



A Win-Win for Families

Out of School Time & FAST Families & Schools TOGETHER.

The Families and Schools Together® (FAST®) program in your school is sponsored by the Investing in Innovation (i3) project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. On the web, this project is called *PhillyFAST-i3.com*. It is working in 30 Philadelphia elementary schools, of which 16 have Out of School Time programs.

Starting this Fall, families with children participating in Out of School Time (OST) are able to attend FAST one afternoon a week, with no financial loss for the OST program. In fact, both the FAST and OST programs gain when families attend. Why? Parents and teachers often see positive changes in children's behavior and an increase in children's self-esteem, especially when families attend several FAST sessions. These benefits are expected to be observed in the Out of School Time program.

How Can OST Staff Support FAST this Fall and Spring?

OST staff are encouraged to provide parents and guardians information about FAST and support their regular attendance.

FAST will be held in two cycles: Fall and Spring. Fall FAST sessions will begin the last week of September or first week of October. Recruitment of families will be happening on-site at school—before the program begins and into the first four weeks of FAST. In other words, parents interested in trying FAST can enter into the program even after the official start date of the program.

The following information, along with a PhillyFASTi3 brochure, will be useful for OST staff to share—to **encourage parents and guardians to try FAST at least once**. When families attend once, more than 80 percent return and graduate from the 8-week program. This is a very high rate for a family engagement program.



Parents' Frequently Asked Questions

We encourage OST staff to seek out FAST team members to introduce themselves and ask any questions they have about the program. Likewise, we encourage FAST team members to meet OST staff.

Who is leading FAST® in Philadelphia schools?

FAST is led by Turning Points for Children, a nonprofit Philadelphia agency. Each school's Turning Points manager, as well as Kindergarten and First Grade teachers, should be able to answer families' questions. In addition, parents can go online to *PhillyFASTi3.com* to learn more and to register.

What is the goal of FAST?

The goal of the FAST program is to help children succeed in school, at home, and in the community. Program sessions usually last 2.5 hours. A free meal, activities, and adult networking all work together to—

- Equip children with new tools to help them make positive behavior choices.
- Equip parents with new tools to communicate with their children.
- Remind children of the value of respect.
- Connect parents to other adults at school to strengthen their support network.



Does FAST have good results?

- Yes. FAST was developed 25 years ago by Dr. Lynn McDonald, who knew that the most important thing to children are the people closest to them. To increase the chances of each child succeeding, children need positive support in their family. FAST gives parents new tools for this to happen. Many research studies have shown that children who attend FAST make more positive choices and do better in school. Parents have also told stories of how FAST has changed their family life, their personal goals and career choices.

94%

Students Who Attend FAST Show Significant Gains, a 2011 review of program effectiveness shows. (The Philadelphia School District)

49% Academic Improvements

25% Increased Good Behavior

26% Decreased Suspensions

What, specifically, do parents and guardians gain from FAST?

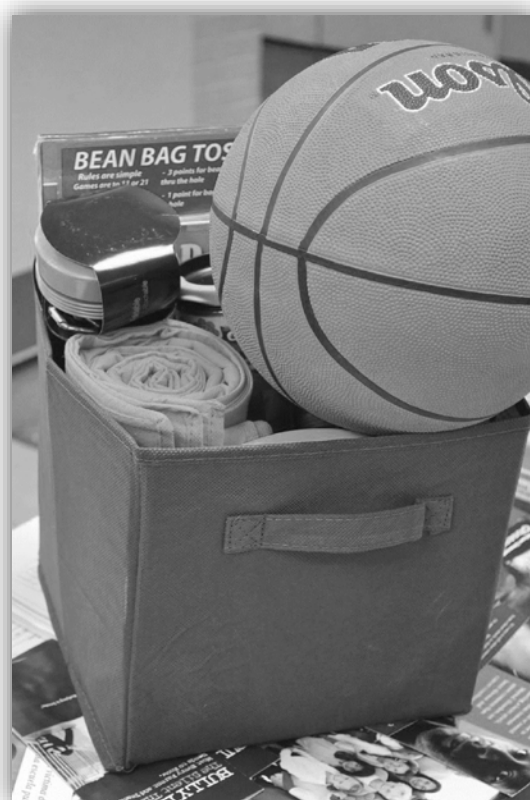
- FAST sets aside time for adults to meet other parents and guardians. With one another, they discover and share new resources, ideas, and contacts.
- FAST also gives family leaders new, powerful ways to build up their child and support his/her learning.

Why would an entire family want to go to FAST?

- Everyone gains.
- All the activities are fun and nurturing.
- Everyone shares a free meal together.
- Activities are set up in ways that remind children to respect family leader(s), even as the entire family enjoys special time together.
- **Families like FAST.** Once a family goes to FAST, over 80 percent graduate from the 8-week program. Many go on to FASTWORKS®.
- By doing fun and rewarding activities with people from school, children become more comfortable at school and gain confidence to succeed.

What usually happens at the 8 weekly (2.5 hour) FAST sessions?

- Meet and Greet
- Free Meal (hosted by a family after the first night; funds are provided to host the meal through a “Lottery drawing”)
- Fun, confidence-building activities
- Parent Support Meeting (while children have kids’ time, including homework support)
- One-to-One Quality Time
- Lottery/Winning as a family (the winning basket includes family activities and games, plus money to supply one meal for your FAST community. In this way, everyone gives and receives and builds up the community.)



Where can OST staff and parents learn more about FAST for their school?

Turning Points for Children, the nonprofit agency managing FAST

FastForKindergarten@tp4c.org

267/236-1540

www.TurningPointsForChildren.org

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Project website

PhillyFASTi3.com

Facebook Page

PhillyFASTi3

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