

Assessing an Unstudied Source of Stress Among Families with School-Aged Children

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Research Team Members

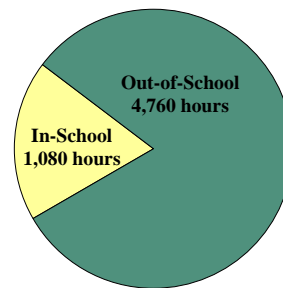
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Parental After-School Stress (PASS)

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Out-of-School Hours

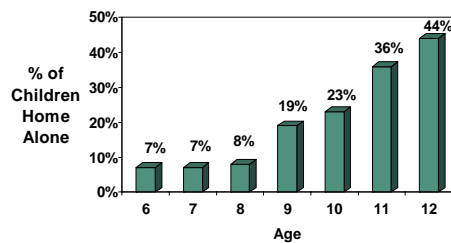


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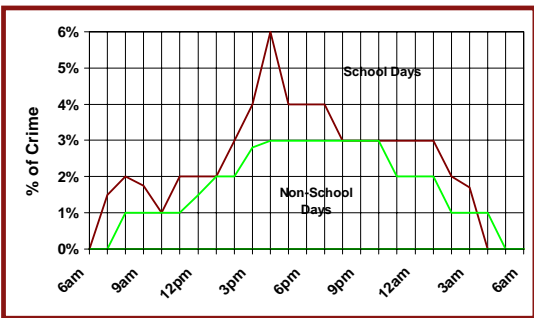
6.9 million of the 38.2 million children between the ages of 5 to 14 are in self-care each week.

Children Home Alone After School



Source: Putnam, R. D., 2000. *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 2000. *Better Together: Report of the Saguro Seminar on civic engagement in America*. Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

The Juvenile Crime Rate Spikes Between 3-6 pm



Source: Putnam, R. D., 2000. *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 2000. *Better Together: Report of the Saguaro Seminar on civic engagement in America*. Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Public Safety and Juvenile Delinquency

According to a state-wide survey of a representative sample of Massachusetts parents:

- 32% are worried that their 10- to 14-year-old is experimenting with drugs.
- 47% are worried that their 10- to 14-year-old could be the victim of violence after school.
- 46% are worried that their 15- to 18-year-old is experimenting with drugs.
- One in seven children has been the victim of violence after school.

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Massachusetts Statewide Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Marlborough High School students revealed:

- 70% are stressed,
- 16% have seriously considered suicide,
- 25% reported binge drinking, and
- 30% of freshmen reported drinking within one month of the survey.

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Parental After-School Stress (PASS)

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Distractions and Job Disruptions Can Lead To:

- low productivity,
- high employer costs, and
- sometimes, serious accidents.

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The Relationship Between PASS and Job Disruptions (JOBBD)

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1. Do parents who have high PASS also report more work disruptions?
2. Do parents who have high PASS compared to those who have low PASS spend more time at work dealing with after-school-care issues?
3. Is PASS related to parents' reports of the overall quality of their work?
4. Is PASS related to parents' satisfaction with their children's after-school program?

Measures

We developed two measures:

- A 5-item PASS measure
- A 3-item measure of the degree of job disruption (JOB D) parents experience in their work due to their children's after-school care.

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PASS

1. How much difficulty, if any, do you have in contacting your child during after-school hours?
2. How much difficulty, if any, does your *child* have in contacting *you* during after-school hours?
3. How much difficulty, if any, do you have in arranging for your child's transportation to and from the after-school program?
4. In general, how much stress do you feel about your child's safety getting home from his/her after-school program?
5. Overall, how much stress do you experience, if any, about the quality of your child's after-school care?

JOB D

- On average, how many workday interruptions do you have each week because of issues concerning your child's after-school care?
- On average, how many hours per week would you say you spend at work dealing with after-school-care-related issues?
- To what extent, if at all, do your concerns about your child's after-school experience affect the quality of your work?

The Study Sample

44 employed parents or guardians of children who were enrolled in a particular after-school program for at-risk, school-aged children in grades kindergarten through high school

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Results

- The PASS measure has acceptable psychometrics. The alpha for the PASS measure was .65.
- Most parents reported low levels of PASS (Mean = 1.2, Range = 1 – 2.6).

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Results

- The JOB D measure had an alpha of .62.
- One of the 3 items, an overall assessment of the extent to which their concerns about their child's after-school care affected the quality of their work, showed the strongest and most consistent pattern of results.

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Correlates of PASS

Parents who reported high PASS:

1. Reported more concern about their child's after-school experiences affecting the quality of their own work, $r = .40$, $p = .01$.
2. Reported spending more time at work per week dealing with after-school care issues, $r = .31$, $p = .04$.
3. Showed a trend to report more workday interruptions because of issues concerning their child's after-school care, $r = .27$, $p = .09$.

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Correlates of PASS

Additionally, there were trends linking PASS to child's grade and gender.

Specifically,

- the higher the grade level, the higher the PASS score $r = .26$, $p = .10$, and
- Parents of female children had higher PASS scores than parents of male children, $r = .23$, $p = .10$.

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Predictors of JOB D

1. Parents with higher compared to lower PASS reported more concern that their child's after-school experience was affecting the quality of their work.
2. Parents with children in higher grades compared to lower grades reported more concerns that their child's after-school experience affected their work.

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Questions for Future Research

What management policies reduce PASS?

Is PASS related to specific job conditions (e.g., job flexibility, job control, skill discretion)?

Is PASS related to family type (i.e., single-earner versus dual-earner, single-parent versus two-parent)?

Does PASS affect supervisors' ratings? Promotions?

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