# Out-of-School Time:

## Evidence Synthesis, Best Practices and Environmental Scan

**Prepared by: Sheila McDonald PhD, Jessica Walsh MD, Suzanne Tough PhD**

**Prepared for: Edmonton Boys and Girls Club Big Brothers Big Sisters**

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## Executive Summary

**Background:**
Out-of-school time (OST) approaches and systems for children and youth can increase engagement and equity across the life-course through development of life and technical skills, including problem-solving and communication. Furthermore, engagement in OST activities provides children and youth opportunities for mentorship, leadership, development of responsibility, and building connections.

In general, the purpose of most OST approaches are to provide one or more of the following:
- constructive, supervised activities for children and youth
- caring relationships with adults and other children and youth
- accessible, safe places for children and youth

OST activities are often structured programs, and many have been evaluated, although rigorous process and outcome evaluation remain a challenge for many programs. Structured programs often require resources, limiting accessibility. Unstructured out-of-school time approaches are less well documented; however, application of the elements of successful structured programs may be appropriate and evaluation is necessary. This report will provide suggestions for consideration.

The present report appraised and synthesized contemporary evidence from diverse sources related to best practices for quality OST approaches. Consistent practices and innovative approaches were identified, and these practices were aligned with diverse frameworks, as well as the ACEs environmental scan and the Natural Supports work to further highlight innovative practices, ascertain gaps, and recommend next steps. We also described results from a snapshot environmental scan using key informant interviews on Albertan OST approaches to provide local data on existing practices. Opportunities for OST initiatives were presented.

**The current project:**
Three work streams composed the study methodology of the current project:
1. Evidence appraisal and synthesis to identify best consistent and innovative practices in OST approaches serving children and youth aged 6-12 years
2. Alignment of identified best practices with key elements from gold standard frameworks as well as the ACEs and Natural Supports literature

3. A snapshot environmental scan of current OST approaches in the province to provide local data and context

**Results:**
- The research team identified a total of 31 evidence sources related to OST for this project; 5 of these were gold standard frameworks that were used to facilitate interpretation of the findings
- Following quality appraisal of the evidence sources, the following key themes to organize the best practices emerged: partnerships, access and participation, inclusion, evaluation, leadership characteristics, and approach characteristics
- Alignment of best practices with gold standard frameworks resulted in support of several innovative and emerging best practices that were generally related to two main topics. The first captured considerations for specific sub-populations, cultures, genders and identities. The second was regarding evaluation, quality improvement, and knowledge mobilization. From these findings, more considerations in OST approaches and planning are needed related to consideration of specific groups, and enhancing current evaluation and knowledge mobilization processes
- The opportunities that we identified in this project mostly related to the theme, **communities and youth working together**, including service-learning and promotion of natural supports. These are opportunities to explore in future OST approaches and planning, enhancing current practice. Adoption of some or all aspects of these strategies in OST approaches may lead to more holistic initiatives. Evaluation of these strategies specific to OST are encouraged
- Based on the environmental scan, Alberta Agencies are interested in sharing approaches
- Recommendations for next steps were informed by the findings, expertise of the research team, the ACES and Natural Supports literature, and stakeholder input

**Next steps and Considerations:**
1. Intentional adoption of innovative practices that engage communities and children/youth into OST approaches. These can enhance what is currently working and include:
   a. using volunteers,
   b. promoting service-learning activities,
   c. using creative/less-structured practices,
   d. using blended supervision contexts (e.g., indirect supervision for recreational activities, direct supervision for homework)
   e. providing opportunities to children and youth for meaningful work,
   f. providing opportunities for children/youth to make meaningful connections with non-parental adults and peers,
   g. providing tailored support for those who are potentially vulnerable,
   h. involving participants and members of the community in planning, decision-making, and evaluation

2. Evidence on characteristics of quality OST approaches can inform innovation:
   a. Information and research on the influence of unstructured, volunteer, ad-hoc OST approaches are seriously lacking
   b. Implementation and testing of innovative approaches mentioned above in (1) in real-world settings are essential
   c. There is a great need for rigorous and methodologically sound evaluation approaches appropriate to the community setting
   d. Multiple levels of evaluation, (e.g. outcome evaluation, such as child and youth skill development; and process evaluation, such as intended implementation) are important considerations. A population health approach to evaluation is recommended
   e. A better understanding  on dosage of activities (e.g., frequency, intensity) is required
   f. A better understanding on the format of the program/approach beyond the critical hours (e.g., summer, Professional Development days, weekends) is required
   g. A better understanding on the role of technology and social media in OST approaches is required; examples include Growing Up Digital, and Alliance Afterschool
   h. Information on how implementation and fidelity influence outcomes is required

**Purpose**

This report will present findings from appraised and synthesized contemporary evidence from diverse sources related to best practices for quality out-of-school time (OST) approaches. Consistent practices and innovative approaches will be presented, and gaps and next steps will be discussed. We will also describe results from a snapshot environmental scan using key informant interviews on Albertan OST approaches to provide local data on existing practices. We will suggest opportunities for OST initiatives.

Setting the Context: [1]
- 49% of dual-income families use non-parental care for a school-aged child between the ages of 5 and 14, and 35% of lone-parent working families use non-parental care for their school-aged children (1)
- Financial barriers and other barriers may exist for low-income families as 46% of the highest income families (at least 100K household annual income) use non-parental care for school-aged children, compared to 32% of the lowest income families (<40K) (1)
- The percent of children reporting that they had two or more important adults in their lives decreased from 76% to 61%, while the percent reporting no important adults increased from 15% to 29 % in Grade 4 from 2017/18-2018/19 (2)
- When asked, 'who are you with after school?', 24% of children in Grade 4 said 'by myself', while only 9% said a 'non-parent adult'(3)
- The percent of children thriving on the well-being index decreased from 42% to 38% in Grade 4 from 2017/18-2018/19 (2)
- The percent of children thriving on connectedness to school decreased from 72% to 69% in Grade 4 from 2017/18-2018/19. Relating decreases were seen for school climate and school belonging (2)
- Out of school time activities are known to support the development of life and technical skills, friendships, good mental health; and reduce the likelihood of engaging in disruptive activities

**What does the evidence say about out-of-school time?**
OST approaches and systems for children and youth can increase engagement and equity across the life course through development of life and technical skills, including problem-solving and communication.(4, 5) Furthermore, engagement in activities in OST provides opportunities for mentorship, leadership, development of responsibility, and building connections.(6) With a growing body of evidence highlighting the potential of OST opportunities and approaches to enhance development and learning in a cost effective, locally relevant manner, governments, educators and policy-makers are poised to make informed investments.(4) The context provides opportunity to ensure current approaches are contemporary, relevant, and optimize outcomes for the investment.

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[1] Statistics taken from Statistics Canada and the Human Early Learning Partnership, UBC

OST approaches aim to provide children and youth with a safe space to participate in supervised activities, and can range from care centers for school age children to extracurricular clubs to summer camps. The phrase "out-of-school time" is used to describe the hours that children and youth are not in school, including hours before school, after school, during school professional development days, holidays and summers.

Presently OST approaches are necessary in most communities. Local, provincial, and national agencies have been joined by foundations, corporations, and community-based organizations to support such opportunities. In general, the purpose of most OST approaches is to provide one or more of the following (7):
- constructive, supervised activities for children and youth
- caring relationships with adults and other children and youth
- accessible safe places for children and youth

However, some questions remain.

**OST approaches: structured or unstructured? supervised or unsupervised?**
When children and youth, ages 6-12, are not in school, they spend their time in many different ways. Activities can range from sports to art classes to sibling care to play to after-school programs to nothing at all.(7) Young people may be at risk of poor health and social outcomes in several ways if they are not in supportive environments that are stimulating and engaging. School success may be impacted, as well as increased rates of juvenile crime and victimization.(7) These risks can be reduced and transformed into opportunities when OST approaches provide quality activities for children and youth.(6) However, accurate quantifiable data on whether children and youth are spending more time in unsupervised or unstructured activities compared to previous decades are lacking. And, reliable data on how structure, supervision and safety interrelate are limited and mixed. That is, there is some evidence to suggest that unsupervised activities are associated with positive outcomes for youth, and that supervised activities can lead to negative outcomes under certain circumstances.(8-12) OST activities are often structured programs, and many have been evaluated, although rigorous process and outcome evaluation remain a challenge for many programs. Structured programs often require resources, limiting accessibility. Unstructured OST approaches are less well documented and evaluations are lacking. It has been suggested that the dichotomy of unstructured vs. structured *activities*, or unsupervised vs. supervised *activities* be reframed in terms of *contexts*: contexts that have direct supervision, contexts that have no supervision, and contexts that integrate the previous two – indirect supervision.(8-12) Also, there may be room for a blended approach, where direct supervision may be appropriate for some activities (e.g., homework) and indirect supervision for others (e.g., recreational activities). This is an opportune area for pilot projects, evaluation and further research, as qualitative data from the voices of adolescents suggest that there is 'no one size fits all'. Converging data suggest that both indirect and direct supervision contexts may outweigh unsupervised contexts when it comes to improved outcomes for youth in OST approaches.(8-12) Application of the elements of successful structured programs may be appropriate and evaluation is necessary. This report will provide suggestions for consideration.

**The present study**

For OST approaches and opportunities to be effective and positive experiences for children and youth, certain aspects of quality should be considered and implemented. A body of evidence exists that outlines these considerations for quality, based on the research and evaluation of OST professionals and organizations. Standards for evaluation and accreditation exist, and mostly converge in terms of key elements, (examples include HIGH FIVE accreditation standards for quality recreational programming, adopted by the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association,(13) and standards developed by the National School-Age Care Alliance in the US).(7)

However, there is room for broadening the conversation with innovative and emerging approaches, building on successful elements of current approaches. The present report will appraise and synthesize contemporary evidence from diverse sources related to best practices for quality OST approaches and opportunities. Consistent practices and innovative approaches will be presented, and these practices will be aligned with diverse frameworks, as well as the ACEs environmental scan and the Natural Supports work to identify gaps and next steps. We will also describe results from a snapshot environmental scan that we conducted for this project using key informant interviews on Albertan OST approaches to provide local data on existing practices. Finally, opportunities and next steps for OST initiatives will be presented.

> For the purpose of this report, **innovation** refers to the process of building upon, refining or enhancing a pre-existing idea or process, and adapting to the context. Evidence can be used to inform innovation.

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## Methodology

Three work streams composed the study methodology of the current project:
1. Evidence appraisal and synthesis to identify best consistent and innovative practices in OST approaches serving children and youth aged 6-12 years
2. Alignment of identified best practices with key elements from gold standard frameworks as well as the ACEs and Natural Supports literature
3. A snapshot environmental scan of current OST approaches in the province to provide local data and context

**1. Literature Search: Evidence appraisal and synthesis**

The research team conducted a structured search using *a priori* criteria of the grey literature and academic literature on OST approaches; attention was paid to Alberta documents, followed by other provincial and national documents, and international documents. Organizational, commissioned, and synthesized reports were collected from reputable and known sources for guidelines and best practices known to the research team and recommended by stakeholders. Critical appraisal of the literature was conducted using the AACODS (Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date, and Significance) grey literature in health checklist for quality appraisal (adapted by NICE),(14) complemented by expertise of the research team. A data extraction template was developed and pilot tested. Key data elements included demographic

variables (e.g., year, location, focus) as well as best practices/recommendations, guiding frameworks, and links to both the Natural Supports(15) and ACEs literature,(16) among other elements, and were extracted into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. *Please see Appendices 3 and 5.*

Evidence was appraised followed by synthesis until saturation on best practices and key characteristics of OST approaches was achieved. Best practices that were consistent across data sources were aggregated; practices less consistent but worthy of examination were also highlighted as innovative and emerging practices.

**2. Alignment of identified best practices with frameworks, and the Natural Supports and ACEs literature.**
The extent of alignment between identified best practices from the evidence synthesis and key elements from various frameworks was examined to inform interpretation of the findings. Five gold standard frameworks were selected to ensure that the interpretation would not be monopolized by only one or two frameworks. We recognize the value in using diverse elements gathered from multiple frameworks as a robustness check. Frameworks were identified based on relevance to the topic, quality, and stakeholder input, and included the following:

- Alberta Child Care Accreditation Standards (17)
- CMEC (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada) Early Learning and Development Framework (18)
- Framework for Selecting Best Practices in Public Health: A Systematic Literature Review (19)
- My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia (20)
- SAFE (Sequenced, Accessible, Focused, Explicit) Principles (21)

*See Appendix 1 for a detailed table outlining the key characteristics of each framework.*

Based on relevance to the Alberta context and stakeholder input, two additional synthesized literatures were added to inform interpretation of the evidence synthesis:

- Mobilizing the Knowledge of ACEs Prevention and Proactive Supports for Alberta's Children, Youth and Families: An Environmental Scan (16)
- Working with Vulnerable Youth to Enhance Their Natural Supports: A Practice Framework (15)

*See Table 2 in the Results section below for key characteristics of the Natural Supports and ACEs documents.*

**3. Snapshot Alberta Environmental Scan**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants on OST activities, barriers and facilitators, and future directions. Mostly, these informants were program management and coordinators (not front line child care workers) at the organizational level. Questions were developed in consultation with stakeholders and were informed by previous environmental scans on this topic. The interview guide was pilot tested and revised accordingly; for example, after one or two interviews, we felt that questions on community engagement needed to be more explicit. *Please see Appendix 2 for the interview guide.* The data collected from these interviews were used to prepare case studies of key organizations involved with OST approaches.

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**Results**

**1. Sources:**

The research team identified a total of 31 evidence sources related to OST for this project. Nine sources were from Alberta. Five sources were key frameworks and 5 sources* were specific to ACEs, Natural Supports or social-emotional learning (SEL). The remaining 21 sources were either directly relevant (i.e., OST focus; n=17), or indirectly relevant (i.e., general youth programs or school-related programming; n=4). There was emphasis to focus on provincial evidence sources, followed by national, and international evidence. Most of the evidence was gathered from the grey literature, although key papers (peer reviewed and white papers) were also included, as appropriate. Quality appraisal of the evidence was performed in duplicate using the AACODS tool and expertise of the research team. Excluding the frameworks, 83% (20/24) of sources fully met the AACODS quality criteria, while 17% (4/24) partially met the AACODS criteria, suggesting that the evidence was of moderate to high quality.(14) *Please see Appendix 3 for a complete listing of the evidence sources and characteristics, excluding the 5 frameworks, and Natural Supports and ACEs literature.*

*Two of these sources, the Natural Supports and ACEs literature pieces, are referred to in the section below. Three sources were not included with the synthesis of best practices, but can be found in Appendix 3; these additional sources may inform organizations with planning and implementation of OST approaches and opportunities around ACEs, trauma toolkits, and social-emotional learning.

**2. Natural Supports and ACEs Literature to inform interpretation of the evidence synthesis:**

To further link this project to the Albertan context, and at the recommendation of stakeholders, two literature pieces were added that assisted with interpretation of identified OST best practices. The first was "Mobilizing the Knowledge of ACEs Prevention and Proactive Supports for Alberta's Children, Youth and Families: An Environmental Scan" from the Science Policy Practice Network on Children's Mental Health; this document provided a better understanding of the landscape around programs and activities that aim to prevent and address ACEs and build resilience in Alberta.(16) The second was "Working with Vulnerable Youth to Enhance Their Natural Supports: A Practice Framework" produced by the Calgary Change Collective to

enable practitioners and organizations to assist with the creation and strengthening of natural supports for vulnerable youth.(15) *Please see Table 2 below for additional information on these literature pieces.* Of note, alignment results will be presented later.

**Table 2: Natural supports and ACEs literature to inform interpretation of the evidence synthesis.**

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|---|---|---|
| ACEs environmental scan (16) | To provide a snapshot of Albertan initiatives that work to prevent and address ACEs and build resilience in children, youth, and families. Initiatives were then aligned with Harvard key recommendations (from the Harvard Centre on the Developing Child) to examine the extent to which they were evidence-based. | **What we found:**<br>77% adopted an ACE/Trauma-informed approach and 64% worked to develop resilience in children and families<br>46% served a high-risk or vulnerable client base<br>46% worked to address the sequelae of ACEs<br>2/3 2/3 aligned with 4 or more Harvard key recommendations<br>The top 3 Harvard key recommendations identified across all initiatives were **'support responsive relationships', 'prevent and reduce sources of significant stress', and 'strengthen life skills'**<br>**What we heard:**<br>In the Health catchment, over 20% of initiatives included an ACE assessment, yet practice guidance is needed. **An ACE assessment may or may not be needed, depending on the context, treatment intention, or the population.***<br>In the Community catchment, key foci among initiatives include building relationships and strengthening natural supports. Cultural sensitivity and the client's narrative are important considerations in programming to engage and retain clients.<br>In the Multi-domain catchment, coordination of services allow for continuity of care for clients. These services need to be culturally sensitive to be effective.<br>In the Education/Academic catchment, knowledge dissemination on brain development is seen as foundational to change practice. Local evidence is needed to inform policy and practice of relevance to Albertans.<br>In the Provincial Policy catchment, there is a recognition of the importance of universal messaging around ACEs and a commitment to incorporating brain science in decision making. Further integration of efforts is also needed.<br>**Key Insights**<br>Different groups use different approaches. Across catchment, population, etc., there is a common purpose to address ACEs and/or build resilience; it's the packaging that varies. |

| | | There is a lack of evidence with respect to whether routine ACE screening is warranted.<br>**An ACE assessment or ACE/Trauma-informed approach needs to incorporate the science on resilience to identify appropriate interventions for well-being.**<br>**Programs need to be adapted and relevant to the culture and context of the clients they are serving and supporting.** |
|---|---|---|
| Working with Vulnerable Youth to Enhance their Natural Supports: A Practice Framework (15) | Natural supports are informal reciprocal relationships that enhance quality of life, and can impact an individual's identity, sense of belonging, resilience and positive development. This framework provides a sustainable mechanism for practitioners and organizations to better support vulnerable youth by enabling natural supports that meet the strengths, needs and circumstances of each youth. | **Goal:**<br>Youth are able to rely on, and contribute to, a life-long network of supportive family, community and peer relationships.<br>**Foundational Constructs:**<br>• Identity and belonging<br>• Trauma-informed practice<br>• Reflective practice<br>**Principles:**<br>• **Connection First** – We treat connection to natural supports with the same urgency as food, shelter and clothing.<br>• **Seek Out & Scooch Over** – We actively seek out natural supports and create space for them to contribute.<br>• **Doing With, Not For** – We respect the autonomy of young people and their natural supports.<br>• **Social Emotional Learning** – We support youth to build and maintain meaningful relationships.<br>• **A Harm Reduction Approach to Relationships** – We cultivate a more realistic approach to risk-management and safety.<br>**Continuum of Needs & Opportunities**<br>• **Engaging** – Help youth to cultivate an interest in connecting with natural supports.<br>• **Finding** – Work with the youth to identify potential supports.<br>• **Strengthening** – Help youth to strengthen relationships with natural supports.<br>• **Restoring** – Support healing and restoration.<br>• **Maintaining** – Help youth maintain connections.<br>• **Transitioning** – Help youth transition to other relationships. |

*Populations at greater risk of adversity or trauma exposure include, but are not limited to, children involved with social services or the judicial system, refugees, etc.; consequently, some exposure to ACEs can be assumed and screening may be unwarranted. Criteria for screening have been developed by the World Health Organization and can be found here:
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/37650/WHO_PHP_34.pdf (p. 26-27)

**3. Extracted Best Practices:**
The final raw data extraction sheet of best practices can be seen in *Appendix 4* with the detailed AACODS quality assessments in *Appendix 5*. From this descriptive information, best practices were themed and further aggregated, leading to categories of consistent practices and innovative and emerging practices. *Table 3* highlights extracted practices according to theme and category.

**Table 3. Extracted best practices according to theme and category (consistent best practices, and innovative and emerging best practices\*)**

| Theme | Consistent Best Practices* | Innovative and Emerging Best Practices* |
|---|---|---|
| Partnerships | Develop and maintain strong community partnerships;<br>Pursue authentic community and family engagement;<br>Strive to meet the needs of the community | There is proactive sharing of knowledge and information;<br>Community volunteers are used;<br>There is intentional integration of both school and non-school supports;<br>Service-learning approaches are adopted (i.e., community service and learning for youth);<br>Benefit from local community resources |
| Access and Participation | There are strategies in place to support children and youth facing barriers (e.g., subsidies);<br>The approach is affordable and accessible for all children and families;<br>The approach aims for sustained participation;<br>There is adequate organizational infrastructure to foster maximum participation | Enhance what works rather than duplicating |
| Inclusion | Approach philosophy respects and supports the uniqueness and diversity of each child;<br>Approach philosophy fosters equity;<br>Approach philosophy aims to empower children | Let leadership reflect the diversity of the community;<br>There are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees;<br>There is culturally sensitive practice and training;<br>There is emphasis on Indigenous ways of knowing |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Evaluation | There is ongoing learning and evaluation; Sustainability measures are put in place; Use of formalized checklists for accountability and quality assessment | There are multiple phases of evaluation; Use of an independent review; Use of both formal and informal evaluation methods (context dependent, i.e. HIGH FIVE)(22); There is reflective practice |
| Leadership Characteristics | Leadership provide supportive and committed relationships; Leadership work to create a positive emotional climate; Leadership value communicating and supporting families; Leadership are knowledgeable and trained in child development; There is ongoing professional development and training opportunities | Leadership support youth to discover their unique identities; Community volunteers are used; Leadership participate in trauma-informed/targeted care training; |
| Approach Characteristics | Activities are varied; The approach provides a safe and responsive environment; Activities are developmentally appropriate; The approach is intentional and purposeful; There are low adult:child ratios (e.g., 1:10, 1:15); Children provide input into the approach; Healthy practices are encouraged; There is an appropriate approach dose; The approach is flexible; The OST approach builds off school time; Skill building is emphasized; Recreation is a key component | There is a mix of structured and less structured opportunities including play (creative domains); The approach is strengths-based; Activities are evidence-based; There is an intentional focus on social and emotional learning |

\* Consistent best practices refer to those seen consistently across evidence sources; innovative and emerging best practices refer to those seen less consistently yet reflect the direction in which the OST field is heading.

**Summary of Practices:** Both consistent, and innovative and emerging best practices across 6 key themes were identified. The 6 themes were: partnerships, access and participation, inclusion, evaluation, leadership characteristics, and approach characteristics. Innovative best practices reflect the direction in which the OST field is developing and are worthy of consideration for OST approaches in Alberta. The 6 theme areas used to categorize the best practices that relate to approach success could be applied in a less structured setting and guide the development of broader community-based opportunities.

**4. Alignment of best practices with frameworks – Key Findings**

We examined alignment of best practices (both consistent, and innovative and emerging) with key elements from the 5 frameworks. We found that a number of best practices from the evidence synthesis **were not** reflected in the gold standard frameworks (*Table 4*). All were from the innovative and emerging best practices category.

**Table 4: Innovative and emerging best practices identified in the evidence synthesis that were not reflected in the 5 gold standard frameworks.**

| Theme | Innovative and Emerging Best Practices* |
|---|---|
| Partnerships | There is proactive sharing of knowledge and information; There is intentional integration of both school and non-school supports |
| Access and Participation | Enhance what works rather than duplicating |
| Inclusion | Let leadership reflect the diversity of the community; There are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees; There is emphasis on Indigenous ways of knowing |
| Evaluation | There are multiple phases of evaluation; Use of an independent review; Use of both formal and informal evaluation methods (context dependent, i.e. HIGH FIVE) |
| Leadership Characteristics | Leadership support youth to discover their unique identities; Community volunteers are intentionally used; Leadership participate in trauma-informed/targeted care training |
| Approach Characteristics | The approach is strengths-based; Purposeful incorporation of social-emotional learning |

*\* Innovative and emerging best practices refer to those seen less consistently yet reflect the direction in which the OST field is heading.*

**Summary of Practice and Framework Alignment:** Aligning the best practices from the evidence synthesis with the 5 gold standard frameworks resulted in identification of several innovative and emerging best practices that were not incorporated into these frameworks. These best practices generally related to two main topics; the first capturing considerations for specific sub-populations, cultures, genders and identities. The second is regarding evaluation, quality improvement, and knowledge mobilization. From these findings, more considerations in OST approach and opportunity planning are needed related to consideration of specific groups, and enhancing current evaluation and knowledge mobilization processes.

## 5. Environmental Scan

As mentioned above, we identified several innovative and emerging best practices that are currently not incorporated into the 5 gold standard frameworks used for this project. Most of them are considered "newer" innovative and emerging best practices for OST programming and opportunities. In order to link what we have learned with current local and provincial practices, an environmental scan was completed to provide a snapshot of OST approaches and activities in Alberta. An emphasis was placed on Edmonton OST approaches in organizations. Organization management responsible for facilitating, funding or coordinating OST programming at either a local or provincial level were interviewed to gather an overview of each respective organization's practices.

Specific considerations relating to these innovative and emerging best practices will be highlighted within this environmental scan to provide insight into how local and provincial organizations have incorporated these practices. For example, Alberta is considered a leader, nationally and internationally, in the areas of trauma-informed care and practice, and natural supports from championing by several organizations and government ministries, including Alberta Education,(23) Alberta Family Wellness Initiative,(24) Alberta Health Services,(25) the Calgary Change Collective (15), and the Ministry of Children's Services.(26) This work, as a result, has been integrated into many organizations with OST programming by updating practices and promoting training opportunities. REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities, one of the organizations included in this environmental scan, is one such example that coordinates trauma-informed care and self-care training opportunities for OST frontline staff of partner organizations.(27) Please note that not all of the innovative and emerging best practices in *Table 4* have examples included in the case studies.

Interviews were completed with Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, Calgary AfterSchool, Ever Active Schools, and REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities. These four organizations were highlighted by stakeholders as key players within the OST programming and opportunities in Alberta, and were used as case studies. Please see these case studies below which provide an overview of the organization, and how their practices align with innovative and emerging best practices:

<u>Alberta Recreation and Parks Association:</u>
Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) is a provincial non-profit organization that works to enhance quality of life by building healthy communities and families through promotion of recreation and parks.(28) They provide a variety of programming and supports. Within the OST context, ARPA's main roles pertain to coordinating training and event conferences for OST staffing and instructors, specifically around HIGH FIVE (13, 22) and Sport for Life Society (29) frameworks to promote high quality recreation and physical literacy for children and youth. Physical literacy is defined as "the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life".(30)

✦ *Alignment with innovative and emerging best practices:*
- ARPA relies on community volunteers and community-based organizations as partners in delivering high quality recreation and sporting OST programming and training. *(Relates*

*to innovative and emerging best practices of "community volunteers are intentionally used", and "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information".)*

- HIGH FIVE offers a Sport Trainer that is designed to teach coaches and trainers how to work with potentially vulnerable children and parents, and to promote relationship building. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "there are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees".)*
- There are HIGH FIVE training modules for OST staff and facilitators that touch on bullying, specifically how to prevent it and design programs so it can be addressed. (*Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "leadership participate in trauma-informed/targeted care training".)*
- ARPA hosts annual training sessions that can enable connections between service providers and organizations, and an opportunity for sharing knowledge and learnings. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information".)*
- Following HIGH FIVE quality guidelines and standards, there are multiple methods and phases of evaluation, including assessment tools for frontline staff and trainers, as well as tools for assessing programs. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "multiple phases of evaluation" and "use both formal and informal evaluation methods".)*

Calgary AfterSchool:
Within the City of Calgary, Calgary AfterSchool is a framework that strives to offer fun, safe and free or minimal cost OST programming and opportunities for children and youth.(31) A collaborative approach has been utilized with community partners since 2009 to enable provision of high-quality programs, opportunities, training, and resources. Partners include the Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Catholic School District, Calgary Centre for Sexuality, Calgary Neighbourhoods, Calgary Recreation, Family and Community Support Services, and the Federation of Calgary Communities.

✦ *Alignment with innovative and emerging best practices:*
- Calgary AfterSchool has recently invited experts from their partners to assist with creating a model to implement trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning into programming, opportunities, and training. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", "leadership participate in trauma-informed/targeted care training", and "purposeful incorporation of social-emotional learning".)*
- There are a variety of training opportunities offered for OST staffing, management, volunteers, etc., including HIGH FIVE training,(22) trauma-informed practices, and cultural awareness training. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "leadership participate in trauma-informed/targeted care training", and "There are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees".)*
- Recently, Calgary AfterSchool has been looking to incorporate training and opportunities to promote positive and healthy mental health practices and supports for children and youth, and their families. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "there are*

*considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees".)*

- Calgary AfterSchool, with key partners, such as the Calgary Centre for Sexuality, offer to children and youth sessions to promote inclusivity, and learn about gender and equality. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", "there are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees", and "purposeful incorporation of social-emotional learning".)*
- A collective impact collaborative approach is used with partners and stakeholders, which includes evaluation and sustainability measures. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", "there are multiple phases of evaluation", and "use of both formal and informal evaluation methods".)*

<u>Ever Active Schools:</u>
Ever Active Schools is a provincial initiative that promotes supportive social and physical environments within schools and communities to enable healthy development of children and youth.(32) Within an OST context, Ever Active Schools chair the Alberta Active After School committee where they have been working to draft, pilot, and implement provincial activity guidelines for afterschool programs. These guidelines were officially launched in Fall 2018.(33) Ever Active Schools works to coordinate provincial efforts for OST programming and opportunities.

✦ *Alignment with innovative and emerging best practices:*
- Ever Active Schools has created a free online training module that is available to any OST staff, management, volunteers, etc. to provide an introduction to activity guidelines for children and youth, as well as to emphasize the importance of implementing physical activity into programming or opportunities. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", and "community volunteers are intentionally used".)*
- Ever Active Schools primarily works with schools and within school environments, but can also coordinate and assist in providing training opportunities within communities, such as community associations and community-based organizations. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is intentional integration of both school and non-school supports", "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", and "community volunteers are intentionally used".)*
- Ever Active Schools enhances what is being offered by a partner through incorporating physical activities that complement the program or opportunity rather than adding additional work or components. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "enhance what works rather than duplicating".)*
- A main role is connecting smaller organizations with larger networks and support systems to enable sharing of ideas and practices. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "proactive sharing of knowledge and information".)*
- The physical activity guidelines include considerations that target those who are more likely to participate in the least amount of activities, such as children and youth with disabilities, low-income families, and girls. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of*

*"there are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees".)*
- Social emotional learning has been incorporated through a physical activity lens. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "purposeful incorporation of social-emotional learning".)*

REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities:
REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities (REACH) is a backbone organization that mobilizes and coordinates community-based organizations and groups to work towards promoting safe communities and social change.(27) REACH offers support and capacity-building to any non-profit organizations that run OST programming and supports for children and youth during the school year or summer months. Together with their partners, REACH works to help vulnerable children and youth develop a sense of community and a sense of belonging through OST programming and opportunities to enable success and healthy development, as well as to create safer communities.

✦ *Alignment with innovative and emerging best practices:*
- Through their work, it has become apparent that vulnerable children come from many different backgrounds, including multi-ethnicity, multicultural, new and settled families. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "there are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees".)*
- Currently many of the partner organizations and programming are focused on newcomers, immigrant and refugee youth. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practice of "there are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees".)*
- Many of the training and capacity-building opportunities are dependent on feedback from partners. For example, recently REACH have been offering courses for OST staff and management to learn mental health first aid, and have also begun training for promoting activities and monitoring the health of children with special needs. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", and "there are considerations for those vulnerable in a specific context – girls, boys, LGBTQ2S, children and youth with disabilities, families facing income and access barriers, immigrants and refugees".)*
- REACH offer an annual conference for front-line summer-time OST staff specifically targeted to those who have never tutored, taught or worked with children and youth. Skills learned include behavior management, bullying and anger management, Indigenous sharing circles, handling disclosure, and conflict resolution. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", "let staffing reflect the diversity of the community", "there is emphasis on Indigenous ways of knowing", and "leadership participate in trauma-informed/targeted care training".)*
- Trauma-informed and self-care training opportunities are coordinated by REACH that are open to all board members, partners and their staff. *(Relates to innovative and emerging best practices of "there is proactive sharing of knowledge and information", and "leadership participate in trauma-informed/targeted care training".)*

**Additional Albertan Organizations Involved With OST:**
Participants of this environmental scan provided recommendations of additional organizations involved with OST programming and opportunities in Alberta. These included Aspen Family and Community Network Society, Bridge Foundation, Calgary Police Services MASST and YARD programming, Carya Society of Calgary , and Two Wheel View in Calgary; and in Edmonton Alberta Centre for Active Living, All in For Youth with the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Multicultural Health Brokers, Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton, Somali Canadian Women & Children Association, and YMCA.

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**Summary of Practice and Environmental Scan Alignment:**
Through aligning environmental scan interview data with innovative and emerging best practices we were able to identify how key organizations in OST approaches and opportunities have implemented these best practices within their various roles and contexts. The information presented in these case studies may assist other organizations involved with community-based OST programming and opportunities.

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## Discussion

**Opportunities:**
Based on project findings, **opportunities** for next steps were identified. Many of these opportunities relate to **'youth and communities helping each other'**; high-level groupings include service-learning and natural supports and both convey volunteering or making use of volunteers.

Each will be described in turn below in terms of:
- what we found in this study;
- what the research says; and
- how the learnings can potentially be incorporated into OST programs and planning.

**Youth and communities helping each other**
**1. Service-learning approaches:**
<u>What we found in this review:</u> Although not a new concept, service-learning (which benefits both the community in terms of service, and youth in terms of learning) was identified as an innovating and emerging best practice for future consideration in OST approaches and opportunities (*Table 3*).

<u>What the research says:</u> Engaging with the community in out-of-school time programs can yield important benefits to both programs and the young people that they serve.(34) Community partnerships can provide leverage in terms of support and resources, and have the potential to reap diverse benefits, from improving participant recruitment and attendance to contributing

volunteers or other resources to programs.(34) There is limited evidence on community engagement in the context of out-of-school time programs; rather, the focus has tended to be on community engagement and volunteer opportunities as part of *in school* curricula, some of which are mandated (e.g., required to graduate), and others that are driven by need/interest.(35) This is seen in both secondary school and university environments.(36, 37)

**The phrase, 'service-learning' has been used to describe the combination of community outreach or service with various learning components, such as reflection opportunities and collaboration**.(38)  As seen in the *in school* literature, with service-learning, students take an active approach in applying knowledge to improve their communities, while enhancing personal development in areas such as character, academics, leadership, and civic responsibility.(39) An emerging body of research highlights the positive impacts of service learning on youth outcomes; a snapshot summary can be found here: https://leduccenter.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl_impacts-on-k12_students.pdf. To relay one example, one study found that high school students who engaged in service-learning were 22% more likely to graduate from college and scored 7% and 6% higher in reading and science achievement, respectively, than students who did not engage in service-learning. Students who participated in service-learning activities in high school were 22% more likely to graduate from college than those who did not participate.(40)

Elements needed to create successful community service approaches, in terms of providing a positive experience for young people and building character include giving responsibility to students, and providing opportunities for problem solving, decision making, and leadership. To achieve desired outcomes, pedagogical and administrative structure is required. For example, for students, clear educational goals, opportunities for reflection and feedback, and explicit linkages to their existing/prior knowledge are tools that help to better understand how their service relates to their community and their own personal development. Sufficient capacity (financial and human resources) is a key feature of a good community service program.(38) One can see how these approaches and elements of service-learning can be applied to the out-of-school time setting.

Other features worthy of mention include service duration, nature of the service work (i.e., direct service or peripheral support), and adult (e.g., parents, volunteers) involvement/buy-in. Direct service (i.e., working directly with clients or in the community) for longer periods of time is most likely to garner long-term benefits.(38) Participation in family volunteering projects is more likely to encourage young people to become involved. Local context and needs are important considerations and service-learning initiatives in afterschool should complement (not duplicate) the school day activities. Academic aspects, as well as social and emotional aspects are important considerations. A Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective, which focuses on competence, character, connection, and contribution can inform civic engagement and service-learning.(39)

Service-learning as a strategy for engaging youth in the non-school hours may be an attractive option for community-based organizations due to the following factors: youth want to be engaged and connected to others, not just 'busy'; communities can prepare youth for life-long success and help build life and academic skills; to decrease youth from engaging in risky behavior; and to meet the needs of the community.(7)

✦ **Service-learning: examples from the US and Canada:**

**US:** A National Service Fellowship project in the US focused on examining community-based organizations using service-learning as a strategy to engage children and youth, aged 5 to 18, during non-school hours. Nine programs that used service-learning were ranked high-quality based on standards in the literature from both service-learning and out-of-school time research. Nine profiles were created based on interview findings, document review, and surveys. Each program profile aligned with one of the nine best practices. <u>The successful practices included: serving a community need; identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives; creating structured opportunities for reflection; including youth voice and leadership; fostering civic responsibility; evaluating the program and activities; building partnerships between youth, parents, schools, and community, as appropriate; fostering positive human relationships; and providing accessible times and places for activities.(7)</u> The nine successful practices resulted in the following recommendations to facilitate service-learning during non-school hours:

- Reconsider resources and support for existing youth programs, to effectively integrate service-learning, as well as other out-of-school time strategies, for a more holistic approach to youth programming.
- Integrate and increase resources for community-based organizations involved in service-learning both during out-of-school time and during the school day.
- Create more funding opportunities for out-of-school time programs, with service-learning as a possible strategy.

**Canada:** The Canadian literature on service-learning mostly focused on initiatives in secondary school or post-secondary schools. For example, key findings from an Ontario secondary school program were that compulsory programs, while attractive, suffered from sustainability and those that lacked structure produced limited gains. Program structure as compared to its mandatory/voluntary nature was more important for effectiveness, defined as improvements in social growth, psychological development, moral judgement, academic learning, and impact on community. <u>Key structural characteristics of school-based programs that benefited students and the community included committed on-site adult supervision, as well as student opportunities for input, opportunities for meaningful work, and opportunities for reflection.</u> However, prediction of future volunteering was less linked to the program as it was to the type of student (i.e., students likely to volunteer regardless of nature of program continued to volunteer).(35, 37)

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<u>How the learnings can potentially be incorporated into OST approaches and planning:</u>
Adopting a service-learning approach into OST contexts can enhance existing approaches, creating additional learning opportunities for youth and skill building. Incorporating elements of successful service-learning approaches in the OST domain can benefit both youth and the communities they serve.

**2. Natural Supports**

What we found in this study: Findings from the evidence synthesis showed that supportive, responsive relationships, both with peers and adults, are key features of successful OST approaches and opportunities (Table 3). These relationships can be informal or formal. The term, natural supports, was conspicuously absent as there was only indirect evidence that informal relationships were evaluated or considered. More emphasis was placed on the influence of formal relationships, such as those between staff and children, suggesting an opportunity to explicitly link natural supports into the OST sphere.

What the research says:
Recent foci in Alberta's public health sector are the advancement of interventions and supports to mitigate the impact of adversity and promote resilience in children, youth and their families.(15, 24, 41, 42) Resilience is "both the capacity of the individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources to sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways".(43) Academics and organizations have looked to promote resilience within individual, family and community settings, and have found that they are linked since factors that promote individual resilience are oftentimes contextually sensitive.(44) Children and youth are less likely to participate in high-risk behaviors, such as substance abuse and violence, with supportive family and community environments.(45-47) For example, youth involved with the child welfare system who reported to have more protective adult relationships were 13% less likely to participate in antisocial behaviours, such as assault, theft and property damage, than youth with less protective relationships.(48) Targeting families and communities has been identified as an opportunity to prevent and mitigate the effects of adversity.

✦ **Strategies to build resilience and social connections**
Organizations, including the Calgary Change Collective, a collaborative of non-profit organizations that work to promote family and community well-being, and the Anne E. Casey Foundation have identified strategies that prioritize supportive physical and social environments for children and youth, thus seeking to optimize resilience and well-being.(15, 49) One key strategy is the creation and promotion of informal reciprocal relationships and associations, referred to as natural supports.(15) Natural supports are often synonymous with social connections, and can consist of both close relationships, such as family and friends, and broader associations, such as neighbours, recreation representatives, and sporting coaches. Social connections have been shown to be key for children and youth because they can counteract adverse home, school or community environments, and enable opportunities for success.(50, 51)

According to research gathered and presented by the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, the most common factor among resilient children is the presence of at least one stable and supportive relationship with a parent, caregiver, or other dedicated adult.(52) Therefore, not only do social connections improve well-being for children, they provide a mechanism for parents, caregivers, teachers, coaches, etc. to better support children and youth themselves. Any adult, not just parents, can enable creation of these informal relationships by

providing social and emotional support. Non-parental caring adults can become contextual resources for children and youth to enable building of strengths and life skills.(53, 54) For example, Hurd and Zimmerman found in a longitudinal study that African American adolescents who had a non-parental caring adult as a natural mentor had gradual decreases of depressive symptoms in comparison to those who did not have this support.(55)

Academic literature shows that non-parental caring adults with warm, accepting and stable relationship attributes can contribute to healthier behavioral and psychosocial development in children and youth.(15, 55, 56) For example, a study by Woolley and Bowen examined the relationship between supportive adults and adolescent school engagement, which was broken down into psychological components, such as interest and connectedness, and behavioral components, such as participation in activities and attendance. Supportive adults were associated with 9% of the variance in adolescent school engagement. They found that supportive adults reduced risks associated with demographics (i.e. gender and SES) and the environment (i.e. threats to safety and high-risk peers) by approximately 50%. Furthermore, from these findings, Woolley and Bowen suggest that by either decreasing environmental risks, or increasing the number of supportive relationships in the lives of adolescents, the achievement gaps between low and high risk students would decrease.(57) More research is needed to identify how non-parental supportive adults within neighbourhood or community settings can impact specific school outcomes, such as attendance and achievement, in children and youth.

There is a significant amount of literature that looks at the effects of social connections on mental and physical health, and behaviour development.(46, 58-62) Social isolation in fact has been shown to have comparable associated mortality risk with well-established factors, including physical activity and obesity.(63) Due to the wide range of health implications and outcomes that can be impacted by social connectivity, this has become an area of interest for organizations, community planners, and policy-makers.(60, 64, 65) For instance, these supports and networks are key to development of healthy coping skills by assisting with buffering everyday stressors.(58) Furthermore, these skills can empower children and youth to subsequently create naturally supportive and healthy relationships, and may enable them to overcome the effects of adverse exposures.(66-69)

✦ **Mentoring**

Mentoring is an exemplar of a natural support. In fact, naturally occurring relationships, or natural supports, can account for approximately 70% of mentoring relationships that adults report having in their roles as coaches, neighbours, extended family members, etc.(70) With an adult mentor, youth at risk are more likely to develop healthy coping skills,(71) and also have higher enrollment (45%) in post-secondary education in comparison to un-mentored peers (20%).(72) A systematic review by Hahn et al. found that school mentoring and counseling programs were at least 2 times more effective at increasing youth high school completion compared to schools not offering those programs.(73)

Mentoring is not a new concept. Over a decade ago, a review of the literature on connectedness of youth and adults (teachers, mentors, volunteers) provided evidence that the positive relationships youth form with non-parental adults improve their health and well-being. Specific to OST programs, the review identified effective practices such as enabling staff and

volunteers to interact in a caring and respectful manner, which in turn promoted the youth's desire to learn, and provided space and time to socialize.(74) Better quality relationships and increased adult:youth ratios were positively linked to greater participation and increased satisfaction with the programs.

A more recent systematic review and meta-analysis of mentoring programs found support for modest-moderate efficacy of mentoring interventions on youth outcomes including school, cognitive, health, psychological, and social outcomes. This review, and a Canadian report on the characteristics and effectiveness of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) mentoring programs, emphasized that further research is needed to more precisely determine which program practices are most effective for which populations of mentors and youth, and for which particular youth outcomes. The Canadian report presented findings of a five-year longitudinal study on BBBS mentoring programs. The aim was to better understand the mentoring experience of youth and the contribution of the BBBS mentoring programs to positive youth development. Mentor engagement and support, and overall relationship quality were the strongest and most consistent predictors of a range of children's developmental outcomes.(75)  Additional details can be found here: https://www.bigbrothersvancouver.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Mentoring-Relastionships-Study-REPORT-June-13-2014.pdf

How the learnings can potentially be incorporated into OST approaches and planning:
Building resilience and supportive relationships are key components to positive youth development and lifelong well-being. Mentoring, and natural supports in general, is but one important consideration for a holistic, innovative OST approach. Opportunities for those working in the OST area are explicit and intentional adoption of practices and policies that promote natural supports and adult-youth connectedness (e.g., mentors, community volunteers in programming). These practices can enhance existing quality approaches.

**Summary of Opportunities:**
Exemplar strategies reflective of **youth and communities working together** include service-learning and promotion of natural supports. These are opportunities to explore in OST approaches and planning, enhancing current practice. Adoption of some or all aspects of these strategies in OST approaches may lead to more holistic initiatives. Evaluation of these strategies specific to OST is encouraged

**Next steps and Considerations:**

Recommendations for next steps were informed by the findings, expertise of the research team, ACES and Natural Supports literature, and stakeholder input:

1. Intentional adoption of innovative practices that engage communities and children/youth into OST approaches. These can include:
    a. using volunteers,
    b. promoting service-learning activities,
    c. using creative/less-structured practices,
    d. using blended supervision contexts (e.g., indirect supervision for recreational activities, direct supervision for homework)
    e. providing opportunities to children and youth for meaningful work,
    f. providing opportunities for children/youth to make meaningful connections with non-parental adults and peers,
    g. providing tailored support for those who are potentially vulnerable,
    h. involving participants and members of the community in planning, decision-making, and evaluation

2. Evidence on characteristics of quality OST approaches can inform innovation:
    a. Information and research on the influence of unstructured, volunteer, ad hoc out of school time approaches are seriously lacking
    b. Implementation and testing of innovative approaches mentioned above in (1) in real-world settings are essential
    c. There is a great need for rigorous and methodologically sound evaluation approaches appropriate to the community setting
    d. Multiple levels of evaluation, (e.g. outcome evaluation, such as child and youth skill development; and process evaluation, such as intended implementation) are important considerations.(76) A population health approach to evaluation is recommended (77)
    e. A better understanding on dosage of activities (e.g., frequency, intensity) is required (78)
    f. A better understanding on the format of the program/approach beyond the critical hours (e.g., summer, Professional Development days, weekends) is required
    g. A better understanding on the role of technology and social media in OST approaches is required; examples include Growing Up Digital,(79) and Alliance Afterschool (80)
    h. Information on how implementation and fidelity influence outcomes is required.

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Appendix 1 – The 5 Gold Standard Frameworks key characteristics

Appendix 2 - Environmental scan semi-structured interview guide

Appendix 3 – The evidence sources and characteristics, excluding the 5 gold standard frameworks, and ACEs and Natural Supports documents

Appendix 4 – Template and data from extraction of best practices from each evidence source

Appendix 5 – AACODS (Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date and Significance) grey literature in health checklist for quality appraisal (adapted by NICE) for all evidence sources

Appendix 6 - SUMMARY: An environmental scan of perceptions and practices of community-based natural supports, including key facilitators and barriers identified by City of Calgary Community Social Workers.

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**Appendix 1**

**The 5 Gold Standard Frameworks key characteristics**

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|---|---|---|
| Alberta Accreditation Standards (17) | Alberta child care accreditation promotes excellence in child care settings and helps families choose the best care for their children. The accreditation standards are based on current research and leading practices focusing on outcomes related to children, staff, families, and communities. | **Children:** <br> **1. Positive, supportive relationships and enriched physical and emotional environments foster children's well-being and development.** <br> 1.1 Child care programs promote and nurture children's positive sense of self and belonging through supportive relationships and secure emotional attachments. <br> 1.2 Child care professionals demonstrate respectful, positive interactions with children and guide them within a caring and nurturing environment. |

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|---|---|---|
| | | 1.3 Child care programs incorporate well-designed physical indoor learning environments to foster the optimal development in children. |
| | | 1.4 Children's development is supported through outdoor environments with active play spaces and opportunities to experience and learn about the natural world. |
| | | **2. Program planning and practices support every child's optimal development in an inclusive early learning and care environment that incorporates the value and importance of play.** |
| | | 2.1 Child care programs incorporate inclusive approaches that respect children's diversity and value children's individual needs and backgrounds. |
| | | 2.2 Child care programs promote physical wellness in all children and incorporate physical literacy in everyday programming. |
| | | 2.3 Child care programs promote competence, active exploration, and learning through play. |
| | | 2.4 Child care programs use observation, recording, and documentation to plan the program based on the needs, abilities, and interests of children and their experiences with families and communities. |
| | | **Families:** |
| | | **3. Relationships with families are supportive and respectful.** |
| | | 3.1 Child care programs work in partnership with families and respect their beliefs and expertise in their child-rearing role as primary caregivers. |
| | | 3.2 Child care programs implement clear, simple practices that promote communication and regular exchange of information with families. |
| | | 3.3 Child care programs support families through parental involvement, sharing of resources, and providing information regarding additional supports for their children. |
| | | **Staff:** |
| | | **4. Child care programs create a supportive work environment to maintain a team of qualified child care professionals and assist them in providing** |

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|---|---|---|
| | | **high quality child care services through program philosophy, policies, procedures, and practices.** 4.1 Child care programs have clear and current statements of program philosophy, policies, goals, and strategies in place to assist child care professionals in providing quality care. 4.2 Child care programs have well-defined human resource and management practices to support a team of qualified child care professionals. 4.3 Child care programs demonstrate a positive workplace environment and organizational culture that support the well-being and educational development of child care professionals. **Communities:** **5. Child care programs collaborate with community organizations and services to respond to the needs of children and families they serve.** 5.1 Child care programs are responsive to the diverse needs of the children and families they serve. 5.2 Child care programs establish working relationships with organizations and services within the community. 5.3 Child care programs have a clearly defined process for involving community stakeholders. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** **6. Continuous quality improvement is demonstrated through ongoing self-monitoring and evaluation processes.** 6.1 Child care programs engage in ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes involving administrative staff, families, child care professionals, and other stakeholders to support continuous quality improvement. 6.2 Child care programs use a Quality Enhancement Plan to set program goals annually. 6.3 Child care programs have sound administrative policies and procedures in place to support quality services. |
| CMEC Early Learning and | To present a pan-Canadian vision for early learning, to foster continuity across | The following principles set out a shared understanding of children's learning and development for children from birth to eight years |

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|---|---|---|
| Development Framework (18) | jurisdictions and across all settings that provide education and care for children from birth to eight years of age, including preschool and formal schooling environments. To provide common understandings of a continuum of learning and development and shared values regarding what is most important in the early years. To serve as a resource to support decision-making and the development of policies, initiatives and learning approaches by Ministries of Education and their early childhood education and care partners that enhance the quality and continuity of experiences for children and their families in the early years and beyond. | old. They are based on evidence from diverse fields of study and support continuity of approaches and connections across early years and education settings and will serve as a guide to policy and curriculum development and, ultimately, help support children's transitions into school. Many of these same principles also hold true for education beyond the early years.<br><br>1. **The child is integral to policy and program development.**<br>2. **The family as central to a child's development.**<br>3. **Honouring the diversity of children and families is integral to equity and inclusion.**<br>4. **Safe, healthy and engaging environments shape lifelong learning, development, behaviour, health and well-being.**<br>5. **Learning through play capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.**<br>6. **The educator, or the extended family as educator, is central to supporting learning and development through responsive and caring relationships.** |
| Framework for selecting best practices in public health: a systematic literature review (19) | To develop a scientifically sound and feasible framework for the selection of best practices in public health. | Proposed framework for selection of best practices in public health.<br>**Context**<br>1. **Relevant**:<br>  • Relevant to the needs of the community (conduct problem analysis and needs assessment of the community prior to programme development; consider perspectives of the target group and stakeholders)<br>  • Relevant to the setting of the community (describe characteristics of the community and context)<br>**Process**<br>2. **Engage the community (community participation)**: |

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|---|---|---|
| | | <ul><li>Describe who and how members of the community are involved</li><li>Empower the community</li><li>Achieve synergy through community participation in programme development and implementation</li></ul>**3. Involve the right stakeholders (stakeholder collaboration)**<ul><li>Ensure appropriate representation of relevant stakeholders</li><li>Describe who and how stakeholders are involved</li><li>Achieve synergy through stakeholder collaboration</li></ul>**4. Ethically sound**<ul><li>Ensure benefits outweigh harm to individuals and community</li><li>Distribute access, financing, benefits and harms equitably</li><li>Demonstrate respect for individual autonomy and privacy</li><li>Consider vulnerable groups</li><li>Ensure accountability to community</li><li>Demonstrate respect for local norms and cultures</li></ul>**5. Replicable**<ul><li>Require expertise and resources that are generalizable to other settings</li></ul>**Outcomes**<br>**6. Effective**<ul><li>Achieve desirable outcomes and improve public health</li><li>Describe types of supporting evidence available</li></ul>**7. Efficient**<ul><li>Describe physical, financial and technical resources used</li><li>Use locally accessible resources</li><li>Demonstrate minimization of resource use and wastage</li></ul> |

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Describe types of supporting evidence available<br>**8. Sustainable**<br>• Demonstrate (potential of) continuation of programme activities through local ownership or institutionalization<br>• Demonstrate (potential of) continuation of benefits of programme<br>• Demonstrate (potential of) continuation of community and organizational capacity to delivery programme, including source of funding in the long run<br>• State duration of programme since start of implementation |
| My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia (20) | It represents Australia's first national framework for school age care to be used by school age care educators, and aims to extend and enrich children's wellbeing and development in school age care settings. | **Principles:**<br>Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; Partnerships; High expectations and equity; Respect for diversity; Ongoing learning and reflective practice.<br>**Practice:**<br>Adopting holistic approaches; Collaborating with children; Planning and implementing play and leisure activities; Acting with intentionality; Creating physical and social school age care environments that have a positive impact on children's development, wellbeing and community-building; Valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families; Providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transition; Using reflection and documentation about children's wellbeing and learning to inform and evaluate programs and to support children in achieving outcomes.<br>**Outcomes:**<br>Children have a strong sense of identity; Children are connected with and contribute to their world; Children have a strong sense of wellbeing; Children |

| Framework | Purpose | Guiding Principles Description |
|-----------|---------|-------------------------------|
|           |         | are confident and involved learners; Children are effective communicators. |
| SAFE (21) | Effective approaches to skills development are sequential, active, focused and explicit. Knowing this, we hypothesized that programs that used all four approaches to promote youths' personal and social skills would be more successful than those that did not, and we developed a method to capture the application of these evidence-based approaches. In other words, it is the combination of both training process (i.e., sequential and active) and program content (i.e., focused and explicit) that leads to positive results. | Only those programs that followed four evidence-based training approaches in their program components devoted to skill development produced significant changes on any outcomes. Specifically, effective programs had skill-development activities that were **sequential, active, focused, and explicit**. These four features have been important in a variety of other skill-oriented interventions for children and adolescents. **To improve youths' personal and social skills, programs must devote sufficient time to skill enhancement, be explicit about what they wish to achieve, use activities that are coordinated and sequenced to achieve their purpose, and require active involvement on the part of participants** |

**Appendix 2**

**Environmental scan semi-structured interview guide**

**Objective:**
We are conducting an environmental scan of agencies and organizations in Alberta to identify Out-of-School Time (OST) programming characteristics, barriers and facilitators, sustainability, evaluation and future directions. The information gathered will be used to address an identified gap in programming for children between the ages of 6 and 12 years by informing a pilot project sponsored by the Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters Edmonton and Area.

**Questions:**

1. <u>Program demographics</u>:

   What organization do you work with?

   What type of program do you offer? What is it called?

   How long has your program been available?

   What is your program focus? Target age or population?

   When is your program offered (e.g. specific times of year, schooldays, summer)?

   Where does your program generally take place (e.g. schools, community association buildings, organization buildings)?

   Would you consider your program for a universal or targeted population? Do you have programming considerations for specific populations (e.g. LGBTQ2S, Indigenous, specific age groups)? Vulnerable groups?

   What is the objective of your program?

2. <u>Program best practices, facilitators and barriers</u>:

   Is your program aligned with specific best practices or frameworks? If so, which ones?

Do you have ongoing training for your staff? What are the main training areas that your program focuses on (e.g. child development, conflict resolution, staff-student interactions)?

Does your program have any considerations or training for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma, or trauma-informed practice? If yes, what does this entail?

Does your program aim to actively promote natural supports, which are informal, mutual relationships and connections? Is there any training for staff to enable creation of these natural supports? If yes, what does this entail?

What are your key program outcomes?

What are the main facilitators and barriers to achieving these program outcomes?

Is there any consideration of social media and technology in your program?

3. Program sustainability and evaluation:

What efforts do you make in your program regarding sustainability?

Does your organization undertake program evaluation? What does this generally entail? Formal or informal?

4. Future directions and closing questions:

What do you believe are the future directions for your program? For OST programming in general?

Do you have any recommendations on who should we connect with next?

Do you have anything else to add on OST programming?

**Thank you for your participation!**

If you would like additional information or have any questions, please email Jessica Walsh at jlawalsh@ucalgary.ca.

# Appendix 3

**The evidence sources and characteristics, excluding the 5 gold standard frameworks, and ACEs and Natural Supports documents**

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Calgary AfterSchool current state report, and 2019-2025 strategic plan (81, 82) | 2019 | AB | Calgary AfterSchool with the City of Calgary | To provide no-cost after-school programming and services for children and youth | Grades 1-12; primarily targeted to children <13 years of age | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Better practices review: Barriers and facilitators, staff roles and responsibilities, and essential components for developing, implanting, and sustaining school health promotion initiatives (83) | 2017 | AB | Alberta Health Services | Review of academic and grey literature to identify 1) barriers and facilitators to effective development and implementation of school health promotion initiatives; 2) recommended roles and responsibilities of school nurses and school health promotion staff; and 3) essential components for effective development and implementation of school health promotion initiatives. | School age children | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive child and youth development: Research brief 1 (84) | 2014 | AB | Family and Community Support Services with the City of Calgary | Intended to provide guidance to organizations and funders working to increase social inclusion among vulnerable Calgarians, and strengthen neighborhoods by identifying key characteristics of programming, including after-school. | Not specified | Yes |
| Developing after-school partnerships and programs: A resource guide for community groups (85) | 2012 | AB | Alberta Recreation and Parks Association | Is a resource guide for community groups who have no access to best practices in larger, established, and experienced agencies | Not specified | Partially – no referencing, and limitations not clearly stated |
| Program design: A literature review of best practices (86) | 2011 | AB | United Way of Calgary and Area | To examine best practices around the critical elements of program design within the human services field. Does not have an out-of-school focus. | Not specified | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Afterschool recreation initiatives (13) | 2009 | AB | Alberta Recreation and Parks Association | To examine the state of afterschool recreation programming and to identify opportunities for engaging recreation practitioners and allied stakeholders in developing a provincial strategy for action. | Children and youth | Yes |
| After school for all! A guide to building programs were all children get to be active, creative, supported by peers and caring adults: Learnings from British Columbia's After School Sport and Arts Initiative (87) | 2016 | BC | After School Sport and Arts Initiative (ASSAI) | To highlight strategies and share key features of successful after school programs that have been learned through the ASSAI to enable the design and delivery of programs that remove barriers and promote participation for all. | Children and youth | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Addressing the after-school hours: An environmental scan of after-school programming outside of licensed childcare for children aged 6 to 12 in BC (4) | 2010 | BC | BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) | To explore programming for after school hours for middle childhood due to BCRPA's direct connection with communities and recreation professionals across BC. | 6 to 12 years | Yes |
| The Coalition's 20 best practices: A program development toolkit (88) | No date | MB | Coalition of Community-based Youth Serving Agencies | To provide tools for program assessment and improvement to provide better service to youth. Does not have an out-of-school focus. | Youth | Partially – no date |
| Before-and-after school programs (Kindergarten - Grade 6): Policies and guidelines for school boards (89) | 2018 | ON | Ministry of Education with the Government of Ontario | Summarizes provisions set out in the Education Act and regulations for before and after-school programs. | Kindergarten to Grade 6 | Yes |
| Gearing up: A strategic framework to help Ontario middle years children thrive (90) | 2017 | ON | Ministry of Children and Youth Services with the Government of Ontario | A framework to promote the well-being of children between 6 and 12 years of age. Does not have an out-of-school focus. | 6 to 12 years | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Best practices in after-school programing for secondary school students (91) | 2016 | ON | Ontario Institute for Studies in Education with the University of Toronto | To examine the credibility and relevance of current literature, and identify best practices, gaps, limitations in the research base for effective after-school programs. | Secondary school children | Yes |
| The RBC Foundation after-school programs evaluation (92) | 2013 | ON | Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work with the University of Toronto | To examine the successes and challenges of offering after-school programs in Canada by completing a content analysis of annual program evaluation reports submitted to RBC grant managers to identify key outcomes and benefits, and to conduct interviews and focus groups to explore perspectives of "what works" and what may serve as barriers. | Not specified | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active after school programs for girls and young women: Policy and recommendations (93) | 2012 | ON | Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport Physical Activity | Practitioners and decision-makers involved in delivering active after school programs will use this policy to guide their program design, with the aim of meeting the needs of girls and young women in the 3-6pm time period. | Not specified | Partially – no referencing and limitations not clearly stated |
| Making a difference: Research summary for the development and implementation of HIGH FIVE (94) | 2012 | ON | Parks and Recreation Ontario | To provide a history of the development and evolution of HIGH FIVE, present evidence-based research on the impact of HIGH FIVE, and introduce new cutting-edge training. | 6 to 12 years | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| An opportunity for every child: Realizing the potential of after-school programming for children ages 6-12 in Toronto (95) | 2011 | ON | Children's Services Division, and Parks, Forestry and Recreation with the City of Toronto | To promote the Middle Childhood Strategy to provide children with experiences that promote their chances of developing into healthy, well-adjusted and productive adults. This was accomplished by completing a needs assessment, and an environmental scan around after school programming. | 6 to 12 years | Yes |
| Adverse childhood experiences and the school-age population: Implications for child care policy and out-of-school time programs† (96) | 2019 | USA | National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment | To identify how out-of-school time programs can play a role in mitigations and prevention of ACEs | School age children | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LA's best protective factors afterschool project: Promising practices for building protective and promotive factors to support positive youth development in afterschool (97) | 2018 | USA | Claremont Evaluation Center at the Claremont Graduate University | To demonstrate through a comprehensive review of academic research how afterschool programs can build protective and promotive factors associated with supporting positive development in youth. | Youth | Yes |
| Promoting social and emotional learning in the middle and high school years† (98) | 2017 | USA | Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center with the Pennsylvania State University | An overview of frameworks that define social-emotional competence, and a review of current school-based programs designed to promote social-emotional learning in middle and high school students. | Middle and high school students | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACT Now: Afterschool for children and teens: Illinois state afterschool quality standards (99) | 2016 | USA | ACT Now Coalition | A statewide coalition that works to ensure that young people in Illinois have access to quality, affordable afterschool and youth development programs. | 5 years to young adult | Yes |
| How is the afterschool field defining program quality? A review of effective program practices and definitions of program quality (100) | 2009 | USA | University of Connecticut Center for Applied Research in Human Development | To define program quality, and then a review assessing effectiveness of afterschool programming for 3 key outcomes: academic, socioemotional development and healthy behaviours | Youth | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Child trauma toolkit for educators†(101) | 2008 | USA | National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee | A toolkit enabling educators to identify children and youth impacted by trauma or traumatic grief, providing opportunities for what educators and parents can do to help, and including a self-care checklist. | Kindergarten to Grade 12 | Yes |
| The quality of school-age child care in after-school settings (102) | 2007 | USA | Harvard Family Research Project | To identify the features of high-quality after-school settings, and to link high program quality to positive developmental outcomes. It also reviews current practice in program quality assessment, and offers policy considerations. | School age children | Yes |

| Document Title | Date of Publication | Province or Country | Organization | Focus of Report | Target Age | Quality* - Fully meets criteria? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Siolta: The national quality framework for early childhood education (103) | 2017 | Ireland | Department of Education and Skills | A Framework to support practitioners and their colleagues who work with young children from birth to six years to assist with the provision of quality early education to improve and enrich young children's early, and arguably most critical, life experiences. | Birth to 6 years | Partially – no referencing and limitations not clearly stated |

*Quality was assessed to identify if the study or report fully met the AACODS criteria (Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date, Significance).

† These sources were specific to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed practices, or social-emotional learning (SEL), and were therefore not included in the evidence synthesis, but may help inform OST programming and opportunities.

# Appendix 4

**Template and data from extraction of best practices from each evidence source**

| Document Title | Best practices or recommendations for OST programming and opportunities |
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| Calgary AfterSchool 2019 current state report, 2019-2025 strategic plan (81, 82) | CAS Programming Principles:<br>- Target age group: 6-18years<br>- Demand - provide must have clear evidence of a sustainable (8mo-1yr) demand for after-school programming<br>- Hours - provide programs Mon-Sun during school year when children and youth are not in school<br>- Readiness - demonstrate trained staff available in appropriate ratio for number of participants, suitable facilities and rental or lease arrangements in place for duration of program, evidence of support from school administration or facility manager<br>- Frequency - programs fun a minimum of 2 days a week during school year<br>- Accessibility - organization must have clearly articulated a publicly visible plan to ensure financial barriers to participating in CAS programs are minimized or eliminated (subsidy)<br>- Financial Planning - organization must be able to provide a balanced budget demonstrating adequate resources and income.<br>Quality Principles:<br>- SEL/SAFE - incorporate and show how SAFE principles and core principles of social emotional learning in planning and delivery of programs<br>- Staff training - minimum, must have the requisite safety training and current security check<br>- Inclusion - written policy and strategy in place to support the inclusion of all children and youth<br>- Data and monitoring - measurement tools, formats and timelines to provide basic data on participation and participants<br>- Participant retention - strategy in place to support children and youth that are facing barriers<br>Engagement Principles:<br>- Evidence and evolving best practice - commitment to using good evidence and available data to align programs and services with best evolving practices<br>- Training - help identify the kinds of professional development opportunities. At least one specific training initiative annually.<br>- Organizational commitment - partner agencies staff are expected to participate in, and contribute to the work of the leadership group, CAS membership and other committees or task groups, created to support the work of CAS<br>- Sharing expertise - agencies or individuals that have a particular focus, capacity or skill that is identified as a learning opportunity will be expected to share with knowledge with other members when requested - sharing best practice examples and material provided to local agencies.<br>Communications - responsibility to support efforts to communicate and promote the value and outcomes of after-school programming. Whenever possible, the genuine voice of children, youth and parents should be given priority. Responsible for their own media or communication efforts. |

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| | Common Evaluation Methods: Gather, review and assess evaluation tools/methods utilized by CAS agencies and required by funders. Identify key outcomes of CAS programs. Conduct research into other evaluation methods. Develop evaluation tool and present for comment to other agencies and funders. Finalize draft tool and beta test with some agency programs (include difference types of programs). Train staff and agencies on implementation of evaluation tool. Evaluation of the evaluation tool - one year out |
| Better practices review: Barriers and facilitators, staff roles and responsibilities, and essential components for developing, implementing, and sustaining school health promotion initiatives (83) | · High-level components for school health promotion initiatives: leadership, collaboration, student involvement, shared vision and goals, equity, sustainability, evidence-based and culturally appropriate approaches and resources, professional development<br>· Operational considerations for school health promotion initiatives: communication mechanisms, clear roles and responsibilities, accountabilities and reporting structures, project management, performance measurement and evaluation, dedicated human resources<br>· Important considerations for implementing school health programs in rural schools: 1) obtain administrator and teacher buy-in. 2) identify true, strong, effective leaders to initiate and motivate others to support program implementation. 3) focus on desired outcomes, with sometimes require discussion and compromise. All those involved should have a common goal. 4) Plan for sustainability from the beginning. |
| Positive child and youth development: Research brief 1 (84) | There is a section on the nine characteristics of effective prevention programming for children and youth (based on results of a review of reviews by researchers in child and youth programming) 1. pgms are theory driven; 2. pgms are comprehensive, using multiple strategies and engage the system; 3. pgms use varied teaching methods; 4. a sufficient dose of programming is provided; 5. pgms are appropriately timed; 6. pgms provide exposure to adults and peers in ways that promote strong relationships and support positive outcomes (NS!!!); 7. pgms are socio-culturally relevant and include the target pop in planning and implementation; 8. pgms track and measure outcomes, which requires clear goals and objectives and their measurement; 9. pgms employ well-trained staff to implement and deliver the pgm. Recommendations from the research on afterschool programming - in general, unstructured pgms can promote negative outcomes. Adoption of SAFE principles in programming are linked to quality programs; all 4 principles need to be adopted. In terms of sufficient dose - a general rule of thumb from the research is somewhere between 50-100 days of programming or at least 100 hours of programming. Yet required dose likely depends on a number of factors such as outcomes targeted, participant's pre-pgm competencies, nature and intensity of the pgm itself. Research suggests that occasional participation unlikely to be effective; attendance 4-5 times per week linked to better outcomes compared to those unsupervised; intensity of participation might matter more than duration. No fast and hard directive - evidence is mixed and there are many factors to consider. |

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| Developing afterschool partnerships and programs: A resource guide for community groups (85) | Research suggests that there are three primary factors that are critical to achieve positive outcomes: Access and sustained participation in the program; quality programming and staffing; promoting strong partnerships among the program. Best practice analysis suggests key principles that can assure better quality programs likely to produce measurable outcomes. These are the SAFE principles. |
| Program design - A literature review of best practices (86) | Program Design Best Practices - effective programs: are theory driven, are designed using a collaborative approach with input from all relevant stakeholders, are compatible and comprehensive, are contextually and environmentally based, specify the services phases and client pathways, are accessible, reach participants when they are ready to change, are of appropriate dosage and intensity, are developmentally appropriate, have well-trained and committed staff, use a strengths-based approach, are designed for evaluation and evaluative learning. NOT OST FOCUS |
| Afterschool recreation initiatives (13) | In research, case studies and interviews, the following key elements surfaced repeatedly as best practices in afterschool programming and infrastructure. Frontline programming and delivery: 1. caring, committed adults; 2. qualified, well-paid stable staff; 3. purposeful, organized and varied activities; 4. age-appropriate activities for youth as well as children; 5. community engagement; 6. affordable and accessible. Supportive infrastructure: 1. enabling public policy and sustained funding; 2. enhance what works rather than duplicating; 3. strong partnerships and network; 3. recreation as a key pgm component. In results section: for children aged 6-12, it is especially important that afterschool programs not simply feel like an extension of the classroom. To appeal to this group, pgms must be accessible, varied and relevant, combining elements of both learning and play |
| After school for all! A guide to building programs were all children get to be active, creative, supported by peers and caring adults: Learnings from British Columbia's After School Sport and | 1. School-based. A. Favour activities that can be delivered at school B. maintain communication between the pgm and the rest of the school; 2.  High Quality. A. Build your staff team (different roles and responsibilities like pgm coordinator, person of rapport or a relationship builder, pgm leader). B. deliver engaging pgm content (8 key questions - see page 14). C. Provide Healthy Snacks (key strategies for providing healthy snacks and fostering healthy eating practices - partnership, teaching/role modelling, sharing, leadership). D. Maintain a safe environment - pay attention to staff qualifications, policies and protocols, and facilities and supervision; 3. Accessible. A. Foster relationships and trust. B. Build Community (for more resources see High Five). c. Use strategies to deal with challenging behaviours (strategies include: establish ground rules, establish yourself, be compassionate with the kid and firm the behaviour, contain the problem behaviour, don't take it personally). D. Promote Maximum participation. E. Support Children with Diverse Abilities. F. Create Policies and protocols that work for everyone. G. Reach out to children and parents/caregivers (inviting children, engaging with parents); 4. Capacity Building (continuous learning and improvement). A. Support Leadership Development and Training (have team building considerations, identify training needs and provide training opportunities). B. Commit to ongoing evaluation and assessment (Four main steps: Identify the goals of your pgm, collect information, assess and reflect, share the information). C. Spread the Word. D. Access External Resources and Support. E. Share Leadership and Develop Partnerships (involving the broader community in the |

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| Arts Initiative (87) | pgm...partnerships can enrich your pgm by helping you leverage community resources and providing an opportunity for children to connect to the broader community). Report discusses elements of successful partnerships on page 30. See Appendix 2 and 3 for summary breakdowns. |
| Addressing the after-school hours: An environmental scan of after-school programming outside of licensed childcare for children aged 6 to 12 in BC (4) | · Key components to a good after-school program: safe, accessible, affordable, of high quality, developmentally-appropriate, intentional, appropriately structured, offer opportunities for skill-building and provide the opportunity for mastery, support positive peer relations, offer opportunities for physical activity, supported by caring trained and qualified staff, provide a wide range of activities, encourage connection to community including family and school<br>· Environmental scan promising practices identified: 1) collaborative models located within communities, 2) dynamic and responsive to children's and community needs, 3) supported by a somewhat stable funding source, 4) reliant on evidence-based programming |
| The Coalition's 20 best practices: A program development tool kit (88) | ·Program Administration: 1) Strategic plan (includes mission statement, goals, objectives, and activities, focusing on youth and the community). 2) Agency leadership (board and management provide competent, engaged, stable and accountable leadership). 3) Financial management (stable funding, ensures financial accountability and manages its resources responsibly). 4) Communication strategy (plan in place to maintain effective internal and external communication). 5) Evaluation (program and staff are regularly evaluated through formal and informal methods). 6) Staffing (recruits, manages and supports a staff team that delivers high quality programs for youth). 7) Professional development (committed to enhancing its "people power" through professional development). 8) Group size and ratios (small group sizes and low adult-youth ratios). 9) Volunteers (attracts and makes effective use of community volunteers). 10) Pro-active in working to engage parents and families in your programs through outreach activities.<br>· Program Design and Delivery: 11) Recreation (offer fun and positive recreational opportunities responsive to the interests of youth in the community). 12) Accessibility (accessible to youth in terms of location, schedule and cost). 13) Environment (staff, facilities, and activities all contribute to making the program site a safe, welcoming and positive environment). 14) Behavior management (sets out simple, clear, effective rules for participants with high expectations for appropriate behaviour). 15) Relationships (build relationships among youth and positive adult role models, mentors and peers). 16) Youth input (youth have meaningful role in shaping programs).17) Learning (provide opportunities for youth to gain knowledge and develop new skills). 18) New experiences (expose youth to experiences and opportunities that are otherwise not available to them). 19) Achievement and support (activities are designed for success; youth are presented with stimulating yet attainable challenges in a supportive environment). 20) Links and integration (integrated with a holistic, linked network of community services for youth). NOT OST FOCUS |

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| Before-and-after school programs (Kindergarten - Grade 6): Policies and guidelines for school boards (89) | School-board operated programs are guided by these principles: View of the child (allowing children to exercise choice and enabling individual abilities and interests); positive interactions (connections with peers and staff, engage in independent activities, able to make positive contributions to group and community); developmentally responsive (support physical and mental health and wellness, rooted in understanding of child development and broader contexts within which development is happening); safe, inclusive spaces. Staffing ratios (15:1 max); staff qualifications and adult supervision; active play (min 30 mins in daily programming); outdoor play; optional activities and programs (may wish to offer specific programming based on needs and interests of the community and program participants); developmentally responsive spaces |
| Gearing Up - A strategic framework to help Ontario middle years children thrive (90) | · Vision = all middle children thrive as individuals and as members of their families and communities <br> · Guiding Principles: 1) Establish a balanced, holistic and strengths-based approach to child development. 2) Target support to those who need it. 3) Collaborate and partner effectively. 4) Address discrimination and foster equity and inclusion. 5) Empower children and families. 6) Deliver high quality services that reflect evidence and research. 7) Embed the principles of the Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy. |
| Best practices in after-school programing for secondary school students (91) | 1) The program has a clear mission and is organized around achieving those goals. 2) The program has a safe, positive, and healthy climate. 3) The program recruits a diverse mix of youth to participate. 4) The program addresses barriers to participation. 5) The program hires, trains and retains high quality staff. 6) The program has a flexible curriculum and has content that is engaging and meaningful to students. |
| The RBC Foundation after-school programs evaluation (92) | Participant perspectives of important features of after-school programs: 1) Academics (homework and skill mastery, varied learning tasks, English language learning, multicultural programming); 2) Recreation; 3) Socialization (general and diversity, acknowledge bullying); 4) Tailored programming (program location, community and neighbourhood context, registration, staff and volunteers, fees, nutrition); 5) Evaluation (indicators of success). <br> Participants identified factors as potential areas of evaluation related to program effectiveness: student factors (academic improvement/confidence/achievement, skill mastery, positive changes in behavior and/or social skills, satisfaction), program factors (staff retention, volunteer recruitment and retention, attendance and participation). |
| Active after school programs for girls and young women: Policy and recommendations (93) | Five strategic POLICY directions to guide active after school programs involving moderate to vigorous physical activity and healthy eating choices for girls and young women: 1) effective program design (content and operations), 2) supportive effective human resources policies and practices, 3) effective organizational supports (policies, evaluation, sustainable funding, collaboration amongst various level and dept of gov), 4) establishing and maintaining partnerships (organizations, geographic community), 5) ensuring access (get to programs safely, within economic means, respect and accommodating of differences). |

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| Making a difference - Research summary for the development and implementation of HIGH FIVE (94) | · HIGH FIVE's Principles of Healthy Child Development: 1) A caring adult (caring, positive and supportive relationships with adults help children ages.6 to 12 develop positive social skills, self-esteem and self-confidence). 2) Friends (help introducing children to the bigger world beyond their family, share in humour, test loyalty, become a first audience, and offer support and criticism). 3) Participation (children need to make choices, have a voice, do things by and for themselves, have opportunities and know that others want them to participate). 4) Play (allows children to shape their environment, use their imaginations, be creative, cooperate and have fun). 5) Mastery (providing children with activities and tasks that make them feel they are special, important and succeeding). <br>· HIGH FIVE Design Guidelines: programs are age appropriate, respect and support the uniqueness and diversity of each child, and programs are physically and emotionally safe. <br>·HIGH FIVE's Quality Framework: 1) Practitioners (organizers of children's programs) must have in-depth knowledge of the development of children. 2) Practitioners must be able to both clearly understand and be able to assess the impact of all aspects of their program on children. 3) Practitioners must adhere to principles of healthy child development in the design and development of programs and activities, the delivery of programs and activities, the hiring and training of staff, and the selection of sites and environments. 4) Practitioners should ensure significant emphasis on interactions between children and staff as recreation and sport leaders are perfectly situated to play this crucial role. |
| An opportunity for every child: Realizing the potential of after-school programming for children ages 6-12 in Toronto (95) | Literature reveals the following best practices and quality considerations for planning and sustaining after-school programming: 1) *Appropriate staffing is crucial to successful program planning and delivery* (caring and committed staff, adequate compensation to staff, well trained with ongoing professional development, clear link between staff achievement and management practices, develop required staff qualifications and standards for hiring), 2) *After-school activities should be planned and purposeful* (clear goals, sequential focused and explicit activities, activities connected to goals of program, relevant to children's interest and engage children by getting their feedback and ideas, both group and one-on-one settings, promote informal peer engagement, complement in-school learning), 3) *Programs need to place priority on being affordable and accessible in order to have the best reach and outcomes* (reasonable rates, subsidy opportunities, incentives for attendance, languages other than English, sites where parents can easily reach, accessible to children with disabilities, times that are convenient for families, culturally inclusive and relevant, staff who share or deeply understand the children's cultural or racial backgrounds and experiences), 4) *The highest quality programs engage families as an integral part of their approach to planning and delivery* (support of the children's learning, support of family itself, general support for programming), 5) *Partnership and collaboration are the keys to moving after-school programming forward* (multiple stakeholders, municipalities are the natural stakeholder to lead the charge, strong genuine partnerships, intentional integration of both school and non-school supports, strong after-school network, building consensus among key stakeholders, school-community partnerships are a key starting place). |
| Adverse childhood experiences and the school-age | OST programs can assist and enhance the lives of children who are dealing with ACEs by providing support in the following areas: 1) Social and emotional development (programs with specified curricula that target the development of social and emotional outcomes, and which include the universal use of trauma-informed practices were associated with improvements in |

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| population: Implications for child care policy and out-of-school time programs† (96) | outcomes). 2) Safe zones (provide a safe-haven, supervised time, instruction and promotion of new skills, opportunities for positive adult interaction and peer interaction). 3) Family engagement (interconnectedness of supports for all program participants, inclusive of family, acknowledge that engagement of the family unit is crucial to the success of the youth participant). 4) Academics (academic instruction for remediation, enrichment or enhancement purposes within an afterschool or summer learning program environment). |
| LA's best protective factors afterschool project: Promising practices for building protective and promotive factors to support positive youth development in afterschool (97) | Evidence-Informed afterschool program practices: 1) Intentional organizational practices (intentional staff hiring practices; relationships across network; connections with teachers; recruit and retain youth; reinforce school rules and practices; train staff on self-regulation and emotional awareness skills and attunement skills). 2) High quality learning environments (shared ownership, choice, autonomy and leadership with youth; positive peer relationships; active skill development; diverse activities to appeal to diverse youth interests, small group sizes and low adult-youth ratios; physically and emotionally safe; enjoy and feel challenged). 3) Supportive and nurturing youth-staff interactions (highlight/praise youth's unique contributions, attributes and effort; celebrate and reinforce youth successes; support youth in discovering their unique identities; model positive behaviors; communicate care, warmth and support; clear rules and expectations; create norms for prosocial behavior). 4) Intentional and explicit focus on youth development (teach emotional awareness, management and attunement; teach problem-solving steps and skills; teach a variety of interpersonal skills).

Protective and Promotive factors (for positive youth outcomes): 1) Community and school factors - i) school belongingness and connectedness, and ii) participation in structured youth programs and extracurricular activities. 2) Peer factors - iii) association with positive peers, and iv) friends characterized by care, support and acceptance. 3) Parent (and other caregivers) factors - v) care, support and attentiveness, vi) clear rules and expectations, vii) monitoring. 4) Individual factors - viii) positive self-concept, ix) competence, self-efficacy and agency, x) self-regulation, xi) problem solving and decision making, xii) interpersonal skills. (each of these are defined in document).

Outcomes = less substance misuse/abuse, better academic performance, and fewer problem behaviors

Criteria for inclusion as protective or promotive factor: 1) relate to multiple youth outcomes, 2) show robust and consistent effects in literature, 3) be malleable through intervention, 4) be relevant to the afterschool context. |
| Promoting social and emotional learning in the middle and high school years† (98) | Strategies that promote social-emotional learning:
1) Freestanding lessons - High quality lessons on specific topics are presented. Teaching is more interactive than didactic and involves discussion and practice.
2) Shared agreements  - Student involvement is used to set goals, norms, or classroom behavioral guidelines to create a positive experience.
3) Interactive or reflective activities - Tasks, games or daily routines create opportunities to practice SEL skills (e.g., social |

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| | problem-solving steps, reflective journal).<br>4) Peer mentoring - A formal or informal process in which students support one another to enhance connection to peers and/or provide academic support.<br>5) Teaching practices - Teachers use instructional, relationship building, or classroom management practices specifically designed to create a learning environment that promotes SEL.<br>6) Schoolwide policies, structures and supports - Strategies for organizing students into groups to promote students' sense of belonging with both adults and peers (i.e., advisories). Methods for building a sense of school community (e.g., daily announcements) or to support SEL planning, implementation, and sustainability (e.g., creating an SEL leadership team). Policies that create opportunities for students to develop SEC (e.g., discipline that uses restorative practices)<br>7) Family and community linkages - Strategies that engage parents actively in the life of the school. Strategies that engage students in school- or community-based volunteer work (e.g., cleaning around the school or local park), service learning, or community-based academic work. |
| ACT Now: Afterschool for children and teens - Illinois state afterschool quality standards (99) | Quality Program Standards (for specific quality indicators, please see report): 1) The program's indoor environment meets the needs of all youth and staff. 2) The program's outdoor environment is safe and meets the needs of all youth. (If applicable, as some facilities may not have access to outdoor space.) 3) The program protects the health and safety of all youth. 4) Youth are carefully supervised to maintain safety and there are clear protocols for responding to emergency situations. 5) Staff work to protect the health of all youth. 6) If the program serves food, it meets the following indicators. 7) Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of all youth and families in the community. 8) The administration provides sound management of the program. 9) The program develops and implements a system for promoting continuous quality improvement. 10) Program policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety of all youth. 11) Staff receive appropriate support to make their work experience positive. 12) The program maintains personnel records of all staff. 13) Files of youth contain accurate and sufficient information and are properly maintained. 14) Staff/youth ratios and group sizes permit the staff to meet the needs of youth. 15) Staff are professionally qualified to work with all youth. 16) Staff are given an orientation to the job before working with youth. 17) The training needs of the staff are assessed and training is relevant to assigned responsibilities as provided. 18) The program has a systematic approach and structure for family and community engagement. 19) The program builds a welcoming environment that is responsive to youth and family needs. 20) Staff engage in ongoing and meaningful two-way communication with families to support youth learning and healthy development. 21) A quality program develops, nurtures, and maintains strong relationships with community organizations to fully support youth. 22) Staff encourages all youth to make thoughtful and responsible decisions. 23) Programs provide flexible and supportive activities for all youth. 24) The program is intentional about creating a positive afterschool climate that is emotionally and physically safe and that supports and accelerates student academic, social and emotional learning. 25) Staff relate to all youth in positive ways. 26) There are sufficient materials to support program activities. 27) Program activities and curricula integrate a variety of areas (e.g. recreation, fitness, fine arts, academic support, life skills, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), and personal growth and development) ensuring that the physical, cognitive, social, emotional and creative domains are addressed |

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| | in a comprehensive manner. 28) The program maintains two-way/reciprocal communication with school-day staff to monitor academic and behavioral progress of youth. 29) School-day and afterschool programs collaborate on curriculum planning and development to strengthen continuity around student learning and development. 30) The program staff coordinates effective use of services and programs toward aligned goals.<br>7 Core Areas with Program Standard Numbers:<br>1) Indoor and outdoor environments (#1-2)<br>2) Safety, health and nutrition (#3-6)<br>3) Administration (#7-14)<br>4) Professional development and qualifications (#15-17)<br>5) Family and community partnerships (#18-21)<br>6) Youth development, programming and activities (#22-27)<br>7) Partnerships with schools (#28-30) |
| How is the afterschool field defining program quality? A review of effective program practices and definitions of program quality (100) | 1) Safe, supportive relationships and positive emotional climate. 2) Focused-intentional programming. 3) Strong community partnerships (families, schools, organizations). 4) Young people active participation and engagement. 5) Healthy, physically safe environment. 6) Management practices that support program sustainability and continuous program improvement. (SEE FIGURE 1 for great diagram linking these) |
| Child trauma toolkit for educators† (101) | What can be done at school to help a traumatized child?<br>• Maintain usual routines. A return to "normalcy" will communicate the message that the child is safe and life will go on.<br>• Give children choices. Often traumatic events involve loss of control and/or chaos, so you can help children feel safe by providing them with some choices or control when appropriate.<br>• Increase the level of support and encouragement given to the traumatized child. Designate an adult who can provide additional support if needed.<br>• Set clear, firm limits for inappropriate behavior and develop logical—rather than punitive— consequences.<br>• Recognize that behavioral problems may be transient and related to trauma. Remember that even the most disruptive behaviors can be driven by trauma-related anxiety.<br>• Provide a safe place for the child to talk about what happened. Set aside a designated time and place for sharing to help the child know it is okay to talk about what happened.<br>• Give simple and realistic answers to the child's questions about traumatic events. Clarify distortions and misconceptions. If it isn't an appropriate time, be sure to give the child a time and place to talk and ask questions. |

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| | • Be sensitive to the cues in the environment that may cause a reaction in the traumatized child. For example, victims of natural storm-related disasters might react very badly to threatening weather or storm warnings. Children may increase problem behaviors near an anniversary of a traumatic event.<br>• Anticipate difficult times and provide additional support. Many kinds of situations may be reminders. If you are able to identify reminders, you can help by preparing the child for the situation. For instance, for the child who doesn't like being alone, provide a partner to accompany him or her to the restroom.<br>• Warn children if you will be doing something out of the ordinary, such as turning off the lights or making a sudden loud noise.<br>• Be aware of other children's reactions to the traumatized child and to the information they share. Protect the traumatized child from peers' curiosity and protect classmates from the details of a child's trauma.<br>• Understand that children cope by re-enacting trauma through play or through their interactions with others. Resist their efforts to draw you into a negative repetition of the trauma. For instance, some children will provoke teachers in order to replay abusive situations at home.<br>• Although not all children have religious beliefs, be attentive if the child experiences severe feelings of anger, guilt, shame, or punishment attributed to a higher power. Do not engage in theological discussion. Rather, refer the child to appropriate support.<br>• While a traumatized child might not meet eligibility criteria for special education, consider making accommodations and modifications to academic work for a short time. You might: shorten assignments, allow additional time to complete assignments, give permission to leave class to go to a designated adult (such as a counselor or school nurse) if feelings become overwhelming, provide additional support for organizing and remembering assignments.<br><br>They provide signs for educators to look for to identify students who have experienced traumatic events.<br><br>How school personnel can help a student with traumatic grief:<br>• Inform others and coordinate services<br>• Answer a child's questions<br>• Create a supportive school environment<br>• Raise awareness of school staff and personnel<br>• Modify teaching strategies (flexibility, avoid or postpone tests or projects, sensitive, etc.)<br>• Support families (build relationship of trust with student's family, etc.)<br>• Make referrals |
| The quality of school-age child care in after- | · Staff Management practices: 1) Hiring and retaining educated staff. 2) Providing attractive compensation. 3) Training staff.<br> ·Program management practices: 1) ensuring the programming is flexible. 2) establishing and maintaining a favorable emotional climate. 3) Establishing clear goals and evaluating programs accordingly. 4) having a mix of younger and older |

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| school settings (102) | children. 5) keeping total enrollment low. 6) Maintaining a low child-to-staff ratio. 7) Maintaining continuity and complementarity with regular day school; 8) Paying adequate attention to safety and health; 9) Providing a sufficient variety of activities; 10) Providing adequate space; 11) Providing age-appropriate activities and materials; 12) Providing enough quality materials<br><br>·Communications with other organizations: 1) involving families; 2) using community-based organizations and facilities; 3) using volunteers<br><br>In 2005, Harvard Family Research Project conducted a national (USA) scan of program quality assessment tools - 44 tools were found. 12 different categories of standards and over 3000 indicators to measure those standards. The 12 categories are: 1) Assessment, evaluation, and accountability. 2) Equity and diversity. 3) family, school and community linkages. 4) fiscal management and sustainability. 5) organizational capacity. 6) physical space and the environment. 7) program administration and management. 8) program planning, activities, and structure. 9) relationships. 10) safety, health and nutrition. 11) staffing and supervision. 12) utilizing a youth development approach |
| Siolta: The national quality framework for early childhood education (103) | Standards of Quality: 1) *Rights of the child* - ensuring that each child's rights are met requires that she/he is enabled to exercise choice and to use initiatives as an active participant and partner in her/his own development and learning. 2) *Environments* - enriching environments, indoor and outdoor, are well maintained, safe, available, accessible, adaptable, developmentally appropriate, and offer a variety of challenging and stimulating experiences. 3) *Parents and families* - valuing and involving parents and families requires a proactive partnership approach evidenced by a range of clearly stated, accessible and implemented processes, policies and procedures. 4) *Consultation* - ensuring inclusive decision-making requires consultation that promotes participation and seeks out, listens to and acts upon the views and opinions of children, parents and staff, and other stakeholders, as appropriate. 5) *Interactions* - fostering constructive interactions (child/child, child/adult, adult/adult) requires explicit policies, procedures and practice that emphasises the value of process and are based on mutual respect, equal partnership and sensitivity. 6) *Play* - promoting play requires that each child has ample time to engage in freely available and accessible developmentally appropriate and well-resourced opportunities for exploration, creativity and 'meaning making' in the company of other children, with participating and supportive adults and alone, where appropriate. 7) *Curriculum* - encouraging each child's holistic development and learning requires the implementation of a verifiable broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme. 8) *Planning and evaluation* - enriching and informing all aspects of practice within the setting requires cycles of observation, planning, action and evaluation, undertaken on a regular basis. 9) *Health and welfare* - promoting the health and welfare of the child requires protection from harm, provision of nutritious food, appropriate opportunities for rest and secure relationships characterised by trust and respect. 10) *Organisation* - organising and managing resources effectively requires an agreed written philosophy, supported by clearly communicated policies and procedures to guide and determine practice. 11) *Professional practice* - practising in a professional manner requires that individuals have skills, knowledge, values and attitudes appropriate to their role and responsibility within the setting. In addition, it requires regular reflection upon practice and engagement in supported, ongoing professional development. 12) |

*Communication* - communicating effectively in the best interests of the child requires policies, procedures and actions that promote the proactive sharing of knowledge and information among appropriate stakeholders with respect and confidentiality. 13) *Transitions* - ensuring continuity of experiences for children requires policies, procedures and practices that promote sensitive management of transitions, consistency in key relationships, liaison within and between settings, the keeping and transfer of relevant information (with parent consent), and the close involvement of parents and, where appropriate, relevant professionals. 14) *Identity and belonging* - promoting positive identities and a strong sense of belonging requires clearly defined policies, procedures and practice that empower every child and adult to develop a confident self- and group- identity, and to have a positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others. 15) *Legislation and regulation* - being compliant requires that all relevant regulations and legislative requirements are met or exceeded. 16) *Community involvement* - promoting community involvement requires the establishment of networks and connections evidenced by policies, procedures and actions which extend and support all adults' and children's engagement with the wider community.

† These sources were specific to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed practices, or social-emotional learning (SEL), and were therefore not included in the evidence synthesis, but may help inform OST programming and opportunities.

**Appendix 5**

**AACODS (Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date and Significance) grey literature in health checklist for quality appraisal (adapted by NICE) for all evidence sources**

| Document Title | Authority: Organization Name. | Authority: - Reputable organization? Authority in the field? - Author an expert in the area? - Detailed reference list? (Y/N) | Accuracy: - Clear aim/brief? Is it met? - Methodology stated? Followed? - Peer reviewed? - Edited by reputable authority? - Strong references? Refers to primary work (if applicable)? - Represents field of work? Or valid counterbalance? - Appropriate data collection? - Unbiased/accurate analysis? Y/N | Coverage: - Study limits clear? (Y/N) | Objectivity: - Author standpoint/bias clear? - Balanced presentation? (Y/N) | Date: - Clearly stated date? If no data, valid reason given? - Key contemporary material referenced? (Y/N) | Significance: - Document meaningful? (feasibility, utility, relevance) - Document enriches or adds something unique? - Document strengthens or refutes a current position? - Document is integral, representative, typical? - Document has impact? (Y/N) | Does study meet criterion? |
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| Calgary AfterSchool 2019 current state report, 2019-2025 strategic plan (81, 82) | Calgary AfterSchool with the City of Calgary | Y | Y | Limited but Y | Y | Y | Y | Yes |
| Better practices review: Barriers and facilitators, staff roles and responsibilities, and essential components for developing, implementing, and sustaining school health promotion initiatives (83) | Alberta Health Services | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Yes |
| Positive child and youth development: Research brief 1 (84) | Family and Community Support Services | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Yes |

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| Developing afterschool partnerships and programs: A resource guide for community groups (85) | Alberta Recreation and Parks Association | Y, but only links to resources, no references | Y, but only links to resources, no references | N | Y | Y, but no references | Y | Partially - no referencing and limitations not clearly stated |
| Program design - A literature review of best practices (86) | United Way of Calgary and Area | Y | Y | Limited but Y | Y | Y | Y | Yes |
| Afterschool recreation initiatives (13) | Alberta Recreation and Parks Association | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Yes |
| After school for all! A guide to building programs were all children get to be active, creative, supported by peers and caring adults: Learnings from British Columbia's After School Sport and Arts Initiative (87) | After School Sport and Arts Initiative | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Yes |

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| Addressing the after-school hours: An environmental scan of after-school programming outside of licensed childcare for children aged 6 to 12 in BC (4) | BC Recreation and Parks Association | Y, specific author not given | Y | Y | Y | Y, have to go to executive summary to get date | Y, limited because BC | Yes |
| The Coalition's 20 best practices: A program development tool kit (88) | Coalition for Community-based Youth Serving Agencies | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y, limited because MB | Partially - date missing |
| Before-and-after school programs (Kindergarten - Grade 6): Policies and guidelines for school boards (89) | Ministry of Education with the Government of Ontario | Y, specific author not given, no references but does provide hyperlinks to resources | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because ON | Yes |
| Gearing up - A strategic framework to help Ontario middle years children thrive (90) | The Ministry of Children and Youth Services with the Government of Ontario | Y, specific author not given | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because ON | Yes |

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| Best practices in after-school programing for secondary school students (91) | Ontario Institute for Studies in Education with the University of Toronto | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because ON | Yes |
| The RBC Foundation after-school programs evaluation (92) | Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because ON | Yes |
| Active after school programs for girls and young women: Policy and recommendations (93) | Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity | Y, no references | Y, no references | N | Y | Y, no references | Y, limited because ON, no references | Partially - no referencing and limitations not clearly stated |

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| Making a difference - Research summary for the development and implementation of HIGH FIVE (94) | Parks and Recreation Ontario | Y, specific author not given, few references listed but is summary document | Y, few references but is summary doc | Y | Y | Y, few references but is summary document | Y, limited because ON | Yes |
| An opportunity for every child: Realizing the potential of after-school programming for children ages 6-12 in Toronto (95) | Children's Services Division and Park, Forestry and Recreation - City of Toronto | Y | Y | Limited but Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because ON | Yes |
| Adverse childhood experiences and the school-age population: Implications for child care policy and out-of-school time programs†(96) | National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment | Y, specific author not given | Y | Limited but Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because USA | Yes |

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| LA's best protective factors afterschool project: Promising practices for building protective and promotive factors to support positive youth development in afterschool (97) | Claremont Evaluation Center Claremont Graduate University | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because USA | Yes |
| Promoting social and emotional learning in the middle and high school years† (98) | Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center with the Pennsylvania State University | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because USA | Yes |
| ACT now: Afterschool for children and teens - Illinois state afterschool quality standards (99) | ACT Now Coalition | Y, specific author not given | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because USA | Yes |
| How is the afterschool field defining program quality? A review of effective program practices and definitions of program quality (100) | Afterschool Matters | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because USA | Yes |

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| Child trauma toolkit for educators† (101) | National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee | Y, specific author not given, no references | Y, no references | Y | Y | Y, no references | Y, limited because USA | Yes |
| The quality of school-age child care in after-school settings (102) | Harvard Family Research Project | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y, limited because USA | Yes |
| Siolta: The national quality framework for early childhood education (103) | Department of Education and Skills | Y, specific author not given, no references | Y, no references | Limited but Y | Y | Y, no references | Y, limited because Ireland, no references | Partially - no referencing and limitations not clearly stated |

† These sources were specific to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed practices, or social-emotional learning (SEL), and were therefore not included in the evidence synthesis, but may help inform OST programming and opportunities.

**SUMMARY: An environmental scan of perceptions and practices of community-based natural supports**

Communities can build resilience in their children and youth by providing access to resources, activities, and programming that promote the creation of natural supports.(104) Understanding these opportunities that enable the development of natural supports within community settings is instrumental in creating more supportive environments for children and youth, and their families.

**Objective:** To conduct an environmental scan of perceptions regarding factors that serve as facilitators and barriers in the development of natural supports within Calgary communities.

**Methods:** To capture a snapshot of current opportunities and events available within communities that can enable the creation of natural supports for children, youth and families, City of Calgary Community Social Workers (CSWs) were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews to provide information on their perceptions and practices of natural support opportunities within their respective communities. CSWs were targeted due to their work within communities to design, implement and evaluate community events and programs; they are also a point of contact for community members and organizations, and provide supports and services to residents and families. Interview transcripts were analyzed to extract and categorize data into reoccurring themes. Commonalities identified among categories were quantified as data permits.

**Summary of Findings:** Seven CSWs representing 10 communities in Calgary, all classified as highly vulnerable,(105) participated in this environmental scan. This sample allowed for the identification of potential facilitators and barriers for residents and families to participate in community-based opportunities that can enable the creation of natural supports. Below are the key facilitators and barriers identified by CSWs. Each facilitator or barrier presented includes the number of CSWs that discussed the particular idea in the interviews:

Table 1: CSW perceptions of key facilitators and barriers for residents and families to participate in community events and opportunities.

| Perceived Factor | Explanation | Number of CSWs (Total n=7) |
|---|---|---|
| **Facilitators** | | |
| • Free food | Providing food at events enables those with low income and food insecurity to participate. Food is a key vehicle to create connection through gathering, and is also an opportunity for sharing culture and tradition. | 7 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Free events and activities that are open to everyone | Free and low-cost events and activities increase accessibility for low-income families and individuals. Events open to everyone are more attractive for families as all family members can attend, and promotes inclusivity of individuals, including youth and seniors. | 7 |
| • Community champions | Engaging with community residents with leadership roles, referred to as community champions, creates a sense of familiarity for other residents, and can assist with recruitment of volunteers, and increasing community participation and capacity-building. | 7 |
| • Local events and activities | Events and activities that occur at a location within the community increases accessibility, especially for children and youth. | 6 |
| • Connecting with residents directly | Recruitment and gathering information from community residents through door knocking and word-of-mouth is perceived to be more effective than posters, fliers and newsletters. | 5 |
| • Convenient and flexible timing | Offering events and activities at times that are convenient for caregivers with busy work schedules, and children and youth with schoolwork and extracurricular activities, promotes greater participation. | 4 |
| • Free childcare | Providing free and low-cost childcare at events and activities enables more caregivers to attend. | 3 |
| • Consistency | Offering programming and activities, such as summer camps, at consistent locations, times and/or frequencies enables the creation of closer connections and relationships. | 2 |
| **Barriers** | | |
| • Low income | Many families and individuals in the communities studied experience financial barriers potentially limiting community participation as the primary focus is meeting basic needs. This is especially a barrier when there are few free or low-cost community events and opportunities offered. | 7 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Busy schedules | Many individuals and caregivers work long hours, multiple jobs and have varying work schedules, including night shift and contract work. Large, multigenerational families living within a single household can add additional stressors, including childcare costs and providing care for older generations. Busy schedules can limit community participation and may prevent individuals from taking on leadership roles. | 7 |
| • Community connections are not perceived to be a priority | Highly vulnerable communities have many families and individuals focused on meeting basic needs, such as food and shelter. As a result, creating connections and participating in events and activities within communities oftentimes are not prioritized. | 7 |
| • Unawareness of events and activities | Spreading awareness of events and activities can be challenging, especially for newcomers, immigrants and refugees who are frequently unaware of available resources and supports. | 5 |
| • Language barriers | Immigrants and refugees with little or no ability to understand or speak English are often discouraged from participating in events and activities. | 4 |
| • Lack of communal space | Several of the communities studied have limited community space for events and activities decreasing accessibility, especially for children and youth. | 4 |
| • Challenges engaging youth and seniors | Seniors and youth were identified as two groups within communities that are difficult to connect with and engage. | 4 |
| • Lack of funding | Lack of funding limits event, activity and program development. It also requires implementation of maximum participation numbers of children, youth and families due to limited resources and supplies. | 3 |

**Significance:** CSW perceptions regarding current natural support opportunities in communities have provided insight into program availability and accessibility, and have identified potential areas of further work to promote system-wide changes in Alberta. Information and data gathered from this project will serve to inform knowledge users, such as community planners and policymakers, to better understand how to optimally invest and develop community initiatives and strategies that strive to enhance natural supports for children and youth and their families.