



EVALUATION REPORT

EEC: After-School Science PLUS
Final Evaluation Report: Summary

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Playtime Is Science (PS) is an equity-based, early childhood, parent involvement project that uses fun, hands-on developmentally appropriate science activities to bring science to a broader range of students and parents. PS focuses on "fun" science activities, such as Building with Wonderful Junk, Oobleck: Solid or Liquid? and Creating a Mystery Bottle, that use inexpensive, culturally familiar, found materials. The purpose of this three-year project (1996-99) was to bring PS to after school programs in a new program called After-School Science PLUS (AS+).¹

The results of a three year evaluation found:

After participating in AS+, centers were doing more science activities and students were more apt to mention specific AS+ activities as the science they did in the after school centers.

When after school centers do AS+ the amount of science done in that center increases. This finding is reflected in both group leader and student data and appears to be true independent of whether the group leaders had had AS+ training. However, at least for the two sites where student data was collected, students perceive that science is a small part of their after school experience.

After participating in AS+, centers were doing more gender equity activities; students were more apt to say, "everyone does science," and they became more positive and not at all stereotyped about girls who do science.

With AS+ training, the number of science gender equity activities done in centers increased, with most of the reported activities reflecting efforts to treat girls and boys equally and to have all students do all the activities. In the two sites where student data was collected, this increased

emphasis on gender equity paid off, with the major change in attitudes about girls who do science coming after students did AS+ with group leaders who had been trained. Independent of whether the group leaders had training or not, after doing AS+, students has more accurate responses to the question “what is science?” and were more apt to say that “everyone” does science.

After participating in AS+, centers tended to do more career and literacy activities.

The small response rate from the third year group leaders makes it not possible to draw conclusions about the impact of the career and literacy activities introduced during the third year. The leaders did the career activities that were a part of each AS+ activity but most didn’t do other science career activities. Group leaders tended to do the literacy connections for earlier AS+ activities but not for those introduced in the third year.

¹ When this report was written, the program was called Playtime is Science Plus. It has been changed in this version to reflect the current title of AS+ After-School Science PLUS (AS+).