

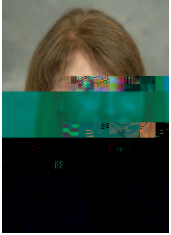
Children's Participation in Out-of-School Activities

Interest in out-of-school activities has grown over the last decade fueled by research suggesting that participation in such activities has a positive effect for children and youth. Research has shown that out-of-school activities improve academic outcomes foster children's relationships with peers and adults add to their knowledge and skills and provide supervision for children when school is not in session.

Moreover these benefits also tend to extend beyond the child to the family and larger community contributing to the formation of social and cultural capital as social networks and connections are established.

Less attention has been paid to the factors associated with participation in out-of-school activities. This is especially important because to achieve these positive effects children must take part in activities with sufficient regularity so that participation is a significant part of their lives.





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Dr. Coulton and Ms. Irwin were interested in learning more about how family and neighborhood characteristics influence children’s participation in organized activities outside of school. Specifically, their study sought to answer questions about the degree to which parental involvement in the community and neighborhood safety and disadvantage affected participation in out-of-school activities.

Data for the study came from 2192 households with children ages 5 to 17 nested within 128 low income neighborhoods (defined by census tracts) in 10 cities that were part of Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Making Connections Initiative. The study sought to understand the influence of both individual/ household and neighborhood factors on children’s participation in out-of-school activities using hierarchical generalized linear models (HGLM).

Started in 1999, Making Connections is a ten-year investment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and partners to improve the outcomes for families and children in tough or isolated neighborhoods in 10 cities across the U.S. (Denver, Des Moines, Hartford, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Oakland, Providence, San Antonio and Seattle/White Center).



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This study was carried out with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation as part of their *Making Connections* Initiative. Data for the study were collected jointly by the National Opinion Research Corporation (NORC) at the University of Chicago and the Urban Institute.

For more information on *Making Connections*, go to:
<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/MakingConnections.aspx>

STUDY RESULTS

Overall almost 50% of children in the sample did not participate in any out-of-school activities. Children in these neighborhoods were almost twice as likely to not participate in out-of-school activities as were children in the surrounding counties. On average, 48% of children participated in out-of-school activities at least once a week. There was considerable variation between neighborhoods in terms of children's participation in any out-of-school activities.

Unlike similar studies in more affluent neighborhoods African American children were significantly more likely to participate in out-of-school activities than were white children. In fact their odds of any participation were more than 1.5 times higher. There were no significant differences found in rates of participation between Hispanic or Asian/Other children and white children.

Neighborhood safety had a significant positive effect on participation in at least one out-of-school activity. For each unit increase in the neighborhood safety rating the odds of any participation in out-of-school activities increased almost 10%. Results also show that children whose parents were involved in community volunteering and action were more likely to participate in out-of-school activities.

Moreover as illustrated in **Figure 1** African American and Hispanic children were less likely to be dissuaded from participation in out-of-school activities by unsafe neighborhood conditions than were whites. Additionally in families that volunteer safety projects in the neighborhood were less likely to impede children's participation in out-of-school activities.

A similar effect was seen with neighborhood poverty. **Figure 2** shows that as compared to whites all of the other racial and ethnic groups were less likely to be affected by neighborhood poverty. In fact African American, Hispanic and Asian/Other children participated at slightly higher rates if their neighborhood poverty rate was higher.

Figure 3 shows a differential sensitivity of residents to the racial and ethnic composition of their neighborhood. Whites participated in out-of-school activities at higher rates when the neighborhood had a higher proportion of white residents. The opposite was true for all other racial and ethnic groups in the study who participated at higher rates when a higher proportion of residents were African American, Hispanic, Asian or of other races.

PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF PARTICIPATION IN AT LEAST ONE OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITY

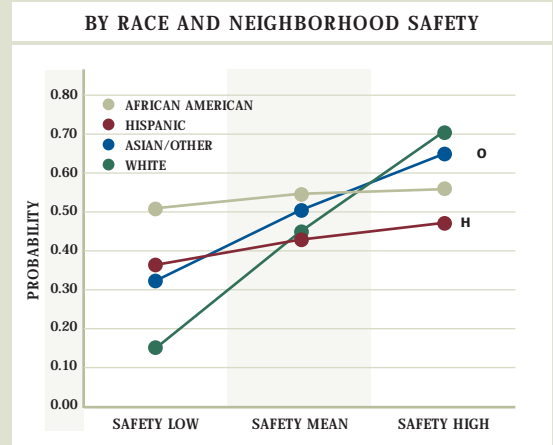


Figure 1

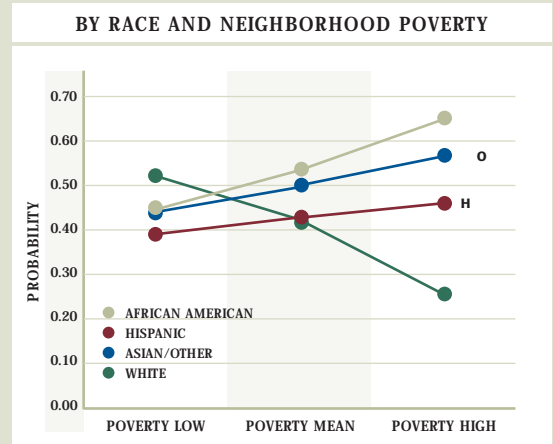


Figure 2

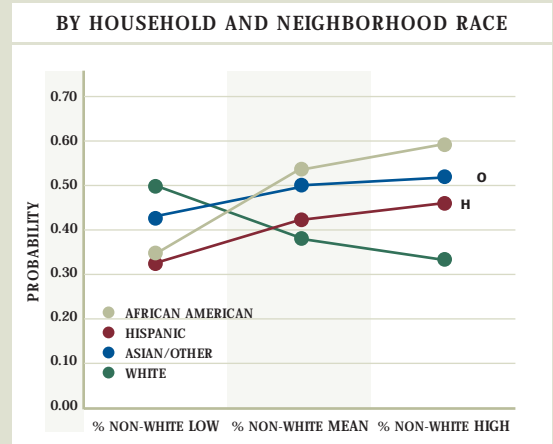


Figure 3

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