

Stamford Cradle to Career Afternoon Enrichment Summary

Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) Summer Enrichment Overview

Stamford Public Schools (SPS) partnered with SC2C to assist with the coordination of a six-week summer school program open to all K-8 students in the summer of 2021. SC2C coordinated the RFP process on behalf of SPS for proposals from community programs to provide afternoon enrichment activities to round out the day for students. Morning academic instruction was provided by SPS; afternoon enrichment programming was provided by community youth organizations (see below).

This was the first time that SPS offered summer school to all students with an option to stay for a full day of programming. Transportation, breakfast, lunch, and a snack were provided – also a first. The program was free. The expanded program was made possible through federal COVID recovery funding allocated for academic recovery and summer enrichment.

Role of SC2C

- Led the planning process in partnership with SPS and Stamford Public Education Foundation (SPEF) to design a plan for community partners to apply for and provide programming.
- Set up an RFP Process for Community Programs to apply to participate. **14** community agencies applied to provide enrichment services.
- Hosted information session for interested community agencies to learn more about the process and answer questions.
- Submitted RFP to SPS to be the intermediary funder for programs.
- Hosted webinars for community partners on how to help parents register.
- Hosted ongoing calls with enrichment providers to acquaint them with program plan and address questions.
- Disbursed several rounds of funding throughout the summer to support programs; worked with providers to finalize budgets and catalog documentation of payroll, program expenses and receipts. Submitted final documentation to Stamford Public Schools September 2021.
- Assisted with measuring and evaluating the impact of the program on students and families.

Overview of Numbers

Over **1,200** students were served in the afternoon program which ran for six weeks for three hours immediately following the morning academic portion of the summer enrichment program. **Eleven partners** provided a range of activities for students across areas such as sports, art, and science. Our partners are listed below. Information about their offerings can be found [on the flier](#) which was sent home with children and included the QR code to the parent survey.

- *Sports Providers*
 - Peak Performance
 - PEACE Basketball
 - Grassroots Tennis & Education
 - Bobby Valentine's Sports Academy
- *Nature*
 - Stamford Museum & Nature Center
 - SoundWaters
- *Art & Technology*
 - Arts in CT
 - Happy Code Club
- *Music*
 - Project Music
 - INTEMPO
- *All Around*
 - ROSCCO
 - Stamford YMCA

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Feedback

Feedback is essential for Cradle to Career to inform our recommendations and ensure transparency. We collected feedback from program partners, students, and families and have plans to share this information back to participants after it is presented to SPS staff and Board of Education members.

Enrichment Provider Feedback

14 members representing management roles and on-site program managers completed the end of program feedback survey. Overall, partners enjoyed their experience, especially watching students come out of their shells during the time in their programs. Partners offered insightful feedback around ways to improve the experience for next year, emphasizing the need for earlier, more detailed communication and a request to be active participants in program design. Below are highlights from the data:

- **Over 50%** were satisfied to very satisfied with the communication efforts between their organization and SPEF and SC2C
- **93%** felt that 3 hours in the afternoon was adequate time to engage with students
- **71%** were satisfied to very satisfied with their overall participation in the program this summer
- **93%** indicated they would be likely to take part in the program again if offered in 2022
- What providers enjoyed:
 - Watching kids forming relationships with their staff and other children
 - The opportunity to provide children with new experiences
 - Offering children some semblance of normalcy after the past year and a half
 - Partnering with other organizations and learning from them
- What providers would like to see improved:
 - **Communication** – more frequently and starting earlier in the year between SPS and whomever is leading enrichment efforts. Providers would like communication to start earlier and contain more details about the plan and day to day execution.
 - **Transparency** – knowing more about issues in execution, including a plan for students with special needs who require additional supports/adapted programming
 - **Including enrichment partners in the program design process.** Many expressed working with children in school settings throughout the year and in the summer and would have liked the opportunity to offer their expertise in the design phase.
 - **Improving the predictability** of the day/experience.

Afternoon Provider Satisfaction with Overall Experience



Student Feedback

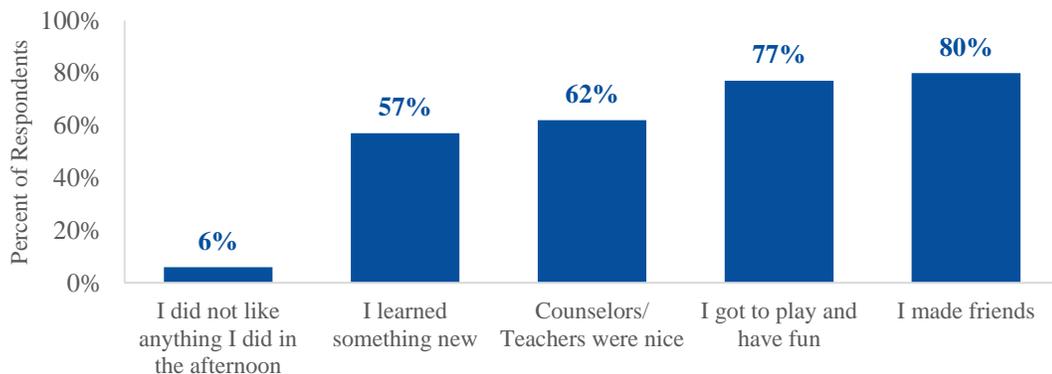
Over 600 K-8 students took our student survey to help us better understand what children liked about the afternoon program and would like to see done differently in the future.

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Students overwhelmingly enjoyed their time in the afternoon program with more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents indicating they “liked” or “liked their experience a lot”. What they liked most was making friends and getting to play and have fun. What they would like to see next year is more choice and the ability to select which activity they participate in. The survey was given during the last week of programming. It was short and used simple questions and smiley faces to ensure young children could adequately indicate their preferences. Students who needed assistance in understanding the questions or selecting answers were supported by program staff.

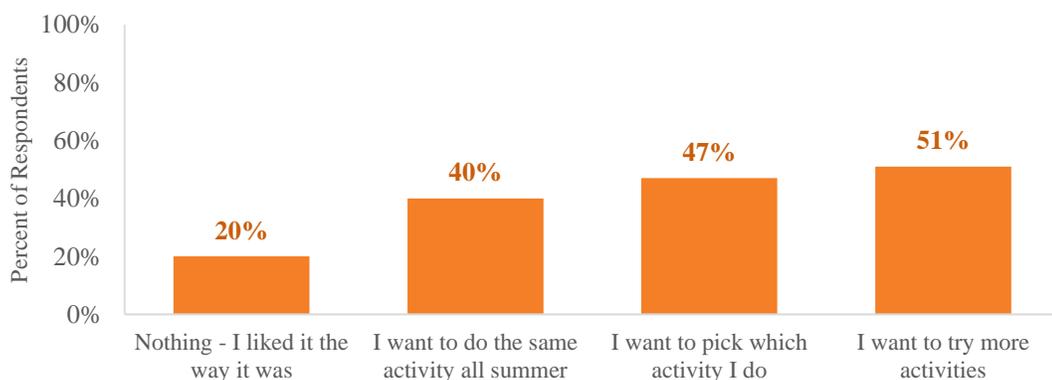
- **653** responses from each of the 5 summer school locations
- **88%** of students *liked to liked a lot* their experience in the afternoon this summer. There was no significant variation by school or grade.
- When asked what it was students liked about their experience this summer, children could select from a pre-set list of five options, and they could select as many from that list as they felt best represented their experience. The graph below represents the percentage of students who selected each answer option (n=653). The two most popular responses were that children made friends and enjoyed being able to play.

What Students Liked About Enrichment



- When asked what students would like to see done differently next year, children could select as many of the four options shown below as they liked. The two most common responses were that children wanted to try more activities and would like to have more say in activities they try.

What Students Would Like to See Changed for Next Year

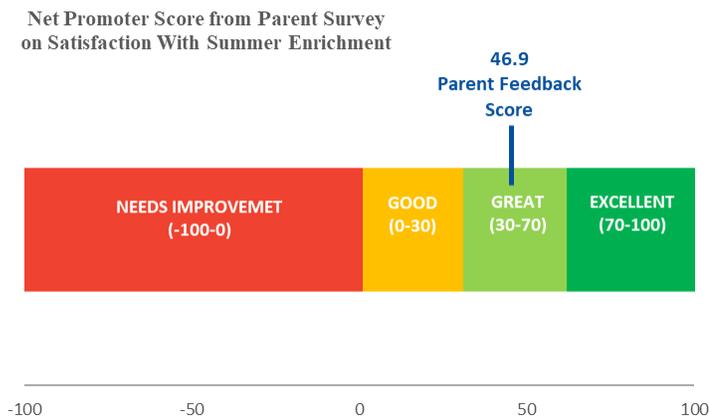


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Parent Feedback

94 families took our parent survey which was sent home on fliers via a QR code on the last day of programming. The survey was also emailed to families by SC2C and was linked in the Superintendent's weekly message. Responses came from families with children at each of the locations and across a range of grades.

- **60%** of parents said their child liked all the activities they participated in this summer with 30% saying their child liked some of the activities.
- **83%** of families said they would send their child to a similar program next summer if available. While this is great to hear, we acknowledge that this response may be influenced by the fact the program was free of charge and provided a safe, instructional environment for children during normal working hours. More parent feedback on their experience and input on design is encouraged.
- **46.9** Net Promoter Score when asked if the parent would recommend the program to a family member or friend. This score falls within the "Great" range of Net Promoter scores which range from -100 to 100.



- Parents liked that the afternoon portion:
 - **Exposure to new experiences** – families remarked that their children learned something new, and that they enjoyed the experience.
 - “[Provided] exposure to activities we would not normally be able to sign up for.” – *Toquam 3rd grade family*
 - “The fact they were able to do 3 hours of activity since summer school ended earlier than regular school. They were able to do more intense and in-depth activities.” – *Rogers 1st and 3rd grade family*
 - **Opportunity to participate in these high-quality programs for free**
 - “My daughter really enjoyed the program to the point that she didn't want to miss a day. This made me happy!! Thank you!!!” – *AITE/Ripp 7th grade family*
 - “The recreational part and coding class was the best fun and learning, thanks was a great activity for my daughter during summertime. Also, an opportunity to enjoy without affecting our budget. Please do next year.” – *Strawberry Hill 4th grade family*

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- Areas for improvement:
 - **Communication** – more frequent, detailed, and proactive communication between schools, providers, and families.
 - “The communication- it was almost nonexistent. I never heard or spoke to his teachers. Even when the bus took almost 3 hours to get home- there was no form of communication. We trust SPS with our kids but there needed to be more updates. Also, a sort of a small progress report or certificate of communication of completion. I think the kids would feel a sense of accomplishment.” – *Toquam Kindergarten family*
 - **Bussing** – improved communication about late buses, informing families of which bus their child is on earlier.
 - “I wish they prepared a bit more in terms of the transportation, my kids used the bus, and it was a bit difficult at first” – *Stark 1st and 2nd grade family*
 - **Overall Program Design** – Improve the flow and structure of the afternoon to run seamlessly from morning school portion to afternoon enrichment.
 - “It was highly unorganized. In theory, it was a wonderful idea, but it missed the mark in execution. My kids were excited to rotate through other activities but instead they were stuck for 5 weeks. Eventually, we were offered to attend the YMCA program. That was ok, except by the time they arrived, the Y’s main activities were just about done. I hope that with more planning and learning from this year, next year will be a great success. Staff should be informed, qualified, and trained to work with our children. The communication to parents should exist (pickup/drop off, program changes, etc.) and overall, keep them interested.” – *Strawberry Hill 1st & 5th grade family*

Conclusion

The expanded summer school program was a massive undertaking to manage for the first time. Learnings from this past summer that will inform next summer’s experiences. SC2C is grateful to SPS leadership and staff as well as our enrichment partners for their commitment to making the program successful despite the challenges. For questions regarding this report, please contact Bridget Fox, President, Stamford Cradle to Career at Bridget.fox@uwwesternct.org or 203-883-0960.