

**AfterSchool KidzLit
AfterSchool KidzMath
AfterSchool KidzScience**

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Scenario

Erin Hutchins has been working as the program director of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program at the Albany Area YMCA (Albany, GA), in partnership with the Dougherty County School System, to support children's academic and social development. Using funding from two 21st CCLC grants, one for [Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School](#) and one for [Alice Coachman and Live Oak Elementary Schools](#), Erin purchased the AfterSchool KidzLit, AfterSchool KidzMath, and AfterSchool KidzScience programs from Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC). 21st CCLC's results with these children during the 2014–2015 school year are amazing. Here is her story.

What challenges were you seeing with your children before you started using AfterSchool KidzLit, AfterSchool KidzMath, and AfterSchool KidzScience?

In the more recent years, the principals have been requesting more support for academics and they have been pressing for students to have more time with the teachers in our YMCA 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school program. We have children reading at a low reading level, low-performing schools, and a need to raise grades. Behavior has also been a problem.

What made you decide to purchase the KidzLit, KidzMath, and KidzScience materials?

The materials were written into the 21st Century grant as approved resources but we've continued to order all of them in the subsequent years for three reasons:

First, the personal commitment we've received from the people at the Center for the Collaborative Classroom has been wonderful. Sam and Susan Young from CCC came to visit with us, met our trainers, and even "liked" our Facebook page. They've always stayed in touch to support us.

Second, it's easy to implement and use the AfterSchool Kidz programs. It's foolproof. The videos for AfterSchool KidzScience are really simple and the links for online trainings are very helpful. My staff said, "Lord, this has everything! You don't have to buy anything. Not even the paper!" They loved how the kits were very inclusive. Even though we are sometimes working with very different personalities, we can get the children involved with the reading

instructions using the AfterSchool KidzLit guides. The staff really loves those tools. The children just learn. The activities take up a good amount of time; if you have 15 children and you want to do a project this is a great way to keep them engaged in something they would like to do.

Third, we've exceeded our objectives for the 21st CCLC grant using these programs. We have two sets of staff: our counselors who use AfterSchool KidzScience and the schoolteachers who use AfterSchool KidzMath and KidzLit.

How have your children's attitudes towards academics changed since you started using the programs?

In the YMCA program as a whole, the AfterSchool Kidz activities have a lot to do with it. We are doing things that we wouldn't have been able to do before. You don't have to go get all the stuff to set up an activity, or a game; it's all right there. It makes it easy and the children enjoy it.

My first year working, I remember a day we were reading from one of the children's literature books and then we were working on spelling words. This child, a second grader, was at one of the stations and he couldn't spell *fish*. And I thought, "Oh, this is worse than I thought." So we worked on it that day and now he knows how to spell the word *fish*. Seeing him learn and grow—he's been with us three years—is amazing and it mirrors the stories of a lot of the children we've served. We had a school close, and it has since been repurposed, but we've been able to stick with those children because they love coming to the program. Overall, this YMCA program has benefitted from CCC's AfterSchool programs a great deal just because the programs help us do more for the children and expand their knowledge.

How have your children's social skills and community changed since you started using the AfterSchool Kidz programs?

One of the five YMCA 21st CCLC program objectives identified in the grant was "60% of students participating in the program will demonstrate improvement in behavior."

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School:

- 85% of the children demonstrated improvement in behavior.
- 85% had no disciplinary referrals during the school year.

At the Alice Coachman and Live Oak Elementary Schools:

- 61% of the children demonstrated improvement in behavior.
- 98% of the regularly participating students had no disciplinary referrals during the school year.

What changes have you seen in your staff since you have started using the AfterSchool Kidz programs?

My staff really enjoys using the programs. All the staff members have a deep interest in the children; they know their names, their siblings and cousins, their likes and dislikes. It's like

they are their own children. They are just so into it for the children—they go above and beyond. We have lesson plans that sometimes include some of the materials needed and the staff can just insert an AfterSchool KidzLit activity or one of the other program’s activities into their lesson plans and have a very productive day.

All three sites have done an amazing job with children who have been abused in all kinds of ways, are affected by the poverty of the area, and are suffering from hunger. The school system we’re partnered with has started a dinner program, so now the children get a snack and dinner every day. It’s been nice seeing the YMCA 21st CCLC program grow, and having AfterSchool KidzMath and KidzScience from the beginning to support these children.

What do you think was the most powerful aspect of the AfterSchool Kidz programs for the children at your site?

The hands-on aspect of AfterSchool KidzScience is huge. Having the children be able to touch the science. We have a lot of different levels of reading ability among our children so by having them do the science in these activities and then write about it they are able to apply their learning. The practical application helps them to understand the science better. These are struggling children. When you help a child better understand, and have project-based learning—the children are more apt to understand, and *then* you can get them to read and write about it. So when the children go back to write about their observations and learning, the staff can ask, “What did you do? How did it work?” and the children learn to express themselves.

With AfterSchool KidzLit, it’s been very helpful to see how the sets are broken down and how the books work with the leader’s guides. You can do small groups with the books and have a book-club-like setting where the children are learning and reading together. It’s great to have resources for children like these that are *tailored* for after-school. It’s not worksheets. It’s not, “Go sit down and do this.” It’s more interactive and so powerful.

What do you think was the most powerful aspect of the AfterSchool Kidz programs for the leaders at your site?

The counselors are able to use AfterSchool KidzScience, which they use a lot in summer. The children really enjoyed the Oobleck kit, the Crime Lab Science kit, the Bubbles kit—they’ve done them all and the children really enjoy them. If a counselor forgets a lesson plan, it’s really easy for them to access the KidzScience activities and lead the activities in groups, and every grade has a chance to go in and assess the crime scene or whatever activity they select that day.

I’m so excited about what the children have been able to do in KidzScience but AfterSchool KidzLit and KidzMath have definitely helped YMCA 21st CCLC to be as successful as it has been. We do appreciate those programs.

We don’t have much downtime; the children always have fun things to do. CCC’s AfterSchool Kidz programs have been a great resource for our teachers and counselors.

Have you received any feedback from the extended community either through parents or the local schools?

Parents understand that the YMCA 21st CCLC after-school program is a very, very good program, and for them to get all of this is beyond amazing. The parents of children who participated in the grant program were surveyed about their impressions of the program and its impact on their children.

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School:

- 85% of parents stated that they were satisfied with the after-school program.
- 92% of parents reported that the program has helped improve their child's behavior.
- 100% of parents want their child to continue to participate in the program next year.

At the Alice Coachman and Live Oak Elementary Schools:

- 97% of parents stated that they were satisfied with the after-school program.
- 80% of parents reported that the program has helped improve their child's behavior.
- 89% of parents want their child to continue to participate in the program next year.

We've also seen how the AfterSchool Kidz programs are helping the children finish their homework, develop closer friends, and have healthier interactions. There are children who before had anger problems or got into fights. The programs help them work together and that plays a part as well.

What do you think is the most important thing for people working in community-based organizations and after-school organizations to know about AfterSchool KidzLit, KidzScience, and KidzMath programs?

It's super beneficial. If you want an all-inclusive after-school program and you want to take it to another level, this is a big way to do it. If you're shopping here, there, and everywhere for curriculum—don't. You can get it all in one package with the AfterSchool Kidz products. It's all included; you have everything you need. It's shipped fast, refills come easily—it's just great. They have all kinds of subjects. It's a great start-up product to bring in to an after-school program. You can order one kit and you're all set.

The cost is far offset by the benefits and the longevity of the materials. Once you purchase AfterSchool KidzMath or KidzLit you're always going to have the books. If you're a librarian, the fiction and nonfiction is already sorted out for you. You can use them year after year. It's not just a toy. We're not babysitting, we're expanding minds. Any chance we get we want to make sure the child is learning and growing. I think the AfterSchool KidzLit, KidzMath, and KidzScience programs are great, they are beautiful, they are packaged nicely, they are well-organized. We've used them for years and you just can't go wrong.

Even if we didn't have after-school programs, if we could only just get these programs into the schools and the lower-performing schools with Title I money, librarians could benefit from the books and science teachers could benefit because these are just a little bit "outside of the box" and everything is put together: there's a lesson plan all laid out, the materials are all listed. It's all there!

We appreciate how great you all are with responding to customer requests in a fast manner. Having your rep pop by; Sam is just so sweet! He's just so nice, and excited about learning and

helping children learn. It's been a really good partnership working together in helping our children become successful.