**Child Care Funding for ages 0-13 Received the Largest Influx of Funds in History:**

**Ensure the critical programs for school-age children are not overlooked**

**Quick Look:**

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| --- | --- |
| **When school age care is not considered** | **When school age care is considered** |
| * School age program sites have to meet physical requirements for items like water fountains close to the ground even when they only serve middle schoolers * Staff for school age only programs can be taking classes on safe sleeping practices instead of adolescent development * State quality systems (QRIS) are developed for 0-5 but leave out opportunities for high quality license-exempt school age providers to participate * License-exempt providers, such as those exempt because they already operate in schools, are seen as less worthy than early care licensed providers including for relief grants * Providers choose not to participate in the CCDBG system reducing availability of high quality school-age programming for parents most in need * The expertise of years of research in positive youth development for school-age youth is untapped * Opportunities for coordination and leveraged investments with other departments, statewide networks and community partners are missed | * The 44% of CCDBG recipients ages 5-13 receive the attention they need to thrive * Working families continue to have accessible high quality care as their students transition from early care to the K-12 system * Students can sustain the gains made in early education through high quality adult relationships and academic support * Program staff receive relevant trainings that support the youth in their care in developmentally appropriate ways such as social and emotional development, student voice and choice/leadership training, trauma informed care, STEM learning, and healthy lifestyles * School-age programs receive proper training and incentives to improve quality through the QRIS system * Partners and resources are leveraged across departments, statewide networks and community providers * High quality programs become more eager to participate and availability increases |

Continue reading to learn more about the importance of school-age care in CCDBG and how you can support the availability of quality programs.

**School- Age Child Care:**

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), established in 1990 and last reauthorized in 2014, provides federal funding to support parents in or entering into the workforce by providing quality child care and development opportunities for their children ages birth to 13, extending beyond infant, toddler and pre-school care into a child’s early adolescence. The wide range of ages is necessary when considering that parents of a seven or ten-year-old need safe spaces for their children during the 9-5 or non-traditional workday just as much as a parent of a 3 year old.

For school-age working parents, care can mean before school care, afterschool care, summer care, and during the Covid emergency, even full-day care if school buildings are operating remotely. While parents’ hours of need may be consistent across age ranges of care (ie a parent may always need coverage between 9-5), the needs of the children in care will change dramatically as they grow and develop, so care cannot and should not look the same across the age spectrum.

**Given that 44% of CCDBG participants are school-aged (5 to 13)[[1]](#footnote-1)**, attention to school-age programs with regards to their types of programming for youth, their availability to parents, their health and safety for operators and their training for staff is essential for a quality continuum of care in the CCDBG program.

*School Age Programming for Youth:*

* **Positive Youth Development:** Positive youth development frameworks[[2]](#footnote-2) recognize that as youth age they require more opportunities for leadership, independence, socialization, and safe spaces for risk taking. Programs for 2 year olds should look and feel different than those for 12 year olds.
* **Adolescent Brain**: New research on the adolescent brain (ages 9/10-25) conducted in 2019 by the National Academies[[3]](#footnote-3) found “While the malleable brains of adolescents are adaptable to learning and innovation, they are also vulnerable to detrimental exposures, ranging from alcohol or drug use to the stresses of growing up in dangerous neighborhoods.  Adolescents also face varied access to opportunities and supports, which contributes to long-standing disparities measurable by race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, LGBTQ status, and ability status.” Staff training and program design are critical for making the most of early adolescence development.
* **Continuum of Care**: The gains of early learning environments such as Pre-K, need to be supported and sustained as children age. Afterschool and summer programs continue to provide students with the adult relationships, academic supports and healthy habits development that lead to positive outcomes. Research from Deborah Vandell and colleagues[[4]](#footnote-4) shows positive effects of afterschool participation on areas including student attendance, GPA, social interaction, and academic performance. Moreover, Vandell’s recent longitudinal research[[5]](#footnote-5) found additive effects “students who received higher quality ECE and had sustained participation in afterschool organized activities demonstrated higher academic achievement in high school... Importantly, the effects associated with early care and afterschool care also were exactly the same size indicating that both are good investments.”

*Availability:*

* **1 in 4 Access Gap:** A recent 2020 survey of parents across the United States[[6]](#footnote-6), revealed that for every child with access to an afterschool program, 3 more were unable to participate either due to lack of availability or affordability. Fifty-six percent of elementary students and 5 million (47%) of middle school students currently not in a program would like to have access.
* **COVID Stress:** Moreover, the COVID emergency has also affected access. A fall 2020 survey of the afterschool field found 87% of afterschool programs concerned for their program’s long term future and funding[[7]](#footnote-7).

*Health and Safety:*

* **CCDF Eligible:** School-age child care programs operating under CCDBG fall into two categories, licensed and license exempt. All CCDF eligible programs must meet the federal and state health and safety standards and necessary background checks. In some states, specific programs serving only the school-age population, where some state requirements for areas like sleep safety practices would not be applicable, are given a license exempt status. These programs might operate out of public schools, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, and parks departments and often in addition to meeting the required safety measures have their own careful standards.
* **License-Exempt:** When states do not have different licensing requirements for infant or school age only centers or specific exemptions, then school-age only centers would have to abide by protocol designed for infants and many would opt out of serving youth with a CCDBG subsidy, reducing availability of care unnecessarily. While the language “license exempt” may suggest a more lax level of oversight, that is not the case.
* **Health Procedures under Covid:** 82% of afterschool program providers surveyed in Fall 2020 mentioned being somewhat, very, or extremely considered about maintaining adequate staff through health concerns and new procedures. Their continuation will require school-age specific attention to maintain staff, information, training and best practice for this age group and settings.

*Professional Development, Training and Technical Assistance, the field has:*

* A continually expanding research base in the area of positive youth development
* [50 Statewide Afterschool Networks](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/) exist representing every state help expand quality and access for school-age, afterschool and summer programs and promote best practice, trainings and professional development[[8]](#footnote-8).
* A number of quality measurement tools including:
* [Tools to assess and improve program quality](https://indd.adobe.com/view/15416523-6952-48d9-85d6-54af00473342). A recent survey of the field found these tools were used in 33 states 13 of which had state specific developed by groups of state partners most often including afterschool networks, program providers and state and local education agencies[[9]](#footnote-9). Tools include:
  + The National Institute on Out of School Time [Assessment of Program Practices Tool](https://www.niost.org/Tools-Training/the-assessment-of-afterschool-program-practices-tool-apt) and Surveys of Academic and Youth Outcomes for Staff, Youth and Teachers[[10]](#footnote-10).
  + David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, [Youth Program Assessment](http://www.cypq.org/assessment)[[11]](#footnote-11)
  + The School Age Rating Environment Scale ([SACERS-U](https://ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/73))[[12]](#footnote-12)
  + American Institutes of Research/SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool
  + State developed tools
* 30 state afterschool networks offering professional development opportunities[[13]](#footnote-13). However, professional development is most often through 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs (21st CCLC), and national organizations. Only some is offered with child care programs and for profit providers, an area that could be improved with more coordination and investment.

**Recommendations to ensure a well-supported, high quality, accessible school age field:**

* **Workforce:** Sustain the school-age sector investing recovery funds for school age programs and the school-age workforce
* **Access to Funds:** Ensure all CCDF eligible school-age providers whether licensed or license exempt have access to funding and grants through CCDBG and COVID relief funds to increase access to programming to meet demand and support working parents, including when schools are closed or virtual
* **Summer:** Develop opportunities specific to school age providers such as grants for summer programs to support working families with eligible K-12 students
* **Quality:** Develop quality, professional development, and technical assistance specific for school-age programs
* **Licensing:** Ensure the registration and or licensing process is designed to fit the needs of programs across age ranges and that licensing inspectors are trained for the environment they observe (ie early care environments vs school age only environments). This may involve hiring and training new school-age specific agency staff.
* **Professional Development and TA:** Ensure that school-age program staff have access to developmentally appropriate training for the ages they serve, for example as adolescent development, youth voice and leadership, STEAM, literacy, emotional well-being.
* **Collaboration and Coordination:** Agencies should prepare CCDF plan development and establish ongoing communication with statewide afterschool networks and program providers in the school-age/afterschool community. State plans require coordination with Statewide Afterschool Networks or other coordinating entities. Agencies can coordinate with state afterschool networks around issues of school-age demand, licensing, consumer education, family outreach, grants and contracts, mental and physical health, PD and TA and other relevant areas.

**Funding Sources:**

* **Regular CCDBG appropriations.** $5.8 billion in 2020, and $5.9 billion in 2021. These funds allow grants and contracts to school age providers. There is also a 9% quality set aside in state funds that can be used flexibly to provide school-age professional development and technical assistance including in coordination with statewide afterschool networks, and to support the child care industry at large. The Office of Child Care has guidance on emergency flexibility in the CCDBG law and [issued a detailed FAQ](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/occ/tipsheet_statesterritories4_24_2020.pdf) on the uses of funds during COVID which included clarification that Child Care funds can be used for full day care for students in virtual school as long as the care is supplemental to the school day instructional programming.
* **CARES Act COVID Relief Funding.** $3.5 billion in additional funds from the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) passed in March 2020 with funds available to be obligated by lead agencies through FY 2022. (Check on the obligated language) [Allowable uses](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R46324.html#_Toc38616553) include any in the 2014 CCDBG law, and the legislation specifies uses such as program payment for enrollment rather than attendance, sustaining staff wages despite decreased enrollment or temporary closure, child care for emergency workers and supporting CCBDG eligible providers (which includes licensed and license exempt) to maintain or resume program operation even if they had not previously been receiving CCDBG funds.
* **CRRSA Funding**. $10 billion in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental and Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA). This bill, in addition to the uses above, includes language on supporting the stability of the child care sector and tasks agencies with ensuring programs are aware they can apply for funds to sustain their operations, as well as providing technical assistance for applying. It also requires that a portion of funds go to CCDBG eligible providers that had not been receiving subsidy prior to the COVID emergency. States must report to the Department how funds were spent by October 2022.
* **American Rescue Plan (ARP)**: This bill will provide $14.990 billion for additional CCDF funds to be obligated by states in fiscal years 2021 through 2023. These funds are available to any CCDF eligible provider and providers licensed, regulated or registered by the state. This would include CCDF license exempt providers, and registered school-age programs. The bill also appropriates $23.975 billion for a child care stabilization fund. Up to 10% of the stabilization fund can be reserved by the state lead agency for areas such as technical assistance and increasing the supply of child care. The remaining 90% will be subgranted to CCDF eligible programs either operating when submitting the grant application or having closed due to the COVID health emergency. Grants can be used to pay staff (including owners salaries), for rent, health and safety practices for covid, any goods and services needed to maintain operations, mental health supports for children or staff, and can be used to reimburse prior expenses incurred due to COVID.

**Examples of state school-age support:**

* Minnesota offers [grants with Federal Covid Relief Dollars](https://www.childcareawaremn.org/providers/covid-19-public-health-support-funds-for-child-care/) to licensed and [certified license exempt](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/licensing/child-care-and-early-education/certified-license-exempt/) providers
* New Jersey supported parents struggling to find care during virtual school by providing [tuition assistance grants for school-age children](https://www.childcarenj.gov/COVID19)
* Utah offers [school age grant programs](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IDOHJzHyCh5IeUCpsEiP9EQOS2GO9F__pRg-UauDoBc/edit) to license and license exempt, registered, programs to support students whose schools are in virtual or hybrid learning modalities
* Nebraska created a [fund specifically for the stabilization of school-age providers](https://www.nebraskachildren.org/school-age-providers.html)
* Delaware is working with its Statewide Afterschool Network to craft its 2022-2024 CCDBG state plan
* Utah’s Child Care Office offers [grants and an array of resources for afterschool providers](https://jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/afterschool.html)
* Illinois offers a [school age youth development credential](https://www.ilgateways.com/credentials/sayd-credential) option in its professional development system
* Georgia has a school age care specialist position in its lead agency to focus on quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) pathways from a school-age perspective linked to school age quality standards. The state also has a [proposed plan for CRRSA funds](http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CRRSAphaseone.pdf) to provide grants to school age licensed and license-exempt providers.
* [Missouri’s Statewide Afterschool Network offers training](https://moafterschool.org/our-work/moarc/afterschool-trainings/) to school age care providers and 21st CCLC programs
* Vermont: Vermont’s Child Development Division and Agency of Education [work together](https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/practice_brief_3_combining_resources_508c.pdf) to support Vermont Afterschool in the administration of support including adoption of the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) tool, professional development, credentialing, and a social and emotional learning initiative including a full time SEL coach.

**Program Spotlight: (Highlight and Share your own)**

The National Center for Afterschool and Summer Enrichment published a [2018 brief](https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/practice_brief_3_combining_resources_508c.pdf) highlighting the Massachusetts, For Kids Only (FKO) afterschool program. The licensed school-age child care programs, funded by a braiding of many funds including CCDF contracts, offer comprehensive afterschool programs including project based learning, academic support strengthened by a relationship and data sharing with the public school, and social and emotional development. The program funds full-time site directors that connect with the schools, goal set and plan, and support the afterschool teachers with mentoring and professional development.

1. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/ncase-national-saccdataprofile-full-report-2020\_3\_0.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/safeschools/Resources/caad/PYD\_FactSheet.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2019/05/new-report-calls-for-policies-and-practices-to-promote-positive-adolescent-development-and-close-the-opportunity-gap [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://expandinglearning.org/research/vandell/resources/VANDELL\_K4.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Results: A 26-year study shows early care and afterschool are crucial, and benefits last | Mott Foundation](https://www.mott.org/news/articles/results-a-26-year-study-shows-early-care-and-afterschool-are-crucial-and-benefits-last/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Afterschool-COVID-19-Wave-3-Provider-Survey-Toplines.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [LOQ (adobe.com)](https://indd.adobe.com/view/15416523-6952-48d9-85d6-54af00473342) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.niost.org/Tools-Training/the-assessment-of-afterschool-program-practices-tool-apt> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.cypq.org/assessment> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. https://ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/73 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-13)