



DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES CENTER

Educating Minds and Hearts™

AfterSchool KidzLit®

Alief Family YMCA Summer Day Camp
Houston, TX

TaKeesha Rashell, Program Coordinator

"KidzLit gave our kids confidence and excitement."

Please explain what DSC *AfterSchool* program you are using, how they are being used at your sites, and a little about your program.

YMCA Day Camp provides youth with supervised activities that teach core values, conflict resolution, and leadership skills. Kids have fun while building self-confidence, appreciating teamwork, and gaining independence. Day Camp activities allow kids to create arts and crafts, explore science and technology, swim, participate in field trips, appreciate nature, and better understand our many cultures. Last summer we utilized the *KidzLit* program. The kids attended sessions at least three times a day (about 45 minutes per session) for four days out of the week. The sessions were divided into age groups in the morning (about 50 kids), and the counselors rotated their individual groups during the day.

Why did you decide to implement the *AfterSchool KidzLit* program?

Due to the high academic requirements to be promoted successfully to the next grade in our education system, we found that DSC was a major necessity. Studies have proven that kids lose a lot of what they learn in school during the summer months. Thus, we began the DSC program in June. We started with assessments of every child from ages five to eight.

What academic and social improvements have you seen in your participants since implementation? How has it affected your leaders?

KidzLit gave our kids confidence and excitement. For some reading was intimidating and scary in the beginning. They felt incompetent and were very afraid to read aloud. Through repetition and various engaging activities, confidence levels were boosted and reading became an exciting challenge rather than a difficult task. For the counselors, *KidzLit* created a lasting bond between themselves and the kids serviced. A child will never forget the person that taught them how to read. *KidzLit* gave the counselors opportunities to be creative while providing their groups with tools necessary to be successful in school.

How have you benefited from the New York Life Grant? Or the Oracle Initiative?

The New York Life Grant has provided the Alief Family YMCA Day Camp Program the ability to become more than just an ordinary camp. We can honestly say that we are a program dedicated to stimulating a child's entire being—mind, body, and spirit.

How has DSC's ongoing commitment to professional development helped ensure success for your organization?

The more DSC seeks to enhance their programs through professional development, the more our program benefits. Because the YMCA also commits to professional and personal development, the youth development department will continue to strive to enhance the lives of every child and parent affiliated with our programs.