MULTIPLE REFLECTIONS:

Comparison of Frameworks for Promoting Youth Learning and Healthy Development

By Sam Piha and Samantha Fasen
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS to all of the individuals and organizations that were referenced in this paper, and for all of their contributions to the field. We also want to thank Stacey Daraio for her suggestions and edits and to the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation for their support over the years and their support for this paper.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Samantha Fase joined Temescal Associates and the How Kids Learn Foundation in 2019 and has fully embraced her work with the afterschool field. She helps to coordinate and develop marketing campaigns and multimedia elements to reach a wider audience and share with people the importance of out-of-school time and youth development.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

Temescal Associates is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who are serious about improving the lives of young people. Their clients include leaders of youth serving institutions and organizations, school and youth program practitioners, public and private funders, intermediary organizations, and policy makers.

The HKL Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization. It is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of settings that support the education and healthy development of youth. This includes schools and out-of-school time programs.

The HKL Foundation provides educational and training activities that promote the capacity of organizations that support the education and healthy development of youth. Examples of activities include conferences, speaker forums, screenings of relevant films, training sessions, coaching sessions, the awarding of digital badges to acknowledge exemplar programs and the learning that happens within these settings. Activities also include the development and distribution of educational materials (papers, self-assessment tools, videos, program guides, etc.).

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INTRODUCTION

Overview
Every year researchers and experts on youth learning and development issue reports with new concepts and frameworks. They are developed to guide the design and implementation of community initiatives, schools and youth programs.

According to Explore SEL at Harvard Graduate School of Education, “The complex and conflicting terminology used in the field can make it difficult to sort through and compare all the information out there to determine which approach works best for you. This lack of clarity can be both overwhelming and confusing. Without a way to make sense of the words, it becomes easy to misinterpret, over-generalize, or overlook the science that links evidence to strategies, and strategies to measurement and evaluation. When this happens, the links that connect different points along the research-to-practice cycle become lost or obscured, and the cycle breaks down.”

“In the past several years, a large number of frameworks and standards have been created to provide guidance on what young people need to learn.”
- UChicago Consortium on School Research

While many of these frameworks and their critical features are not “new” or surprising, they do offer a more granular examination or focus on a specific issue. These frameworks include (not an exhaustive list):

- Youth Development
- Foundations for Young Adult Success
- The Learning in Afterschool & Summer Learning Principles (LIAS Principles)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Trauma-Informed Practices
- The Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) and Whole Child Development
- Program Quality Standards

“It sometimes feels like risking whiplash to try to follow all the emerging trends in our field and the potential funding, resources and opportunities that come along with them. Every few years, sometimes more often, there are new trends that are often accompanied by or are a part of funding opportunities. Some of these trends stick around for a while until something newer, younger and sexier gets introduced. Some trends seem to come around in cycles.”
- Rebecca Fabiano, Fab Youth Philly

It is important for youth program leaders to closely follow the release of new frameworks and to be literate in and able to integrate the language and concepts they offer. Many of these frameworks have critical features in common with and are born out of earlier youth development frameworks.
The purpose of this paper is to compare recent frameworks and note their commonalities. Below we offer a summary or overview of many of these frameworks as well as resources to learn more. We also provide a crosswalk chart to learn where their critical features overlap. (Note: Harvard’s Explore SEL has catalogued a large number of program frameworks and allows the reader to explore and compare frameworks to others in the field.)

**Why a Framework?**
There are several ways that a framework is useful. To begin, it summarizes existing knowledge and helps us by creating a common language. A framework also gives direction and purpose to a program. Knowing the important components of a framework can help guide staff and volunteers toward programming intended to achieve specific positive outcomes. A framework can help provide direction for program evaluation, as well, to identify items on which an evaluation can focus. Finally, a framework which is validated and accurate can identify more clearly what the long-term outcomes are that youth programs are helping to create.

**Systems Approach**
We know that individual youth programs do not stand alone. They are impacted by their own parent organizations, funders, local communities and policymakers. Zoom out and one will see they are nested within a larger system, like Russian nesting dolls. Many of these frameworks name critical features for the larger systems of influence. Below is an example, see figure 1.1. However, for the purposes of this paper, we only focus on frameworks that address individual youth program practices.

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**Figure 1.1**
Community Action Framework for Youth Development

- **Build Community Capacity and Conditions for Change**
  - Building stakeholders’ awareness, knowledge, engagement and commitment
  - Conveying urgency, possibility, equity and inevitability of change

- **Implement Community Strategies to Enhance Supports and Opportunities for Youth**
  - Strengthen community adults’ and families’ capacity to support youth
  - Reform and coordinate public institutions and services to support youth development
  - Increase number and quality of developmental activities for youth
  - Create policies and realign resources in public and private sectors to support community strategies

- **Increase Supports and Opportunities for Youth**
  - Adequate nutrition, health and shelter
  - Multiple supportive relationships with adults and peers
  - Meaningful opportunities for involvement and membership
  - Challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences
  - Safety

- **Improve Developmental Outcomes**
  - Learning to be productive
  - Learning to connect
  - Learning to navigate

- **Improve Long-Term Outcomes in Adulthood**
  - Economic self-sufficiency
  - Healthy family and social relationships
  - Community involvement

*Figure 1.1 Source: Finding Out What Matters for Youth*
Building Staff Capacity
In order to shape program practices in alignment with a chosen framework requires a great deal of work. This includes the building of staff capacity through training and a program improvement process. While this is not always explicit, this should be assumed when reviewing program practice frameworks.

Afterschool Learning: What Do We Call It?
What do we call the learning time outside of the classroom? In this paper we will use the term “afterschool” or “youth programs.” Learning time outside of the classroom is also referred to by others as “out-of-school time” (OST), “expanded learning opportunities (ELO)”, “expanded learning time” (ELT), and “expanded learning programs” (ELP).

A Historical Perspective
In examining afterschool frameworks it is useful to have a historical perspective on the afterschool movement which began in the late 1800’s. To learn more, check out Youth Development Guide 2.0 and The History of Afterschool in America, a 60-minute documentary and read, Making Play Work: The Promise of Afterschool Programs for Low-Income Children by Robert Halpern.

FRAMEWORKS: OVERVIEWS AND SUMMARIES

Youth Development
The Youth Development framework we cite is based upon the youth development framework created by researchers, James Connell and Michelle Gambone. Drawing on their understanding of the fundamental ideas underlying the youth development approach, we can now begin to look more closely at the kinds of experiences we can offer young people in afterschool programs to help them learn and grow.

“The principles undergirding this youth development framework are as relevant today as when it was created. It is well aligned with our new learnings from both research and practice -- from the importance of relationships and social emotional learning to considering the kinds of short and longer term outcomes we seek that enhance success in school, work and life. It remains especially important for increasing intentionality around both the program opportunities we create for and with youth and especially the ways communities contribute systematically to ensuring these are available. This is youth development and community development framing at its best.” - Dale Blyth, Extension Professor Emeritus and Sr. Research Fellow, University of Minnesota
This youth development framework names 5 key experiences which are crucial to promoting young people’s healthy development and creating successful learning environments:

- Promoting a sense of physical and emotional safety
- Encouraging relationship building
- Fostering meaningful youth participation
- Providing opportunities for community involvement
- Creating challenging and engaging learning experiences that build skills

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:

Websites:

- Temescal Associates
- Youth Development Strategies, Inc.
- Center for Youth Program Quality
- Forum for Youth Investment

Written:

- Youth Development Guide 2.0
- Finding Out What Matters for Youth: Testing Key Links in a Community Action Framework for Youth Development
- National Academy of Sciences: Community Programs to Promote Youth Development

Foundations for Young Adult Success

The Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework is from the UChicago Consortium on School Research. It characterizes the experiences and relationships youth need to develop into young adults who have agency, an integrated identity, and the requisite competencies to successfully meet the complex challenges of young adulthood and become thriving, contributing members of their communities.
This framework identifies three key factors of young adult success: agency, an integrated identity, and competencies. It then names four foundational components:

- Self-regulation
- Knowledge and skills
- Mindsets
- Values that underlie the above

It takes into account what we know about how children develop, considers how the backgrounds of and contexts in which young people live affect their development and makes the intentional provision of opportunities for young people to experience, interact, and make meaning of their experiences the central vehicle for learning and development.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:

Websites:
- Foundations for Young Adult Success
- Forum for Youth Investment - A Conversation with Camille Farrington on the Foundations for Young Adult Success Framework (contains a number of brief videos)

Videos:
- Foundations for Young Adult Success with Jenny Nagaoka (UChicago)

The Learning in Afterschool and Summer Learning Principles

Temescal Associates launched the Learning in Afterschool (LIAS) to address a great debate as to whether afterschool programs should be focused on academic or youth development outcomes. It was designed to unify the field of afterschool and focus the movement on promoting young people’s learning.

If afterschool programs are to achieve their full potential, they must be known as important places of learning that excite young people in the building of new skills, the discovery of new interests, and opportunities to achieve a sense of mastery. The LIAS Learning Principles became a foundational part of the California Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs.

"We spend so much time focused on 'achievement' and so little time focused on how to motivate students to learn. The principles advocated by LIAS strike the right balance and make sense... The principles contained in LIAS promote such an approach, and if applied with fidelity, could lead to real improvements in educational outcomes for kids." - Pedro Noguera, Dean, USC Rossier School of Education
The LIAS project promotes five core, “evergreen” learning principles that should guide the design and implementation of afterschool programs.

- Effective Learning is Active
- Effective Learning is Collaborative
- Effective Learning is Meaningful
- Effective Learning Supports Mastery
- Effective Learning Expands Horizons

**Figure 5 Source: LIAS Position Statement**

**RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:**

**Websites:**
- [Learning in Afterschool & Summer](LIAS)

**Written (Book/Reports/Articles/Blogs):**
- [Summer Programs That Reflect the LIAS Learning Principles](LIAS)
- [Afterschool Programs That Reflect the LIAS Learning Principles](LIAS)
- [A Crosswalk Between the Learning in Afterschool Learning Principles and Afterschool Quality Measurement Tools](LIAS)
- [National Academy of Sciences: How People Learn](LIAS)

**Videos:**
- [Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project - How Kids Learn](LIAS)
- [Learning in Afterschool & Summer Youtube Channel](LIAS)
**Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

There is now a strong consensus that young people need more than reading and writing skills if they are to be successful in school, work, and life. According to the California Department of Education’s Expanded Learning Division, “there is a growing body of research proving that social and emotional learning (SEL) is fundamental to academic success, and must be woven into the work of every teacher in every classroom and every after school and summer enrichment program, if we truly want to prepare all our students for college and careers.”

“**The concept of social emotional learning has come to a frenzy in the past couple of years. Where does afterschool fit in to all of this? You would hope that we’d be right at the forefront. We’ve been doing this for years we know how to do it.”** – Karen Pittman, *Forum for Youth Investment*

According to *The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)*, SEL is “social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”

The CASEL framework names 5 critical youth competencies:

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision Making
- Self-Management

![Figure 6 Source: CASEL](https://www.casel.org)
The Expanded Learning 360°/365 Collaborative Project, under the leadership of The Partnership for Children & Youth (PCY) formed a research group to develop a program framework that encompassed both SEL and character building. They developed a framework shown below and wrote several papers detailing this framework including Student Success Comes Full Circle: Leveraging Expanded Learning Opportunities.

![Figure 7 Source: Student Success Comes Full Circle: Leveraging Expanded Learning Opportunities](image)

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:

**Websites:**
- Expanded Learning 360°/365
- The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
- Character.org
- Explore SEL at Harvard Graduate School of Education

**Written:**
- Student Success Comes Full Circle: Leveraging Expanded Learning Opportunities
- LIAS Blogs: SEL
- LIAS Blogs: Mindfulness
- Expanded Learning 360°/365- Mindfulness in Afterschool: A 16- Session Curriculum of Mindfulness Activities for Young People in Afterschool Programs

**Videos:**
- The Limits and Possibilities of Social Emotional Learning with Dr. Shawn Ginwright
- PEAR: Social Emotional Development with Dr. Gil Noam
Trauma-Informed Practice

According to a report entitled, "Trauma-Resilient Informed Practices in Expanded Learning Programs: A Snapshot of Trends in the Field," trauma impacts individuals from all walks of life. The long-lasting effects of trauma can create barriers in the lives of those impacted. Trauma may cause devastating consequences for young people in their social and emotional development, academic achievement, and overall wellbeing. However, when provided with the right supports, young people can not only gain better coping skills, but they can also tap into their abilities to be resilient, overcome adversity, and even transform adversity into strength.

"High doses of adversity not only affect brain structure and function, they affect the developing immune system, developing hormonal systems, and even the way our DNA is read and transcribed..." - Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California Surgeon General

This report goes on to say, as expanded learning programs across the United States continue to become more aware of the effects of trauma on young people’s lives, leaders and staff in the field are examining how they can better support these young people by leveraging the many assets that are already part of expanded learning programs. As the implementation of trauma-resilient informed practices in expanded learning programs gains more traction, questions and considerations are surfacing in terms of what it means to build the capacity of staff and leadership and to create systems that are trauma-resilient informed for the field of expanded learning.

"In the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), where 80% of students live in poverty, 98% of students reported experiencing one or more stressful or traumatic life event in the past 12 months and at least half suffer from moderate to severe symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)." – Eric Gurna, LA’s BEST

In the article by Brandy Maynard, Anne Farina and Nathaniel Dell entitled "Protocol: Effects of Trauma Informed Approaches in Schools" they offer a framework which names 6 critical principles:

- **Safety**: An environment where kids feel physically, emotionally, and culturally safe; helps kids regulate and fosters relationship building. Important components of this are staff to youth ratios and physical space.
- **Trustworthiness & Transparency**: Programming is predictable and consistent to alleviate any fear or anxiety that may be created by the unknown; youth know what to expect when arriving at the program.
- **Peer Support**
- **Collaboration & Mutuality**: The understanding that learning happens in relationships; staff who intentionally work to make all youth feel like they belong and help youth to develop new skills allows for greater social-emotional learning.
- **Empowerment, Voice and Choice**: Traumatic experiences steal an individual’s autonomy and ability to make choices for oneself. Providing opportunities for youth to have choice within programming and choice in directives can help fill that void.
- **Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues:** Increases community leadership; builds inclusive practices; respects individuals; and utilizes culturally relevant and sensitive practices, language, and communication. Acknowledging the behaviors youth have developed and helping them reframe those behaviors can be an incredibly powerful message.

![Diagram of Six Principles and Four Key Elements](image)


Dr. Shawn Ginwright offers a different view of how we respond to young people who have experienced trauma. He suggests that we should consider community trauma instead of only the individual. He states in his article *The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement*, “a shift from trauma informed care to healing centered engagement (HCE) is more than a semantic play with words, but rather a tectonic shift in how we view trauma, its causes and its intervention. HCE is strength based, advances a collective view of healing, and re-centers culture as a central feature in well-being. Researchers have pointed out the ways in which patients have redefined the terms used to describe their illnesses in ways that affirmed, humanized and dignified their condition.”

*“While trauma informed care offers an important lens to support young people who have been harmed and emotionally injured, it also has its limitations. For me, I realized the term slipped into the murky water of deficit based, rather than asset driven strategies to support young people who have been harmed. Without careful consideration of the terms we use, we can create blind spots in our efforts to support young people.”*  
- **Dr. Shawn Ginwright (SFSU) The Future of Healing**
RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:

Websites:
  • ACES Aware

Written:
  • Protocol: Effects of Trauma Informed Approaches in School
  • The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement
  • Hope and Healing in Urban Education by Dr. Shawn Ginwright
  • Building a Trauma Informed Care Approach for Afterschool Programs
  • Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations
  • LIAS Blogs: Childhood Trauma

The Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) and Whole Child Development

According to the American Institutes for Research (AIR), “SoLD is a collaborative effort to combine findings from diverse areas of research, from neuroscience to human development, into an integrated science of learning and development—a body of work that can bolster the youth development field’s efforts in afterschool systems and settings to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to thrive. The findings from SoLD add to our understanding of youth development in afterschool settings and systems.”

“This science provides the biological rationale for the positive relationships and safe, supportive environments that researchers and practitioners have found to be so important and effective.” - Katie Brackenridge, Turnaround for Children, Supporting the Whole Child in Afterschool (LIAS Blog)

Turnaround for Children developed a framework naming 5 Non-Negotiables for Whole-Child Design to describe how we should prioritize our work in afterschool programs:
  • Positive developmental relationships
  • Environments filled with safety and belonging
  • Integrated supports
  • Intentional development of critical skills, mindsets and habits
  • Rich instructional experiences
RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:

Websites:
- SoLD Alliance
- Turnaround for Children

Written:
- Malleability, Plasticity, and Individuality: How Children Learn and Develop in Context
- Expanded Learning 360°/365° - Growth Mindsets: A Literature Review

Videos:
- The Science of Learning and Development from Edutopia
- The Science of Learning and Development in Out-of-School Time (10 Videos)

Quality Program Standards for Expanded Learning

The purpose of Quality Standards is to describe high levels of “quality” of a youth program. Quality standards have been developed by national organizations and state and local networks. Quality standards are not intended to serve as a compliance tool, but are designed to guide programs in the implementation and assessment of program quality. For the purpose of this paper, we will reference California’s Quality Standards for Expanded Learning and focus on the standards that pertain to “Point-of-Service” or program practices that are aimed at youth.
The California Quality Standards for Expanded Learning focuses on 6 critical point-of-service areas:

- Safe and Supportive Environment
- Active and Engaged Learning
- Skill Building
- Youth Voice and Leadership
- Healthy Choices and Behaviors
- Diversity, Access and Equity

California’s Quality Standards for Expanded Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point-of-Service Standards</th>
<th>Youth voice and leadership</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Safe and supportive environment</strong></td>
<td>The program provides and supports intentional opportunities for students to play a meaningful role in program design and implementation, and provides ongoing access to authentic leadership roles.</td>
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<td><strong>Active and engaged learning</strong></td>
<td>The program promotes student well-being through opportunities to learn about and practice balanced nutrition, physical activity and other healthy choices in an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle.</td>
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<td><strong>Skill building</strong></td>
<td>The program creates an environment in which students experience values that embrace diversity and equity regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, income level, national origin, physical ability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.</td>
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RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:

Websites:
- California Afterschool Network- Increasing Program Quality
- California Department of Education Quality Standards
- Statewide Afterschool Networks Quality Standards
- Toolkit for Expanded Learning

Written:
- A Crosswalk Between the Quality Standards of Expanded Learning and Program Quality Assessment Tools

Videos:
- California Department of Education Standards in Action
ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Identity and Equity
It is important to note that many of the frameworks detailed above do not address the important issue of youth identity and equity. We have learned that how youth identify (LGBTQ+, race, gender, etc.) must be considered in addressing youth needs. It is important that we work to ensure that ALL youth have access to and feel a sense of positive belonging in afterschool programs.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:
Temescal Associates and The How Kids Learn Foundation have developed many blog posts and recording of webinars addressing identity and equity
Websites:
• Forum for Youth Investment: Equity
Videos:
• History of Afterschool in America (see interviews with Lynn Johnson and Ashanti Branch)

Program Practices
Any framework adopted by an afterschool program only comes to life when it is aligned with program practices and staff development. This alignment can be assured by entering into a thorough program improvement process. We recommend Youth Development Guide 2.0 which offers a description of inventive program practices and staff development activities which support the practices.

COVID-19
Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, afterschool programs had to amend their practices to account for the pandemic and in some cases, the need for distance learning. Many national, statewide and local organizations have included COVID-19 resources and information. Some of these are listed below.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:
Websites:
• Afterschool Alliance: COVID-19
• California Afterschool Network: COVID-19
Written & Videos:
• Temescal Associates and The How Kids Learn Foundation Response to COVID-19
Other Frameworks
There are many youth program frameworks beyond those detailed in this paper. Below are two others. The reader can also explore and compare other frameworks at Explore SEL.

Employability Skills
RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:
Websites:
- America’s Promise Alliance: The Yes Project
- Perkins Collaborative Resource Network: Employability Skills
Written:
- America’s Promise Alliance: Ready, Connected, Supported- A Framework for Youth Workforce Development and the Yes Project
- Temescal Associates: Engaging Youth as Workers Within High School Afterschool
Videos:
- Employability Skills with Laura Rasmussen Foster (RTI International)

21st Century Learning Skills
RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE:
Written:
- Blog: What Are 21st Century Skills?
- 21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times by Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel
- LIAS Blogs: 21st Century Skills

FRAMEWORKS CROSSWALK

All of the frameworks detailed above name critical features (some use other terms like experiences, components, non-negotiables, principles, factors, or competencies) that are deemed essential. They are all useful in guiding the design and implementation of youth programs, their values and intentions; along with program practices, activities, and assessment tools to gauge fidelity and effectiveness.

Although they do not use these terms, they are essentially about love, acceptance, respect for self and others, mentorship, agency, and preparing youth for success in school, work and life.

“...Youth developers will see the immediate parallels to expanded learning quality standards and the principles of Learning in Afterschool and Summer from Temescal Associates...High quality afterschool programs specialize in positive relationships, safe and supportive environments, and engaging activities. Afterschool plays a vital role in supporting learning and well-being by focusing on these core areas of expertise and experience...”

- Katie Brackenridge, Turnaround for Children, Supporting the Whole Child in Afterschool (LIAS Blog)
In figure 10, *Frameworks Crosswalk*, we have used the Youth Development framework as our baseline and sought to align the critical features of the other frameworks detailed above. Regardless of which framework a program uses to guide their design and implementation, one should be aware of the other frameworks, both their similarities and their differences.

### Frameworks Crosswalk

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<tr>
<th>Youth Development</th>
<th>Foundations for Young Adult Success</th>
<th>LIAS Learning Principles</th>
<th>Social Emotional Learning</th>
<th>Trauma-Informed Practice</th>
<th>The Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) and Whole Child Development</th>
<th>Quality Program Standards for Expanded Learning</th>
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*Figure 10 Source: Temescal Associates and The How Kids Learn Foundation*