

# What Parents Should Know About **STEM** Afterschool Programs in Pennsylvania



SCIENCE



TECHNOLOGY



ENGINEERING



MATH



## A Solid Foundation in **STEM** Will Help

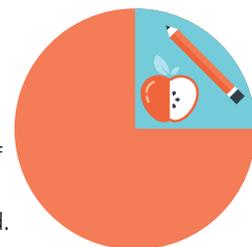
As early as 12 or 13, youth are faced with big choices about which subjects to take on to achieve certain skill sets. Choosing to study STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects will ensure students keep their career options open. STEM learning is occurring in schools and afterschool programs across Pennsylvania and inspiring the next generation of scientists, mathematicians and engineers. But even if they don't work in one of these fields, strong STEM skills are critical to well-rounded education.

**STEM helps kids understand how the world works and careers in STEM are rewarding, challenging, well paid and varied. Jobs include everything from crime scene investigation and volcanos to medicine, weather and even video games!**



### **STEM AFTER SCHOOL**

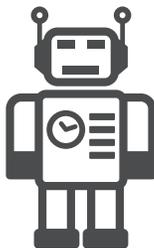
Children spend less than a **quarter** of their waking hours in school; and in the U.S., elementary schools devote an average of **2.3 hours per week** to science, a decline of **43 minutes** since 1994. After school hours and summers are times for kids to get ahead.



Children often don't realize how much STEM is a part of their lives. Time spent outside of school can be a valuable way for them to learn about STEM careers and how they can solve problems. Afterschool programs get youth excited about STEM: they offer fun, engaging activities that build knowledge and the opportunities to talk to people with STEM jobs, find mentors and experience hands-on learning with

### **PARENTS AND STEM**

Parents encourage their children to participate in sports, even though those children won't necessarily be professional athletes. In the same manner, you can support your children's interest in math or science, which exposes them to a variety of learning opportunities.



To help your child get a STEM-rich education, add after-school and summer activities that focus on STEM learning. Look for programs that will teach your child something new – zoology, robotics, environmental fieldtrips, forensics – that she wouldn't get in school, to branch out and learn new skills and have new experiences like building a robot or doing outdoor experiments.

Parents are the most influential persons helping their children decide which career to pursue.



Source: *STEM Perceptions: Student & Parent Study* By Harris Interactive; commissioned by Microsoft (2011)

