



BACKGROUND

Computers for Youth (CFY)—www.cfy.org—began with a meeting in the late 1990s of two New Yorkers—Dan Dolgin, a lawyer and private investor, and Elisabeth Stock, a former White House Fellow and MIT graduate. Independently, they became convinced that the home holds the greatest *untapped* potential for improving school children’s academic and life-long success. Compared to the classroom or the after-school center, the home has received the least attention from policy makers and educators. It is where children spend the greatest amount of time (only 13% is spent in the classroom) and where children interact with the adults most interested in their success—their parents or guardians. The pair realized that a home computer packed with engaging educational software not only offered children an important tool for discovery and understanding, it also drew their parents into what they were learning. They joined forces and began CFY’s operations in 1999, with Mr. Dolgin serving as its board chair and Ms. Stock as its President.

Headquartered in New York, with an office in Philadelphia and Atlanta, CFY partners with public schools in high poverty areas to improve the educational resources available in children’s homes, enhance parent-child interaction around learning, and help teachers connect classroom learning with the home. CFY’s computer-based *home learning centers* are designed by software experts and tested by students and education executives from around the country. CFY’s Family Learning Workshops are designed to improve parents’ confidence in helping their children learn and increase student engagement in core academic subject areas.

CFY focuses on children in the sixth grade because research shows that this is when there is the steepest decline in academic achievement, and also when parents begin to feel less capable of helping with increasingly complex homework assignments. Up to 25 percent of the achievement differences between higher and lower performing students may be attributed to parental involvement. As such, during its required family training session, CFY has families review more than a dozen specially created Family Together Time activities (FATT). These are engaging mini-projects families can do on the computer to spend quality time together, have fun and improve children’s academic skills as well as parents’ confidence in helping children learn.

CFY’s research demonstrates impact in the following areas: academic achievement (as measured by test scores), student engagement (such as class effort) and parental involvement in children’s learning at home.

CFY is supported by donations of computer systems (30 at a time to equip an entire classroom of families at once), software, and funds from government, foundations, corporations and individuals. CFY hosts an annual fundraising event, the Tech Leadership Awards, which recognizes the best family learning software of the year, innovation in digital leadership, and social responsibility among IT executives. CFY is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

In the next five years Computers for Youth plans to have operations in five cities serving almost 10,000 families per year.

For more information about Computers for Youth please visit www.cfy.org