

School of the 21st Century

Responding to the needs
of today's children and families



School of the 21st Century

Yale University

310 Prospect Street

New Haven, CT 06511-2187

www.yale.edu/21C



What is the School of the 21st Century?

The School of the 21st Century (21C) is a model for school-based preschool, after-school care and family support services designed to promote the optimal growth and development of children beginning at birth. 21C, also known as Family Resource Center (FRC) in some communities, transforms the traditional school into a year-round, multi-service center providing high-quality, accessible services from early morning to early evening.

The 21C/FRC model has proven successful in urban, rural and suburban areas, as well as in affluent, middle class and poor communities. More than 600 schools in 17 states implemented 21C in its first decade. The flexibility of the 21C/FRC model enables individual schools to tailor it to match their own needs and resources. In many

communities, 21C serves as an umbrella for an expanded array of family support services including adult education, youth development and social services. Connecticut and Kentucky have launched statewide initiatives based on the model, and with the growing public interest in early childhood development, more states are starting pilot initiatives.

Guiding Principles

The School of the 21st Century is firmly grounded in the belief that all families in need of support and quality child care should be able to obtain these services. To achieve this goal, 21C/FRC sites uphold the following principles:

- strong parental support and involvement;
- universal access to programs achieved through sliding scale fees based on family income;
- programmatic focus on the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children;
- quality programming as measured by staff qualifications, staff-child ratios, group size, staff turnover and other relevant criteria;
- professional training and advancement opportunities for child care providers; and
- non-compulsory programming utilized at the discretion of the family.



The School of the 21st Century is right on target in tying together child care, preventive health care, after-school care, and parent education. Locating these in schools is one excellent way to bring a sense of community back to families. What better way to make this constellation of services available to all families and to ensure the healthy development of all children?

— T. Berry Brazelton

Author of *Touchpoints*

Core Components

Guidance and support for parents

Recognizing parents' important role in their child's development, 21C schools offer home visits, playgroups, and workshops for parents of young children. 21C schools also make a special effort to reach out to and involve parents of school-age children, providing regular opportunities for parents to meet and discuss a wide range of parenting issues.

Preschool programs

21C schools provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate, full-day, year-round services for children ages 3-5 at the school or at a school-linked site, laying the groundwork for positive interactions between schools and families and children's later success in school.

Before-school, after-school and vacation programs for school-age children

Either on site or at a linked site, 21C schools provide diverse, supervised activities for children during out-of-school time. School-age programs enable children to learn, grow and socialize in a safe and stimulating environment while also meeting the needs of working families.

Health education and services

In collaboration with community-based health care providers, 21C schools offer a range of services including: health, nutrition and fitness education, physical health services, care for children with special needs, developmental assessments, dental assessments and mental health services.

Networks and training for child care providers

To strengthen the quality of local child care, 21C schools offer workshops, training opportunities, support groups and newsletters to support community child care providers, with a special emphasis on family day care providers in the neighborhoods served by the school.

Information and referral services

21C schools inform families about community options for child care as well as the criteria for high-quality care. They also provide information about health care and other community services pertaining to the well-being of children and families.

One of the key attributes of effective programs is that they don't clone; rather they replicate the essence of a successful intervention while allowing each new setting to adapt many of its components to that locale's particular needs and strengths. I can think of no better example of this attribute in action than the Schools of the 21st Century.

— Lisbeth Schorr

Director

Harvard University Project

on Effective Interventions





To be able to go to school with your children?! Hey, now that is a blessing and a joy. Because I was not employed when my children began school, I was able to enroll them and at the same time engage myself in an atmosphere of work and play.

— Rachaelle Hayes-Ruff

Parent

Bowling Park

Elementary School

Norfolk, Virginia

Evaluation Research Says 21C Works!

Research on the 21C/FRC model indicates that the combination of services provided in the 21C model has strong benefits for children, parents and schools:

For children:

- Children participating in 21C for at least three years had higher scores on mathematics and reading achievement tests than children in a control, non-21C school.
- Children who participated in 21C beginning at age three started kindergarten ready to learn as evidenced by their scores on kindergarten screening tests.
- According to teachers, the 21C preschool program helped identify and address children's special learning needs early in the educational process.
- Availability of 21C child care services enabled parents to provide consistent adult supervision and high-quality out-of-home care, vital factors in healthy child development.

For parents:

- 21C parents gave their school higher marks for academic focus, caring and sensitivity, school-community relations and collaborative decision-making than did parents at a comparison school.
- 21C parents reported that:
 - they experience significantly less stress, as measured by the Parental Stress Index;
 - they spend less money on child care; and
 - they miss fewer days of work.
- According to teachers, 21C programs helped parents form an early and positive relationship with the school.

For schools:

- Principals in 21C schools reported:
 - increased parental involvement and parent appreciation for the school;
 - substantial reduction in school vandalism;
 - changes in teaching practices in first and second grade to reflect developmentally appropriate practice and provide greater individual attention; and
 - positive public relations because of the expanded services offered by the school.
- Teachers in 21C schools reported significantly improved school climate in areas such as leadership, achievement, motivation, parent and teacher involvement in decision-making, and school-community relations.

As we look at successful initiatives around the nation, none has had more success than the School of the 21st Century in being replicated in multiple settings. This program truly works for today's children and families — in all their diverse shapes and forms.

— Gerald Tirrozzi

Assistant Secretary

for Elementary Education

U.S. Department of Education

Related Research

Benefits of quality preschool

- Research is clear that the quality of child care has a lasting impact on children's well-being and ability to learn. Children in poor quality child care have been found to be delayed in language and reading skills, and to display more aggression towards other children and adults. In contrast, participants in quality preschool have been found to be more likely to be employed and married as adults, and less likely to have committed a crime.

Guidance and support for new parents

- Children in Parents As Teachers (PAT), one of the leading programs providing guidance and support to new parents, have been found to outscore their peers on measures of school readiness and later school achievement. PAT has also been found to reduce placement in special programs and lower the incidence of abuse and neglect. In addition, PAT parents are significantly more involved in their children's schooling.

Benefits of school-age child care

- High-quality school-age child care programs which offer structured, developmentally appropriate activities for children have positive outcomes for both children and families including improved social skills, reduced problem behavior such as vandalism and juvenile crime, and enhanced academic performance.



Financing the School of the 21st Century

There is enormous variety in the ways that different schools and districts finance their 21C programs. Some schools are able to completely fund the preschool-age and school-age child care components through fees paid by parents on a sliding scale according to income. In less affluent communities, some 21C services are paid for through local, state, and federal funds. All 21C schools usually require some initial start-up funds to create or renovate space or pay for outreach components. Start-up funds often come from local foundations or businesses through partnerships with local community-based organizations, or through reallocation of existing school district resources. Several states, including Kentucky, Connecticut and Arkansas, have made grants available to launch and support 21C/FRC programs. The following chart provides an overview of some of the types of funding sources used by 21C sites.

Revenue Sources for School of the 21st Century Programs

Source	Examples
fees	Most 21C schools charge weekly or monthly fees for both preschool and before- and after-school programs. To ensure universal access, fees are set on a sliding scale according to family income.
state grants	Each state is different, but many have special grant programs that can fund portions of a 21C program. The types of grants that are available in many states include: Early Childhood/ Preschool, School Improvement/ Reform, Family Partnership/ Involvement, Family Resource Center, Parents As Teachers, Dropout/Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Adult Education, Literacy and Universal Pre-Kindergarten.
federal programs	Specific federal programs change over time, but funding that has been used for 21C programs includes: Title I, Goals 2000, Head Start, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Medicaid, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, USDA Food Programs (breakfast, lunch, snack, summer), Special Education, Adult Education and Literacy.
in-kind	Space, custodial services, utilities, transportation, materials, telephone, staff, etc., donated by the school district and other organizations.
other	Child care vouchers, partnerships with local nonprofit agencies/hospitals/universities, sponsorships/donations by local businesses, special events fundraising, private foundation grants, employer child care subsidies.

21C operates as a school-based community center. The approach has a solid track record providing each community with flexibility to create its own version, while adhering to core principles that promote child and family development.

— Ruby Takanishi

President

Foundation for Child Development

Consultation, Training and Technical Assistance

The School of the 21st Century model was developed in 1988 by Yale University Professor Edward Zigler, one of the principal architects of the federal Head Start program. While dedicated and enthusiastic program organizers at the school level have made the School of the 21st Century a reality, Yale University serves as a national resource to guide the growth of the initiative. Under the leadership of Matia Finn-Stevenson, 21C staff provide consultation and training for each of the core components:

- Initiating a home visitation and early parenting program
- Setting up a preschool program
- Establishing before-school, after-school and vacation care programs for school-age children
- Establishing or enhancing school-based health education and services
- Launching a Child Care Provider Network
- Creating an Information and Referral service

In addition, Yale consultants can provide training and technical assistance on the following management and implementation issues:

- Conducting a community needs assessment
- Generating support for 21C in the school and the larger community
- Locating funding sources and developing grant proposals
- Increasing family involvement
- Selecting appropriate curricula for preschool and school-age programs
- Assessing and ensuring high quality in all 21C programs
- Developing evaluation strategies

The level of Yale's involvement depends on the 21C Network membership option selected by the school or district (contact the Yale office for membership details).

Publications

The Yale School of the 21st Century initiative has developed an array of manuals and other written materials that can help answer 21C implementation questions. Some materials are included as part of 21C Network membership; all are available for individual purchase.

The School of the 21st Century provided the research base and the philosophic underpinning for one of the most successful aspects of the Kentucky Education Reform Act: the Family Resource and Youth Service Centers. Yale University continues to be a tremendous resource for training, guidance and support.

— Robert (Sandy) Goodlett
Executive Director
Kentucky Family Resource/
Youth Service Centers



Our school is a better place for children, their parents, and the community because of the School of the 21st Century. With a variety of services and an emphasis on quality, 21C has helped us create an optimum learning environment for children.

— Valerie Livingstone

Principal

Page/Hilltop School

Ayer, Massachusetts

Frequently Asked Questions

Does 21C target specific children or families?

One of the unique strengths of the 21C model is that it works for all children and in all types of communities. By using sliding scale fees and other innovative funding strategies, 21C services are made available to all families in a community regardless of income or family circumstances.

Do all schools implement 21C in exactly the same way?

The 21C model recognizes that every community is unique, and it is designed to respond flexibly to those differences. Implementation of a 21C program begins with a needs assessment to determine which of the 21C core components are necessary in a given community. Many schools already have one or more of the core 21C components in place before they adopt the 21C model. For these schools, 21C provides a guiding framework to explore the need for additional child care and family support services, building on what the school and community have already begun.

Our school is already overcrowded; how could we possibly add more programs?

21C schools have been creative about finding ways to accommodate 21C child care components by converting little-used classroom space; renting or purchasing nearby houses; renovating and utilizing unused school buildings; constructing separate facilities on school grounds; using modular or mobile buildings; or joining forces with local early childhood education providers and other nonprofits serving children and families. School-age programs can often use existing space in the school building, such as a cafeteria, a gymnasium or a large classroom.

Can we combine 21C with other school reform efforts?

The School of the 21st Century is a comprehensive approach to creating critical support services which works extremely well with other school reform programs. One such successful collaboration is the Comer/Zigler (CoZi) initiative, which is a combination of Dr. Edward F. Zigler's School of the 21st Century and Dr. James P. Comer's School Development Program. CoZi offers family support services linked to the school through a child-centered, collaborative decision-making structure.

Is it good for children to start school so young?

The School of the 21st Century is expressly designed for the optimal development of children and therefore recognizes the need for age-appropriate activities. The program does not advocate academics for preschool children or an extended academic day for school-age children. The School of the 21st Century emphasizes play and social relationships for preschool children and allows school-age children to choose from a variety of activities that develop their social, emotional, artistic, physical and intellectual abilities.

What is the teacher's role in 21C?

Although the programs that make up 21C operate independently of the teaching staff, teachers are key to the success of a 21C program. By keeping abreast of the many services offered through 21C, teachers can make referrals for students and families in need and promote the program in the community. Many teachers in 21C schools feel the program gives them more time to focus on teaching in its traditional sense since the necessary mechanisms are in place to provide students and families with other kinds of support services they might require.



When I need help reaching out to or meeting the needs of a particular family, the Family Resource Center makes my job easier in the best sense of the word. It enables me to focus on children's academic learning with assurance that their other needs are being addressed.

— Therese Horn

Teacher

Charter Oak Elementary School

West Hartford, Connecticut

How Does My School Become a 21C School?

Schools or school districts that want to implement the 21C model should contact the School of the 21st Century office at Yale University. 21C staff will be happy to provide more information about the initiative and to consult about how to build a version of the School of the 21st Century in your community. Staff can also help to arrange a visit to one of the national 21C Demonstration Sites, an orientation meeting at Yale, and/or register you to attend the 21C annual conference.



The School of the 21st Century programs make our school district especially desirable for many young families. By diminishing the divisions between child care and education, the model puts into practice the view that learning begins at birth.

— Robert Watkins

Superintendent

Independence, Missouri

Annual Conference

Each summer, the School of the 21st Century hosts an annual conference at Yale University. Workshop topics include management and implementation challenges such as fundraising, evaluation and program planning, as well as significant and timely topics such as brain research, technology and family involvement. The conference attracts school district personnel, early childhood professionals, parents, teachers and policymakers and is geared to meet the training needs of both beginning and mature sites.

21C Network

Schools interested in implementing the School of the 21st Century model are encouraged to become members of the 21C Network established and maintained by the School of the 21st Century initiative at Yale. Through the 21C Network, Yale keeps 21C schools informed about relevant research, new funding opportunities, evaluation findings and more, and schools are able to communicate with each other regarding implementation challenges and strategies. The 21C Network provides several different levels of membership tailored to meet the needs of sites just beginning implementation as well as mature sites interested in continuous quality improvement. For detailed information about membership options, contact the Yale office.



School of the 21st Century
Yale University
310 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511-2187
203-432-9944 / 9945 fax
www.yale.edu/21C

I've worked in schools for more than 25 years, and the 21C/FRC program is the best strategy I know of to truly meet the needs of children and families. Parents love the fact that there is one place they can go to find answers to their most pressing concerns about their children's well-being.

— Norma Meek

Site Coordinator

Family Resource Center

Catlettsberg, Kentucky

School of the 21st Century
Yale University
310 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511-2187

School of the 21st Century
Yale University
310 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511-2187

please
place
stamp
here

please
place
stamp
here

Request for Information

- Please add me to the School of the 21st Century mailing list
- Please send me information on 21C Network Membership options
- Please send me a brochure for the next School of the 21st Century Annual Conference
- We are interested in implementing 21C and would like Yale staff to contact us to explore next steps.

Name _____

Title _____

School/Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Comments: _____

Request for Information

- Please add me to the School of the 21st Century mailing list
- Please send me information on 21C Network Membership options
- Please send me a brochure for the next School of the 21st Century Annual Conference
- We are interested in implementing 21C and would like Yale staff to contact us to explore next steps.

Name _____

Title _____

School/Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Comments: _____

I look at the creation of the 21C/FRC program as one of the best examples of our ability to address the needs of real people. Everyone I talk to about this program says, 'How can we get this in our community?'

— John Larson

U.S. House of Representatives

1st Congressional District,

Connecticut

School of the 21st Century
Yale University

310 Prospect Street

New Haven, CT 06511-2187

203-432-9944 / 9945 fax

www.yale.edu/21C