

Out-of-School Time Resource Center **(OSTRC)**

Out-of-School Time

- *Effective out-of-school time (OST) programs can address children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs while enhancing their self-efficacy and self-esteem. (Douglass, 2004)*
- *Most OST programs address 4 overarching goals: increase academic achievement; decrease participation in risk behaviors; increase career awareness and access; and increase personal and social skill development. (Peter, 2002)*
- *High-quality OST programs cultivate supportive relationships between staff and youth participants, provide rich and varied academic activities, offer additional enrichment opportunities, and foster strong connections with neighborhoods, schools, and community organizations. (Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007)*

OSTRC Mission

The Out-of-School Time Resource Center promotes youth achievement by supporting staff and enriching programs. With a focus on out-of-school time (OST), we:

1. **Identify and coordinate resources.** We produce a monthly Newsletter and two Area Resource Directories; maintain an online Professional Development Calendar and a Document Library; host regular Peer Networking Meetings; and offer ongoing professional support and technical assistance. In addition, we connect individuals to one another and provide access to diverse fields, programs, and resources.
2. **Conduct research and evaluation.** We conduct and disseminate literature reviews and empirical research to identify promising practices in professional development and program quality. We also design and implement surveys, focus groups, interviews, and observations to measure staff, program, and youth outcomes.
3. **Recommend changes in practice and policy.** Through brokering, consulting, research, and publications, we inform and advocate for high-quality staff and programs on a local, regional, and national level.

Resource Center Highlights

1. **Online Professional Development Calendar**. This searchable database features area training organizations, individual trainers, and stand-alone workshops. Session topics include “Positive Youth Development,” “Behavior Management,” “Homework Help,” and “Program Safety.”
2. **Online Document Library**. The OSTRC Document Library includes reports, articles, and research papers sorted to categories such as “Activities,” “Child and Adolescent Development,” “Research and Evaluation,” and “Program Administration.”
3. **Monthly Peer Networking Meetings**. Monthly Peer Networking Meetings are open to administrative and direct-service staff from all types of OST programs. These meetings provide professional networking opportunities, panel discussions on timely topics, and related articles and resources.
4. **OSTRC Professional Development Academy**. The OSTRC offers a series of workshops pertaining to staff support and professional development. Topics include “Promising Practices in Professional Development,” “Networking Made Easy,” and “How to Develop Surveys.”
5. **Annual Resource Fair**. In partnership with the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network, the OSTRC organizes a regional OST resource fair featuring over 50 vendors, multiple workshops, and hundreds of attendees.
6. **OSTRC Helpline**. Each month, 35-50 individuals contact the OSTRC through email, phone calls, and personal consultations. OSTRC staff provide resources ranging from local job announcements to national curricula and funding opportunities.

Research and Evaluation Activities

1. **Evaluation Surveys**. The OSTRC has developed a collection of research-based surveys that evaluate OST workshops, conferences, and other types of professional development. These paper and online surveys are available, free of charge, to individuals and organizations interested in measuring the impact of their professional development activities.
2. **Comprehensive Assessments**. OSTRC staff use quantitative and qualitative methods to measure the short-and long term impact of professional development. These methods include participant and facilitator surveys, workshop observations, participant focus groups, and cumulative comment logs.
3. **Research Publications**. OSTRC staff have published multiple research papers and journal articles on topics such as “Outcomes and Research in OST Program Design,” “Promising Practices in OST Professional Development,” and “Defining our Terms: Professional Development in OST.”

Special Projects

1. **Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative (PYSC)**. Co-administered by the OSTRC, PYSC is a collection of area programs that use sports to promote positive youth development. PYSC services include monthly networking seminars, an online resource library, and a youth sports program directory. PYSC is also engaged in outreach activities with the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation, Drexel University, the US Attorney’s Office, and the Juvenile Justice System.
2. **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)**. The OSTRC oversees a statewide workgroup whose goal is to integrate STEM programming into Pennsylvania’s afterschool and youth development activities. In addition, OSTRC staff participate in a Philadelphia Advisory Committee devoted to promoting STEM curricula, quality, and assessment in local OST programs.