



Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada
Clubs Garçons et Filles du Canada

Ready for Success

EDUCATED AND ENGAGED

A good place to be



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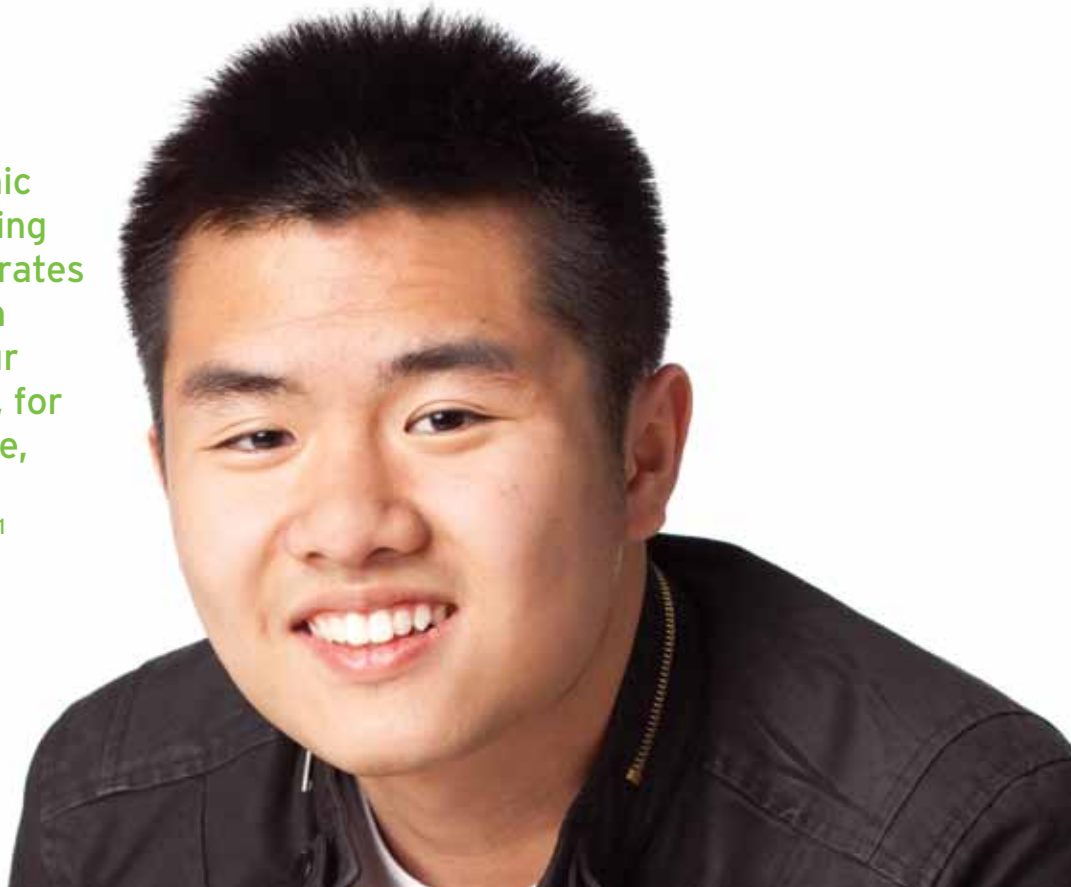
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FALL 2012

ready for success

Canada is experiencing an unprecedented demographic shift – our population is aging and birth and immigration rates are simply not high enough to meet the demands of our economy. “Within 10 years, for every two people who retire, there will be less than one person to take their place.”¹



This situation will require all of Canada’s young people to be educated, skilled and ready to be active members of the workforce. Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada have young people’s learning at heart. We share responsibility for helping them do well in school, make successful transitions to post-secondary education and employment, and feel confident about their ability to achieve throughout their life.

We know young people have great potential, and we also understand the challenges they face to succeeding. Boys and Girls Clubs provide the kind of environment, support and programs that are known to increase students’ engagement in learning and lead to life-long positive outcomes.

Quick facts

ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT

Completion of high school is an essential milestone in a young person’s life, contributing to his or her independence and self-reliance. It provides the foundation for future opportunities such as further education, training and employment. Those who complete high school have a better quality of life overall, and it only improves with post-secondary education.

Canada has relatively high levels of educational attainment.

- The high-school dropout rate has fallen in the past 20 years, from 16.6% in 1990/1991 to 8.5% in 2009/2010.²
- As for post-secondary education, we can celebrate the fact that “55% of Canadians between the ages of 25 and 34 (68% of non-Aboriginals and 42% of Aboriginals) had completed a post-secondary program of study, compared to an average of 33% among all OECD countries”.³
- First and second generation immigrant youth tend to have higher educational aspirations, more family support to stay in school, and have later transitions to cohabitation and parenthood.⁴ As a result, they are much more likely to participate in post-secondary education.⁵
- Increasingly, young women are enrolling in undergraduate programs. They now represent 58% of those enrolled.⁶

BARRIERS TO ATTAINMENT

These are positive trends. However, we ought to be concerned that thousands of young Canadians do drop out of high school each year, thus failing to acquire the minimum educational requirement to access the labour market and other learning opportunities. Most striking is the disproportional representation of Aboriginal youth, francophone Quebecers (Québécois), youth with disabilities, homeless youth, those living in rural and remote communities (in Manitoba, Quebec and Alberta in particular)⁷, and young men among school leavers.

- Living in poverty is an important barrier to academic success. Young people from modest socio-economic backgrounds tend to experience earlier life transitions such as leaving home or having a child, which may lead them to abandon high school before graduation.⁸ Youth from low income families are also less likely to enroll in post-secondary education.⁹
- Housing insecurity is a strong predictor of poor academic achievement and school abandonment.¹⁰
- “Young adults with intellectual disabilities are five times more likely than those without disabilities to have no formal education certificate.” Furthermore, “52% of young adults with an intellectual disability (aged 20-29 years) are neither working nor attending school, compared with 12% of those without a disability”.¹¹

- Nearly one in three youth in Quebec celebrates his or her 20th birthday without having a high school diploma or a vocational diploma.¹² The dropout rate for francophone youth is especially high. Montreal French language public schools have a high school completion rate of 63% for girls and 49% for boys. Comparatively, English language schools have 86% of their female students and 79% of their male students graduating.¹³
- Across Canada, young men are abandoning high school at higher rates than young women – 10.3% and 6.6% respectively.¹⁴
- Rural Canada has to contend with especially high dropout rates: 16.8% compared to 8.8% in urban areas.¹⁵
- “Only 39% of First Nation people aged 20 to 24 living on reserve have completed high school or obtained an equivalent diploma. By comparison, the Canadian average for high school completion for non-Aboriginal people aged 20-24 is more than 87%.”¹⁶

Ensuring the academic success of Canada’s youth is of great importance as lower rates of education have long-term effects including higher rates of youth unemployment and long-term unemployment.¹⁷ “In the 21st century, failure to earn a high school degree has devastating implications for a young person’s prospects.”¹⁸

EMPLOYMENT READINESS

Completing high school and, increasingly, having some form of post-secondary training or education is a necessary requirement for securing employment. Canada’s demographic shift will create opportunities and we must ensure young people are well prepared to take full advantage of them.

The right education and skills are critical to finding work, achieving financial security and being able to contribute to society as an adult. Educational underachievement is a barrier to employment and makes young people vulnerable to fluctuations in the labour market.

In July 2012, just under 30 per cent of Canadian firms were reporting labour shortages that posed a challenge for their ability to meet demands.²⁰ Some youth are missing out on job opportunities because they lack basic skills or the specialized knowledge to fill available positions, but even those who are skilled are finding the transition to employment difficult.

- While rates of enrolment and completion of post-secondary education are slowly increasing, they have not kept up with the labour market’s need for highly educated and highly skilled workers.²¹ By 2031, 77% of the workforce will need post-secondary education.²²
- Employers are finding young people ill-prepared for today’s workforce – lacking oral and written communication skills, critical thinking, professionalism, problem solving, and even creativity.²³ 37.8% of Canadian youth aged 16 to 25 lack the literacy and essential skills they need to be successful in today’s knowledge-based economy. “This is especially problematic when we consider that basic skills such as reading, writing, computer use and oral communication are integral in employing effective job search strategies, such as completing a job application (in person or online) or excelling in an interview.”²⁴
- The youth unemployment rate increased with the 2008 recession and remains double that of other workers. Youth unemployment has profound impacts including earning losses that take years to recuperate, de-skilling, and lifelong risk of poor attachment to the labour market.²⁵
- Young people are over-represented in low-paying, temporary, contract and seasonal jobs. Working at minimum wage, they must complete 16 weeks of full time work to cover the cost of tuition alone (an average of 6,704\$ per year).²⁶ This creates an additional barrier to post-secondary education.
- Low skills and poor educational attainment make young people vulnerable to fluctuations in the job market.²⁷ Those who have some post-secondary education – trade certificate, college or CEGEP diploma, university certificate and/or degree – are more resilient in economic downturns. They are more likely to benefit from stable employment and to recover quickly from any job losses due to a recession.²⁸ “Between July 2008 and July 2012 there were 700,000 new jobs for university graduates in Canada compared with 320,000 for college grads, and a net loss of 640,000 jobs for those with no post-secondary education.”²⁹
- All youth are affected by economic fluctuations: “An examination of Canada’s last three recessions reveals a pattern, wherein youth have consistently experienced the highest unemployment rates compared to other groups.”³⁰



“When young adults fail to successfully complete a post-secondary degree or credential, it is increasingly difficult for them to find an alternative pathway to success through the labour market.”¹⁹



\$7.7 billion (in 2008 dollars): The aggregate estimated cost savings that would result from a 1% point increase in Canada's graduation rate.³⁶

THE COST OF FAILURE

Inadequate educational attainment is costly to Canada, and especially concerning in the context of Canada's aging population and the need for a skilled and educated workforce. The tangible costs of not completing high school are high and include costs related to social assistance, crime, health, labour and employment.

- The cost of providing social assistance for someone who has not completed high school is estimated at over \$4,000, or \$969 million per year. The annual cost to the criminal justice system is estimated at over \$220 per high school dropout, or \$350 million per year.³¹
- On a personal level, there is a strong correlation between education and health – those who abandon high school enjoy a lower quality of life. They can also expect to lose over \$3,000 per year in income compared to those who have graduated.³² What is more, university graduates earn on average \$1.3 million more during their careers than high school graduates.³³

There are also important democratic costs to educational underachievement. With youth voter turnout at historic lows – a mere 37.4% in the 2008 federal elections³⁴ – civic participation is of great concern.

- Only 52% of those who have dropped out of high school vote, whereas 67% of those with a high school diploma exercise their voting right. Youth who obtain a college or university degree are even more likely to vote – 74% and 84% of them cast a ballot, respectively.³⁵

For these reasons, and so many more, Canada simply cannot afford to fail its young people. We all have a role to play in securing a prosperous and enriching future for young Canadians.

Education – a better chance at a more prosperous future

FACTORS THAT IMPACT SCHOOL COMPLETION

There is broad consensus on the fact that young people do not drop out of school suddenly, nor as the result of any single cause. The factors that influence school completion are multiple and extend beyond the school realm to communities, families, and individual learners.³⁷ Dropping out is the result of risk factors building and compounding over time.³⁸

Birth	Early childhood	Childhood – primary	Adolescence – secondary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sex• cultural capital• family income• family education level• socio-economic status• rural/urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• health & well-being• cognitive abilities• family structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lifestyle• parental support• school-parent relationship• family cohesion• academic success• after-school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• academic achievement• teacher-student relationship• school & classroom climate• paid work• professional and scholarly aspirations• value attached to studies



Intergenerational trauma, the result of residential schools, coupled with inequitable and inadequate funding for schools, are additional factors that impact the school success of Aboriginal children and youth in particular. Mental health problems and illnesses can also factor in school completion – young people who are affected are more likely to experience interruptions in their education and thus face extra barriers in developing their skills and talents.³⁹

While community-based organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs may not be able to alter all factors, there are some upon which we can act – changing attitudes, values and beliefs about education, providing new experiences, supporting school performance, accompanying those who face the greatest barriers, enhancing children, youth and families' engagement in learning.⁴⁰ Successful programs address many of the factors that affect school completion, using a range of strategies.⁴¹

What is needed?



A positive and engaging learning environment

No single measure will prepare young people to succeed in school and enter the workforce, but after-school programs are part of the solution. Evidence has shown again and again that quality after-school programs improve school outcomes.⁴³ They are also good places for youth to build job skills, expand their social networks and gain the experience they need to enter a competitive job market.

Research on the role of after-school programs in school success state that in order to be successful, such programs must:

- offer physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure and supportive relationships with peers and adults
- provide opportunities to belong and encourage positive social norms
- support the ability to achieve and offer opportunities for skill-building
- integrate family, school and community efforts⁴⁴
- start with children and youth – their interests, skills and challenges⁴⁵

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada's own model for success embodies all these features. Clubs create the right environment and offer the needed supports for school success, job readiness and lifelong learning.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS:

CREATE RESPECTFUL, INCLUSIVE AND ENGAGING ENVIRONMENTS

Boys and Girls Clubs are the start of many positive experiences and opportunities to belong. Clubs create environments that are safe, inclusive, respectful, fun and stimulating. "After-school programs can't change students' school experiences, but they can provide alternative environments that may be more in tune with young people's interests, motivations and needs. Programs may provide opportunities for the kind of personal attention from adults that young people crave, a positive peer group, and activities that hold their interest and build their self-esteem."⁴⁶ Club environments support personal development, leadership, discovery, and academic success.

After-school programs are uniquely poised to help young people see themselves as learners in an informal, hands-on learning environment. They can bring parents, schools and the community together. They can create the foundation for a positive peer culture that values learning skills and contributes to society.⁴²

FOSTER RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AND MENTORING

Boys and Girls Clubs staff and volunteers act as positive role models and take an individualized and strength-based approach to every child's potential. They establish and reinforce high expectations and help young people achieve them. Adult mentors and role models play a significant role in the lives of young people who face barriers in education. "In many studies, the single most important factor in long-term success is the presence of an adult, whether a relative, teacher or community member, who provides a consistent nurturing presence in a young person's life."⁴⁷

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

Boys and Girls Clubs programs are based on local need and young people's interests. Clubs are supportive and encouraging of families and work collaboratively with community members and organizations for the benefit of children and youth. This is a real asset when supporting young people's school success. Having built families' trust through after-school programs, Clubs are able to act as a bridge "between the culture of peers, families and communities on the one hand, and the school environment on the other".⁴⁸

Expanded opportunities for learning

The informal nature of after-school programs makes them a winning approach to supporting learning and preparing young people for life.⁵⁰ Outcomes are strongest for those students who face the greatest barriers.⁵¹

Boys and Girls Clubs start by listening to children and youth because we know the path to success will be different for each one. Staff members and volunteers have high expectations of young people and work hard to help them set goals and reach them.

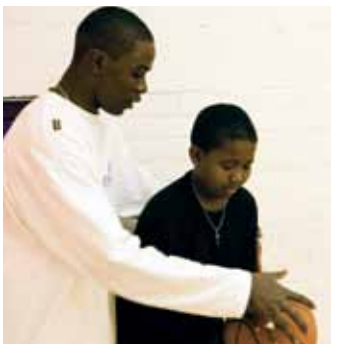
Boys and Girls Clubs' programs nurture young people's confidence and provide them with opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills. This includes programs that enable children and youth to sustain meaningful relationships, develop a positive self-image, be respectful of themselves and others, and participate in civil society.

Through enrichment and leadership programming Boys and Girls Clubs members develop interpersonal skills and build their self-confidence. A range of activities provides hands-on learning: event planning, entrepreneurship, attention to detail, problem solving, and teamwork.

Strong relationships and problem solving skills are central in building engagement in learning and they are valuable assets in the workplace. Studies have found that increases in social and emotional competence translate into improvements in academic behavior and attitudes.⁵²

Boys and Girls Clubs see the potential in everyone, and help children and youth see the potential in themselves.

Students who do not attend after-school programs or activities are missing out on important opportunities that can benefit them, and, in the long run, society.⁴⁹





Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton offers Life After High School, a series of workshops directed at graduating students. Participants attend sessions on university/college applications, scholarship and bursary applications, resume writing, and job search resources.

Many students pursue post-secondary education, but some youth believe that this opportunity is not open to them because of financial barriers or because they would be the first person in their family to attend college or university. Life After High School is intended to educate and excite Hamilton youth of all backgrounds about their options.

A partnership with McMaster University translates into a day on campus when senior students have a chance to tour the campus, attend workshops, and sit in on a class of their choice to get the full student experience. Participants also visit the Office of Financial Aid and the Centre for Student Development, where they learn how to make post-secondary education affordable and attainable.

For some Club members, Life After High School is the tap on the shoulder they need to dream big and attain higher educational goals.

Years ago, the Petiscodiac Boys and Girls Club held a youth engagement exercise that reached over 150 youth in the community. Inspired, these youth created their own organization, People for a Better Community (P-FAB-C) and got involved in cleaning up the streets and making repairs. They even reached out to their peers in the neighbouring city of Moncton. One young leader has now graduated from high school and has big plans for the future. This is what Kelsey had to say about her experience: “I want to thank the Petiscodiac Boys and Girls Club for all the help you have given me. All of those things with P-FAB-C and the experiences that I gained, built my character and made me into the person I am today. They have shaped this young girl who is going to Africa, and later to Canada’s far North.”

Torch Clubs are programs that engage pre-teens 10 to 13 in their community, building their leadership skills, self-esteem and sense of responsibility. Youth in the Torch Club at the Boys and Girls Club of Moncton have started their own newspaper, writing and publishing articles on issues they are concerned about, in one case interviewing a local MP on federal legislation. To raise money for their activities, they set up a booth at a local market to sell produce they grew themselves. From building grow boxes, to planting food and herbs, to canning, drying and marketing their goods, the youth involved in this project are gaining tangible job skills they can feel proud of.

OUTCOME: When we expand opportunities for learning, young people have confidence in their aspirations.

Boys and Girls Clubs provide new experiences that foster learning, and change attitudes, values and beliefs about education. Club staff and volunteers help young people discover and pursue their aspirations.

Children and youth who participate in quality after-school programs have the ability to see potential in the world around them, and to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves.⁵³ They also have the confidence in their own goals and aspirations, and the leadership skills to make them happen.

Supporting Achievement

Boys and Girls Clubs’ programs assist children and youth to develop and achieve their educational goals and career aspirations and embrace lifelong learning. A range of programs, delivered by skilled staff and volunteers, help children and youth become literate and numerate and develop self expression, creativity and cultural awareness. Most importantly, they promote a love of learning and discovery that will help them be resilient in education and the job market.

Homework clubs are a staple in many Boys and Girls Clubs across the country. Junior members of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Ottawa’s homework club said it was valuable in helping them complete their school work (71%), feel better prepared for school (73.1%) and perform better in school (64.7%). Intermediate and senior members agreed that going to homework club helps them complete their schoolwork (61.3%), and 67% reported doing better in school. The majority felt more confident about completing their homework. An impressive 81 % of the intermediate/senior members who attend homework club state that they plan on attending post-secondary school.⁵⁴

For over a decade, Fidelity Investments Canada and Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada have partnered to offer Power Up!, an academic support program that helps kids 8-12 years old develop positive study habits and practices at school, and encourages a life-long interest in learning. More than 85% of all Boys and Girls Clubs have received Power Up! funding and most of them value the program so much they continue to offer it using their own funds.

As of 2012, Power Up! had reached over 10,000 children across Canada. Delivered by Clubs during after-school hours, Power Up! provides the tools and environment necessary for young people to set academic goals and create a plan for achieving those goals – an impressive 86% of children who made learning pledges in 2011-2012 achieved their goals. The emphasis on making learning fun and interactive reflects Clubs’ overall approach, which ensures that children have opportunities to explore, learn social and life skills, and develop positive associations with learning.





“The reason why I stayed at Power Up! to volunteer is because I love feeling like I helped teach a child something new and watching them grow and learn throughout the year. A really big goal of mine is to help children who don’t have a very good home life and to make sure they don’t end up on the streets and turning to negative things like drugs, alcohol and gangs. Every child needs a safe place to stay after school, on weekends and in the summer and I know volunteering at Power Up! makes that possible for them.”

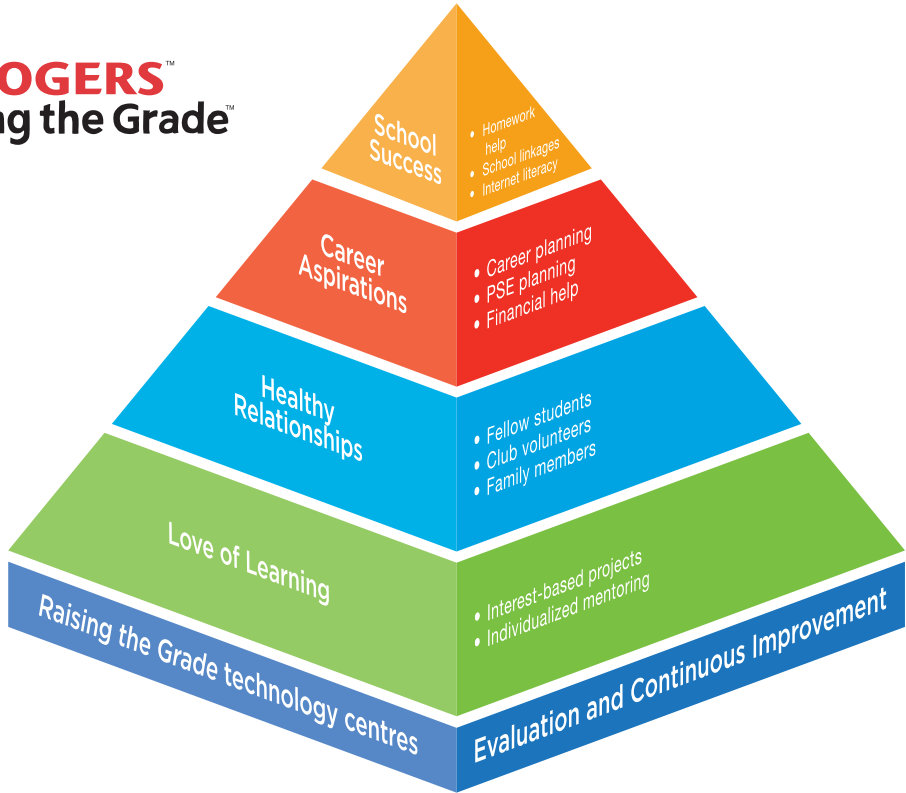
- Amy, Age 16, Teen mentor, Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg

Boys and Girls Clubs’ programs have the following features:⁵⁵

Adapted to each learner	Fosters positive peer interactions related to school work	Provides academic support and mentoring	Nurtures aspirations and helps young people achieve their goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It helps me learn in a way I can understand.• I like how the staff sits down with you and talks about what you are doing and what you are learning about.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I like to be with my friend while doing my work.• I like the Power Up! program because I have a lot of friends there who come to do their homework and do their daily reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I participate in homework club because I need help in most subjects and there’s always staff and volunteers who are willing to help me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I [participate in homework club] so I can get better grades, so I can be a police officer.• Power Up! helped my math mark go from a 62 to a 88!

Boys and Girls Clubs go beyond homework support, offering the more focused academic support and long term mentorship that are demonstrated to be effective. We know that young people benefit greatly from a broader scope and range of formal education that includes vocational training and apprenticeship programs, but also career education and counseling.⁵⁶ A new program offered in Clubs across the country aims to provide young people with the skills, tools and opportunities that will equip them to excel academically and secure their future success as productive, independent and contributing members of society.

ROGERS™
Raising the Grade™



Raising the Grade™
Program Model

Offered in 25% of our Clubs, *Raising the Grade* engages youth who are enrolled in high school and who commit to attending the program a minimum of two times per week.

Proudly supported by
ROGERS
Youth Fund™

Raising the Grade is an interactive after-school program that allows youth to explore interests, receive homework support, connect with mentors/tutors, interact with peers, increase their digital literacy and plan for post-secondary education.

THREE KEY ELEMENTS:

1. An integrated program that includes supports that are shown to improve academic opportunities for youth:
 - Tech centres: provide access to computers, high speed internet and on-line resources
 - Academic support: provided through on-site tutoring/mentoring, homework help, workshops and more
 - Scholarships: for post-secondary education (e.g., college, university, apprenticeship)
2. Goal setting: each participant is helped to establish, monitor and accomplish personal goals for high school completion, post-secondary education and careers
3. Interest-building: youth discover interests, talents and new hobbies while using online resources and interacting with mentors and peers

⁵⁵Rogers, Raising the Grade and Rogers Youth Fund are trademarks of and used under license from Rogers Communications.



Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary have an entire team dedicated to education and employment, managing a range of programs and activities. The Stoked about Staying in School program for instance, is for youth 15 to 18 years old who have dropped out of high school but have a desire to return. Three full-time staff members work with 12 youth to help them identify personal strengths, values and career goals, develop practical life skills in a classroom-based setting, explore alternative education and community resources, and understand the importance of high school completion to their future success. 75 to 85% of young people who participate in the program successfully reintegrate high school full time.

Helping provide access to post-secondary education is another way Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada helps young people realize their educational potential. Each year, generous funders such as Future Shop support scholarships ranging from \$750-\$4,000 that are distributed to deserving Boys and Girls Club members across the country. Future Shop has been a sustained funder of scholarships for over a decade.

Given that over 60% of families served by Clubs are low income and 43% are single-parent families, such financial support for Boys and Girls Club youth is critical.

OUTCOME: When we promote academic achievement, young people are connected to their school and community, and they have key academic, vocational and recreational skills.

Boys and Girls Clubs provide school performance support and mentoring for those who face barriers to educational success.

Young people who participate in quality after-school programs have the academic skills to succeed in school, and the interest in learning that will inspire them to achieve. They also have the creative, recreational and life skills that will make them more resilient through economic ups and downs.

After a decade of research on after-school programs, there is no doubt that they make a positive difference in the lives of the children and youth who attend. They “improve academic performance, social and developmental outcomes, contribute to healthy lifestyle options, and prevent many risky behaviors”.⁵⁷ Regular participation in after-school programs translates into “more positive attitudes and commitment to school”, fewer early school leavers, improved grades and academic achievement, and a stronger connection to schools and institutions in their neighbourhood.^{58,59} > cont’d

Extracurricular activities, including after-school programs are highly correlated with school success “including consistent attendance, academic achievement and aspirations to continue education beyond high school”. This is particularly the case for high school students who are more likely to graduate high school if they have engaged in extracurricular activities.⁶⁰

Providing job skills and training

While Clubs play an important role in supporting formal education, they also support youth in gaining skills that they can translate into gainful employment. From leadership programs, to volunteer opportunities at the Club or in the community, to co-op placements and internships, Clubs are a great place to be for hands-on learning.

Boys and Girls Clubs also employ over 4,000 staff across the country, the majority of whom are between 18-30 years old, thus promoting the human capital and employability of young people. Clubs help them develop a strong work ethic and guide them in pursuing post-secondary education and/or making career choices.

“Working at the Boys and Girls Club of Cape Breton has been a great experience for me the past three summers. It showed me my passion for working with youth. It changed me a full 360 degrees. I realize that I am a role model in my community for the youth so I have to set a positive attitude for myself and people around me. Chester (our Executive Director) has been a great mentor for me as a youth and as a young adult, and I am always pushing myself. I am going to finish my post-secondary schooling and perhaps go into social work. Without the Club giving me a chance I wouldn’t be the young man I am today. I never thought that I would love to go to work every morning. It is fun and I enjoy it. It is very rewarding. It pushed me to want to get that diploma so I could work at the youth club and make positive changes to the youth in my community.”

- Desmond, teen role model, Boys and Girls Club of Cape Breton



Children from low income families and inner city neighbourhoods, Aboriginal and immigrant youth in particular, often have fewer opportunities to participate in quality programs that include enriching learning opportunities. This means they risk losing academic ground over the summer.

In partnership with a number of organizations, including the Winnipeg and Pembina Trails School Divisions, the University of Winnipeg, and the University of Manitoba, Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg offers the Community School Investigators (CSI) Summer Learning Enrichment Program. CSI actively engages children and families in learning, while enhancing the skills and employment experiences of local youth who volunteer or work for the program. Through CSI, university education students can also work in the inner city and other challenged communities to improve educational outcomes for children living in poverty.⁶¹



“My name is Darcy and I am returning to school in the fall thanks to the support and inspiration I receive at the Boys and Girls Club of Cape Breton. The Club has been there for me in all kinds of different ways over the years. When I was younger the Club kept me out of trouble. I decided to come to the Club everyday rather than running the streets. The Club has been there for me almost my whole life and I am proud to have had the chance to come here and grow into a worker who the youth look up to.”

– Darcy, teen role model, Boys and Girls Club of Cape Breton

In partnership with Kal Tire, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is helping address the skilled trades shortage by ensuring that youth have access to reliable information about the skilled trades and provincially-regulated apprenticeship programs, and that they see these as a viable option when they begin to make career choices. The Skilled4Success Program offers youth, ages 13-18, knowledge about skilled trades, on-site job shadowing, connections to community members working in the skilled trades, reliable career planning information, and support in pursuing a certified apprenticeship. Twelve Boys and Girls Clubs across the country offered the program in its first year.

For 40 years, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary have had a valuable partnership with the Calgary Stampede and Exhibition. The Stampede Work Experience Program provides those 12 years and older with a paid opportunity to work at the “Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth” and gain valuable work experience. Youth work in small teams throughout the 11 days of the Stampede and are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the grounds. Through a skills workshop and the ongoing support of qualified, caring, adult supervisors – youth learn important employment skills such as application writing, interview skills, punctuality, and customer service.

Developed by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, CareerLaunch is a pre-employment program for youth ages 13-18 designed in response to the need of Boys and Girls Club members for career preparation skills. The program builds essential skills for exploring careers, making sound educational decisions and finding success in the world of work. With the generous support of GAP Inc. Clubs in Canada receive financial support and training to run the program in the communities they serve.

OUTCOME: When we provide job skills and training, young people gain academic, vocational and recreational skills.

Work-based learning is a promising way for young people to prepare for work life. They acquire hard and soft skills, learn to use equipment, and interact in a real-world context.⁶² “Young people who have been in programs teaching them about ‘work life’ and giving them soft skills as well as training and experience in a career area do better at finding jobs.”⁶³ > cont’d

Boys and Girls Clubs not only offer an enriching work environment, they also provide mentorship, training opportunities, as well as career and educational support. “Affirmative work experiences during early career development are positively correlated with long-term career prospects. This is true for both low and high-skilled youth who often need applied experience to integrate into the labour market.”⁶⁴

Actions for success

Children and youth need encouragement to do well in school, access to a variety of enriching learning experiences, and opportunities to put skills into practice if they are to be successful in employment and life.

1. REDUCE BARRIERS TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada call on leaders at the provincial, territorial, and federal levels to implement policies and programs that will reduce demonstrated barriers to young people’s educational achievement.

Of particular urgency is the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada urge governments to collaborate with First Nation, Inuit and Métis leaders to ensure access to quality education that will prepare every child and youth to take full advantage of the education and career opportunities that are readily available to other students across the country.

2. INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada urges governments to increase employment programs that provide youth with valuable work experience. Many provinces and territories do provide much needed support for youth employment. Canada’s Youth Employment Strategy and programs such as Career Focus, Skills Link, and Canada Summer Jobs are invaluable to young people. The Skills Link program is especially relevant as it promotes the human capital and employability of a population that faces many barriers to employment.

3. SUPPORT ACCESSIBLE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

After-school programs have demonstrated their benefit to communities, young people and their families. They play an important role in supporting learning, educational success and transitions to employment. Boys and Girls Clubs believes that quality programs should be available to every young person who wants to participate.

Canada’s future depends on its workforce and on young Canadians’ ability to do their part. Let’s all do our part to make sure young people are ready to give their best.

The most significant thing we can do to ensure young people take their rightful place in Canada’s future, is to bridge the gaps in educational outcomes for those who face the most barriers.



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