

# From a Time of Risk to a Time of Opportunity

## This is Afterschool



The hours after the last school bell rings and before parents typically return home from work is a time of endless opportunities and potential for young people. It can be a time of learning and growth, when kids explore new topics in fields like science, technology, engineering, and math; discover new interests; and develop their communication, teamwork, and leadership skills alongside supportive mentors. It can also be a time of risk, as an October 2019 report by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a membership organization of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and other law enforcement leaders, found.



**9 in 10 adults agree that afterschool programs are important to their community**

Although juvenile crime has dramatically decreased in the past decade, *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks* determined that nationally, the hours between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak time for juvenile crime.<sup>1</sup>

In the U.S., for every 1 young person in an afterschool program that inspires learning, provides enriching activities, and keeps them safe, there are 2 more who are waiting to get in. Public support for afterschool is high, with 9 in 10 adults agreeing that afterschool programs are important to their community, but there are not enough programs today to meet the needs of all children and families. The new Fight Crime: Invest in Kids data is further evidence of the need to do more to help ensure that all youth are able to take advantage of the benefits and supports that afterschool programs provide.

### Juvenile Crime in Florida

Analyzing data obtained from law enforcement partners in the state, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids' report, *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks*, determined that 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. is the peak time for juvenile crime in Florida during school days, with approximately half of all crimes taking place during this time period. 24% of crimes occurred between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and 24% of crimes occurred between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. However, it is worthwhile to note that in some instances, law enforcement agencies may code a criminal activity as noon or midnight if the exact time of the offense is unknown or unclear. Looking at the hourly crime rate breakdown in Florida, noon has the highest recorded offenses at 7%.

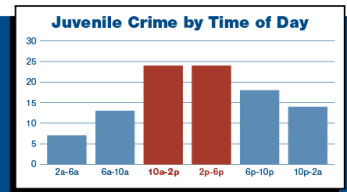
In Florida, 74% of parents agree that afterschool programs help to give parents peace of mind about their children when they are at work and 74% agree that afterschool programs help to keep kids safe and out of trouble. Yet, for every student in an afterschool program, 2 more would participate if a program were available.

*With 1 million students in Florida waiting to get into an afterschool program, increased investment in afterschool programs is needed.*

### The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime in Florida

#### Quality Afterschool Programs:

- Reduce Crime
- Boost Academics
- Improve Behavior
- Lead to Healthier Habits
- Save Money



#AfterschoolFightsCrime

FightCrime

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS  
COUNCIL FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

## Program Spotlight

DIVERT (Diversion Initiative for Vocational Employability Related to Technology) | St. Petersburg, FL



Courtesy of Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action

In 2018, the DIVERT (Diversion Initiative for Vocational Employability Related to Technology) program was founded out of a technical assistance grant offered through the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. The goal from the outset was to provide juvenile-justice involved young adults with wrap-around support services while teaching the cohort a valuable skillset that would encourage them to be more involved in their education and expose them to a viable career path, namely through coding and computer science. In partnership with the St. Petersburg College Gibbs Campus, the DIVERT program was led by interns who were seniors in the school's Computer Programming and Analytics department. Classes were held on the college campus, and as a mutually beneficial partnership, the program participants received college credit for an introduction to computing class at no expense, and the student instructors obtained the internship credit they needed to complete their degrees.

In collaboration with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and Pinellas County School District, DIVERT recruits

students ages 16 or older participating in juvenile arrest avoidance or alternative diversion programs. For three hours a day, Tuesday through Thursday, the cohort engages in coding instruction through CodeCombat—a game-based approach to teaching the coding languages JavaScript and Python—in addition to hands-on coding with Raspberry Pi and Sphero. The students complete eleven CodeCombat modules, and as they reach each milestone in the curriculum, DIVERT hosts celebrations and brings in local STEM business leaders as guest speakers, exposing participants to the wide range of career opportunities available through computer science. Simultaneously, DIVERT supports students in furthering their education and transitioning into adulthood by helping students reenroll in high school, obtain a GED, apply for driver's license, or find part-time employment. The first cohort of the program was comprised of five students in January of 2019; the program is now planning to expand for its second cohort in August of 2019 and recruit up to 20 students to participate.

### Source

<sup>1</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. (2019). *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks*. Retrieved from [www.strongnation.org/articles/930-from-risk-to-opportunity-afterschool-programs-keep-kids-safe](http://www.strongnation.org/articles/930-from-risk-to-opportunity-afterschool-programs-keep-kids-safe)

The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. Learn more at: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)