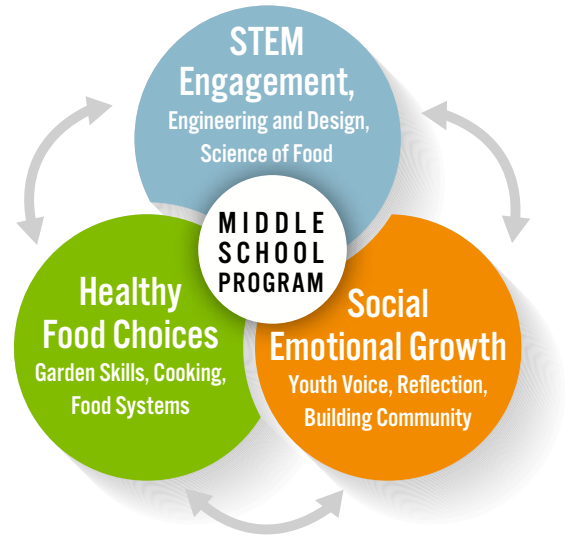


MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM SNAPSHOT



CitySprouts Middle School Program is an out-of-school time program that introduces young people ages 11-14 year old to ecosystems and food systems through garden-based learning. Using gardening, cooking and exploring the neighborhood as a vehicle, our program guides middle school-aged youth through projects that engage them in science practices, encourage life-long habits of health, and give them experiences being leaders in their community.



Our after school serves 6th-8th graders in six schools in Boston in Cambridge. At each site, our program is framed around a semester-long project centered on science/engineering and food systems. Clubs are held weekly for 45-85 minutes (length depending on the school site).

Our summer internship in Cambridge serves 100 middle school youth in a four week (9am-1pm) internship based at each of the four Upper Schools in Cambridge.

CitySprouts Middle School Program serves youth in high-need urban school districts, providing access to the natural environment and engaging science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educational projects related to food systems and ecosystems. A total of 200 youth were served by our Middle School Program in 2015-16.

WHAT CITYSPROUTS YOUTH SAY

“You kind of take your food for granted, and then when you learn about it— whoa! It’s a lot to wrap your brain around.”
—Sasha, age 12

“What if everything was just there and it never decomposed? What if there was no soil? There’s a lot of ‘what if’ questions we thought about.”
—Julia, age 11

“I didn’t actually think you needed math for planting...now I know you do.”
—Tyler, age 12



CitySprouts is supported by the following key partnerships:





OUTCOMES

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

CitySprouts utilizes the school garden as a learning environment for science and engineering. Outside observers gave CitySprouts the highest score in the area of organization of activities, space utilization, and appropriate and engaging materials.

Our program provides an engaging learning experience appropriate to the diverse students in our program. Observers noted the level of support for students of varying abilities allowing for consistent access to the activity and to the learning, both individually and as a group. "This is an exceptional example of access provided for all students," the observer wrote.

"If you know some things about science, everything else just becomes a little bit easier."

-Julia, age 11



HEALTH

CitySprouts Middle School Program improves children's health by expanding their healthy food choice. At every session, tasting vegetables is integrated into the day's activity. Among the 100 young people in our after school program this year, pre-and post-surveys revealed that there were 85 unique first time tastes of new vegetables, and 109 unique first time likes of new vegetables. Other results from our 2015-16 after school program:

- 62% of participants tried a new vegetable for the first time
- 79% of participants reported that they liked a vegetable that they had not liked before the program
- 64% of participants cooked a new vegetable at home with their family

"Being in the garden inspires you to cook, and it's really not that hard."

-Sasha, age 12



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

CitySprouts creates a social-emotional environment that supports young people's healthy development. Our program scored the highest level in participation in activities and in positive relationships—both indicators of an effective learning environment.

Evaluation results consistently reflect positive adult-youth relationships, and positive youth peer relationships.

"I didn't know anyone on the first day [of CitySprouts]. It opened up a new door."

-Sem, age 12

HOW WE MEASURE CHANGE

We use two evaluation tools to measure the quality of the learning environment of our Middle School Program. The **Dimensions of Success (DoS)** is a holistic observation tool designed to improve the STEM assessment capacity of out-of-school time programming. Trained and certified observers make pre- and post-observations to measure empirically based indicators of student engagement in STEM learning and practices. The **Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT)** tool collects information both through observation and staff questionnaire with the aim to improve program quality in three areas: Learning & Skill Building, Program Organization & Structure, and Supportive Social Environment.