



PLAYBOOK FOR SCHOOL & DISTRICT LEADERS

# CLOSING COVID GAPS IN 2021

How Extended Day Enrichment Can Help School Districts  
Address Learning Loss, Enhance SEL, and Improve Equity



# INTRODUCTION

**As educators, we know that the school disruptions wrought by COVID have had an enormous impact on the academic and social-emotional development of our kids.**

Recent studies point to a stark reality—it may take years for students, especially the most vulnerable, to recover from the turbulent events of 2020-21.

In the coming months, educators will face an historic undertaking: helping America's students get back on track after a generational learning crisis. Administrators planning for the 2021-22 school year will be challenged to look beyond the traditional school day for strategies to help students reclaim lost time.





How do we reclaim lost learning?

# QUALITY ENRICHMENT TIME IS CRITICAL



Before the pandemic, the average American student spent 5-6 hours per day in a classroom. On top of that, children enrolled in before and after school programs could spend up to five additional hours in school each day.

When students were in class full-time, it was easy to overlook the potential of these extra hours—but that's no longer a viable option.

Every hour students spend at school beyond normal class time is a golden opportunity to enhance their educational experience and address the learning consequences of COVID-19.



## ESSER FUNDS

### ARE ELIGIBLE FOR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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Extended learning opportunities will be a key strategy in school districts' plans to recover lost learning time in the months and years to come. That's why the recently enacted **American Rescue Plan** specifically allocates funding for after school enrichment and summer camp programs. Right At School extended learning programs are fully eligible for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding.



**This e-book will explore the growing body of research suggesting that children who participate in high-quality before and after school enrichment programs see faster gains in academic achievement and social-emotional learning (SEL) outcomes.**

- ✓ We'll take a close look at **how the pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges**, making enrichment programs during out-of-school hours more important than ever:
- ✓ Many students have experienced **significant learning loss** due to COVID, worsening academic gaps among vulnerable populations.
- ✓ **The social isolation and trauma** students have experienced over the last year have increased their need for SEL opportunities.
- ✓ Efforts to deliver instruction remotely during the pandemic have **exposed persistent inequities** that need to be addressed.



**School districts that seize this opportunity to expand their approach to enrichment and SEL beyond the 8am to 3pm school day will be equipped to achieve better outcomes—for all students—in the post-COVID world.**



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# But first... What is **high-quality** enrichment?

## The quality of childcare programs can vary widely.

Some only provide supervision while others provide opportunities for academic enrichment and social-emotional growth.

Unfortunately, many enrichment programs have not kept up with the times and fall short. For example, one of the most common complaints about before and after school programs is that they offer little more than babysitting—missing a critical opportunity to provide meaningful enrichment that yields long-term rewards.

Many of us remember programs like this from our own childhood, and the reality is that many programs have not changed much over the past 20-30 years. Parents often report that such programs lack flexibility or availability, and students say they're "boring" and "no fun."

Enrichment programs today should be able offer districts and families much more. For example, in addition to supervision, a high-quality program should provide opportunities for academic enrichment and social-emotional growth through a fully developed curriculum. It is too much to ask for after-school educators to make up enriching curricular activities on the fly each day.

The daily schedule should be thoughtfully designed and highly intentional. In addition to enrichment activities, it should offer opportunities for students to have fun, explore personal interests, develop leadership skills, serve their communities, finish homework, and engage in physical fitness.



**In the following pages, we'll dive into evidence suggesting that students who participate in high-quality extended day enrichment programs realize significant academic and social-emotional benefits.**



**Right At School has been delivering high-quality enrichment and childcare since 2010—and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic—and is uniquely prepared to serve your school district, students, and families.**

Since 2010, Right At School has provided safe, engaging, and meaningful in-school and extracurricular programs to enrich students' lives, give parents peace of mind, and enable schools to focus on their academic mission.

Since the early days of COVID-19, we have been on the front lines running safe, physically-distanced childcare for first responders, essential workers, and working parents who rely on schools for childcare. In addition to serving schools with traditional schedules, we adapted our enrichment programs to complement hybrid schedules and full-time remote learning.

**We currently operate a wide range of enrichment programs in 80+ school districts across the country.**

Prior to the pandemic, an increasing number of districts were seeing the importance of incorporating this type of before and after school care into their strategic plans to extend school-day learning and achieve better outcomes for students. As we emerge from the pandemic, this strategy will become even more vital.

**By accessing this e-book, you've already taken an important first step—recognizing the potential of high-quality enrichment programs to improve student outcomes and better serve the needs of families in your community.**

“

**“As the superintendent of a district that has partnered with Right At School for five years** and the father of two happy children participating in the program, I can say a lot about it—but nothing can replace seeing it yourself. Come visit and see what's happening on our campus. Seeing is believing.”



— Dr. David Vannasdall, Superintendent of Arcadia Unified School District (Calif.)





LEARNING LOSS

SEL

EQUITY

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# LEARNING LOSS



# LEARNING LOSS

## Addressing learning loss and keeping student engagement high

**During 2020, K-12 educators made incredible efforts to adapt to the abrupt transition to remote and hybrid learning.**

However, many teachers across the United States were **dealing with remote instruction for the first time**. They had to figure out what works and what doesn't with teaching online "on the fly."

**Teachers encountered a host of other challenges**, including students not turning in assignments or failing to pay attention during virtual classes or even skipping classes altogether. Teachers often felt that they had to deliver less demanding coursework and fewer assessments to keep students from logging off and tuning out of learning.

However, that tactic also meant that educators may have only a vague idea of how much learning actually took place. For students who were struggling to master subject matter even before the pandemic, this was an even bigger concern. Interventions that worked in-person may not have been adaptable to online settings.

**Given these difficulties, fewer students will likely have grade-level mastery of subject matter than in previous years.** At the same time, school districts may not have the funding or the capacity to provide additional academic services during or outside of the regular school day.





# What the research says



**In October 2020, the RAND Corporation surveyed 1,082 teachers and 1,147 school leaders from its American Educator Panels.<sup>1</sup>**

- ✓ **56% of teachers** reported that despite their best efforts, they had covered only half, or less than half, of the curriculum content that they would have covered by that time in 2019.
- ✓ **66% of teachers** reported that most of their students were less prepared to participate in grade-level work during the 2020-2021 school year relative to the same time during the previous school year.
- ✓ **Only 10% of principals** indicated that their school was able to provide more students with tutoring or supplemental courses.
- ✓ **4 in 10 remote teachers** say that they have a major or very major need for strategies to help students catch up to grade level.

During fall 2020, the testing nonprofit NWEA reviewed MAP® Growth™ assessments of nearly 4.4 million students in grades 3-8. Mathematics emerged as a particular concern, with average gains being lower (between 5 and 10 percentile points) than in prior years.<sup>2</sup>

**A McKinsey report on the impact of COVID learning loss** estimated that if in-class instruction only resumed in January 2021, students could lose 7 to 11 months if they receive lower-quality remote instruction, and a year or more of learning if they do not receive any instruction at all.<sup>3</sup>







## How enrichment can help

Children enrolled in high-quality before and after school programs can spend an extra 20 to 25 hours per week in a learning environment that is standards-aligned, engaging, and fun.

Even better, research shows that the academic benefits to children in these programs are significant and long-lasting:

- ✓ **Up to 42% increase** in math and reading performance<sup>15</sup>
- ✓ **Better grades**, test scores, and graduation rates<sup>15</sup>
- ✓ Improved overall **academic performance**<sup>15</sup>
- ✓ **65% have improved** homework completion and class participation<sup>16</sup>
- ✓ **Better attendance**, and decreased truancy and suspensions<sup>15</sup>
- ✓ **Increased positive attitude** toward school and **confidence** about academic advancement<sup>15</sup>
- ✓ **Better cognitive performance** (concentration, task motivation, frustration tolerance, and cognitive flexibility)<sup>15</sup>



Let's take a closer look at how Right At School's enrichment programming can help school districts reclaim lost learning time.



# HOW RIGHT AT SCHOOL COMBATS LEARNING LOSS

Right At School's proprietary **Disguised Learning™** curriculum infuses extra learning time into the day without causing student burnout.

We know the last thing a child wants to hear at the end of the school day is, "Who wants to learn some more?" That's why **we thoughtfully incorporate learning into fun and engaging activities**. For example, in the unit *Inventor's Workshop*, students learn about Roman Aqueducts and apply Design Thinking as they engineer, test, and iterate their own designs built out of recyclables.

**We overhauled our curriculum in 2020** to address knowledge retention gaps resulting from the pandemic. With 180+ hands-on, STEM-focused activities, students will continue learning key concepts long after the last school bell rings.

“

## Disguised Learning

"Kids love the Disguised Learning. The activities are genius. The extra support they get from the enrichment helps all of our students, from our regular education to special education. They don't realize they're learning something valuable, but they are."



— Dr. Kenneth Rohrbach,  
Superintendent of Medina Valley  
Independent School District (Texas)



## Right At School provides daily and consistent homework support.

During Homework Help, staff are paired with like-age groups of students to **provide instructional support, encourage critical thinking, and promote problem solving**. Our educators are guided by assumption of ability; they work to help students understand their homework but will not solve the problems for the students. Students who lack homework support at home and may otherwise continue to fall behind their peers stand to benefit the most from daily Homework Help after school.

## Right At School's flexibility and partnership-focused service model are unparalleled among after school providers.

We carefully tailor our curriculum **to reflect the strategic objectives of our district partners**, thereby reinforcing school day learning. We also partner with parents and teachers to understand the learning style of each individual student and provide consistent interventions carried over from the school day and/or home setting where appropriate and beneficial.

“

### Standards-Aligned

“Right At School gives students opportunities to participate in lessons that are interactive and engaging, and tied to the State Standards. It's not simply warehousing students. They're actually engaged in high-level work and activities, which is helping us address the achievement gaps that are impacting so many communities during the COVID-19 crisis.”



— Jody Ian Goeler, Superintendent of Hamden Public Schools (Conn.)



# HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PARTNER

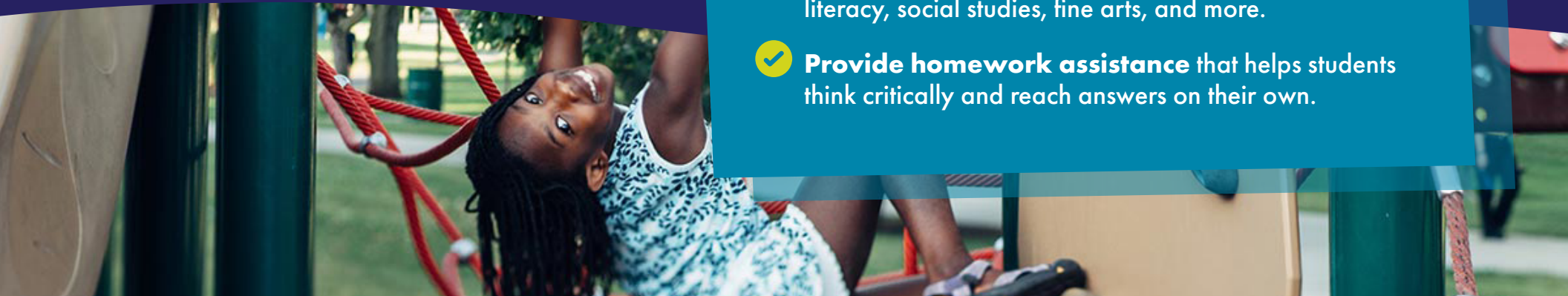
## How can you find the right partner to provide enrichment and help address learning loss?

Here are several things to consider. The same set of criteria can be used to evaluate the quality of your district-run program.

**Does the program provider have a proven track record delivering engaging, meaningful enrichment programs?**

## HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDERS WILL:

- ✓ **Deliver clearly defined, intentional program structure**—not limited to mere “babysitting” or supervised play.
- ✓ **Align their program** to your district’s strategic objectives and priorities.
- ✓ **Implement a fully-developed curriculum** aligned to state and/or national standards.
- ✓ **Offer enrichment activities in a variety of subjects** including STEM, English language arts, literacy, social studies, fine arts, and more.
- ✓ **Provide homework assistance** that helps students think critically and reach answers on their own.



# Final Thoughts on Learning Loss

**There are only so many hours in a school day.** High-quality enrichment provides an easy way to infuse up to five additional hours of learning (and fun!) into each child's day.

**As you plan for the future, providing this enrichment can help address learning loss from COVID-19**—and help participating students realize significant academic gains. In addition, it can help to reduce the need for academic interventions during the school day, thereby decreasing costs and easing the burden on intervention staff.

“

## Homework Help

“Parents love the fact that when they pick up their kids, they're done with their homework. It helps families have quality time when they get home in the evening, which has been a huge benefit.”



— Dr. Kenneth Rohrbach,  
Superintendent of Medina Valley  
Independent School District (Texas)







LEARNING LOSS

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**SEL**

**Closing COVID Gaps in 2021**



# Supporting social-emotional learning

**Children nationwide have had to deal with the emotionally taxing experiences of social isolation and disruption to their routines.**

Additionally, many children live in households where parents lost jobs, resulting in increased food insecurity and in some unfortunate cases, domestic violence. Other children found themselves confined with family members who were already abusive and with no way to safely ask for help. Although accounts from mandatory reporters dropped during the pandemic, sources that did not depend on mandatory reporters (e.g., the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline and emergency rooms) reported a surge in child abuse.

Some returning children have had to deal with the trauma of family members, friends, or acquaintances falling seriously ill from COVID-19 or even passing away. Also, many children have been traumatized by the racial injustice and civil unrest during 2020.

This means that a significant percentage of students will be returning to school still suffering from anxiety, depression, toxic stress, and trauma. All these conditions can negatively affect students' academic performance and trigger disruptive behaviors. Providing those children with the help and support that they need will require districts to dedicate more time and attention to SEL strategies and trauma-informed care. This comes at a time when economic woes have reduced the state revenue available to school districts.





## What the research says

- ✓ In September 2020, the American Psychological Association reported that the prevalence of kids who have school adjustment difficulties and mental health problems was “too high” pre-pandemic and predicted that it would now be even higher.<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ In a national survey during the summer of 2020, more than 3 in 4 school social workers reported that a majority of students at their schools needed serious mental health supports in the wake of the pandemic and school closures.<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ A June 2020 Gallup report stated that that nearly 29% of parents with school-aged children said their child’s emotional or mental health was already experiencing harm because of social distancing and closures. Another 14% said their children could continue social distancing a few more weeks until their mental health suffered.<sup>6</sup>
- ✓ The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline reported 31% more calls and messages in March 2020 than in March 2019.<sup>7</sup>







## How enrichment can help



Participating in a high-quality enrichment program before and/or after school can provide students with hours of positive socialization and social-emotional learning every week. It can provide specific, structured opportunities to practice and exemplify the SEL character traits that have been identified and prioritized by your school district. All of this can help promote mental, physical, and emotional well-being, helping kids cope, grow, and flourish.

In fact, research shows that children experience a variety of social-emotional benefits from participating in high-quality extended day programs.

### Such benefits include:

- ✓ Improved behavior for nearly 60% of participants<sup>16</sup>
- ✓ Greater social-emotional skills (self-management, decision-making, self-awareness, peer social skills)<sup>15</sup>
- ✓ Higher self-concept, confidence, and sense of belonging<sup>15</sup>

# THE SAME IS TRUE FOR STUDENTS IN RIGHT AT SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

Using the Developmental Assets Profile, a well-established and highly utilized SEL assessment tool by Search Institute, data showed Right Club students were “thriving” in their school environment and had substantial gains over the school year in the following SEL areas:<sup>17</sup>

**+64%**

POSITIVE VALUES

**+35%**

FEELING EMPOWERED

**+20%**

SOCIAL SKILLS

**+20%**

COMMITMENT TO  
LEARNING

**+19%**

UNDERSTANDING  
BOUNDARIES AND  
EXPECTATIONS

**+14%**

POSITIVE IDENTITY



Let's take a closer look at how Right At School programming fosters social-emotional development.



# Social-emotional learning has always been a core competency of Right At School.

Because development is more “caught” than “taught,” we infuse our program content, methods, and experiences with opportunities for children to practice personal responsibility, relationship skills, self-awareness, and positive self-identity.

## Here are just a few ways we make SEL a core component of our programs:

Our thematic curriculum is aligned with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) competencies, and for districts with SEL initiatives, we gladly mirror and extend their school day work in our programs.

### We focus on character development.

SEL is intentionally addressed in our monthly “I AM” program, which focuses on fostering ten character traits across the school year (e.g., I AM Honest, I AM Brave). By sprinkling discussion and activities on these themes throughout programs and highlighting role model students exhibiting these traits, we help students become better equipped to process their own emotions, increase their social skills, and build positive identity.

### We start each morning and afternoon with a Town Hall.

This is an opportunity to gather as a community to celebrate student birthdays and accomplishments, set expectations for the day, reinforce character traits, and reflect on the prior day’s learning.

did you know?

Right At School is the  
official afterschool provider  
of AASA and a member of  
their SEL cohort.





## Junior Educator Program

Because older children thrive on early leadership opportunities but rarely get the chance to be around younger peers during the school day, Right At School developed the Junior Educator Program.

Through this program, 4th-5th grade students are provided an opportunity to become peer leaders—mentored by highly trained and experienced staff, they learn to plan and organize program activities for younger peers, to spearhead service-learning projects, and to lead peers in team-building and self-esteem boosting activities.

## Service Learning

We also utilize service learning to instill positive character traits, belonging, and servant leadership. An example is a thematic unit called Right Club Gives Back, where students launch service projects of their own interests, including collecting socks for homeless shelter residents, making cards for a community nursing home, and sending messages of appreciation to U.S. troops overseas.

“

### Caring & Accountability

“Right At School helps support SEL, so it’s a good match for us. For the students who participate before school, it sets the tone for day. They’re prepared to walk into the classroom and start their day. Students who go after school finish the day off with same type of caring and accountability. It enhances what they do in between those two sessions that much more.”



— Michael Lonergan, Superintendent of Longwood Central School District (N.Y.)

# HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PARTNER

Here are a few things to consider to help you find the right partner to support students' social and emotional development and empower them to contribute to thriving, healthy, safe school communities.

Does the provider have a proven track record supporting SEL?

## HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDERS WILL:

- ✓ **Provide a strong focus on SEL** with activities designed to build and reinforce positive self-identity in children.
- ✓ **Train their educators** in SEL and trauma-informed care.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for students to **establish and maintain supportive relationships.**
- ✓ Provide opportunities for students to **achieve personal and collective goals.**
- ✓ Help students hone their **curiosity, empathy, integrity, and grit.**
- ✓ Support your district's commitment to **local community service and engagement.**



# Final Thoughts on SEL

**The pandemic, school closures, social isolation, and the economic recession have taken a toll on adults and children alike.**

For many students, the social-emotional effects of COVID-19 will be felt long after the pandemic subsides. To provide the help and support they need to recover and thrive, districts will need to dedicate more time and attention to SEL.

As you plan for the future, providing before and after school enrichment with a strong focus on SEL can offer an effective way to improve students' social-emotional skills and confidence—and renew their sense of belonging in the school community.

“

## COVID-19 & SEL

“The need for social-emotional learning has been amplified by the pandemic. With a partner like Right At School, we can provide more of that support for our students.”



— Dr. Phil Ertl, Superintendent of  
Wauwatosa School District (Wisc.)





LEARNING LOSS

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# EQUITY

Closing COVID Gaps in 2021



# EQUITY

## Providing equitable access to extended day enrichment

**The COVID-19 crisis has exposed and exacerbated the impact of inequities on particular groups of students.**

In March 2020, the Economic Policy Institute parsed data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and concluded that only **16.2% of Hispanic workers and 19.7% of Black workers would be able to telework.**<sup>8</sup> As a result, children in those demographic groups were more likely to have the traumatic experience of a family member falling seriously ill or passing away.

Additionally, eviction bans established during the COVID-19 crisis expired toward the end of 2020. Consequently, the number of children experiencing homelessness or housing instability increased. Since unemployed parents tend to move frequently as they search for jobs and affordable shelter, reopening schools may have to address the needs of new students who have had no access to remote education and are dealing with the emotional upheaval of having to leave behind friends and familiar surroundings.





# EQUITY

## The Digital Divide

Another glaring inequity is the “digital divide.” Near the beginning of the crisis, Carnegie Mellon University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) published findings that “even in areas where there is a high level of broadband penetration, children who are low-income, lacking proper housing, African-American, English learners, or of Hispanic ethnicity still lag behind their peers in terms of internet access.”<sup>9</sup>

This means that when schools closed in March 2020, children from those segments of the population were much less likely to be able to participate in distance learning. Unfortunately, an Education Week survey found that Hispanic, Black, and Asian families were far more likely to be in areas where schools engaged in full-time remote learning at the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year.<sup>10</sup>

“

## Flexibility is Key

“Our community is very diverse economically and racially. Our previous before and after school programming had a rigid schedule and pricing structure, and it didn’t meet the needs of our community.

When I talked with Right At School, I marveled at their flexibility and their ability to accommodate our families and their unique needs. In our first year with Right At School, participation in our before and after school program more than doubled.”



— Jody Ian Goeler, Superintendent of Hamden Public Schools (Conn.)

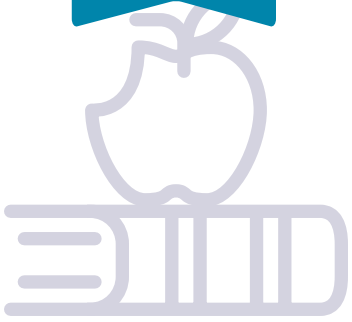
## What the research says

- ✓ **Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds were missing from the NWEA's fall 2020 data.** Causes included schools not administering the tests due to technological and other challenges, students' absence from school, or their opting out of the tests "for economic, health, technological, or other reasons unknown to educators and researchers." The NWEA warned that this lack of information would likely result in "underestimated learning loss and achievement gaps, potentially resulting in under-provision of support and services to the neediest students."<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Students living in households that likely qualified for free or reduced lunch were **16% less likely to have access to high-speed internet and 10% less likely to have access to internet at all**—thereby impeding access to remote instruction.<sup>12</sup>





## EQUITY



- ✓ The Brookings Institute found that by the third week in June 2020, **13.9 million children were living in a household where they sometimes or often did not eat enough due to a lack of resources.** That rate of child food insecurity was 5.6 times more than in all of 2018 (2.5 million) and 2.7 times more than at the peak of the Great Recession in 2008 (5.1 million).<sup>13</sup> Hispanic and Black household food insecurity rates were 27.1% and 27.0%, approximately double that of white households (13.5%).
- ✓ **Only 61% of parents** whose families received free or reduced-price meals during the school year reported receiving school meal assistance during closures.<sup>14</sup>
- ✓ Among teachers who work with students with special learning needs, **about half or more of teachers providing remote instruction reported that they had not received adequate guidance** to support students with severe disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, students affected by poverty, and English language learners.<sup>1</sup>







## How enrichment can help

Equity is a top priority for educators during the school day—and it should be before and after school as well. Equity is about more than equal opportunity. It means that a student's personal circumstances should not be obstacles to achieving their academic potential. In addition to opportunity, equity is about achievement, fairness, inclusion, and equitable outcomes. It's about making sure every child has the individualized support they need to be successful.

At Right At School, equity is more than a buzzword—it's a central consideration in every decision we make. We believe every child should have access to high-quality enrichment and childcare programs, and we're passionate about helping school districts achieve better outcomes for at-risk kids.

### Here are just a few examples:

- ✓ It's right there in our name: we operate at school—and that means **serving every school in your district where there is a demand for our program.** This eliminates costly busing and reduces barriers for low-income families, who may not have the transportation means to pick up their child at a distant location.
- ✓ Right At School has the agility to **scale up our programs to accommodate all families who need care.** We never operate with waitlists, which can disproportionately exclude underprivileged families.



- ✓ **We work with every district partner to build a financial model that maximizes access.** We offer significant discounts for students eligible for free or reduced lunch, and we often share revenue with districts in the form of scholarships for low-income families.
- ✓ Not only do we accept **state and local childcare subsidies**, but we are committed to helping families navigate the eligibility process. Parents can call our customer service hotline and a knowledgeable staff member will patiently guide them through the application.
- ✓ **We offer so much more than babysitting.** Our STEM-based curriculum—with 180+ daily enrichment activities—excites and engages students long after the bell rings. This especially benefits students who don't have access to learning and enrichment opportunities at home.
- ✓ **With daily homework help,** students often complete their assignments before leaving our program. This can make a world of difference for children whose parents are unavailable to assist them in the evening.



# HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PARTNER

**Not all enrichment programs are built with equity in mind.**

How can you find a program that supports your efforts to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion in your schools?

Here are some things to consider to help you find the right partner to help your district realize more equitable outcomes for all students.

**Does the provider have a proven track record providing equitable access to all students?**

## **HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDERS WILL:**

- ✓ Serve a broad and representative population of students in your school district, including those most at-risk.
- ✓ Provide equitable access to the program for families of all needs.
- ✓ Accept state subsidies and offer discounts to families who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Take a look at your current program: what percentage of students receive a subsidy or discount to attend, and how does that number compare to your district's free/reduced lunch rate?
- ✓ Deliver in-school enrichment at every elementary school in your district, including your lower-SES schools.
- ✓ Cultivate an environment inclusive of children with different abilities.
- ✓ Scale their programs to accommodate every student without having to create waiting lists.





**Does the provider have the ability—and flexibility—to meet the diverse needs of working parents and caregivers?**

### **HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDERS WILL:**

- ✓ Allow families to choose before school and/or after school care, depending on their needs.
- ✓ Offer families the option to register their child(ren) for 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week, change schedules without penalty, and provide punch cards for those who may only need to use the service infrequently.
- ✓ Offer programming during school breaks, holidays, professional development days, and/or the summer.



# Final Thoughts on Equity

**Children enrolled in before and after school programs will spend up to 1,000 extra hours per year under the care of educators.**

Though often overlooked, these hours offer school districts a priceless opportunity to improve educational and social outcomes for at-risk students.

As you plan for the upcoming school year, providing equitable, affordable access to high-quality enrichment can help children grow socially, emotionally, and academically. It can also provide peace of mind to working parents who desperately need it.

“

## Equal Opportunity

“With Right At School, we’re now able to provide the same opportunities at every elementary school so kids don’t have to be transferred or transported somewhere else. It provides more equity among our schools.”



— Bobbie Fiori, Assistant Superintendent  
for Beaver Creek City School District (Ohio)







ENRICHMENT  
PROVIDERS

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# ENRICHMENT PROVIDERS





# Exploring the current landscape of enrichment providers

## Children and working families need access to affordable enrichment programs.

Yet, nationwide, millions of children who could benefit from before and after school care currently lack access. Most heavily affected are low-income and minority children, which only perpetuates the achievement gap.

## There are many different types of providers.

Some districts choose to operate their own enrichment programs. Others opt to work with an outside provider to reduce the administrative burden.

## THESE PROVIDERS MAY INCLUDE:

- ✓ Local organizations (e.g., city park departments, small businesses, nonprofits, etc.)
- ✓ Youth organizations (e.g., YMCA, Boys & Girls Club)
- ✓ Nationally-recognized providers



Each type of provider has its own set of potential benefits and drawbacks.

## Here are some common pitfalls that can create issues for districts and families:

### DISTRICT-OPERATED PROGRAMS:

- ✓ High cost (in both time and money) to implement and manage programs
- ✓ Dependency on state and local budgets
- ✓ Ongoing administrative burdens for district and school leaders: hiring, payroll, staff supervision, program evaluation, enrollment/billing, customer service, marketing, etc.
- ✓ Lack of time and resources to continuously improve and innovate on program
- ✓ Lack of time and resources to promote programs and increase enrollment

### LOCAL/YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS:

- ✓ Limited number of locations
- ✓ Busing/transportation
- ✓ Waiting lists
- ✓ Inflexible schedules
- ✓ Lack of drop-in care
- ✓ Under-trained and/or under-resourced staff
- ✓ High staff turnover
- ✓ Inadequate supervision
- ✓ Inability to accommodate special needs

## To complicate matters, schools' and families' needs are changing, so providers must change too.

Despite this fact, many after school programs offer little more than babysitting—missing a critical opportunity to provide meaningful enrichment that yields long-term, positive results.

High-quality enrichment programs are intentionally designed to help students develop intellectually, emotionally, and socially—laying the groundwork for a lifetime of learning and satisfying relationships.



**Right At School offers before and after school enrichment programs as well as programs that wrap around your school schedules on hybrid or distance learning days.**

We also offer programming during school breaks, holidays, professional development days, and the summer. All of our programs are built upon the six after school components described on pages 45-46.

We cover all of the costs and fully manage every aspect of implementation, communications, billing, staffing, hiring, training, and program administration.

### **That said, we're a true partner**

We can adapt our programs to accommodate your district's unique plans, needs, and priorities.





# HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PARTNER

In addition to enrichment program content, there are several operational aspects to consider to ensure that a childcare program will be a benefit—and not a burden—to your district.

To eliminate administrative headaches, can the provider handle all aspects of program implementation?

## HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDERS WILL:

- ✓ Hire a qualified, local team of educators and program managers while ensuring every employee passes an exhaustive background check process.
- ✓ Provide extensive, ongoing training for staff and conduct regular program observations and staff evaluations.
- ✓ Partner with school leadership to identify program space and implement safety protocols that fully align with each school's policies.
- ✓ Adapt the program's structure and curriculum to district's unique needs and strategic initiatives.
- ✓ Take steps to minimize each program's storage footprint, stock its own supplies, and provide nutritious, nut-free snacks for students.

**Can the provider handle all aspects of program administration and promotion?**

**HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDERS WILL:**

- ✓ Develop marketing such as brochures, flyers, emails, web pages, and informational events to promote their childcare programs to the community.
- ✓ Keep parents well-informed with regular communications via email, newsletters, bulletin boards, and in-person chats.
- ✓ Handle the registration process end-to-end through an easily accessible online self-service portal for families.
- ✓ Completely manage the billing process. School district staff should never have to worry about collecting or processing payments.
- ✓ Provide regular program updates and presentations for leadership and board meetings.







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Closing COVID Gaps in 2021

**RIGHT AT SCHOOL**





# WHY RIGHT AT SCHOOL?

**Right At School is a nationally-recognized provider of school-age childcare and enrichment.**

More than that, we are a true partner. We align with your district's priorities and meet community needs today—and tomorrow.



## RIGHT AT SCHOOL CAN:

### ✓ Address learning loss and close academic gaps with high-quality enrichment.

Learning loss is a big concern for educators and parents. We can help students catch up and get excited about learning—while avoiding learning loss that may result from reduced class time. We can support district academic goals with a unique curriculum calendar, homework help, distance learning support, and hands-on STEM activities. In addition, we integrate safe and healthy fitness activities to help students socialize and have fun.

We also help students finish their homework after school so families don't have to worry about it when they get home. We offer guidance and help students critically think their way through problems—without providing the answers. With daily and consistent homework support, homework completion rates improve, and parents appreciate that weeknights are free for family time.

### ✓ **Bolster social-emotional development, which has never been more important.**

Right At School's SEL curriculum, which is based on CASEL standards, focuses on character traits and social support mechanisms that help students develop positive self-identity and find community with their peers.

### ✓ **Provide equity in access, with a multitude of financial supports.**

We offer flexible 1 to 5 day enrollment plans and drop-in options so everyone who needs childcare may enroll. We provide a financial model that maintains affordable pricing at all schools, acceptance of state subsidies, and savings for a variety of situations: including students who receive free/reduced lunch, discounts for teachers and staff, and scholarships for families in need.

### ✓ **Operate in every school, eliminating busing and waitlists.**

We are able to operate before school, after school, summer camp, half-day, full-day, and non-school day childcare programs in every school in a district. Our service model allows us to scale up no matter how many enrollments we receive—which means no more frustrating waitlists.

### ✓ **Meet local needs today—and adapt as your districts' needs change.**

When schools nationwide closed their doors in March 2020, Right At School jumped into action—opening full-day distance learning camps for the children of essential workers in Washington and New York. Armed with this experience, we've expanded our reach. We now serve the needs of schools across the country with carefully crafted programs to support students before and after school, provide wrap-around care for hybrid schedules, and offer in-person care on remote learning days to create an environment conducive to online learning.

Our enrichment curriculum, covering a wide range of subject areas, can be tailored to district learning objectives to complement classroom and virtual learning. Further, in addition to our regular safety protocols (e.g., name-to-face transitions, check-in/out procedures), our programs incorporate best practices for hygiene, wellness checks, and physical distancing.



### ✓ Hire highly-qualified, local staff.

Right At School's educators and program managers live and work in the communities we serve, and we care deeply about the welfare of the students in our care. We hire experienced candidates, starting with existing program staff and district employees, who are passionate about inspiring a love of learning in students. And our recruitment team maintains a healthy pipeline of candidates so we can fill roles as soon as they open.

### ✓ Provide best-in-class training for program staff.

All Right At School employees participate in an industry-leading blended training model. Staff learn core concepts and methods through custom online modules, followed by assessments to validate our comprehension and ability to apply concepts to scenarios.

Training topics include: safety protocols, injury and crisis response, abuse and neglect signs and mandated reporting, program quality methods, child development, positive and progressive child guidance, leadership and program management, parent/school relationships, professionalism and ethics, childcare licensing regulations, peer mentorship, and more!

### ✓ Conduct evidence-based program evaluations to maintain the highest quality standards.

Though every Right At School program is uniquely tailored to local needs, our rigorous program evaluation methods ensure that all our sites deliver the same world-class standard of care.

We base our internal program evaluations on the Weikart Center's *Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA)* to establish that our program content and methods meet or exceed high-quality youth program standards. Our area managers visit each site monthly to complete a PQA, identify opportunities for individual and team improvement, and conduct real-time quality coaching.

### ✓ Ensure the health and safety of students, staff, and families.

Safety has always been Right At School's top priority. Staff follow strict protocols to ensure that all children expected to attend on a given day are accounted for at the beginning of the program and every time we transition spaces. When COVID struck in March 2020, we swiftly adopted all CDC-advised safety measures (masking, physical distancing, etc.) to keep everyone in our programs healthy. Our unwavering commitment to safety has allowed us to continue operating much-needed childcare services throughout the pandemic in communities across the country.





What does an afternoon with Right At School look like?

# RIGHT CLUB

**Our after school program, *Right Club*, is structured into six components, but we can (and do!) adapt this structure to meet the needs of our partners.**

For example, some districts ask us to prioritize homework completion, so we begin the afternoon with Homework Help and devote more time to this component.



**Our before school program follows a similar structure, with a focus on warming up the body and brain for a great day of learning!**



# THE SIX COMPONENTS OF RIGHT CLUB

## ✓ Town Hall and Snack

We gather to recognize students for birthdays and special accomplishments, engage students in community discussions, and set expectations for the afternoon—all while enjoying a healthy snack!

## ✓ The Right Moves

We spend 10-15 minutes in a “fitness blast”—dancing, doing yoga stretches, or enjoying quick team games. It’s just enough time to get the “wiggles” out and prepare kids to focus on homework.

## ✓ Homework Help

We provide daily, consistent homework support. Our educators are guided by an assumption of ability: they work to help students understand their homework and think critically, but they won’t solve problems for students.

## ✓ Daily Enrichment

Our Disguised Learning™ preK-8 curriculum supports your educational goals by reinforcing learning standards. With 180+ unique, hands-on activities, our dynamic enrichment themes help students engage with both academic (e.g., math, science, reading) and non-academic subjects (e.g., community, sportsmanship, problem-solving, culture, leadership, self-reflection) while complementing district efforts to prepare your students for success beyond elementary school.

## ✓ Fun Fitness

Making time for daily movement and fun fitness activities is an essential part of our program. Our fitness programming offers staff a wide range of indoor/outdoor team games and fun exercise routines to keep students moving and fit!

## ✓ Self-Directed Inquiry

We know kids need time for self-navigation and free play! We have an ample supply of arts and crafts supplies, board games, card games, chess sets, and sports equipment available for kids to stretch their creative muscles in individual or peer play.

# Bringing it all together

## How districts, students & families benefit



### ✓ Get exceptional enrichment programs at no cost to your district

Right At School handles all aspects of program administration, gives parents affordable and flexible options, and even shares revenue with your district.

### ✓ Align your extended day programs with district priorities

We offer a uniquely adaptable program model that aligns to your district's learning objectives. All programs focus on the whole child and can be tailored to your district's strategic focus areas.

# “

## One of the best decisions I've ever made...

“When I was first introduced to Right At School at a conference, I was a skeptic. I've had enough programs pitched to me over the years that I'm a hard sell. I remember asking, 'What's the catch?' But as we continued the conversation, I became convinced it was something we should look at. Partnering with Right At School is one of best decisions I've ever made in public schools.”



— Dr. Kenneth Rohrbach,  
Superintendent of Medina Valley  
Independent School District (Texas)



## ✓ Incorporate academic and social-emotional development directly into the before and after school environment

Our Disguised Learning curriculum is aligned to state standards and based on CASEL's SEL standards. Most importantly, every hour of the program is designed to help kids succeed while having fun.

## ✓ Give students with special needs more access to enrichment and socialization outside of the classroom

Right At School is committed to serving students with special needs, and we work closely with families to determine the best placement for their children. We review every situation on a case-by-case basis to determine if the setting will meet the child's needs. We collaborate with our Inclusion Specialist, the family, school staff, and outside providers (with permission from parents) to develop individualized plans and make sure students with different abilities enjoy the same benefits and experiences.

## ✓ Empower working parents

We partner with districts to design programs around traditional schedules and virtual class schedules. This returns priceless hours and a sense of normalcy for working parents who desperately need it.

“

### Caring & Committed

“The SEL that's woven into the Right At School curriculum is an extension of what our counselors and social workers are doing, and the Right At School staff do a fantastic job. They're very caring, committed people.”



— Dr. Kenneth Rohrbach,  
Superintendent of Medina Valley  
Independent School District (Texas)

## Gain new revenue to support more families

In addition to providing programs that are free for your school district, we share a portion of the revenue as direct payments and/or provide scholarships for families in need.

## Gain a powerful staff retention tool for district faculty and staff

We offer significant discounts to all school district faculty and staff, allowing your district to provide essential childcare and enrichment as an employee benefit.

## Reduce turnover among enrichment program staff

Right At School serves school districts across the nation—and we do it all with local staff who care deeply about the communities we serve. We even offer jobs first to local staff and district employees who qualify. Our team members become close partners to families in the community, collaborate with district faculty and staff to ensure quality programs, and provide students a safe and enriching program experience each and every day.



# Worksheet

## Childcare Provider Assessment

Use this assessment form to evaluate the quality of your district's current or prospective childcare providers against Right At School's standard of care.

Assessment Criteria	Right At School	Provider 2	Provider 3
<b>Experience:</b> Does the provider have a proven track record delivering...			
Safe, engaging, and meaningful in-school and extracurricular programs in school districts over the last 10 years?	✓		
Safety-first childcare for parents and districts during the COVID-19 pandemic?	✓		
Flexible programs that can accommodate traditional schedules, hybrid schedules, and full-time distance learning schedules?	✓		
<b>Administration</b> To eliminate administrative headaches, can the provider handle all aspects of...			
Program implementation (e.g., staffing, structure, safety protocols, curriculum, supplies, etc.)?	✓		
Program administration (e.g., marketing, parent communications, registration, payments, etc.)?	✓		
<b>Costs</b> Will the provider...			
Deliver the program at no cost to your district?	✓		
Offer a program that's affordable to parents?	✓		
Share revenue with your district?	✓		
Make discounts available for families who qualify for free or reduced lunches, parents who enroll siblings, military families, and/or district employees?	✓		



Location Can the provider...			
Offer the program at every prekindergarten, elementary, and middle school in your district, or whichever sites you choose?	✓		
Quickly scale up or down as enrollment increases or decreases at each location?	✓		
Alignment to district objectives Can the provider deliver an enrichment program curriculum that supports...			
Your district's objectives and priorities?	✓		
Learning standards in English language arts, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, social-emotional learning (SEL), fine arts, and physical fitness?	✓		
Critical thinking, creativity, and engagement through fun, hands-on activities?	✓		
State standards and/or national standards?	✓		
Staff Are the provider's staff members...			
Thoroughly vetted before hiring (e.g., state and FBI background checks, abuse/neglect/sex offender registry checks)?	✓		
Experienced in education and/or childcare?	✓		
Provided with ongoing coaching, support, and professional development?	✓		
Safety Do the provider's safety protocols...			
Promote safe physical distancing?	✓		
Strictly adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines?	✓		
Fully comply with state and local safety protocols?	✓		
Focus on ensuring student safety throughout each stage of the day (e.g., check-in/out, attendance, transitions, name-to-face, etc.)?	✓		
Align to your district procedures (e.g., ER/disaster plans, fire/tornado safety, lockdowns, etc.)?	✓		
Include monthly drills, quality checks, and compliance audits?	✓		



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# Be ready for what's next.

**It's no secret that school districts are facing unprecedented challenges. But these challenges bring unprecedented opportunities to think differently about how to meet the needs of students and their families.**

By partnering with a high-quality enrichment provider, district leaders can provide a multi-pronged enrichment solution to address learning loss, enhance SEL, and improve equity—without dipping into scarce resources.

School districts that take this opportunity to extend enrichment and SEL beyond the school day will be equipped to achieve better outcomes for all students in the post-COVID world.

No matter what your school district faces in the months ahead, Right At School has a program to fit your unique needs. We are constantly adapting and developing new strategies to help district and school leaders, families, and students navigate the new normal, whatever that may be.

## Contact us today



Please call **855-AT-SCHOOL (855-287-2466)** or fill out the [online contact form](#) to discuss your district's childcare needs with a Right At School team member and discover how to expand access to high-quality enrichment and social-emotional development for all students.

### Right At School

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