

PARTICIPATION

DATA

What can data do for *your* expanded learning program?



What is participation data?

Simply put:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{"Participation"} \\ = \\ \text{Enrollment} \\ + \\ \text{Attendance} \\ + \\ \text{Engagement} \end{aligned}$$

Participation data, then, is a measure of individual youths' **program enrollment** (Is this young person a member of my program?), **attendance at that program** (Does this young person come to sessions?), and **program engagement** (How often is this young person here?).



Who should use participation data?

Participation data can be used in a number of ways by a number of actors, including:

- ✓ Line staff
- ✓ Programs staff
- ✓ Managers, Directors, and Executive-level staff
- ✓ Board members
- ✓ Program evaluators
- ✓ Funders
- ✓ Community stakeholders

YOUTH benefit¹ from program participation...



✓ Academic success

Research indicates that youth in expanded learning programs have better school day performance and attendance, less disciplinary action, and a more positive outlook on school



✓ Socio-emotional learning

Data show that expanded learning spaces help youth decrease their behavioral issues, can improve youth-youth and youth-adult communication, and boost youths' confidence and self-esteem



✓ Health and wellness

Participation in expanded learning has been shown to help youth make healthier decisions, avoid truancy and fighting, and learn about physical activity and nutrition

Harvard Family Research Project: Little, Priscilla, "Understanding and Measuring Attendance in OST Programs; "Issues and Opportunities in OST Evaluation," No. 7, August 2004

...and PROGRAMS benefit when they collect these data

Youth who do not attend school on a given day are unlikely to come to after school; program participation can thus be a predictor of school day attendance

✓ Predict school-day attendance



Programs setting attendance goals can gain a deeper understanding of which youth attend most/least often, and when participation spikes/drops off

✓ Expose enrollment & retention patterns



Programs that collect both youth attendance data and youth surveys can link youths' program outcomes to their program participation rates, and can tailor program activities accordingly

✓ Link youth outcomes to participation



Well-informed programs can use participation data to market program- and staff-related ideas to the Board through hard numbers

✓ Grow support for evaluation, Program investments, and professional development



What are *housing agencies* saying about participation data?

Public Profit helps youth service organizations measure and manage what matters. Our clients include school districts, community-based expanded learning providers, after-school program networks, and other local, regional, and national organizations ranging from housing authorities to music education groups.

We are passionate about using research and evaluation methods to improve the quality of youth services. Since 2007, we have created a tailored approach to each project, drawing on our expertise in methods including:

- Program evaluation
- Site visits
- Evaluation capacity building
- Staff training and technical assistance
- Quantitative analysis
- Focus groups

Our work is not successful unless our clients can use our findings to improve the quality of their services; we believe that data should enable action, and this is our sole focus.

Want more information? Visit: <http://www.publicprofit.net>, or call Public Profit at (510) 835-1669.

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH is a California-based non-profit organization that finds funding, partners, and solutions to help schools better serve students, and informs state and national public policy on education issues. Our mission is to ignite systems of continuous learning, foster collaboration, and build leadership among school districts, government agencies, and community based organizations serving low income children and youth. For more information, please visit our website:

www.partnerforchildren.org



How can programs begin to use data?

“We are using program data to measure impact of our afterschool programming. This includes **collecting and measuring daily attendance**, collecting reports cards to measure participant progress in school, and annual on-site program assessments. **We share program data with potential funders**, developers, community stakeholders, and on grant applications.”

Research indicates that young people need to attend a program for **100** days to see the benefits of expanded learning. Benefits include increased English fluency, standardized test scores, and proficiency in math & literacy.



What benefits can programs expect to see?

“Collecting program data has been useful because it allows us to **continually assess and improve** the effectiveness of our programming. This includes the effectiveness of line staff practices as well as organizational structure and supports. Our goal is to equip line staff with all the tools necessary to **deliver intentional youth-centered programming on-site**. Program data is useful for allowing us identify training opportunities for staff and any additional support that might be needed.”

“Program data that effectively highlights our work puts us in a **greater position to apply for grants** and seek out potential funders, allowing us to leverage these resources to further increase the impact of our programming. This data also allows us to **share our impact with board members** and developers, increasing transparency of programming delivered on-site.”