
The Growing Out-of-School Time Field: Past, Present, and Future

A Volume in:
Current Issues in Out-of-School Time

Series Editor

Helen Janc Malone

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Helen Janc Malone
Institute for Educational Leadership

The Growing Out-of-School Time Field: Past, Present, and Future (2017)
Helen Janc Malone and Tara Donahue

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Edited by
Helen Janc Malone
Tara Donahue



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ENDORSEMENTS

It has been clear for some time that the so-called achievement gap is driven in part by gaps in educational opportunities. Providing access to high-quality out-of-school learning experiences is one of the most important measures that can be taken to reduce disparities and level the playing field. The authors in this important new book show us not only how to create such programs but why it matters to our collective future. Timely, relevant, and readable, this book is an invaluable resource for anyone seeking to close gaps in educational opportunities.

—Pedro A. Noguera, Ph.D.

Distinguished Professor of Education

UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies

As the chair of the NAS/NRC committee that wrote the report *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, I am delighted by this book. When we wrote the report in 2002, there were few systematic attempts to organize and theorize the emerging field of positive youth development. As the editors and chapter authors in this book make very clear, a great deal has happened at all levels of scholarship in this field over the last 15 years. Both this volume and the new book series that it is initiating signal the maturing of this field from childhood, through adolescence, and now into emerging adulthood. The breadth of work discussed in this collection is exceptionally broad, ranging from psychological theorizing about the impact of youth serving programs in the out-of-school time period to

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social policy analyses of how to grow the profession of OST youth professionals and create steady funding streams to support OST programming. All topics are critically discussed and new directions are suggested. I consider this book to be required reading of all students, scholars, professional, and practitioners in the field of positive youth development and OST programming. I go even further by suggesting it be read broadly by anyone interested in the education and development of young people around the world. There is no better collection available for educators, parents, community activists, and social policy makers concerned with positive youth development. I believe this collection lays a very strong foundation for achieving the goal set forth by Karen Pittman for the field to move from “where and when to what and how.”

—Jacquelynne S. Eccles
Distinguished University Professor of Education
University of California, Irvine

The impressive growth of OST programs represents one of the brightest spots on the American educational landscape. Importantly, as this book portrays, what began a series of programs and local initiatives has now grown into a maturing field, with standards, scholarship, organizations, policies, and funding at the national, state, and local levels. And more than a field, OST carries the urgency, energy, and passion of a movement for social justice.

The Growing Out-of-School Time Field offers a comprehensive review of earlier decades of work and points the way forward for the field’s future development. It should be read not only by those involved in the OST field, but by all educators who seek to create inclusive and powerful learning environments. Policymakers, as well, would benefit from deeper knowledge of this movement. It holds a key to preparing today’s youth for an uncertain future, where the nature of work is changing, norms of society are shifting, and multicultural, global perspectives are needed.

—Milton Chen, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow & Executive Director Emeritus
George Lucas Educational Foundation (edutopia.org)

Having watched the landscape develop and evolve over the past 20 years, I was pleased to read such a comprehensive account of the afterschool and expanded learning field. Helen Janc Malone and Tara Donahue, and everyone who contributed to this anthology, have much to offer those who care deeply about youth development and closing the opportunity gap. I was particularly struck by the call for research around the role of out-of-school time to support developmental transitions, as well as including students with disabilities in this research and bringing an international perspective to practice and policy. Given our long history of building systems and advocating for public support of quality learning time beyond the traditional school day, our organization welcomes this book to the canon of supporting literature in the field.

—Lucy N. Friedman
President and Founder, ExpandedED Schools

This new book captures many important developments in providing more and better opportunities in afterschool and summers—key out-of-school time (OST) spaces. The volume indicates the growth and maturity of the field and strengthens the fields’ ability to understand and deliver on its growing potential.

In the Introduction, Helen Janc Malone provides a taste of why this field is increasingly important, “(t)he hallmark of the OST field has been the ability to remain adaptable to change in a way that complements the field and supports young people in diverse ways.”

The book describes an increasingly sophisticated set of learnings, especially over the past 15–20 years, about how to provide better OST opportunities in a variety of settings.

The continuing challenge, however, is how can local, state, and national governments provide more of these vital safe, engaging, and enriching opportunities in after school and summers and on weekends for working, low- and middle-income families...especially in and near schools and neighborhoods that need them the most. As Dale Blyth explains in the Foreword, this is a critical “time period that can contain both threats to and opportunities for learning and development.”

—Terry Peterson, Ph.D.

Senior Fellow, College of Charleston

2016 National Champion of Children Awardee from Foundations, Inc.

Executive Editor, Expanding Minds and Opportunities (4th printing, 2016)

This edited volume by Helen Janc Malone and Tara Donahue is “must reading” for researchers, graduate students, practitioners, and policymakers with interests in the burgeoning out-of-school-time (OST) field. The 20 chapters are written by respected academic researchers, program evaluators, and organizational leaders. These authors have provided thoughtful analyses of the seminal work that grounds the OST field as well as nuanced descriptions of the issues facing contemporary programs, including the pressing needs of the diverse youth and staff in afterschool and summer programs. The specific roles of research, evaluation, and advocacy in contemporary OST programming also are examined in several chapters. This volume should have a place on your book shelf next to Peterson’s (2013) *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning* and Eccles’ (2002) *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Collectively, these three volumes make a strong case for the importance of out-of-school time as a developmental context for children and youth.

—Deborah Lowe Vandell

Professor of Education

University of California, Irvine

This volume provides an authoritative overview of important issues in the out-of-school time (OST) field. Leading researchers and practitioners summarize the field’s recent advances regarding effective strategies for working with diverse populations and describe state-of-the-art professional development training for

OST providers. They also highlight future priorities for OST research, practice, and policy. The editors and authors provide critical readings for people who want the best current information about innovative approaches to enhance the positive development of young people.

—Roger P. Weissberg, Ph.D.
UIC Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Education
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chief Knowledge Officer
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

As the executive director of an afterschool program and an active advocate for quality out-of-school time practice for more than thirty years, I watched the field grow rapidly, begin to develop an academic and professional tradition, and finally receive the recognition it deserves for the critical impact it makes on the lives of children and families. Yet it remains a relatively young and widely diverse field. Malone and Donahue capture that diversity by gathering an impressive array of the strongest voices working today in OST, representing their individual roles and perspectives while creating a cohesive picture of the field. The outstanding contributors provide research and practice-based information on topics from creating programs to meet the developmental needs of youth, and closing the opportunity gap, to addressing the professional needs of a uniquely diverse workforce and developing leadership to ensure a commitment to quality going forward. The collective wisdom in this volume would provide value to a new practitioner striving for excellence, a seasoned professional seeking to reflect on their practice, or anyone whose work could benefit from a solid understanding of the OST field, past, present, and future.

—Denise Trasatti Sellers
Retired Executive Director
Haddonfield Child Care

The Growing Out-of-School Time Field represents an impressive commitment on the part of the publishing house, and if the launch is any indication, those who follow the series will be richly rewarded. As the book's subtitle indicates, the volume looks back at the emergence of OST as a (reasonably) coherent whole, looks around with a status report on many of the most pressing issues of the day, and looks ahead to help guide future directions. The emphasis is on OST as a vehicle for supporting positive youth development.

That indeed is how OST is thought of today, but my own entry into this space was narrowly focused on summer learning loss among Baltimore's poor children in the academic realm. My colleagues and I began in 1994 with research contributions. Since then, the practical import of our work, and that of others, began to garner attention, in large measure owing to vigorous outreach by what is now the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA).

While NSLA was working hard to get summer time on the practice and policy agendas much the same was happening along two other closely related strands—preschool and afterschool programming—as all three were addressing the same problem: strengthening out-of-school learning opportunities for children, our neediest children, in particular.

The emergence of OST as a unifying umbrella for me is one of the most exciting developments of the last decade, and one of the most promising. It is my expectation that this OST series will both catalyze and accelerate that process.

The present volume ably documents that my agenda from an earlier era is but a small piece of what has become a much larger whole. It is no longer just test scores, but also socio-emotional learning and college and career readiness; it is not just low income urban youth, but also youth with disabilities, rural youth, ELL youth, and LGBTQ youth; it is no longer just schools, but “any time; anywhere” learning opportunities spanning a whole host of venues and institutional settings; and, perhaps most importantly, we have moved beyond “documentation” to identify theoretically informed and research validated best practices for programming and policy.

—Karl Alexander
Executive Director
Thurgood Marshall Alliance
John Dewey Professor Emeritus of Sociology
Johns Hopkins University

It is so good to see a book full of thoughtful chapters on the various dimensions of out-of-school time (OST). Using OST to help struggling students – both those that are behind academically and those accelerated students who are bored – is a hugely promising practice, but one that is woefully under-researched and too rarely discussed among educators and policymakers. This book provides a solid theoretical foundation for effective OST practices and prompts the reader to understand what cultural responsiveness should look like to maximize the comfort levels and outcomes for young people. It provides excellent guidance for preparing adults to facilitate student learning and results and discusses some of the findings and challenges in the research that supports the field. There is practical advice for advocates, along with thought-provoking discussions of future directions. This book is clearly written and an important source of current information for OST practitioners, researchers, and policymakers alike.

—Shelley H. Billig, Ph.D.
Vice President
RMC Research Corporation

Millions of individuals in the U.S. and internationally participate actively in out-of-school-time (OST) programs during their adolescence. Integrating the empirical findings, professional experiences, and wisdom of the researchers and practitioners studying, enacting, and evaluating OST programs, this important and

timely volume uniquely advances understanding about and application of the role of OST programs in the positive development of diverse youth. The book is an invaluable resource for researchers, youth-serving professionals, policymakers, and families interested in engaging young people in this key context of adolescent development.

—Richard M. Lerner, Ph.D.
*Bergstrom Chair in Applied Developmental Science and
Director, Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development,
Tufts University*

One of the most significant contributions to the establishment of out-of-school time as a critical setting for youth development is the rise of coordinated system-building efforts that began to emerge around twenty years ago. I commend Helen Janc Malone and Tara Donohue and all the esteemed authors who contributed to *The Growing Out-of-School Time Field Past, Present, and Future* for sharing their lessons and insights. Section 5 on Advocacy eloquently speaks to the rise of city and statewide systems and the continued need for local advocacy efforts to grow investments. We need these investments to ensure young people in the highest need communities have more opportunities to grow, learn, and develop through after-school and expanded-learning.

—Jessica Donner
*Executive Director
Every Hour Counts*

This is an invaluable book. It provides broad state-of-the-art coverage of the out-of-school field, with excellent chapters on young people's development in programs, issues of diversity and equal access, professional development, program evaluation, and advocacy. It is essential reading for up-to-date knowledge on how all the parts of this complex field function, including current debates, needs in the field, and powerful visions for the future.

—Reed Larson
*Professor
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign*

FOREWORD

Dale A. Blyth

In my 40-year career I have had the good fortune to see the growth and development of three areas of work that in many ways now come together in the field of out-of-school time (OST). In the 1970s and 1980s, as a graduate student member of a research team studying transitions and an emerging professional, I witnessed (and hopefully, came to contribute to) the rising importance of research on adolescent development. From the founding of the Society for Research on Adolescence to the increasing sophistication, quality, and volume of research on adolescents, the shift was dramatic and has been sustained. Critical in that shift was the creation and availability of both presenting and publishing opportunities—particularly professional meetings, new journals, and a series of edited and single-authored books. The work that had been scattered and episodic was becoming connected and forming a field of study with major multiyear research studies that attracted and retained bright and talented people.

In the 1980s and 1990s, while with the Search Institute, I became part of the shift from “just” studying adolescents’ development to trying to contribute more directly to supporting the development of youth and the assets they needed to thrive. Over time, positive youth development grew as applied research and evaluation started connecting to program design and the professional development of practitioners and growing awareness of the larger role of community supports. Once again, the emergence of this area of work was significantly advanced by the

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growing number of professionals who came together to articulate and capture lessons learned and build the theoretical, empirical, and practical foundations for a field in special volumes, new journals, and opportunities to exchange ideas.

In the last 20 years, I have watched and contributed to the emerging field of OST. A field that has its roots primarily in over 100 years of practices in the U.S. and about which I learned a great deal in trying to steer the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development. Here I came to see the importance of bridging practice, policy, program, research, and public understanding of what happens during these important time slots that are active contexts for learning and development.

It is from these perspectives that I now look at the publication of this book, and especially the launching of this new Information Age Publishing (IAP) book series. This series represents a significant turning point for OST on the long journey of becoming a recognized and respected multidisciplinary field with multiple levels—from front-line practitioners to program managers to intermediary system builders to researchers and policymakers. As with most journeys, this turning point does not represent a final destination but rather a critical transition in the growth and unity of longstanding practices of child and youth care and youth work with research, policy, program design and delivery, and the professionalization of the workforce.

Although youth programs and services have been around for a long time and many national youth organizations are celebrating 100 plus years of operation, the journey of OST efforts has only in the last 20 years really started to take shape as a field in the U.S. Far too often it is still defined by *what it is not*—not school, not formal learning—and *when it occurs*—the time when outside of the classroom. In reality, the emerging field of OST is multidisciplinary and multileveled, and it has evolved to be much more.

OST is a significant time period when youth are not in school. More importantly, it has come to be recognized as a time period with significant promise for supporting and advancing the learning and development of children and young people. A time period that has multiple dimensions from before and after school to weekends and summers. A time period when youth build relationships, explore and expand their capacities, and learn social and emotional competencies critical to their success in school, work, and life. A time period that can contain both threats to and opportunities for learning and development.

Over the years, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers have come to recognize that OST is actually an *important context for development*—a context to be studied, shaped, and utilized to promote the healthy, positive development of children and youth—a context that has special characteristics, flexibility, and an almost infinite diversity of activities that take place within it. In the 1970s, when the Society for Research on Adolescence was founded, the only contexts being seriously studied were family, school, and peer relationships. We now see a growing

volume of work on the places, programs, and possibilities young people experience in the context of how they use their time beyond the classroom.

OST has become more than a context in how it is talked about and seen—it has also become an approach to learning: an approach that is less formal and content-centered and more informal or nonformal in nature and youth-centered. While nonformal learning and social pedagogy has a rich history in many European cultures, it has had trouble fully establishing itself as a distinct, valued, and viable approach to learning in the U.S. While experiential learning, service learning, and project-based learning have all established themselves as useful pedagogues, recognizing the youth-centric and informal and nonformal unifying nature of these approaches has been less widely accepted, labeled, or understood. Part of the reasons for the long journey is the rich diversity of OST practices, places, and people who shape, manage, and deliver OST activities. This diversity remains both a great strength of the field and an ongoing challenge.

Why do the launching of this new book series and the solid foundations laid by this initial volume represent a turning point in my view? For a field to become viable and respected, it needs to have rich opportunities for presenting and publishing its principles and practices. It needs ways of circulating its basic ideas and drawing lessons from its past as well as present to see where it can go—and opportunities to talk about where it might go.

This book, supported by key leaders in the practice, research, and policy corners of the field, represents a significant opportunity to both advance and systematize the field and an opportunity to do so every year through thoughtful topics organized into complete volumes—volumes that not only establish a foundation but also continue the building of the field. Many thanks go to IAP for providing this ongoing opportunity for our field and to the Advisory Board and Editorial Review Board that have pulled it together. Special thanks to Helen Janc Malone, the book series editor-in-chief, and Tara Donahue, who have brought this first volume into reality along with the many authors who have contributed.

The opportunity, and dare I say responsibility, for contributing to our emerging field now lies with you, the reader. I hope you use this volume to learn and challenge your thinking. Use it to stimulate new work—whether research or practice. Use it to help craft your own contributions to the field—and because of this ongoing series, know that you will have a place to publish that work so others may learn and build on the best work and thinking in the field.

—Dale A. Blyth, Ph.D.

*Profession Emeritus and former Howland Endowed Chair in Youth
Leadership Development University of Minnesota*

