



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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### MAKE TIME FOR KIDS TO PLAY WITH SCIENCE

<b>What:</b>	Interview availability with leaders of the Coalition for Science After School about <b>tips for families, educators, and care providers</b> for offering quality science and technology learning experiences beyond the classroom.
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**Note: The Coalition for Science After School can help reporters and photographers find outstanding science and technology learning programs to visit in their area.**

**Chicago** – For millions of kids, back to school time also means a return to after-school programs. This year, many of those kids will have a chance to experience something new in their after-school program: Science!

Research shows that when it comes to predicting future career decisions, *early interest* in science is more important than test scores. The U.S. Department of Labor is projecting that jobs requiring training in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) will increase by 51 percent between 1998 and 2008 - four times faster than overall job growth. However, growing emphasis on standardized testing has resulted in less school time devoted to science.

Children need time to explore their own ideas about science and technology. Many children view science and technology topics as something that only happens in a classroom and may not understand that science describes the world around them. Gender and ethnic differences in the science workplace persist, not because of academic performance, but because fewer girls and children of color are exposed to science as an engaging career option.

“After-school programs are a perfect place to let young people explore science and technology. There is often more flexible time and opportunity to work in groups. Adults in charge can let kids ‘play’ with science in the same way they play sports or explore the arts. High-quality after-school experiences are fun and engaging, and they spark an interest that translates into classroom success and career options,” said Jason Freeman, Executive Director of the Coalition for Science After School, a national network based in Berkeley, California.

“There is a growing crisis in our national workforce. More than 80% of jobs will require science and technology skills. Those students least likely to get involved with science- children of color, girls, students who don’t perform well academically are not only being cut out of a chance to have fun and explore the world around them, they’re being taken out of a critically needed workforce pipeline,” stated Gabrielle Lyon, Cofounder and Executive Director of Project Exploration, a Chicago-based non-profit science education organization that focuses on providing youth development opportunities to minority youth and girls.

**The Coalition for Science After School is committed to increasing and improving opportunities for children to learn science, technology, engineering and mathematics in after-school programs.**



## **National Conference on Science and Technology in Out-of-School Time**

The Coalition for Science After School and Project Exploration are hosting a national conference, September 17-19, 2008 at the Navy Pier in Chicago, Illinois. This first-ever conference will bring together a national cross-section of program providers, researchers, and policy-makers in the growing movement for science and technology in out-of-school time. Sessions will include research-based best practices, curriculum development and evaluation, with a particular focus on equity and access issues for underrepresented populations.

The excitement of science will continue throughout 2009, the national Year of Science, with public programs, special events, and further opportunities for children to engage in science.

**About the Coalition for Science After School** - The Coalition for Science After School envisions the day when young people from all backgrounds have access to high quality science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning experiences during out of school hours. The Coalition is a strategic alliance among individuals and organizations from STEM education, youth development, and out-of-school time programs. The Coalition's mission is to coordinate and mobilize community stakeholders to strengthen and expand opportunities for young people to do and learn science in after-school settings. [www.ScienceAfterSchool.org](http://www.ScienceAfterSchool.org)

**About Project Exploration** – Project Exploration is nonprofit science education organization dedicated to making science accessible to the public- especially minority youth and girls – through personalized experiences with science and scientists. Founded by University of Chicago paleontologist Paul Sereno and educator Gabrielle Lyon, Project Exploration provides youth programs, services for schools and teachers, and public programs including travelling exhibits and website initiatives designed to *GET* kids interested in science, *KEEP* kids interested in science and *EQUIP* students to pursue science. [www.projectexploration.org](http://www.projectexploration.org).

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