

**Program: LA'S BEST (LAB)**

**Population Served:**

Size: 21 schools offered the program in 1995  
 Age: Fifth-, Sixth-, and Seventh-graders  
 Other Characteristics: Criteria for site selection include high academic need, based on average test scores; low socioeconomic status; at least one in each LA Unified School District region; area of high gang, drug, crime activity; ethnically diverse—26.6% African American, 4.4% Asian, 57.1% Latino, and 11.8% white; sample was 60% female.

**Program Components:**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Provided by</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Description</u>
After-school program	Adult support staff	2 – 3 years; Monday – Friday after school until 6 p.m.	After school
Cultural enrichment (arts participation, trips)			
Academic activities			
Recreational (sports, crafts)			
Computer assistance			
Nutrition (snack, cooking, health)			

**Program Objectives/Goals:**

Provide safety after school.  
 Enhance educational opportunities.  
 Supplement and enrich regular education program.  
 Provide recreation activities.  
 Improve interpersonal skills and develop self-esteem.

**Study 1:**

**Brooks, P., Mojica, C., & Land, R. (1995). *Longitudinal study of LA's BEST after school education and enrichment program, 1992 – 94*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies.**

**Study objectives and measurements:**

Objective

To determine the program's effect on students' effort and achievement in school subjects (performance) and on students' attitudes toward school, their self-esteem, their personal goals and aspirations, and their experiences of close relationships with peers and adults. Also, to examine whether these effects differed by ethnic group, gender, language spoken, or length of exposure to the program.

Measurement instrument

Children's questionnaires, parents' questionnaires, program pre-test and post-test scores

**Evaluation:**

Type: Quasi-experimental. Pre-test/post-test matched comparison group design, with baseline data provided.

Statistical techniques: ANCOVA; significance level=.05

Population evaluated: 123 program and comparison group students in 10 sites

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**Outcome:**

Increase in school engagement, educational expectations, and academic self-concept. Increase in math and science in final year and in reading during two follow-up evaluation years. Higher growth in math, science, social science, and reading comprehension subjects in the last 2 years of the evaluation. No impact on exposure to people in gangs, drugs and alcohol, or to people in college. No impact on relations with adults. Increase in reported positive relationships with adults after school. Increase in reports of feeling safe after school. Increase in reports that adults were helpful after school and that they would seek out nonparental adults (including aides and teachers) for help with a problem.

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**Other Information:**

Program group children were more likely to be Latino or Asian and were more likely to speak a language other than English at home. Program participants had been in the program for at least 2 years, whereas the comparison group had been in the program for 3 months or less. Program participants had lower achievement before the program (as measured by core GPA than comparison group).

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