Effective Program Components

You have support, you have a solid framework, you have happy parents and happily enrolled kids, but how do you KNOW that your program is effective? The Iowa Afterschool Alliance's Quality Standards have been referenced numerous times throughout this toolkit, and we agree that these are the best way for you to think about strong program components. However, additional documentation can be very helpful as you capitalize on program effectiveness.

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance also recognizes that there are several other components that make a program effective. Several of these and links to places you can find great articles or supporting documents are below:

Free Program Activities

» Mizzen by Mott: https://www.mizzen.org/

Mentoring

» The Iowa Mentoring Partnership: https://www.iowamentoring.org/

» Afterschool Alliance: https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Issue-Mentoring-Afterschool.cfm

» You 4 Youth: https://y4y.ed.gov/blog/the-two-way-street-called-mentor-way

Conflict Resolution

» Conscious Discipline: https://consciousdiscipline.com/

» Search Institute: https://www.search-institute.org/happens-parents-preteens-learn-share-power-ask-parents-whove-tried/

Safety

» You 4 Youth: https://y4y.ed.gov/webinars/an-artfully-formed-positive-environment-four-part-series/webinar-3-safety-measures

» You 4 Youth: https://y4y.ed.gov/webinars/21st-cclc-sea-technical-assistance-webinars/student-safety-in-21st-cclc-afterschool-programs

Youth Voice

» David P. Weikert Youth Center for Program Quality: http://www.cypq.org/products_and_services/training/YWM

» You 4 Youth: https://y4y.ed.gov/tools/incorporating-student-voice-training-to-go

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

» Afterschool Alliance: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolsnack/Anti-racism-equity-education-youth-voice-tools-you-can-use_06-08-2020.cfm

Family Engagement

» You 4 Youth: https://y4y.ed.gov/blog/tuning-up-family-activities

» Iowa Department of Education: 21st Century Community Learning Centers: https://8b37b3c5-0681-4dfb-a4c8-69308a9da11a.filesusr.com/ugd/1b1b6d_9fad8eff609149ac8ba966d4579f7b54.pdf

» Search Institute: https://www.search-institute.org/six-shifts-better-family-engagement/

Service Learning

» Volunteer Iowa: https://volunteeriowa.org/

» Youth Serve America: https://ysa.org/

STEM

» Iowa STEM Advisory Council: https://iowastem.gov/

» Active Learning Community Partnership: https://www.stemforiowa.org/

» Iowa State University Extension and Outreach 4-H Program: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/stem

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Included in this section:

Click on the document title below to jump to that resource.

✱ A Case Study on the Effectiveness of a Program in Northern Iowa

Case Study: Holmes Jr. High School, Cedar Falls, Iowa
(Credit to Holmes Jr. High, Cedar Falls, Iowa)

The ECHOES program at Holmes Junior High School offers a wide variety of programs and builds many positive adult-child relationships. Many students are at risk and need positive adult role models and a safe environment after school. The ECHOES program helps make connections with those students and influences students' academic performance by offering additional support.

Our Mission at Holmes Jr. High is to provide a positive and safe environment for the empowerment of youth, the encouragement of academic success, and the collaboration of peers, adult, and community.

Our Goals are to offer activities, experiences, and relationships that promote growth in a student's developmental level, enhance academic performance, and deter harmful behaviors.

A significant part of the Holmes Jr. High Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) addresses providing enrichment opportunities for students through the After School ECHOES program, within "Tiger Time" during the school day, as well as during the summer. A portion of that enrichment includes the introduction and instruction of the "Mindset" concept developed by Dr. Carol Dweck. We have been monitoring the effect our after school programs (academic and recreational) have on our students in the areas of attendance, academic proficiency, and assignment completion and behavior referrals. By infusing Dr. Dweck's Growth Mindset strategies into these programs, it has helped allow staff to connect with and support students who may not otherwise be motivated to be successful in those areas. We attempt to create real-world learning opportunities as well as a variety of collaborating partners within our learning community and have documented the successes these students have had in all these areas as part of our school improvement plan.

Dr. Carol Dweck, a world-renowned Stanford University Psychologist has identified two sets of beliefs that people can have about students' intelligence (and that students can have about their own intelligence). They may have a fixed mindset, in which they believe that intelligence is a static trait: some students are smart and some are not, and that's that. Or they may have a growth mindset, in which they believe that intelligence, can be developed by various means—for example, through effort and instruction.

A growth mindset doesn't imply that everyone is the same or that anyone could be Einstein, but it does imply that everyone's intellectual ability can grow—and that even Einstein wasn't Einstein before he put in years of passionate, relentless effort.

Recent research has shown that students' mindsets have a direct influence on their grades and that teaching students to have a growth mindset raises their grades and achievement test scores significantly.

In addition, studies demonstrate that having a growth mindset is especially important for students who are laboring under a negative stereotype about their abilities. The students with the growth mindset (those who believed that intelligence could be developed) significantly outperformed their classmates who held a fixed mindset.

Because students believed that their intellect could be developed, students with a growth mindset focused on learning, believed in effort, and were resilient in the face of setbacks. Students in a fixed mindset however, worried more about looking smart and not making mistakes, and became discouraged or defensive in the face of setbacks. After receiving a poor grade on a test, they said that they would consider cheating on the next test.

 In other words, their logic was that if you don't have ability, you have to find another way to succeed. It is no wonder that having a growth mindset, with its emphasis on hard work in the service of learning, led to higher grades than having a fixed mindset, with all of the worries and defenses that deflect students from applying themselves.

Dr. Dweck Promotes 3 Basic Principles…

1. Students perform better in school when they and their teachers believe that intelligence is not fixed, but can be developed.

2. Teaching students that intelligence can be "grown" is especially powerful for students who belong to typically stereotyped groups.

 3. Growth mindsets focus on effort and motivate students to overcome challenging work.
…On the basis of those findings, we have designed a model to teach students a growth mindset at Holmes Jr. High.

CHANGING OUR MINDSET

Carol Dweck, world-renowned Stanford University psychologist, talks about the power of our mindset or our beliefs (especially around challenge). We can either have a Fixed Mindset where we let failure (or even success) define who we are, or a Growth Mind set where we see setbacks as opportunities to grow and improve ourselves. Just like how we learned how to walk ... there are many stumbles along the way, but to reach our potential and live the life we desire, it takes practice and perseverance. We always have a choice about which view we adopt for ourselves ... and it's never too late to change. What's your view?

Its up to you!

	FIXED MINDSET — Belief that my intelligence, personality and character are carved in stone; my potential is determined at birth	GROWTH MINDSET — Belief that my intelligence, personality and character can be developed! A person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable).
Desire	Look smart in every situation and prove myself over and over again. Never fail!!	Stretch myself, take risks and learn. Bring on the challenges!
Evaluation of Situations	Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb?	Will this allow me to grow? Will this help me overcome some of my challenges?
Dealing with Setbacks	"I'm a failure" (identity) "I'm an idiot"	"I failed" (action) "I'll try harder next time"
Challenges	Avoid challenges, get defensive or give up easily.	Embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks.
Effort	Why bother? It's not going to change anything.	Growth and learning require effort.
Criticism	Ignore constructive criticism.	Learn from criticism. How can I improve?
Success of Others	Feel threatened by the success of others. If you succeed, then I fail.	Finds lessons & inspiration in other people's success.
Results....	Plateau early, achieve less than my full potential.	Reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

Poster Designed for Holmes Jr. High based on the work of Carol Dweck, Stanford University

Teachers, students and parents with a growth mindset don't just mouth the belief that every student can learn; they are committed to finding a way to make that happen.

If students have a growth mindset—even if they grant that their group may have underperformed historically— they believe that through their effort and the support of educators, they can develop their abilities. In that case, students may expect to struggle and not experience difficulty as insurmountable.

Developing a Growth Mindset in our youth is a key skill that will help young people in school, their future careers and life! By implementing this concept in afterschool and summer programming, as well as the instructional setting during the school day, we can help ensure that all Iowa children, youth and families have both the opportunity and the "mindset" to be successful!