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AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS: DO PARENTS MATTER?

by

MICHELLE A. DIMEO

Under the Direction of Dr. Gabriel Kuperminc

ABSTRACT

Previous research suggests that parents can benefit from youth participation in after-school programs. However, little research has explored parent involvement in after-school programs as an important program characteristic leading to youth development. Bioecological Systems Theory suggests that individuals are influenced by the interactions of others within their environment. Building from this theory, it was posited that parent benefits resulting from involvement in after-school programs can facilitate positive youth development. Surveys were completed by 117 parents whose daughters participated in the Cool Girls, Inc. after-school program, a program serving primarily low-income, African American, urban youth. Using Exploratory Factor Analysis, a three factor structure of parent benefits was identified. Parent benefits include increased (1) parent-child communication, (2) parent social capital, and (3) parent-school involvement. A fourth parent benefit of help for working parents was identified in

subsequent analyses using a smaller sample of only working parents (*n* = 86). Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that more parent after-school program involvement was associated with increases in each of the four parent benefits. As predicted, each of the four parent benefits mediated the association between parent involvement in after-school programs and parent reported changes in positive youth development outcomes due to participation in Cool Girls, Inc. These results suggest the importance of further research into ways parents benefit from their child's participation in after-school programs and how those benefits can influence youth developmental trajectories. These findings also demonstrate the importance of involving parents in after-school programs.

INDEX WORDS: After-school program, Out-of-school time, Positive youth development, Parent involvement, Youth, Bioecological theory

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MICHELLE A. DIMEO

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2011

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2011

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS: DO PARENTS MATTER?

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December 2011

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends. For everyone who offered encouragement, support, and love. I could not have done this without you. I must specifically thank my soon-to-be husband for his unwavering patience and for bringing balance to my life. Most especially I dedicate this to my father for always believing in me, teaching me the value of hard work, instilling within me an appreciation of the pursuit of knowledge, and encouraging me to reach beyond my expectations. Finally, I thank my heavenly Father for the opportunities He has given and for carrying me through life's journeys.

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INTRODUCTION

After-school programs (ASPs) are an important context that can promote positive youth development (PYD) (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Lauer et al., 2004; Lauer et al., 2006). Bioecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) suggests that in order to understand the effects an ASP has on a youth, one must also understand the effects that an ASP has on a youth's social ecologies, such as their family environment. Despite the fact that parents (for the sake of simplicity and clarity, throughout this paper the term parent is used synonymously with caregiver) are often the most influential individuals in adolescents' lives (Laursen, Collins, Lerner, & Steinberg, 2009), little research has explored the ways that youth participation in ASPs benefit parents or how these parent benefits can influence PYD. From an ecological perspective, these processes are important because they can facilitate PYD by not only influencing how youth interact directly with the important settings in their lives (e.g., parent-child communication) but can also influence other interactions that indirectly influence youth (e.g., a parent's relationship with their child's friends). Using an ecological perspective, this study examines how parents benefit from participation in Cool Girls, Inc. and how youth can gain from these parent benefits.

The Cool Girls, Inc. program is an ASP in metropolitan Atlanta serving girls in second through twelfth grade at 11 different schools. This program has been serving youth in the Atlanta area since 1989 (Cool Girls Inc., 2011). The Cool Girls, Inc. program is free to participants and meets one day per week after school on school grounds. Youth and families in the Cool Girls, Inc. program are primarily low-income and African American. Cool Girls, Inc. seeks to empower youth in low-income communities by fostering PYD, promoting youth resiliency, and facilitating academic outcomes. The Cool Girls, Inc. program also has a special focus on educating youth

around issues of sexuality and puberty and decreasing teen pregnancy rates. In addition to meeting weekly after school, Cool Girls, Inc. also offers youth opportunities to participate in a variety of other activities including field trips, fitness programs, technology programs, summer camps, and one-to-one mentoring. Further, the Cool Girls, Inc. program offers parents opportunities to be involved in the program, including volunteer opportunities, parent workshops, and opportunities to watch youth perform in annual talent shows. This study was conducted with the Cool Girls, Inc. program because it offers ongoing opportunities for parent involvement.

The current study seeks to expand previous research by exploring the ways parents can benefit from their participation in ASPs. First, a brief history of ASPs is presented. Second, a developmental ecological model is presented and critiqued as a framework used to understand the effects of ASPs on youth and their parents. Next, a review of the literature surrounding how parents are affected by youth participation in ASPs is provided. Fourth, research examining improvements in PYD as a result of ASP participation will be reviewed. Finally, the methods, results, and implications for the current study are discussed.

A History of After-School Programs

Beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century with the establishment of child labor and compulsory schooling laws, child labor in America steadily decreased while school attendance increased (Halpern, 2002; Kleiber & Powell, 2005). Additionally, women entered the work force in large numbers in 1917 to meet wartime needs. These trends led to rising numbers of youth experiencing more freedom and little adult supervision in the hours following school. Not coincidentally, ASPs such as boys' clubs (1860), the Y.M.C.A. (1860), 4-H clubs (1902), the Boy Scouts (1908), and the Girl Scouts (1912) also began around the same time.

During the past hundred years or so, ASPs have continued to expand; it is estimated that by 2009, 8.4 million youth (15%) in the U.S. participated in an ASP (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). This estimate represents a four percent increase over estimates in 2004. However, it is also estimated that in 2009, 15 million of all American youth (26%) and 30% of all youth in 6th through 8th grade were unsupervised after school (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). Youth ages 10 to 18 are at risk for falling victim to crime, using drugs or alcohol, or engaging in delinquent, antisocial, or criminal behavior in the hours immediately following school (Coley, Morris, & Hernandez, 2004; Mahoney, Stattin, & Lord, 2004; Weisman & Gottfredson, 2001; Wiley, 2007). As such, there is still a large and unmet need for ASPs in America.

ASPs in the late nineteenth century were developed with the intent of providing youth a safe alternative to the streets (Halpern, 2002). Today, ASPs seek to do much more than simply provide youth a safe haven – PYD is now the goal (Hirsch, 2005). The field of PYD is concerned with providing youth opportunities to promote youth strengths, such as the "5 C's": competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring/compassion (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; J. V. Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009). These strengths are intended to reduce youth risky behaviors and promote resilience against risk factors while ensuring that youth are prepared to succeed as adults (Pittman, Diversi, & Ferber, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Deriving from this strengths-based approach, a PYD perspective recognizes the plasticity of human development and therefore the potential for the promotion of youth personal and social assets over time to allow individuals to thrive (J. V. Lerner et al., 2009). Further, the PYD perspective views community-based programs as important resources for the promotion of youth assets and creation of environments conducive to allowing youth to thrive.

Research demonstrates that ASPs can promote positive academic, social, emotional, and physical outcomes. For example, youth in the Cool Girls, Inc. program – the ASP under investigation in this study – showed significant improvements in scholastic competence, hope for the future, and physical activity relative to comparison youth (Kuperminc, Thomason, DiMeo, & Broomfield-Massey, 2011). Meta-analyses have demonstrated improvements in achievement test scores, self-perceptions, positive social behaviors, self-confidence, self-esteem, and school bonding (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Durlak, Weissberg, et al., 2010; Lauer et al., 2004; Lauer et al., 2006). Participation in ASPs can promote time spent in academic related activities, school attendance, academic grades, and performance on standardized tests (Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000; Posner & Vandell, 1999; Welsh, Russell, Williams, Reisner, & White, 2002). Additionally, ASPs have demonstrated effectiveness in decreasing problem behaviors (Durlak, Weissberg, et al., 2010) and many youth consider ASPs to be a second home (Hirsch, 2005). It is important to note, however, that whereas some ASPs have demonstrated positive effects, others have not (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Durlak, Weissberg, et al., 2010; Lauer et al., 2006). These mixed findings might result from differences in the quality of programming, with programs varying on the extent to which they involve parents; offer safe, engaging, and supportive environments; or implement evidence-based practices (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Smith, Peck, Denault, Blazevski, & Akiva, 2010; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

Individuals cannot be understood without taking into consideration the multi-level contexts in their lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Bioecological Systems Theory is a theoretical system of biological and environmental influences used for the study of human development. According to this theory the interaction over time between the evolving individual and the

objects, people, and symbols in one's environment function to direct development (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). Bronfenbrenner argued that individuals can be influenced by their interactions with other individuals in their environment, such as friends, family members, and teachers. For example, parents can be influenced by their interactions with ASP staff. This is important because, as Bronfenbrenner argued, children can be influenced by the interactions their friends and family members have with others. For instance, a parent's interactions with their boss or with ASP staff can affect a child's outcomes. According to this theory, parents can be influenced by their children's participation in ASPs and this influence can then affect youth development.

A developmental ecological approach to understanding ASPs has been advocated by scholars which incorporates key tenets of Bioecological Systems Theory (Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert, & Parente, 2010; Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005; Mahoney, Parente, & Lord, 2007; Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009; Riggs & Greenberg, 2004). Similar to the bioecological model, this approach emphasizes the need to consider both developmental and contextual factors when evaluating the effectiveness of ASPs in contributing to PYD. The Developmental Ecological model developed by Durlak et al. (2010) suggests that youth outcomes can be affected by social ecologies such as parents. This model does not, however, suggest that parents can be influenced by their child's participation in ASPs as would be predicted by Bioecological Systems Theory.

Although there is little peer-reviewed research in this area, evidence taken from program evaluations of ASPs suggests that parents can be affected by youth involvement in ASPs. Sixteen reports of ASPs were examined. The methodologies of these reports ranged, with researchers using focus group/interview (3 studies; 19%) and survey (14 studies; 88%) methodologies.

Surveys were completed either at one time point (*n* = 10; 71%) or at pre-test and post-test (*n* = 4; 29%). Sample sizes ranged from fewer than 100 parents (*n* = 5; 45%), to between 200 and 500 (*n* = 2; 18%) parents, to over 1,000 parents (*n* = 6; 36%). Only three studies compared parents in an ASP to parents in a control group (see Appendix A for a more detailed description of each report). Taken together, these reports suggest that parents can benefit from involvement in ASPs in at least four ways: (1) improved parent-child communication; (2) increased parent social capital; (3) support for parent-school involvement; and (4) help for working parents. Each of these ways will be explored below using examples from the 16 reports. These 16 reports varied in the number of parent benefits they provided evidence to support, with only one study providing evidence for all four parent benefits, half of the studies providing evidence for one parent benefit, and seven providing evidence for two or three parent benefits. Although 15 of the reports found evidence to suggest that parents benefit from youth involvement in ASPs, an examination of 21st Century Learning Centers using a large sample size of over 1,400 parents found no significant differences in parent-school involvement between parents whose youth did and did not attend the program (James-Burdumy, Dynarski, & Deke, 2007). However, a similar study of the same program with a sample size of over 4,000 parents found increases in parent-school involvement among parents whose youth were involved in the ASP as compared to a comparison group (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). These mixed findings are likely due to differences in program characteristics and suggest the need for continued research in this area.

How are Parents Affected by Participation in ASPs?

Parent-child communication.

ASPs may facilitate parent-child communication in several ways. Staff at ASPs may encourage youth to communicate with their parents when they notice youth going through

difficult times. For example, staff at the Beacons program helped one youth, whose parents were going through a divorce, talk with their parents about the divorce process (Warren, Feist, Nevarez, & Academy for Educational Development, 2002). Second, youth may discuss with their parents the ideas they learn through ASPs. Third, parenting workshops offered through ASPs may promote parent-child communication. Parents at Beacons reported improved parent-child communication due to the parenting workshops and counseling services offered through Beacons. Parents at Teen REACH, reported seeing improvements in positive communication about alcohol and drug use including (1) talking to their children about the dangers of using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs (89%); (2) communicating clear rules for their children about not smoking (89%) or using alcohol or other drugs (90%); (3) talking about boy-girl relationships (84%); and (4) talking to their child about the value of sexual abstinence (83%) (The Center for Prevention Research and Development [CPRD]), 2004). These changes were significantly correlated with the number of ASP parent events attended.

Programs that feature programming on specialized topics, such as sexuality education, might specifically facilitate parent-child communication around those specialty topics. Because one of the primary goals of the Cool Girls, Inc. program is to prevent teenage pregnancy, the Cool Girls, Inc. program encourages youth to discuss with their parents ideas they learn at Cool Girls, Inc about puberty and sexuality. Additionally, parents are encouraged to ask their daughters about what they learn through the program and to reinforce the messages daughters learn at Cool Girls, Inc. The Cool Girls, Inc. program has also offered parent workshops on topics such as sexual trafficking and how to talk with your daughter about sexuality. These findings lead to the hypothesis that parent-child communication can be facilitated through parent involvement in the Cool Girls, Inc. program.

Social capital.

A second way that parents can benefit from their children's involvement in an ASP is by developing relationships with ASP staff or with other parents whose children attend the same ASP. In this way, ASPs may increase parents' social capital. Social capital refers to social networks that promote individual wellbeing by increasing access to resources (Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 1988).

ASPs promote parent social capital through the emotional and informational support parents receive through ASP staff (Massachusetts Foundation 2020, 2004) as illustrated in the following examples. Parents of youth at the Greenwood Shalom ASP discuss personal issues with staff such as immigration, child custody, and finances (Kakli, Kreider, Little, Buck, & Coffey, 2006). Parents reported that staff at Teen REACH were willing to listen to the parent's problems and offer suggestions to address the problems (The CPRD). Similarly, 92% of youth in Capital Kids felt that their parents talked regularly with the staff at Capital Kids and 93% of parents reported that they would go to staff at Capital Kids for help with their child if they needed it, indicating that parents view ASP staff as a resource (Anderson-Butcher, 2001). A majority (84%) of parents reported that Teen REACH program staff told them about resources in the community that may be helpful to their family thereby facilitating parent access to resources. Further, 78% of parents reported knowing more about existing community services because of their child's involvement in Teen REACH. ASPs can facilitate staff-parent relationships through communication at pick up time and by offering gatherings designed especially to allow parents to get to know staff members (Kakli et al., 2006; Weiss, Brigham, & Brigham Nahas Research Associates, 2003). Thus, ASP staff can act as a valuable social capital resource for parents by providing emotional and instrumental support.

In addition to increasing social capital through parent relationships with program staff, ASPs can also promote parent relationships with other parents. For example, 63% of parents with youth at Teen REACH reported that they attended parent meetings or events focused on meeting other parents. Seventy three percent of parents reported that they met more parents because of their child's participation in Teen REACH. Increased connections with fellow parents may allow parents to better monitor their children and/or increase their network of support. For instance, parents of youth at Beacon argued that the program gives parents a common ground and allows parents to look out for one another (Warren et al., 2002).

ASPs may further promote parent social capital by facilitating *intergenerational closure*, or the extent to which social networks are interrelated (Coleman, 1988). For example, a social network has intergenerational closure if a parent knows both their child's friend and also the parent of their child's friend. Such intergenerational closure is associated with decreased youth externalizing behavior and increased academic outcomes (Fletcher, Newsome, Nikerson, & Bazley, 2001). In sum, ASPs can promote not only the size of parents' social capital networks but also the interrelationships among members of their networks. Cool Girls, Inc. offers parents opportunities to meet their daughter's friends, program staff, and other parents through open houses at their office, information sessions for parents about the Cool Girls, Inc. program, volunteer opportunities, and parent workshops. As such, it is posited that the Cool Girls, Inc. program may serve as an important resource to parents by facilitating social capital networks.

Support for parent-school involvement.

ASPs may support parent involvement in their child's school (Weiss et al., 2003). Riggs and Medina (2005) posit that school-based ASPs may help familiarize parents with schools and thereby help parents to become more involved in school activities. In this way, ASPs can serve

as a bridge between school and family systems by helping to integrate these two contexts as is recommended by the National Research Council (NRC & IOM, 2002). ASPs may be in a unique situation to involve parents in school activities because ASP staff may be less intimidating than school staff, more inviting, and may be more available to parents because they can meet parents in the after-school hours (Afterschool Alliance, 2008). Student participation in ASPs may promote parent-school relationships by allowing parents to better understand school expectations and by allowing schools to better understand parents' needs and cultures (Miller, 2003).

Youth ASP participation may facilitate parent involvement in youth school in a number of ways. ASP staff may help schools organize family centered activities (Warren et al., 2002) or facilitate communication between parents and school teachers/principals (Weiss et al., 2003). ASPs may also provide parents with information about school curriculum (Kakli et al., 2006). Evaluation of ASPs reveals that these efforts are effective. Youth attendance at Generación Diez over a two year period was associated with increased quality and quantity of parent-teacher contacts from pre-test to post-test (Riggs & Medina, 2005). Moreover, Hmong Youth Pride participants' parents reported contacting their child's school more and reported increased attendance at parent-teacher conferences and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings from baseline to post-test as compared to control group parents (Chase, 2000).

ASP involvement has helped parents connect with teachers; support school functions; improve attitudes toward parent-school partnerships; improve their understanding of how to work with their child's school to improve their child's education; and increase attendance at open houses, parent-teacher meetings, volunteer opportunities, and school and after-school events (Policy Studies Associates Inc., 2000; Reisner et al., 2001; Reisner et al., 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Warren et al., 2002; The CRPD, 2004; Massachusetts Foundation 2020,

2004). However, one study of the CCLC program found no differences between ASP parents and control group parents in frequency of attendance at school open houses, parent teacher meetings, and school volunteer opportunities (James-Burdumy et al., 2007). Cool Girls, Inc. occurs after school on school grounds. Additionally, many Cool Girls, Inc. staff members are also school personnel. Given these program qualities, it is posited that the Cool Girls, Inc. program facilitates parent involvement in youth school.

Help for working parents.

Many children today have parents who are employed. In 47.8% of married-couple families with children ages 6 to 17 years in the U.S., both parents were employed. In female-headed families 59.0% of moms were employed, and in male-headed families 64.3% of fathers were employed in 2010 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). ASPs may influence a parent's relationships with their work environment by helping working parents to (1) worry less about their child's safety after school while at work, (2) secure affordable child care after school, and (3) maintain employment.

Parent worry for child safety after-school. Working parents are likely to worry about their children's safety after school. Worry for children's safety is posited to lead to distraction, lower productivity, high turnover, and absenteeism at work (Afterschool Alliance, 2003). Researchers have demonstrated that 87% of employed mothers were most concerned about their children's safety during the hours after school (Mason-Dixon Polling and Research, 2003). Further, a study of 1,755 working parents found that parents were most likely to be concerned about their children's well-being after school if they were unsupervised (Catalyst, 2006). Additionally, as compared to youth in kindergarten through 5th grade, youth in 6th through 12th

grade were more likely to be unsupervised after school and their parents were more likely to report being worried about their child after school.

ASPs can provide a safe space for youth to attend in the hours after school – helping to alleviate working parent worries. For example, 86% of parents surveyed whose children were enrolled in The After-School Corporation (TASC) supported ASP reported that ensuring that their child had a safe place to go after school was a very important reason for enrolling their child in the ASP (Policy Studies Associates Inc., 2000). Additionally, parents reported that they were given peace of mind while at work – knowing that their child is safe and participating in enrichment activities and not at home without adult supervision (Fitzgerald, 2009; Zief, 2005). Most principals (79%) believed that because of TASC-supported ASPs, parents held more positive feelings about the school because the ASP allowed for a safe place for youth after school (Reisner, White, Russell, & Birmingham, 2004). Providing a safe space for youth after school may be especially important in urban communities, such as the communities served by the Cool Girls, Inc. program, which have higher crime rates than suburban or rural communities (Duhart, 2000). As such, it is posited that working parents' worries about their children's safety after school may be lessened through youth participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program.

Affordable after-school care. The Urban Institute estimates that families that pay for child care spend, on average, 10% of their salary on child care (Giannarelli & Barsimanto, 2000). It is also estimated that families who are below the poverty level spend an average of 23% of their salaries on child care. Thus, child care expenses are great and low-income parents may not have the resources to pay for after-school child care. As such, ASPs can offer a low-cost or free alternative. Parents at Sacramento START and Beacon reported that it was important that the programs were free as they would not have been able to afford child care otherwise (Fitzgerald,

2009; Warren et al., 2002). Free and minimally priced ASPs allow working parents to not only earn more money by working more hours, but also save parents from having to spend money on expensive child care options. Further, it is posited that by increasing monetary resources, ASPs can reduce parent stress and thereby improve parent-child relationships. The Cool Girls, Inc. program is offered at no cost to participants. This is especially important given that Cool Girls, Inc. serves primarily low-income families (Kuperminc et al., 2011). For these reasons it is predicted that participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program will provide help for working parents.

Employment support. ASPs can also help parents go to school and/or maintain employment. Parents report that youth involvement in ASPs makes it easier for parents to keep their jobs, manage their work schedule, spend more time at work, attend classes or job training, go to school, get a better job, improve their job performance, and miss less work (Fitzgerald, 2009; Grossman et al., 2002; Massachusetts Foundation 2020, 2004; Reisner, White, Birmingham, & Welsh, 2001; Reisner et al., 2004; Zief, 2005). Parents of youth who had previously attended Foundations, Inc. were surveyed after the program ended. Because of the program closure, 25% of parents surveyed reported that the hours they were able to work had been affected, 12% reported losing pay or their job because they needed to care for their children after school, and 12% reported that their child was now unsupervised in the hours following school. The Cool Girls, Inc. program is offered after school once a week, and as such, parents may receive valuable support for employment. In sum, ASPs, such as the Cool Girls, Inc. program, may provide important supports to working parents by lessening parent worry of youth safety after school, by offering affordable after-school child care, and by supporting parent employment.

Parent Involvement in After-School Programs and Positive Youth Development

Similar to how the Developmental Ecological Model argues that youth ASP involvement leads to PYD outcomes, it is predicted that parent ASP involvement will lead to parent benefits. Little research to date has explored the association between the degree of parent involvement in ASPs and the effectiveness of ASPs on improving the lives of youth or parents. However, a considerable body of research has demonstrated that parent involvement in their children's school has a positive effect on youth academic success. Parental school involvement is positively associated with youth academic engagement, academic motivation, and academic achievement (For a review of the literature see Pomerantz & Moorman, 2010). In one of the few studies of parental involvement in ASPs, Morrison and colleagues (2000) examined data on parental involvement among 175 parents whose children were involved in an ASP and 175 parents whose children were not involved. Those authors found that youth whose parents attended ASP parent workshops perceived parent-school supervision (measured as parental activities at home related to promoting school work such as the extent to which parents check homework completion and limit TV time on school nights) as increasing, whereas youth not enrolled in the ASP perceived parent-school supervision as decreasing (Morrison, Storino, Robertson, Weissglass, & Dondero, 2000). Further, after controlling for youth perceptions of parent supervision at pre-test, youth whose parents attended more meetings felt more supervised by their parents than youth whose parents attended fewer meetings. Drawing from this work, it is posited that parents who are more involved in the Cool Girls, Inc. ASP will be more likely to receive benefits themselves.

Bioecological Systems Theory not only suggests that youth participation in ASPs can influence parents, but also that the benefits parents receive through their child's ASP participation can work to support PYD. However, this possibility has not been studied

empirically. Although there is little peer-reviewed research in this area, evidence taken from research in similar areas suggests that parent ASP involvement and parent benefits gained from youth participation in ASPs may promote PYD. For example, Campbell, Pungello, and Miller-Johnson (2002) examined low-income African American adolescents' perceptions of scholastic competence and global self-worth, both measures reflective of PYD. Higher levels of scholastic competence and global self-worth were predicted by lower family conflict. Further, Putnick et al. (2008) found parenting stress to be predictive of adolescent self-concept and Van den Bergh (2006) found positive parent-child communication to be predictive of youth global self-worth and competence. As such, it is expected that ASP involvement will facilitate PYD by providing parent benefits (parent-child communication, parent social capital, parent-school involvement, and help for working parents). Extending previous research, the present study predicts that children of parents who are positively affected by participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. ASP (such that parent-child communication improves, parent social capital increases, parent-school involvement improves, and/or parents receive employment support) will have higher levels of PYD resulting from ASP participation.

Hypotheses and Plan of Analyses

Hypothesis 1: Perceived parent benefits due to participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program was predicted to conform to a four factor structure reflecting perceived benefits in (1) parent-child communication, (2) parent social capital, (3) parent-school involvement, and (4) help received by working parents. To test this hypothesis, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. However, items predicted to load onto the help received by working parents factor were not included in the EFA because only 74% (n = 86) of parents reported being employed. Additionally, four mediation analyses examining the association between parent ASP

involvement and PYD outcomes as mediated by each of the parent benefits *while also controlling for other parent benefits* was conducted. This analysis was used to test of the unique effects of each of the four parent benefits.

Hypothesis 2: High levels of parent participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program was predicted to be associated with greater parent perceived benefits due to ASP participation (improved perceived parent-child communication; increased perceived parent social capital; perceived support for parent-school involvement; and perceived help for working parents). To test this hypothesis, four hierarchical regression analyses were conducted testing if parent ASP involvement predicted each of the parent benefits. Family attachment was used as a covariate in to ensure that this analysis was not confounded by the strength of the parent-child relationship.

Hypothesis 3: Parent perceived benefits was predicted to mediate the association between parent involvement in Cool Girls, Inc. events and perceived changes in PYD. Specifically, it was predicted that parents who are more involved with their child's participation in an ASP are likely to experience benefits from this participation (improved perceived parent-child communication; increased perceived parent social capital; perceived support for parent-school involvement; and perceived help for working parents); these perceived benefits, in turn, were expected to contribute to their child's PYD. To test this hypothesis, four meditational analyses were conducted examining the association between parent ASP involvement and PYD outcomes as mediated by each of the parent benefits. Again family attachment was used as a covariate in this analysis.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

This study is part of a larger multi-informant evaluation of Cool Girls, Inc. The parents of all youth enrolled in the Cool Girls, Inc. program during the 2010-2011 academic year were invited to participate in a survey (*n* = 455). A total of 128 parents completed the survey (28% response rate). However, of the 455 surveys which were mailed home to parents, 65 (14%) did not reach the intended parent due to incorrect addresses and were returned to sender. The grade level distribution among those youth whose parents participated in the present study is similar to that of the grade level distribution among all youth who participated in Cool Girls, Inc. in 2010-2011 (See Table 1). Despite sending the survey to parents in both Spanish and English, the study sample is under representative of Hispanic/ Latino participants. Most (72.5%) youth in the Cool Girls, Inc. program in 2010-2011 qualified for a free or reduced price lunch. Similarly, consistent with Cool Girl's, Inc.'s focus on serving low-income communities, among the sample of parents, only 17.8% had a college degree. Thus, despite the low response rate, the sample characteristics for the present study are similar to the characteristics of all youth enrolled in Cool Girls, Inc. in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Parents completed a brief (15 minute) survey (See Appendix B) either online, or via a paper copy. A paper copy of the survey, a consent form, and a pre-stamped return envelope were mailed home to parents of youth enrolled in the Cool Girls, Inc. program during the 2010-2011 academic year. Additionally, instructions for completing the survey on-line were included in the materials mailed to parents. Finally, parents were also given the opportunity to complete the survey during Cool Girls, Inc. sponsored family events. Participants received a $10 dollar

incentive to thank them for their participation in the study. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Of the initial 128 parents who completed the survey, six parents reported that their daughters no longer participated in Cool Girls, Inc. and were removed from the sample. Four parents who had more than one daughter in the Cool Girls, Inc. program completed more than one survey for each of their daughters who participated in Cool Girls, Inc. Five youth were removed from the sample so that no siblings were included in the study; the oldest sibling was kept in the study. The final sample size was 117. Most respondents (87.6%) were mothers of youth, were African American (91.7%), and had completed some college (34.6%) as their highest level of education (Table 2). Most parents reported that their daughters attended the Cool Girls, Inc. program almost every week (75.0%). Youth were in second through twelfth grade.

Measures

Parent involvement in Cool Girls, Inc. Two questions assessed parent involvement of Cool Girl events. First, parents were asked, "How often do you attend Cool Girls, Inc. program events?" Response options ranged from *0 = Never* to *4 = Almost Always*. Second, the breadth of parent involvement was assessed. Parents were given a list of five types of activities (such as volunteer activities and parent-daughter events) that parents could have participated in during the past year at Cool Girls, Inc. Parents were asked to indicate which – if any –activities they had participated in. Scores ranged from 0 indicating no involvement in Cool Girl, Inc. activities in the past year to *5* indicating involvement in all 5 types Cool Girl, Inc. activities. These items were significantly correlated, $r = .54$, $p < .001$. These items were summed together to create a composite variable ($\alpha = .70$).

Family attachment. Family attachment was measured by a 5-item scale adapted from the Communities That Care survey (Arthur, Hawkins, Pollard, Catalano, & Baglioni, 2002). Items were adapted to ask parents, rather than youth, about perceptions of family attachment. Items measure the extent to which parents feel close to their daughter; parents notice and acknowledge their daughter when she does a good job; parents tell their daughter they are proud of her; parents perceive that their daughter shares her thoughts and feelings with them; and parents perceive that their daughter enjoys spending time with them. Items are rated on a four point scale ranging from *1= Not true* to *4 = Always true*. Items were averaged to create a composite scale (α = .87).

Positive youth development outcomes. PYD outcomes were measured with 8 items developed for this study. Because PYD reflects a holistic development of youth character, items reflect parent perceptions of youth changes in variety of youth outcomes including: school performance; confidence; self-esteem; level of independence; leadership skills; ability to make good decisions about sexual behavior; ability to make good decisions about drug and alcohol use; and ability to make good decisions about exercise, health, wellness, and nutrition. These items were specifically chosen to align with the goals and mission of the Cool Girls, Inc. program. Items are rated on a five point scale ranging from *1 = A Lot Worse* to *5 = A Lot Better*. The psychometric properties of this scale are detailed in the results section.

Scale Development Procedure for Parent Benefit Variables

Given the lack of research which has been conducted to examine the effects of youth participation in after-school programs on parents, items were developed to measure the ways in which parents perceive the effects of ASP participation on (1) parent-child communication, (2) parent social capital, (3) parent-school involvement, and (4) help received as a working parent. These items were formulated based on the reviewed literature discussed above.

Parent-child communication. Perceived benefits in parent-child communication were measured with four items. Two items assessed whether parents believed that their communication with their daughter or their daughter's communication with them had been affected by Cool Girls, Inc. Parents were asked an additional two questions about whether their comfort or their daughter's comfort in communicating about sensitive topics such as sexuality and puberty had been affected by Cool Girls, Inc. Response options ranged from *1 = A Lot Worse* to *5 = A Lot Better* (scale psychometric properties are detailed in the results section).

Parent social capital. Perceived benefits in parent social capital were measured with 5 items assessing whether parents had met other community members, met their daughter's friends (an indicator of intergenerational closure), met their daughter's friends' parents, or received information about community resources because of Cool Girls, Inc. Parents were also asked about the degree to which they feel comfortable talking with Cool Girls, Inc. staff about their daughter. Response options ranged from *1 = Strongly Disagree* to *5 = Strongly Agree* (scale psychometric properties are detailed in the results section).

Parent-school involvement. Parents responded to two items about their involvement in their daughter's school. Parents were asked if their relationship with their daughter's school teachers and administrators had improved because of their daughter's participation in Cool Girls, Inc. Parents were also asked if their involvement in their daughter's school had improved because of their daughter's participation in Cool Girls, Inc. Response options ranged from *1 = Strongly Disagree* to *5 = Strongly Agree* (scale psychometric properties are detailed in the results section).

Help for working parents. Parents responded to four items assessing the extent to which Cool Girls, Inc. supported their employment. Parents were asked if they missed less work, if it

was easier to keep their job, if they worried less about the safety of their daughter while at Cool Girls, Inc., and if they spent less money on child care due to Cool Girls, Inc. Response options ranged from *1 = Strongly Disagree* to *5 = Strongly Agree,* with higher scores indicating improvements in parent perceptions of employment support. Only 74% (n = 86) of all parents who completed the survey reported working in jobs. As such, these items were not included in the exploratory factor analysis detailed in the results section. These four items were averaged to create a composite variable, labeled *help for working parents* (α = .75).

RESULTS

Missing Data

All analyses were conducted using PAWS 18. For all variables there were 12% or fewer missing data. The multiple imputation method was used to impute missing values for all variables used in the final mediation model, creating five datasets with imputed data. Multiple imputation is a stronger approach to handle missing data than single imputation methods because it imputes multiple – rather than one – data sets, thereby increasing the variability in the imputed data (Widaman, 2006). Rubin's rules were used to combine results among the imputed data sets (Rubin, 1987).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

EFA was used to determine if there were latent constructs among the 11 items associated with the hypothesized parent-child communication, parent social capital, and parent-school involvement benefits. The four items related to parent benefits received for working parents were not included in this EFA because only 74% (n = 86) of all parents who completed the survey reported working in jobs. EFA is a data reduction tool helpful in determining which factors to

keep, allowing for a parsimonious examination of correlations among variables (Floyd & Widaman, 1995; Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004). EFA is the appropriate technique to identify underlying factors posited to constitute a construct of interest – in this case, parent benefits received through youth participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program – and facilitate theory development (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Use of EFA is also appropriate given that the measures in the parent survey were developed for this study and that these are continuous measures on an interval scale. Common factor analysis was used; the factor solution was rotated using equamax, an orthogonal method that is useful in simplifying variables by maximizing the variance of variable loadings (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

A parallel analysis was employed to determine the number of factors to retain. In parallel analysis, eigenvalues generated from the data are compared with average and 95th percentile eigenvalues from 500 randomly generated data sets which retained the same variable distributions as the raw data (Hayton et al., 2004). Eigenvalues generated from the data that are larger than the randomly generated eigenvalues are retained; thus, the method guides a researcher to determine a number of factors with eigenvalues equal to or greater than what would be expected by chance. This data driven method has been found to be more rigorous than other methods such as selecting eigenvalues greater than 1 or analysis of scree plots. As seen in Table 3, there are five eigenvalues from the data that are greater than the randomly generated average and 95th percentile eigenvalues. As recommended by Hayton et al. (2004), examination of scree plots was subsequently conducted to further consider the appropriate number of factors to retain. The scree plots showed large declines between the first and the third factor; however, there appears to be a change in slope after the third factor and thus the fourth and fifth factor were eliminated.

Items with loadings above .50 were retained. Based on the results of the EFA, two questions were dropped because the item loadings were less than .50 and had high cross-loadings on a second factor. The loadings and initial communalities for the final EFA are presented in Table 4. The three factor solution accounted for 74.7% of the variance (Factor 1 = 30.3%, Factor 2 = 24.6%, Factor 3 = 19.9%). There were no cross-loadings above .33. The three factors were significantly intercorrelated. The communalities were high for most items (M = .74) indicating that any negative effects of a small sample size on obtaining a stable and reliable solution were likely significantly reduced (MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999). The items on each of the three factors aligned with the items posited to constitute factors indicative of parent-child communication, parent social capital, and parent-school involvement benefits.

Parent-child communication. As expected, four items loaded onto factor 1 and were associated with parent-child communication. Higher scores on these items reflect parent perceptions of improvement in parent-child communication as a result of their daughter's participation in Cool Girls, Inc. These four items were averaged to create a composite scale, labeled *parent-child communication* (α = .90).

Social capital. Three items loaded onto factor 2 and reflected perceived changes in parent social capital. Higher scores on these items indicated that parents perceived improvements in social capital as a result of their daughter's participation in Cool Girls, Inc. These three items were averaged to create a composite variable, labeled *social capital* (α = .88).

Parent-school involvement. Two items loaded onto factor 3 and reflect perceived changes in parent-school relationship. Higher scores indicated that parent perceptions of improvements in parent-school involvement and parent relationships with school teachers/

administrators. This factor reflects changes in parent involvement with schools. These two items were averaged to create a composite variable, labeled *parent-school involvement* (α = .92).

Positive Youth Development Outcomes

Principle components analysis (PCA) is a data reduction tool helpful in identifying subsets of meaningful variables among a set of interrelated variables when there is no underlying theory about how the items are associated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). PCA was conducted using the eight items associated with parent perceptions of ways youth have benefited from participation in Cool Girls, Inc. because there is no underlying theory about how these items are associated. A parallel analysis was conducted to determine the number of components among these items. As seen in Table 5, there is only one eigenvalue from the data which is greater than the randomly generated eigenvalues. Thus a one component solution was specified. All items had factor loadings above .75 and therefore all items were retained. The loadings and communalities for the final PCA are presented in Table 6. The one component solution accounted for 67.6% of the variance.

Eight items loaded onto this scale and reflect parent perceptions of ways youth have changed as a result of participation in Cool Girls, Inc. Higher scores on these items indicate improvements in parent perceptions of ways youth have benefited from their daughter's participation in Cool Girls, Inc., including benefits in academics, self-esteem, confidence, and good decision making. These eight items were averaged to create a composite variable, labeled PYD outcomes (α = .91).

Correlations

Pearson product moment correlations of each bivariate relationship among the variables in the study are shown in Table 7. All of the bivariate correlations among parent ASP involvement, parent benefits, and parent perceptions of PYD outcomes were positively correlated. Most of these correlations were moderate to strong. Family attachment was significantly positively correlated with parent-child communication, social capital, and PYD outcomes.

Regression Analyses

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the association between parent ASP participation and parent perceived benefits due to ASP participation. Family attachment was used as a covariate entered in Step 1. Parent race, caregiver type (mom vs. other caregiver type such as grandparent), parent age, parent highest education level, youth grade, youth Cool Girls, Inc. attendance, and family attachment were also considered as possible covariates. However, only family attachment was included as a covariate because this was the only construct that was significantly correlated with the mediating parent benefit variables or youth PYD outcomes (Jaccard, Guilamo-Ramos, Johansson, & Bouris, 2006). In Step 2, after controlling for family attachment, parent involvement of the Cool Girls, Inc. program was added to the equation in order to test the hypothesis that parent ASP involvement would predict perceived parent benefits; one regression analysis was conducted for each of the four parent benefits (Table 8).

In Step 1, family attachment was significantly associated with parent-child communication ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$) and parent social capital ($\beta = .30$, $p < .01$). In Step 2, after controlling for family attachment, there was a significant positive association between parent

involvement in Cool Girls, Inc. and parent-child communication, social capital, parent-school relationship, and help for working parents. Thus, the hypothesis that increased parent ASP participation is associated with greater parent perceived benefits due to ASP participation (improved perceived parent-child communication, perceived help for working parents, increased perceived parent social capital, and perceived support for parent-school involvement) was supported. The regression equations explained 10% of the variance in parent-child communication ($R^2 = .10$, $p < .01$), 19% of the variance in social capital ($R^2 = .19$, $p < .001$), 8% of the variance in parent-school relationship ($R^2 = .08$, $p < .05$), and 7% of the variance in help for working parents ($R^2 = .07$, $p > .05$).

Mediation Analyses

Mediation analysis with bias-corrected bootstrapped standard errors (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) was used to test the hypothesized mediation models. The use of bootstrapping techniques to estimate standard errors is a non-parametric approach that has greater statistical power than alternative approaches, which is important for accurately detecting statistical significance (Fritz & Mackinnon, 2007). This method was conducted using a macro which works in PAWS 18 (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) using 5,000 bootstrapped samples. The method produces an estimate of and a confidence interval for the indirect effect of parent perceived benefits mediating the association between parent ASP involvement and changes in youth PYD outcomes after controlling for family attachment and youth ASP involvement.

As predicted, the association between parent ASP involvement and PYD outcomes was significantly mediated by each of the four parent benefits (parent-child communication, parent social capital, parent-school involvement, and help for working parents). In each case (see Figures 1-4), the 95% confidence interval of the estimate of the indirect effect did not include 0,

indicating that each estimate of the indirect effect was significantly different from 0. After controlling for family attachment, parents who reported being more involved in Cool Girls, Inc. were more likely to perceive receiving benefits because of their involvement. These benefits, in turn, were associated with parent reports of improvements in youth PYD outcomes, while controlling for family attachment. These mediation analyses explained 49% of the variance in parent-child communication ($R^2 = .49$, $p < .01$), 21% of the variance in social capital ($R^2 = .21$, $p < .01$), 30% of the variance in parent-school relationship ($R^2 = .30$, $p < .01$), and 28% of the variance in help for working parents ($R^2 = .28$, $p < .01$).

Mediation analyses controlling for parental benefits. In order to assess the unique effects of each of the parent benefits, mediation analyses were also conducted exploring parent benefits mediating the association between parent ASP involvement and PYD outcomes, *while controlling for other parent benefit variables*. No support for mediation was found when controlling for other parent benefits (See Table 9).

Table 1

Comparison of Characteristics of all Cool Girls, Inc. Participants in 2010-2011 and Study Participants

Characteristic	% Among All Cool Girls, Inc. Participants	% Among Study Participants
Parent Ethnicity		
African American	81.0%	91.7%
Hispanic / Latino	14.6%	5.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.4%	1.8%
White / Caucasian	0.9%	0.9%
Grade		
Second - Fifth Grade	57.8%	52.2%
Sixth - Eighth Grade	37.1%	41.4%
Ninth - Twelfth Grade	5.1%	6.3%

Table 2

Characteristics of Respondents and their Daughters

Characteristic	%	*n*
Caregiver Relationship to Youth (*n* = 116)		
Mother	87.6%	102
Father	2.7%	3
Grandparent	6.2%	7
Other	3.6%	4
Parent Age (*n* = 114; *M* = 38.83, *SD* = 8.01)		
18-25 yrs.	1.8%	2
26-35 yrs.	36.0%	40
36-45 yrs.	44.1%	50
46-55 yrs.	13.5%	16
> 55 yrs.	4.5%	6
Parent Ethnicity (*n* = 112)		
African American	91.7%	102
Hispanic / Latino	5.5%	6
Asian or Pacific Islander	1.8%	3
White / Caucasian	0.9%	1
Highest Level of Education (*n* = 110)		
Some High School	12.1%	14
High School Degree / GED	22.4%	24
Some College	34.6%	38
Associate Degree	13.1%	14
Bachelor Degree	9.7%	11
Master or Ph.D. Degree	8.4%	9
Parent Employment (*N* = 117)		
Does Not Work For Pay	26.5%	31
Less Than 10 hrs/wk	6.0%	7
10-19 hrs/wk	6.0%	7
20-34 hrs/wk	18.8%	22
35 or more hrs/wk	42.7%	50
Youth Grade (*n* = 111; *M* = 5.63, *SD* = 2.03)		
Second Grade	4.5%	5
Third Grade	10.8%	12
Fourth Grade	16.2%	18
Fifth Grade	20.7%	23
Sixth Grade	10.8%	12
Seventh Grade	18.9%	21
Eighth Grade	11.7%	13
Ninth – Twelfth Grade	6.3%	7

Youth Attendance of Cool Girls, Inc. (*n* = 108)		
Almost Every Week	75.0%	81
Most Weeks	9.3%	10
A Few Times a Month	7.4%	5
About Once a Month	4.6%	8
A Few Times a Year	3.7%	4

Table 3

Eigenvalues from the Data and From the Parallel Analysis

Factors	Rotated Eigenvalues From Raw Data	Mean Eigenvalues From Random Data	95th Percentile of Eigenvalues From Random Data
1.00	**1.74**	1.53	1.67
2.00	**1.71**	1.37	1.47
3.00	**1.65**	1.25	1.33
4.00	**1.61**	1.15	1.21
5.00	**1.22**	1.06	1.12
6.00	1.00	0.97	1.03

Note: Rotated Eigenvalues > randomly generated mean and 95th percentile eigenvalues are in boldface.

Table 4

Factor Loadings and Initial Communalities from the Exploratory Factor Analysis with an Equamax Rotation of Parent Benefit Scales (N = 117)

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. my comfort in communicating about sensitive issues such as sexuality and puberty with my daughter is	**.82**	.15	.18	.51
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. my communication with my daughter is	**.81**	.15	.21	.79
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's comfort in communicating with me about sensitive issues such as sexuality and puberty is	**.79**	.16	.16	.74
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's communication with me is	**.78**	.15	.21	.78
Because of Cool Girls, Inc., I have gotten to know my daughter's friends	.20	**.87**	.29	.79
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. I have gotten to know the parents of my daughter's friends	.09	**.87**	.26	.79
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. I have met other members of the community	.15	**.66**	.22	.76
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. my involvement in my daughter's school has improved	.18	.33	**.88**	.75
Because of Cool Girls, Inc. my relationship with my daughter's school teachers/ administrators has improved	.24	.27	**.82**	.75

Note: Factor loadings > .50 are in boldface.

Table 5

Eigenvalues From the Data and From the Parallel Analysis For Youth PYD Outcomes (N = 117)

Component	Eigenvalues from Raw Data	Mean Eigenvalues From Random Data	95th Percentile of Eigenvalues From Random Data
1.00	**5.41**	1.41	1.54
2.00	0.75	1.25	1.34

Note: Rotated Eigenvalues > randomly generated eigenvalues are in boldface.

Table 6

Component Loadings and Communalities from the Principle Component Analysis with Positive Youth Development Outcome Variables

Item	Component 1	Communalities
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's overall school performance is	.85	.72
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's confidence level is	.83	.69
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's self-esteem level is	.82	.68
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's level of independence is	.78	.60
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's leadership skills are	.87	.75
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's ability to make good decisions about sexual behavior is	.83	.69
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's ability to make good decisions about drug and alcohol use is	.84	.71
As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc. my daughter's ability to make good decisions about exercise, health, wellness, and nutrition is	.76	.58

Table 7

Correlation Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations for All Predictors and Dependent Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	*M*	*SD*
1. Parent-Child Communication	–	.36**	.45**	.39**	.22*	.66**	.25**	4.07	0.72
2. Social Capital		–	.58**	.62**	.34**	.35**	.30**	3.33	1.03
3. Parent-School Involvement			–	.62**	.26**	.45**	.15	3.52	1.01
4. Help for Working Parents				–	.25*	.41**	.12	3.35	0.83
5. Parent ASP Involvement					–	.34**	.13	3.72	2.20
6. PYD Outcomes						–	.29**	4.17	0.60
7. Family Attachment							–	3.74	0.45

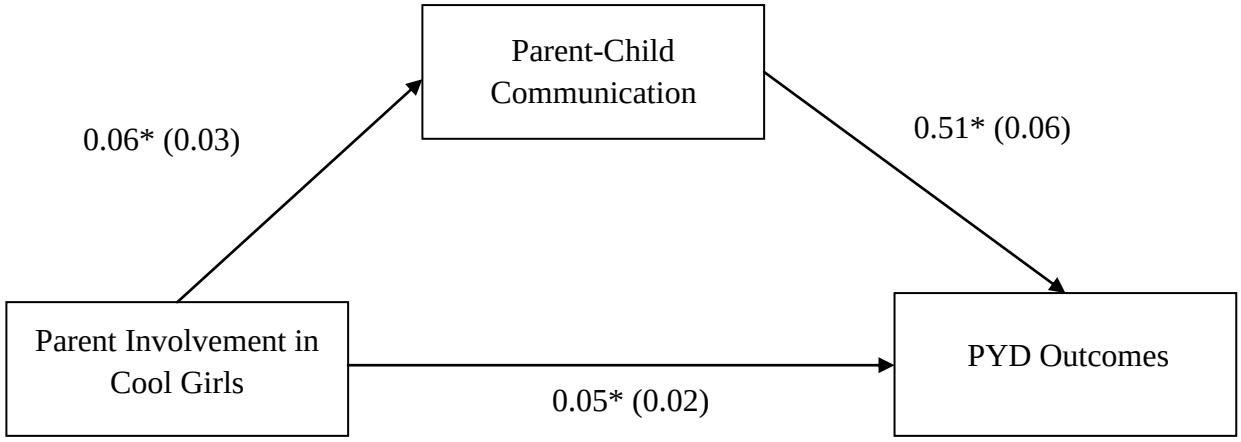
Note. N = 117 for all correlations except those involving the work variable. n = 86 for correlations with the work variable.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 8

Final Step of Hierarchical Regression Results Predicting Parent Perceptions of Parent-Child Communication, Social Capital, Parent-School Relationship, and Help for Working Parents Benefits Received Because of Involvement in Cool Girls, Inc.

Predictor	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*p*
DV = Parent-Child Communication (N = 117)				
Family Attachment	0.36	0.14	0.22	< .05*
Parent ASP Involvement	0.06	0.03	0.19	< .05*
DV = Social Capital (N = 117)				
Family Attachment	0.60	0.20	0.26	< .01*
Parent ASP Involvement	0.14	0.04	0.31	< .001*
DV = Parent-School Involvement (N = 117)				
Family Attachment	0.26	0.21	0.12	0.21
Parent ASP Involvement	0.11	0.04	0.25	< .01*
DV = Help for Working Parents (n = 86)				
Family Attachment	0.18	0.23	0.09	0.43
Parent ASP Involvement	0.09	0.04	0.24	< .05*

Note: *Parent-Child Communication:* $R^2 = .10$, $p < .01$; *Social Capital:* $R^2 = .19$, $p < .001$; *Parent-School Involvement:* $R^2 = .08$, $p < .05$; *Help for Working Parents*: $R^2 = .07$, $p > .05$; * $p < .05$

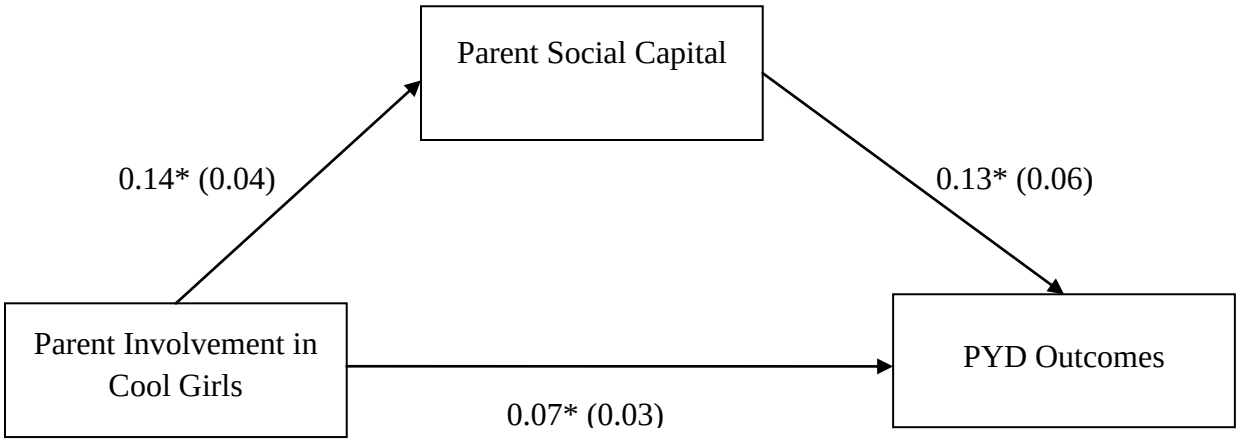


Indirect Effect: *B* = 0.03* (0.02)

95% CI: [.001, .068]

Note: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients. Values in parentheses are standard errors. CI = confidence interval. * *p* <.05

Figure 1. The Association of Parent Cool Girls, Inc. Involvement and Parent Perceptions of Changes in PYD Outcomes Because of Participation in Cool Girls, Inc. as Mediated by Parent Perceptions of Changes in Parent-Youth Communication Because of Cool Girls, Inc. Controlling for Family Attachment (*N* = 117).

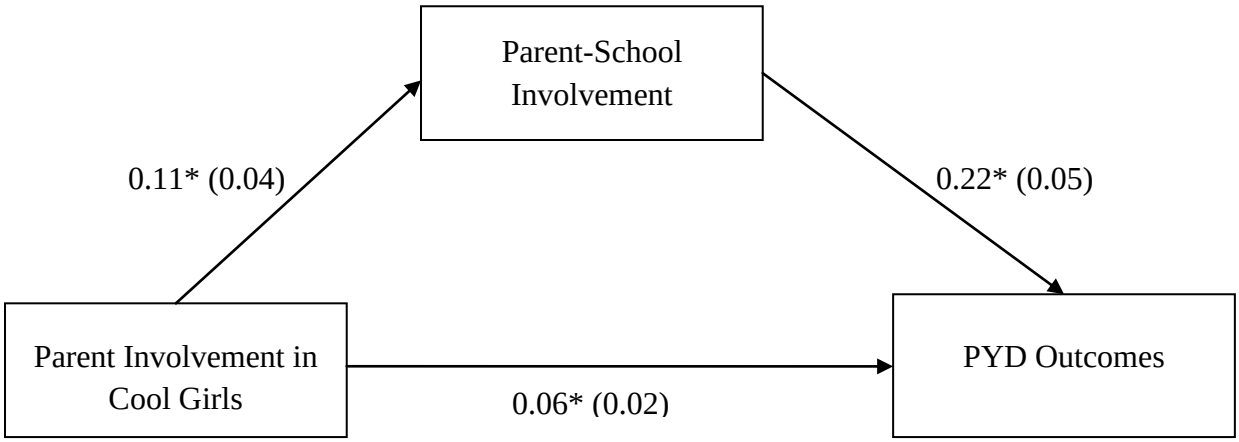


Indirect Effect: *B* = 0.02* (0.01)

95% CI: [.001, .050]

Note: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients. Values in parentheses are standard errors. CI = confidence interval. * *p* <.05

Figure 2. The Association of Parent Cool Girls, Inc. Involvement and Parent Perceptions of Changes in PYD Outcomes Because of Participation in Cool Girls, Inc. as Mediated by Parent Perceptions of Changes in Parent Social Capital Because of Cool Girls, Inc. Controlling for Family Attachment (*N* = 117).

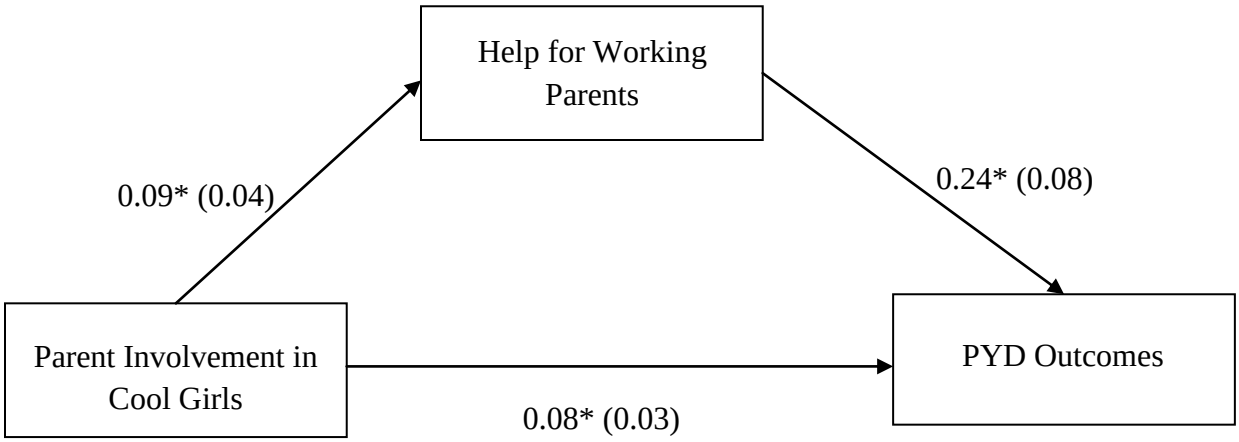


Indirect Effect: *B* = 0.03* (0.01)

95% CI: [.01, .05]

Note: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients. Values in parentheses are standard errors. CI = confidence interval. * *p* <.05

Figure 3. The Association of Parent Cool Girls, Inc. Involvement and Parent Perceptions of Changes in PYD Outcomes Because of Participation in Cool Girls, Inc. as Mediated by Parent Perceptions of Changes in Parent-School Involvement Because of Cool Girls, Inc. While Controlling for Family Attachment (*N* = 117).



Indirect Effect: *B* = 0.02* (0.01)

95% CI: [.003, .053]

Note: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients. Values in parentheses are standard errors. CI = confidence interval. * *p* <.05

Figure 4. The Association of Parent Cool Girls, Inc. Involvement and Parent Perceptions of Changes in PYD Outcomes Because of Participation in Cool Girls, Inc. as Mediated by Parent Perceptions of Help Received as a Working Parent Because of Cool Girls, Inc. While Controlling for Family Attachment (*n* = 86).

Table 9

The Association of Parent Cool Girls, Inc. Involvement and Parent Perceptions of Changes in PYD Outcomes Because of ASP Participation as Mediated by Perceived Parent Benefits Controlling for Other Parent Benefits and Family Attachment

		Estimates for the Indirect Effect		
Parent Benefit Mediators	Control Variables	*95% CI*	*B*	*SE*
Parent-Child Communication	Social Capital Parent-School Involvement Family Attachment	[-.02, .04]	0.011	0.014
Social Capital	Parent-Child Communication Parent-School Involvement Family Attachment	[-.02, .01]	-0.002	0.006
Parent-School Involvement	Parent-Child Communication Social Capital Family Attachment	[-.003, .014]	0.002	0.004
Help for Working Parents	Parent-Child Communication Social Capital Parent-School Involvement Family Attachment	[-.01, .01]	-0.0004	0.003

Note: In the mediation analyses involving social capital, school involvement and parent-child communication as mediators, help for working parents was not included as a covariate due to the smaller sample size of working parents. CI = confidence interval.

(Iso-Ahola, 1980) (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth, 2002) (Mahoney, Parente, & Zigler, 2010) (J. V. Lerner et al., 2009; R. M. Lerner et al., 2005). (Fiester, Simpkins, & Bouffard, 2005; Larson, Pearce, Sullivan, & Jarrett, 2007). (National Institute For Out of School Time, 2000). (Pomerantz & Moorman, 2010). (Putnick et al., 2008). (Van den Bergh, 2006). (Scharf, Quiroga, Nataraj, Olsen, & Bhattacharyam, 2005)

DISCUSSION

This study confirmed the hypothesis that parents can benefit from ASP involvement in four ways: through improved parent-child communication, parent social capital, parent-school involvement, and help for working parents. Using an ecological framework, this study found evidence to suggest that the benefits parents receive through involvement in their child's ASP can mediate the association between parent ASP involvement and PYD outcomes. No other study to date has explored this mediational pathway; the results of this study suggest the importance of involving parents in ASPs and point to a new direction for ASP research.

Four Parent Benefits Received Through ASPs

As was predicted, three factors were identified using an EFA demonstrating that parents perceive benefits in (1) parent-child communication; (2) parent social capital; and (3) parent-school involvement due to ASP involvement. However, two items that were expected to load on the social capital factor were dropped as they did not load onto these three factors. Parallel analysis was used to determine the number of identified factors, as this is a more rigorous approach than looking at eigenvalues alone; however, given the constraints of a small sample size, it is unknown if this factor structure will hold in future studies.

Using a smaller subset of parents who were employed, a fourth parent benefit, (4) help received by working parents, was also examined. Each of the four factors were internally consistent (α = .75 - .92). This is the first study to explore the dimensionality of parent benefits received through ASP involvement. These findings are important because these four parent benefits factors are consistent with previous research (e.g. Warren et al., 2002) and suggest that these four parent benefit factors are separable dimensions. This study extends previous research

by examining these four parent benefits in a single study, demonstrating the breadth of benefits parents receive from ASP involvement.

If the four parent benefit factors were truly orthogonal, it would be expected that the unique effects of each parent benefit would mediate the association between ASP involvement and PYD outcomes. Although parent benefits did significantly mediate the association between parent ASP involvement and PYD outcomes while controlling for family attachment alone, this mediation was not significant *while also controlling for other parent benefits*. This analysis was conducted to test the unique effects of each of the four parent benefits. These results are not surprising given that these four factors are significantly and moderately correlated. These results may indicate that the measures of parent benefits are reflective of a second-order global construct of parent benefits. Alternatively, due to the small sample size in the present study, these analyses may be non-significant because of a lack of power (this is because adding additional covariates to these analyses decreases the power to detect statistical differences). Thus, although the EFA provides evidence to suggest the parent benefit factors are distinct dimensions, these mediation analyses suggest that larger studies are needed to further explore the factor structure of these items. Focus groups with parents may help to determine if these four parent benefit categories are meaningful to parents.

Parent ASP Involvement Predictive of Parent Benefits

As posited, parent ASP involvement was significantly associated with perceptions of improved parent-child communication, social capital, parent-school involvement, and help for working parents due to participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program after controlling for family attachment. Although there is little previous research in this area, this finding is consistent with past research indicating that parent ASP involvement is associated with parent-school

involvement. For example, parents with more ASP involvement were more likely to increase their supervision of their children's school related behavior as compared to parents who were less involved (Morrison et al., 2000). The present study suggests the importance of involving parents in ASPs and studying parent ASP involvement. Suggestions for both avenues are described in more detail below.

Similar to how the Developmental Ecological Model (Durlak, Mahoney, et al., 2010) posits that youth ASP involvement leads to PYD outcomes, it was predicted that parent ASP involvement would lead to parent benefits. However, given that Bioecological Theory predicts that interactions have bi-directional influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), it is likely that this is a bi-directional association, such that as parent ASP involvement increases, parent benefits increase, which, in turn, increases parent ASP involvement. Future longitudinal research is needed to test this hypothesis. If the bidirectional nature of this association is true, ASPs may work to facilitate parent benefits so as to increase parent ASP involvement. Moreover, through ASP involvement and in receiving benefits, parents may gain a psychological sense of community (McMillan, 1996) within the ASP community. For example, parents may develop a sense of belonging through social capital developed, "pay dues" through the sacrifices they make to be involved in the program, and develop trust in the community because of the benefits received - all of which are critical for the formation of a psychological sense of community. Having a psychological sense of community is likely to further facilitate parent ASP involvement.

The evidence from the present study suggesting that parents can benefit from ASP involvement may be used to facilitate parent buy-in thereby promoting parent willingness to allow their children to participate in ASPs and to become involved themselves. This is important

given that parents sometimes prohibit youth from participating in ASPs (Marczak, Dworkin, Skuza, & Beyer, 2006; Pearce & Larson, 2006; Shann, 2001). For example, parents may believe that their child is having too much fun in an ASP, that the ASP is taking away youth time spent on school work, or that the ASP is allowing youth to spend too much time around peers of the opposite gender (Borden, Perkins, Villarruel, & Stone, 2005; Larson & Walker, 2010). Parents play a large role in out-of-school time decision making for youth; this is true even among older youth. Seventy percent of ninth and tenth graders participating in a Boys & Girls Club said that their parent(s) were involved in their decision to join the club (Arbreton, Bradshaw, Sheldon, & Pepper, 2009). Moreover, Mahoney and Stattin (2000) found that youth who were not involved in structured out-of-school time activities had parents who provided less encouragement for participation and who were less likely to report that they would like their child to participate in a community activity. Given the large role parents play in managing child ASP activities, research suggesting the benefits parents can receive though ASP involvement may be important in facilitating parent support for and involvement in ASPs.

High family attachment also significantly predicted perceived improvements in parent-child communication and parent social capital due to participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program. Recent research suggests that parent involvement in a youth's personal life is significantly correlated with more parent-child communication (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009). Moreover, youth disclosure of information to their parents is associated with increased parental knowledge, suggesting that youth have an important role in facilitating parental monitoring (Kerr & Stattin, 2000). As such, it may be that daughters of parents who have perceptions of strong family attachment are more likely to communicate with and disclose information to their parents about what they learned in the Cool Girls, Inc. program and also to be more open to their

parents' involvement in their life (including allowing their parents to develop relationships with others in their social network). This, in turn, likely strengthens youth perceptions of strong family attachment.

Youth who report positive feelings about their family and positive parent-child interactions are more likely to remain in adult-led ASPs (Persson, Kerr, & Stattin, 2007). Additionally, lack of parental warmth predicts less youth involvement in out-of-school time activities (Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos, 2000). Persson et al. (2007) posit that youth who do not have healthy relationships with their parents may have negative feelings towards any adult-led environments and as such may be resistant to participating in adult-led ASPs. Poor family attachment may inhibit youth involvement in ASPs, potentially stifling the benefits parents receive through ASP involvement. For these reasons, ASPs should work to facilitate family attachment. Facilitating family attachment will likely lead to additional PYD outcomes as well. For example, given that child disclosure of activities to their parents is associated with better youth adjustment (Kerr & Stattin, 2000), efforts made by ASPs to promote positive parent-child relationships (e.g., through parenting workshops) may bolster PYD.

Mediational Effects of Parent Benefits

As predicted, after controlling for family attachment, the association between parent involvement in the Cool Girls, Inc. ASP and parent perceptions of changes in outcomes due to participation in Cool Girls, Inc. was mediated by each of the four identified parent benefits (parent-child communication, social capital, school involvement, and help for working parents). As predicted by the Bioecological Theory, these findings highlight the importance of examining the interactions of multi-level contexts to understand individual outcomes. Parents can be positively influenced by their child's participation in ASPs and parent benefits can lead to PYD.

Given these findings, it is recommended that the ASP Developmental Ecological Model (Durlak, Mahoney, et al., 2010) be adapted to illustrate that parents can be influenced by their child's participation in ASPs and that parent benefits received can influence PYD. To my knowledge, no other study has examined this mediational pathway. These findings are promising and suggest an important new avenue for future research. Additionally, these results suggest that ASPs can promote PYD by targeting parent ASP involvement as an important goal.

These outcomes are similar to previous research indicating that parent involvement in the lives of their children can be an important predictor of PYD outcomes. Previous research demonstrates that parent involvement (i.e., amount of time spent with their child and involvement in child's education and social life) in the lives of their children can promote youth happiness (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003), decrease youth problem behaviors (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004), decrease depression (Dmitrieva et al., 2004), promote self-concept (Gibson & Jefferson, 2006), increase academic outcomes (McNeal Jr, 1999) and facilitate youth self-esteem (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). In addition to parent involvement, this research is also similar to past research demonstrating the positive effects of parent-child communication on PYD. Parent-child communication may decrease youth substance use (Luk, Farhat, Iannotti, & Simons-Morton, 2010; Miller-Day & Kam, 2010; Pokhrel, Unger, Wagner, Ritt-Olson, & Sussman, 2008), improve academic outcomes (Snow & Beals, 2006), promote youth adjustment (Brown, Fitzgerald, Shipman, & Schneider, 2007; Davidson & Cardemil, 2009) and facilitate youth coping skills (Gentzler, Contreras-Grau, Kerns, & Weimer, 2005). Parent-child communication specifically about sexuality is associated with delays in sexual behavior and increased use of birth control methods (Aspy et al., 2007; Hadley et al., 2009).

This study also confirms the importance of parent social capital in promoting PYD. Past research shows that parent knowledge of their children's friends and their children's friends' parents (measures of social capital) is associated with positive academic outcomes (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Teachman & et al., 1996; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1997). Parent social networks within the community have also been shown to promote youth academic outcomes, youth future financial stability, and youth well-being (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Runyan et al., 1998; Teachman & et al., 1996; Teachman et al., 1997). Intergenerational closure has been associated with less externalizing behaviors, decreased substance use, and the promotion of academic outcomes (Fletcher et al., 2001; Thorlindsson, Bjarnason, & Sigfusdottir, 2007). Other forms of parent social capital have consistently been associated with facilitating youth emotional health, social well-being, and positive future outcomes (Ferguson, 2006; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995).

The present study is also consistent with previous research demonstrating the importance of parent-school involvement and help received as a working parent in promoting PYD. As noted earlier, a large body of knowledge indicates that parental involvement in youth schooling leads to better youth academic outcomes (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Pomerantz & Moorman, 2010; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010; Voorhis, 2003). Second, this research extends previous work suggesting that parental work pressure, work stress, and feelings of being overwhelmed are negatively associated with youth well-being (Crouter, Bumpus, Maguire, & McHale, 1999; Galambos, Sears, Almeida, & Kolaric, 1995). Parent work stress can lead to poor parenting practices (Repetti & Wood, 1997; Stewart & Barling, 1996). Increases in family income are associated with increased youth academic achievement and less youth problem behaviors (Huston et al., 2003). In sum, this

research is consistent with previous findings suggesting the importance of parent involvement in the lives of their children, parent-child communication, parent social capital, parent-school involvement, and help received as a working parent. This research extends previous work by offering ASPs as an additional mechanism to facilitate these outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This is an understudied field of research ripe with future directions. The current study is limited by its reliance on parent self-reported changes due to ASP participation. Such methods rely not only on parent memory but also can create demand characteristics whereby the results may be biased as parents who want programs to continue may feel compelled to provide good reports of programs. However, measuring parent perception of change due to ASP involvement may be just as important as measuring objective change (e.g. measuring perceptions of parent-child communication at pre-test and post-test) as perceptions of change may also function to promote PYD. In the same way that perceptions of social support, rather than actual receipt of social support, is predictive of positive well-being (Lakey & Lutz, 1996; Wethington & Kessler, 1986), parent perceptions of benefits received may be more important than actual benefits received.

This research relied on parent report of youth functioning; future researchers should use youth self-report of PYD outcomes as well. Further, the parent benefits under investigation in this study may not change in a linear fashion. For example, parent worry about youth safety after school may decrease on days when youth participate in an ASP and increase on days when youth do not attend an ASP. Previous research suggests that parent work stress changes on a daily basis (Almeida & McDonald, 1998). Such non-linear changes may make simple pre- and post-test designs inappropriate. Future researchers may consider diary-study, mixed-methods, focus

group, and/or interview methodologies to more accurately capture parent benefits received due to ASP involvement. Researchers may also map the emotional transmissions (the way one family member's emotions affect another family member's emotions) among family members to determine if, for instance, changes in parental work stress influence youth emotional well-being (Larson & Almeida, 1999).

Given the low response rate (28%) the sample may be biased. If nonresponse is nonrandom only certain types of parents – such as those who are particularly happy with the program – may have completed surveys. Potential bias in respondents could have undermined the internal and external validity of the findings (Kano, Franke, Afifi, & Bourque, 2008). Additional sampling or recruitment strategies for parent participation may be needed.

Future researchers should also compare changes among the parents of youth involved in ASPs and parents of uninvolved youth. Propensity score matching approaches can be used to match comparison and ASP participants thereby controlling for selection biases and other confounding variables (Stuart & Green, 2008). Future researchers may also wish to examine how parent benefits received through ASP participation are associated with parent characteristics and parent perceptions in other domains, such as the following: the potential costs and benefits of their child joining an ASP, their needs for the ASP, their past experiences with similar ASPs, their motivations, their goals, their values, and their expectations for ASP involvement (Mahoney, Harris, & Eccles, 2006; McCurdy & Daro, 2001).

The extent to which the results of this study will generalize to other ASPs is unknown as these results may uniquely reflect the qualities of the Cool Girls, Inc. program and its participants. The Cool Girls, Inc. program is only offered after school once a week, in addition to its other components such as weekend field trips and one-to-one mentoring. ASPs which occur

each weekday may provide more support to working parents by decreasing parent worry about their child while at work. Additionally, the Cool Girls, Inc. program provides parents opportunities to be involved throughout the year (through mother-daughter events, volunteer opportunities, annual parent workshops and information sessions). ASPs programs vary in the extent to which they provide opportunities for parent involvement and such variations likely influence the benefits parents receive. Further, the Cool Girls, Inc. program serves primarily low-income youth. Parents living in poverty may be in greater need of support for their employment than parents in middle class or wealthy communities. For example, the benefits gained from not having to pay for child care are likely to be more pronounced among low-income families as compared to higher-income families. Thus, some parent benefits may be more or less evident depending upon the wealth of the family. Fourth, the Cool Girls, Inc. program only serves female youth. Past research has shown that parent-child communication may be greater among females than males (Keijsers, Branje, Frijns, Finkenauer, & Meeus, 2010; Lac et al., 2011). As such, it may be that parents of male youth would report fewer improvements in parent-child communication as compared to parents of female youth. This example suggests that future research is needed to explore if these findings also hold in samples involving male youth. Finally, the Cool Girls, Inc. ASP occurs on school grounds and many Cool Girls, Inc. staff are also school personnel. Other ASPs that do not occur on school grounds may not facilitate parent involvement in youth education to the degree that Cool Girls, Inc. is able to. Future research should use hierarchical linear modeling techniques (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992) to explore how parent and youth outcomes across multiple ASPs are influenced by program level features, such as number of days per week the program is offered, the extent to which parents are involved in the program, and the wealth of the community served by the ASP.

Further development of parent benefits. The four parent benefits identified in this study provide a model from which future research can build and expand upon. Additional parent benefits to explore should depend upon the unique characteristics of the ASP under investigation. For instance, this study looked at benefits in parent-child communication generally and also with respect to communication about sexuality and puberty. This was due to the Cool Girls, Inc. program's focus on preventing teenage pregnancy. Provided below are suggestions for additional ways parents may benefit from involvement in their child's ASPs.

This study examined how parents became more involved in their child's school due to participation in the Cool Girls, Inc. program. Parents may gain benefits more broadly in involvement in their child's *education* as well. Youth attendance at the Generación Diez ASP was positively associated with increased parent engagement in education related activities such as reading to children and taking them to the library (Riggs & Medina, 2005). Parents of youth enrolled in the CCLC ASP were significantly more likely to provide youth homework help (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Ninety percent of surveyed parents reported that because of their child's participation in the Teen REACH program they had taken a more active role in their child's education (The CPRD, 2004). Exploring how parent ASP involvement influences parent involvement in their child's education may be a promising future direction.

Future researchers may also be interested in exploring if parents gain parenting skills through involvement in ASPs. Through Teen REACH programming, 68% of parents reported learning new ideas about raising children (The CPRD, 2004). Parents of youth attending the Hmong Youth Pride program significantly increased the quality of their parenting skills from pre-test to post-test as compared to comparison parents (Chase, 2000). Additionally, ASP

involvement can promote the extent to which parents check homework completion and limit TV time on school nights (Morrison et al., 2000).

ASPs which offer services to parents may wish to explore how those unique services benefit parents. For example, some ASPs provide parent education opportunities such as English as a second language courses, family literacy programs, General Education Classes (GED), and job skills training (Kakli et al., 2006; Weiss et al., 2003). Additionally, ASPs may provide referral services, case management, counseling, or food for families (Morrison et al, 2000; Weiss et al., 2003; Anderson-Butcher, 2001). In addition to providing unique services to parents, many ASPs provide youth with homework help. This homework help may reduce parent stress and be an important reason parents sign their children up for ASP participation (Reisner et al., 2001). The majority (86%) of parents of youth in the Beacon program believed that the program helped their child with their homework (Warren et al., 2002). Homework help given at ASPs may be especially important to parents who are unable to help their children with their homework assignments and therefore may be critical in supporting youth academically. One youth in the Beacons program reported "When I do my homework at home, my parents don't get it and they can't help me" (Warren et al., 2002, p. 64). Homework help received through ASPs may help to bridge the achievement gap by providing academic assistance to youth whose parents may be unable to help. In sum, future researchers may explore how parents benefit from homework help received through ASPs, supports offered to parents, parenting skills taught through ASPs, and through the facilitation of parent involvement in youth education.

Future Directions for Parent Involvement in After-School Programs

This study suggests the importance of parent involvement in ASPs. To help with this endeavor, researchers must work to provide ASP staff evidence to demonstrate the benefits youth

and parents can receive from youth participation in ASPs. Providing parents with this evidence may help to gain parent buy-in and decrease parent concerns. To promote parent involvement others have recommended that ASPs develop a plan for how to involve parents (Perkins, Christner, Hoy, Webster, & Mock, 2004) and provide opportunities for parents to be involved in programming in meaningful ways (Harris & Wimer, 2004). This may include volunteer opportunities, family nights, parent workshops, advisory board positions, and/or parent de-briefing sessions (Perkins et al., 2004). Many ASPs are designed to provide a safe space for youth while their parents are at work, thereby potentially limiting parents' involvement in such programs. This may be why parent influence on and involvement in many ASPs is overlooked. However, Harris and Wimer (2004) argue that involving and reaching out to parents does not necessarily require parent attendance at ASP activities. As an example, sending home weekly notes to parents detailing youth accomplishments during the week is one way to involve parents without requiring parent attendance (Frazier, Cappella, & Atkins, 2007). Alternatively, as was mentioned previously, facilitating parent benefits gained from ASPs my promote parent ASP involvement.

It is important to note that too much support from parents may be associated with increased likelihood of youth quitting activities (Fredricks et al., 2002) and predict less youth enjoyment in activities (Anderson, Funk, Elliott, & Smith, 2003). Similarly, too much parent involvement may be interpreted by youth as pressure and as such more parent involvement does not always lead to positive outcomes (Pomerantz & Moorman, 2010). The appropriate level of parent involvement likely depends on the age of the youth, with older youth needing more opportunities to explore and develop their autonomy (Larson et al., 2007). Too much parent involvement may also prohibit youth ownership which is important for the development of youth

initiative (Larson, Hansen, & Walker, 2005). Further, the quality of parental involvement (e.g. the extent to which parent involvement includes positive affect and promotes youth autonomy) is an important determinate of youth outcomes (Pomerantz et al., 2007). In sum, it may be important that ASPs facilitate age appropriate levels of positive parent ASP involvement. Future researchers should work to develop clear guidelines of recommended levels of positive parent ASP involvement given youth of varying ages and cultural characteristics. This may be done by conducting focus groups with parents, youth, and ASP staff among various ASPs. After developing and implementing protocols for parental involvement, researchers can then study the effectiveness of fidelity to implementation of those protocols.

Additional promising practices to engage families in ASPs include (1) building trusting relationships with parents; (2) hiring and developing a family-focused staff; (3) having dedicated family liaison staff members; (4) building linkages across individuals and organizations; and (5) providing supports to families (James & Glenda, 2003; Kakli et al., 2006). Many useful resources exist to help ASPs build up family engagement within their programs including the Build the Out-of-School Time Network Toolkit to engage families in ASPs (Build the Out-of-School Time Network, 2009). Culturally competent ASPs may also facilitate parent ASP involvement (Camino, 1992; Metz, Goldsmith, & Arbreton, 2008) by reducing cultural mistrust (Murry et al., 2004). Parental trust of ASP personnel may be an important prerequisite for parents to perceive gaining benefits through ASP involvement. Culturally competent ASPs hire staff reflective of the culture of the community being served, provide staff training in diversity, and incorporate diversity into programming (California Tomorrow, 2007). Many resources exist to assist ASPs in being culturally competent (e.g. Scharf, Quiroga, Nataraj, Olsen, Bhattacharyam, 2005). In sum, facilitating parent buy-in and involvement in ASPs may be an

essential ingredient promoting PYD among ASP participants and will require efforts from ASP staff in promoting parent involvement and ASP researchers in examining how parent involvement influences youth outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. After-School Programs and Their Influence on Parents

Program Name	Youth Sample Characteristics	Parent Sample Characteristics	Youth Program components	Parent Program Components	Data Gathered	Parent Benefits
Beacons (Warren et al., 2002)	5 sites *ASP Participants* *N* = 231 surveys *N* = 120 interviews 47% Male 44% 12-14 yrs. 56% 15-19 yrs. 46% African American 44% Latino	*N* = 83 surveys *N* = 41 interviews	After-school academic support, enrichment, & sport activities.	Recreation, social, educational, and employment related activities. Family involvement opportunities (e.g. family night), family counseling, and support groups.	Youth and parent surveys and interviews at one time point. School staff surveys (N = 189).	↑ Parent-child communication ↑ Social capital ↑ Parent-school involvement ↑ Help for working parents
Capital Kids (Anderson-Butcher, 2001)	4 sites *ASP Participants* *N* = 106 40% Male 89% Black 84% Free or red. lunch K-5th grade Average age 8 yrs.	*N* = 61	Academic, enrichment, wellness, nutrition, skill building, & recreation activities after-school	Parent involvement opportunities in implementing program, parent-child activities.	Parent and youth survey at one time point. Site visits.	↑ Social capital
Extended-Services Schools Initiative (Grossman et al., 2002)	10 sites *ASP Participants* *N* = 1,708 1st-8th grade 45% Male 74% <$30,000 family income 41% single parent home 40% White 33% African American 19% Hispanic 8% Asian	*N* = 221 surveys	Academic and enrichment activities after school.	Parent program involvement (e.g. family nights) and parent classes (e.g. GED preparation, English-as-a-Second Language, and parenting skill classes).	Parent surveys at one time point. Youth surveys at pre-test and post-test.	↑ Help for working parents

Program Name	Youth Sample Characteristics	Parent Sample Characteristics	Youth Program components	Parent Program Components	Data Gathered	Parent Benefits
Foundations, Inc. After School Program (Zief, 2005)	1 site *ASP Participants* *N* = 40 95% African American K-6th grade 75% free or red. lunch *Comparison Participants* *N* = 62 89% African American K-6th grade 76% free or red. lunch	*Surveyed in 2003* *N* = 33 *Surveyed in 2004* *N* = 33	Homework assistance, clubs, recreation	None mentioned	Youth and parent survey at posttest only. Youth and parents were also surveyed when the program had closed.	↑ Help for working parents
Generacion Diez (Riggs & Medina, 2005)	3 sites *ASP Participants* *N* = 60 43% Male 1st -5th grade Children of Mexican Immigrants Only at risk youth	N/A	Academic enrichment; social and emotional education; outdoor play	Parent home-education of school expectations, at-home educational needs, child educational progress, parenting skills, and communication strategies to speak with teachers.	Parent survey pre-test and post-test. Parent and youth program activity attendance.	↑ Parent-school involvement
Greenwood Shalom (Kakli et al., 2006)	1 site *ASP Participants* *N* = 43 total # of participants K-10th grade African American West Indian Cape Verdean Latino	*Parents* *N* = unknown	Homework support, computer instruction, arts and crafts, & literacy lessons.	Parent education on school curriculum and parent involvement in school. Opportunities for parent program involvement and field trips.	Parent interview with one parent. Interviews with staff. Site visit.	↑ Social capital ↑ Parent-school involvement

Program Name	Youth Sample Characteristics	Parent Sample Characteristics	Youth Program components	Parent Program Components	Data Gathered	Parent Benefits
Hmong Youth Pride ASP (Chase, 2000)	3 sites 4th-6th grade; 100% Hmong at risk youth *ASP Participants* Cohort 1: *N* = 66 Cohort 2: *N* = 48 69% Male *Comparison Participants* Cohort 1: *N* = 42 Cohort 2: *N* = 30 49% Male	*Cohort 1 Parents* *N* = 21 ASP parents *N* = 30 comparison parents *Cohort 2 Parents* *N* = 26 ASP parents N = 22 comparison parents	Academic tutoring, recreation, art, & cultural activities.	Family gatherings, parent training workshops, staff home visits.	Parent and youth survey at pre-test and post-test Parent focus groups.	↑ Parent-school involvement
Sacramento Start (Fitzgerald, 2009)	58 sites *ASP Participants* *N* = 8,595 total in program # surveyed unknown K-9th grade 36% Hispanic 27%African American 15% Asian	*N* = 1,914	Enrichment and academic activities.	Unknown	Parent surveys at start, middle and end of the year.	↑ Help for working parents
Teen REACH (The Center for Prevention Research and Development, 2004)	30 sites 4th-12th grade *ASP Participants* *N* = 950 Mean age = 12.2 yrs. 77% free or red. lunch 51% African American 22% White 12% Latino 4% Asian 11% Other	*N* = 464	Tutoring, homework time, life skills education, recreation activities, mentoring	Provide parents opportunities to participate in the program, in parent education classes, and communicate with staff.	Youth surveys at pre-test and post-test. Parent survey at one time point.	↑ Parent-child communication ↑ Social capital ↑ Parent-school involvement
The After-School Corporation (TASC) supported ASP: 1998 – 1999 (Policy Studies Associates Inc., 2000)	# sites unknown *ASP Participants* K-8th grade	*N* = 1,257	Unknown	Unknown	Focus groups and surveys at one time point.	↑ Parent-school involvement ↑ Help for working parents

Program Name	Youth Sample Characteristics	Parent Sample Characteristics	Youth Program components	Parent Program Components	Data Gathered	Parent Benefits
The After-School Corporation (TASC) supported ASP: 1999-2000 (Reisner et al., 2001)	*# sites unknown* *ASP Participants* *N = 32,186 total in program -* *# surveyed = unknown* *K-8th grade*	*N = unknown*	Unknown	Unknown	Principal survey at one time point (N = unknown). Youth & parent survey at one time point.	↑ Parent-school involvement ↑ Help for working parents
The After-School Corporation (TASC) supported ASP: 2001-2002 (Reisner et al., 2004)	61 sites *ASP Participants* K-8th grade	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	Principal survey at one time point (N = 61).	↑ Parent-school involvement ↑ Help for working parents
Transition to Success Pilot Program (Massachusetts Foundation 2020, 2004)	6 sites *ASP Participants* *N* = 116 3rd -8th grade 64% Male 34% African American 34% Asian 19% Hispanic 8% White 67% free or red. lunch *Comparison Participants* *N* = 1,323 3rd -8th grade 53% Male 47% African American 12% Asian 32% Hispanic 8% White 82% free or red. lunch	*N* = 65 short version of survey *N* = 40 long version of survey	After-school tutoring, enrichment activities, and clubs.	Family nights, home visits, coordinated communication between teachers, parents, and staff, scholarships for participation in ASP for families in need of finical assistance.	Youth survey at pre-test and post-test. Parent survey at one time point.	↑ Social capital ↑ Parent-school involvement ↑ Help for working parents

Program Name	Youth Sample Characteristics	Parent Sample Characteristics	Youth Program components	Parent Program Components	Data Gathered	Parent Benefits
21st Century Learning Centers Program Family participation study (Weiss et al., 2003)	622 sites Serve K-12th grade youth >50% of youth participants qualify for free or red. price lunch at 72% of the sites 48% of the sites are rural, 38% urban, 14% suburban 30% of the sites serve 75% minority students; 40% of the sites serve <25% minority students	N/A	Academic, enrichment and recreation activities after-school	Provide supports to parents, communicate with parents, provide parent involvement opportunities.	Project coordinators survey at one time point (N = 622)	↑ Social capital ↑ Parent-school involvement
21st Century Learning Centers Program Elementary Schools (James-Burdumy et al., 2007)	12 sites Elementary students *ASP Participants* *N* = 1,247 49% Male 7% White 54% African American 35% Hispanic *Comparison Participants* *N* = 1,041 50% Male 5% White 55% African American 36% Hispanic	*ASP Parents* *N* = 991 *Comparison Parents* *N* = 812	Academic, enrichment and recreation activities after-school	Provide supports to parents, communicate with parents, provide parent involvement opportunities.	Parent and youth surveys at pre-test and post-test.	No change in parent-school involvement

Program Name	Youth Sample Characteristics	Parent Sample Characteristics	Youth Program components	Parent Program Components	Data Gathered	Parent Benefits
21st Century Learning Centers Program (U.S. Department of Education, 2003)	45 sites Elementary and Middle School students *ASP Participants* *N* = 2,115 47% Male 24% White 48% Black 16% Hispanic *Comparison Participants* *N* = 2,671 49% Male 23% White 51% Black 13% Hispanic	*ASP Parents* *N* = 2,371 *Comparison Parents* *N* = 2,866	Academic, enrichment and recreation activities after-school	Provide supports to parents, communicate with parents, provide parent involvement opportunities.	Parent surveys at one time point. Youth surveys at pre-test and post-test.	↑ Parent-school involvement

Appendix B. Parent Survey

EVALUATION OF COOL GIRLS, INC.

Parent Survey—Spring 2011

Dear Parent or Guardian:

To help make this program better, we are surveying parents to learn about their experiences with it. **This survey is voluntary.** If you do not want to fill out the survey, you do not need to. However, we hope you will take a few minutes to fill it out because your answers are important. **This survey is private.** No one at the school or after-school program will see your answers. Please answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. If you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may leave it blank. **This is not a test.** There are no right or wrong answers, and your answers will not affect your daughter's participation or place in the program in any way.

Thank you for your help!

When you have filled out the survey, please seal it in the envelope provided and return it in the mail.

We would like to send you a $10 gift card once you have completed this survey to thank you for your participation. Would you like us to e-mail you your gift card or send it to you in the mail?

___Please e-mail my gift card. My e-mail address is_____

___Please mail my gift card. My home address is_____

_____

_____

NOTE: If you have more than one daughter who attends Cool Girls, Inc., please answer these questions based on your oldest daughter attending the program.

1. My Daughter's name is_____
   First Name Last Name
2. This is my daughter's
   a. First year in Cool Girls, Inc.
   b. Second year in Cool Girls, Inc.
   c. Third year in Cool Girls, Inc.
   d. Fourth year in Cool Girls, Inc.
   e. Fifth year in Cool Girls, Inc.
   f. Sixth year in Cool Girls, Inc.
   g. My daughter is no longer in Cool Girls, Inc.

If your daughter is no longer in Cool Girls, Inc., please go to question #24.

2. My daughter is in_____grade.

3. My daughter attends the Cool Girls, Inc. program
   a. Almost every week
   b. Most weeks
   c. A few times a month
   d. About once a month
   e. A few times a year

4. This year, my daughter has participated in: **(Circle all that apply)**
   a. Cool Girls, Inc. Club after-school program
   b. Cool Sisters mentoring program
   c. Cool Tech
   d. Cool Fitness
   e. Cool LEAD (high school program)
   f. Field trips
   g. Other_____
   h. I prefer not to answer

5. How much do you agree with the following statements below? **(Circle one in each row)**

	Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Neutral*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
I want my daughter to participate in Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I encourage my daughter to be a part of Cool Girls, Inc. activities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I make sure that my daughter is able to get to Cool Girls, Inc. activities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I let my daughter decide which Cool Girls, Inc. activities she wants to sign up for	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I try to make sure that my daughter gets what she needs to participate in Cool Girls, Inc. activities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I care about my daughter's involvement in Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I talk with my daughter about what she is learning and doing in Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I tell my daughter that participation in Cool Girls, Inc. activities is important	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I believe participating in Cool Girls, Inc. will be important for my daughter's future	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

7. How much do you agree with the following statements about your relationship with your daughter? **(Circle one in each row)**

	Not *True*	*A Little True*	*Often True*	*Always True*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
I feel close to my daughter.	1	2	3	4	N/A
My daughter shares her thoughts and feelings with me.	1	2	3	4	N/A
I notice when my daughter is doing a good job and let her know.	1	2	3	4	N/A
I tell my daughter I'm proud of her for the things she's done.	1	2	3	4	N/A
My daughter enjoys spending time with me.	1	2	3	4	N/A

8. What does your daughter usually do from the end of the school day until about 6 p.m.? Please circle the number of afternoons a week, on average, that your daughter does each of the following things. **(Circle one in each row)**

	Number of Afternoons a Week						
After school ends my daughter goes to…	*Five*	*Four*	*Three*	*Two*	*One*	*Never*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
Cool Girls, Inc.	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
Another program where there is a planned activity (such as sports practice, scouts, or music lessons)	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
My home or another home where there is an adult	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
A place where there is no adult	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A

9. Has your communication with your daughter been affected by Cool Girls, Inc.? **(Circle one in each row)**

Because of Cool Girls, Inc…	*A Lot Worse*	*Worse*	*The Same*	*Better*	*A Lot Better*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
My communication with my daughter is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's communication with me is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My comfort in communicating about sensitive issues such as sexuality and puberty with my daughter is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's comfort in communicating with me about sensitive issues such as sexuality and puberty is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

10. How much time did **you** spend in the last week participating in organized activities not related to work (such as church activities, community service, club participation, organized sports, PTA, volunteering, etc.)?

a. I spent _____ hours last week.

11. How much do you agree with the following statements about your daughter's progress as a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc.? **(Circle one in each row)**

As a result of participating in Cool Girls, Inc.…	*A Lot Worse*	*Worse*	*The Same*	*Better*	*A Lot Better*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
My daughter's overall school performance is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's confidence level is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's self-esteem level is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's level of independence is	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's leadership skills are	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's ability to make good decisions about sexual behavior	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's ability to make good decisions about drug and alcohol use	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter's ability to make good decisions about exercise, health, wellness, and nutrition	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with Cool Girls, Inc.? **(Circle one)**

Very Dissatisfied	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*Very Satisfied*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
1	2	3	4	N/A

13. How often have you attended Cool Girl program events?

Never	*Rarely*	*Once in a While*	*Sometimes*	*Almost Always*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

14. Have you participated in any of the following Cool Girl activities in the past year? **(Please circle all that apply)**

a. A Beautiful Me Parent Workshops
b. Back to Cool Parent Workshops
c. Attended meetings with Cool Girl Staff about my daughter's behavior
d. Volunteer opportunities
e. Cool sister match sessions
f. Other_____
g. I have not participated in any Cool Girl activities

15. How many hours per week do **you** usually work at your job? **(Circle one)**

I do not work for pay	*35 or more hours*	*Between 20 and 34 hours*	*Between 10 and 19 hours*	*Less than 10 hours*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

16. How many hours per week do **you** attend school? **(Circle one)**

I do not attend school.	*35 or more hours*	*Between 20 and 34 hours*	*Between 10 and 19 hours*	*Less than 10 hours*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

17. How much do you agree with the following statements about how Cool Girls, Inc. fits you and your daughter's needs? **(Circle one in each row)**

	Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Neutral / No Change*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*	*Not applicable*
The program hours fit my needs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I miss less work than I used to because my daughter is in Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Cool Girls, Inc. has made it easier to keep my job or go to school	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I worry less about the safety of my daughter after-school when she is at Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I spend less money on child-care because of Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The homework help my daughter receives at Cool Girls, Inc. is a big help to me	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter spends more time after-school with adult supervision because of Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My daughter has made new friends at Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
It is important to me that Cool Girls, Inc. is free	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I have met other members of the community through Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I have gotten to know my daughter's friends because of Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I have gotten to know the parents of my daughter's friends because of Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I have received useful information about community resources from Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I feel comfortable talking with staff at Cool Girls, Inc. about my daughter	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I feel welcome to participate in Cool Girls, Inc. events	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
There are many opportunities for me to participate in the program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My relationship with my daughter's school teachers/ administrators has improved because of Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
My involvement in my daughter's school has improved because of Cool Girls, Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

18. In what ways, if any, has the availability of this program helped you and your family?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19. Do you have any suggestions to improve the program?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for completing this survey! We would also like to know a few things about you, so that we can better understand the families participating in the Cool Girls Inc. program. Please answer as many of the following questions as you are comfortable answering.

20. What is your relationship to the child for whom you answered this survey? **(Circle one)**

Mother	*Father*	*Step-parent*	*Grandpare nt*	*Aunt/ Uncle*	*Brother/ Sister*	*Other*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A

21. How old are you? **(Circle one)**

18-25 years old	*26-35 years old*	*36-45 years old*	*46-55 years old*	*Over 55 years old*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

22. Which best describes your race or ethnicity? **(Circle one)**

a. African American / Black
b. Hispanic/Latino
c. Asian or Pacific Islander
d. Native American or Alaskan Native
e. White /Caucasian (Not Hispanic)
f. other

23. What is your highest level of education completed? **(Circle one)**

Some high school	*High school degree/GED*	*Some college*	*Associate degree*	*Bachelor degree*	*Master degree*	*PhD*	*I Prefer Not To Answer*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A

Thank You!

Only answer questions 24 and 25 if your daughter no longer participates in Cool Girls, Inc.

24. Why is your daughter no longer in Cool Girls, Inc.? **(Circle all that apply)**

a. My daughter lost interest in the program
b. I lost interest in the program
c. Dissatisfaction with the activities offered
d. Transportation problems
e. Program hours did not fit my needs
f. Problems with Cool Girls, Inc. staff
g. Other_____

25. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Cool Girls, Inc.?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____