklist](#)) to assist with planning professional development opportunities.





- Staff may include (but not always) professional educators. This can be good – and challenging – they have experience working with youth, but are more comfortable in a formal education setting.
 - Non-professional educators may include younger adults who want to get into the field, paraprofessionals from the school, community volunteers, and/or retirees.
 - Some staff may have science backgrounds, but many (if not most) will not.
3. *Identify the best time for training afterschool staff.* Communicate with the site coordinator to ensure staff availability. Negotiate release time and compensation for collaborating staff to attend trainings. Many staff work at the school during the day or have other full-time jobs. Each site is different depending on the staffing pattern, so it is important to work with them to find the best time (e.g., evenings, Saturdays, seasonal breaks, etc.). Provide refreshments/meals, especially important if holding a training immediately following the end of the afterschool day.
 4. *Offer state certified training credits, units, or hours.* Provide training opportunities that meet state requirements for licensure of afterschool sites. The 4-H office completes the clock-hour certification paperwork with the state, and includes the certification information in advertisements and on all participant certificates provided. You can partner with your university to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Case Studies

Bird – Providing Expertise and Resources to a Large Afterschool Partner to Make Science Fun. Sacramento County 4-H has a 13-year history of partnering with the Sacramento START afterschool program to enhance science programming. Sacramento START is run through the City of Sacramento and serves over 5,000 youth at 60 sites in five school districts. 4-H helped to bring the 4-H YES Program (grades K-3), 4-H On the Wild Side environmental education camp (grades 4-6), and the 4-H Water Wizards Program (grades 4-6) to hundreds of youth participating in the START program. While there are other 4-H Afterschool partnerships, this is by far the longest and strongest. 4-H has something most afterschool environments highly value – fun, hands-on learning experiences that engage kids, even at 4:00 p.m. The partnership with Sacramento START has taken many forms over the years. 4-H has provided teen facilitators, training, curricula, science kits, and management to the YES program. In addition, youth and staff from START have attended the On the Wild Side environmental education camp. Most recently, 4-H has trained START program leaders to deliver the 12-week 4-H2O Water Wizards Program to 500 youth annually. START provides staff, youth, and financial resources to our shared work; 4-H provides expertise in science programming and the resources to make it fun. –**Marianne Bird, University of California**

Martin – 4-H Afterschool Science Partners with 21stCCLC and the Corridor STEM Initiative. Since 2007, 4-H has trained collaborating and 4-H staff to deliver urban 4-H science programs in afterschool sites in Iowa City and Linn and Johnson Counties. More than 500 youth have participated in these programs. The out-of-school audience includes kindergarten through sixth grade youth in the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids corridor. Programming focus is on working with girls and youth from all socio-economic groups. The goals and objectives of the program include: (a) to increase youth’s understanding of science, technology and engineering in everyday life; (b) to teach youth to enhance and apply their knowledge in science, technology, and engineering through hands-on experiments; and (c) to increase youth’s understanding of STEM content and improve interest in STEM learning and careers.

Partnering with a community STEM coalition and the Iowa City Community School District through 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) was vital to starting afterschool 4-H science. Through these two initiatives, funds are available for science programs including weekly afterschool science at four 21stCCLC schools in Iowa

City and four afterschool Engineering is Elementary eight-week programs in Linn and Johnson Counties. Part-time staff are employed for the program. The majority of staff are students (especially education majors) from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. 4-H teen volunteers have also assisted with the afterschool program. Big Brothers Big Sisters School Buddies, part of the 4-H program in Johnson County, assist with the science activities at one site. At another 21stCCLC, 4-H staff work with school staff to lead Family Science Nights during the school year. –Janet Martin, Iowa State University

Nolen – 4-H Science Project Clubs and Family Science Nights in Afterschool. In Houston, partnering with established afterschool programs has expanded 4-H outreach to youth not likely to be involved in science programs. 4-H science enrichment is delivered in organized 4-H Afterschool project clubs and programs. 4-H staff partner with Harris County Precinct 2 Youth Services, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), and area schools to engage youth, teachers, and site staff in science inquiry programming. Staff facilitate the development of science process skills with research-based curricula. Over the past two years, 4-H has provided leadership for the development of science enrichment for Precinct 2 Youth Services and has established 4-H Science Afterschool clubs - which have elected officers to provide leadership for the program. The youth decide which projects and science topics to explore. 4-H staff partner with science teachers leading Junior Master Gardener® youth horticulture programs at 21stCCLC sites to offer additional 4-H Science learning and support for service-learning projects. 4-H Science filmmaking projects were expanded through a partnership with a media teacher who wanted to involve youth (grades 3-5) in science filmmaking projects afterschool. 4-H provided assistance with planning; resources, such as the online 4-H Filmmaking Studio and Workshop; and access to equipment for film editing. Through a partnership with an area high school, teens from the media department were recruited to mentor and teach filmmaking at partnering sites. This new network of school-based programming stemmed from the existing partnership with Precinct 2 Youth Services.

A common goal of afterschool programs is parent involvement. Getting families to attend an afterschool event is a great way to showcase the program, recognize youth for their achievements, and build a relationship with parents. 4-H has worked with afterschool partners to co-sponsor events such as Family Science Nights and programs to showcase youth projects. These events can be used to interpret program accomplishments to parents and key stakeholders, recognize youth, and celebrate the support of the partners, volunteers, and site staff. -Sheryl Nolen, Texas A&M University

Resources

21st Century Community Learning Centers - this program, through the Department of Education, supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly youth who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps youth meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects. For more information, including current grantees in your state, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>.

Afterschool Alliance STEM Resources – the Afterschool Alliance is the nation’s leading voice for afterschool and is dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs and advocating for more afterschool investments. The Afterschool Alliance works with policymakers across the country. Today the Afterschool Alliance boasts more than 25,000 afterschool program partners and their publications reach more than 65,000 individuals every month. STEM info and resources are available at <http://afterschoolalliance.org/STEM.cfm>.

Coalition for Science After School – the Coalition is a strategic alliance of individuals and organizations from STEM education, youth development, and programs held outside of school time. Their mission is to coordinate and mobilize community stakeholders to strengthen and expand opportunities that engage young people in af-





terschool science. A directory of members, and several resources are available at <http://www.afterschoolscience.org/>.

Frontiers in Urban Science Exploration Resource Guide – a resource guide offering strategies to advance science education in afterschool programs. Available at <http://www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/3040/>.

Harvard Family Research Project OST Resources and Tools – since 1983, the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) has helped stakeholders develop and evaluate strategies to promote the well being of children, youth, families, and their communities. Out-of-school time programming is one of three focus areas, and a wealth of OST resources and tools are available at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time>.

NPASS2 – National Partnerships for After School Science – includes best practices for afterschool science for science project leaders along with many other informal science education resources and professional development tools for OST. NPASS2 is led by the Center for Science Education at EDC. Available at <http://npass2.edc.org/>.

Science in Afterschool Literature Review – a review of afterschool science education practices (including inquiry and project based learning) and afterschool science programs developed for The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning. Available at: <http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/science/pdf/SERVE%20Science%20in%20Afterschool%20Review.pdf>.