

# Toronto after-school programs: What really matters? <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Toronto Children's Services

**Format:** Report

**Publication Date:** 18 May 2015

## AVAILABILITY

Executive summary PDF <sup>[2]</sup>

Full report PDF <sup>[3]</sup>

## Executive summary

Our primary aim in this research project was to elucidate Toronto's after-school community's perceptions on the characteristics of high quality after -school programs and subsequently develop quality standards for these programs.

In the current project, Toronto Children's Services partnered with Braeburn Neighbourhood Place & Boys and Girls Club to identify what families and program providers in Toronto value in after-school programs. In collaboration with a project advisory team comprised of experts representing various sectors the project delivers on the commitments made in the Toronto Middle Childhood Strategy (City of Toronto, 2012).

Previous research has shown that after-school programs can be beneficial to the academic and social development of children, however, discrepancies exist in their quality with some programs yielding measureable benefits and others not. Thus, identifying the characteristics of high-quality after-school programs is essential as it informs program planning and provides specific indicators to monitor through ongoing program evaluation.

The overarching mandate of the current project was the development of research-based quality standards available to all after-school programs in the city of Toronto. Taking a bottom-up approach that prioritized the community's voice, we reviewed previous research and engaged Toronto's after-school program community in clarifying the characteristics of high-quality after-school programs. Further, we aimed to compare groups using statistical calculations (e.g., t-tests) to identify which characteristics are perceived as more and less important by program supervisors, staff, and parents involved in Toronto's after-school programs, and to identify whether type and location of program affect these perceptions.

To accomplish these aims we asked supervisors, staff, and parents to list, organize, and rate characteristics of high-quality after-school programs. We targeted participation from three types of programs: licensed school-age child care, recreation and care, and other community-based after-school programs.

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** school <sup>[5]</sup>

after-school programs <sup>[6]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/11/toronto-after-school-programs-what-really-matters>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/11/toronto-after-school-programs-what-really-matters> <sup>[2]</sup>

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