

This is Afterschool in Illinois



Illinois parents value afterschool programs for keeping kids safe and providing them opportunities to learn, connect, and build foundational life skills. Programs also help parents keep their jobs, boost productivity, and reduce stress. But too many families are missing out. In Illinois, approximately 857,000 children whose parents want afterschool programs do not have access to them.

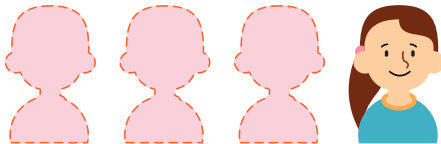
Demand for Afterschool Programs in Illinois is Enormous

Parents of more than
1.1 million children
want afterschool programs

✓ **287,341**
children are in
afterschool programs

✗ **856,853**
children are **not** in programs, but
would be if a program were available

3 in 4 Illinois children are missing out.



Afterschool Programs Support Illinois Children's Learning and Development

Illinois parents give programs high marks for quality and for supporting their child with:

76% A safe environment 

74% Excitement about learning 

75% Teamwork + critical thinking skills 

82% Time with peers + building social skills 

 **4.12**
Quality Rating

 **75%**
Excellent or Very Good

Afterschool Works in Illinois

A 2025 evaluation of Illinois' 21st CCLC programs by the Educational Development Center (EDC) found that participation in programs helped:

Boost academic performance:

About half (51%) of students in 7th through 8th and 10th through 12th grades with a prior-year GPA below 3.0 improved their GPA.

Improve attendance: 61% of students who were chronically absent the previous school year improved their school-day attendance, with the percentage of students improving increasing with the hours of program participation.

Improve school engagement and behavior:

Teachers report that large majorities of elementary and middle/high school students improved their class participation (74% and 67%), satisfactory homework completion (71% and 70%), motivation to learn (63%, all), and behavior in class (68% and 58%).

Illinois Parents Stand Behind Afterschool Programs

87%

Agree that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs.



86%

Are in favor of public funding for afterschool programs. Support for public funding is also high across political affiliations.



Afterschool Programs Help Working Families and Strengthen the Economy

Illinois parents report that their child's afterschool program:

85%

Helps them keep their job



88%

Leads to less stress



83%

Boosts productivity



Additionally, research spanning several states shows that **every \$1 invested** in afterschool programs **saves at least \$3** by:



Increasing kids' earning potential as adults



Improving kids' performance at school



Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency



If there were not an afterschool program available, what, if any impact would it have on your family?

"It would drastically affect my job and the hours that I work. It would mean changing my work schedule to best fit our family's needs."

— ILLINOIS MOM

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative (21st CCLC) is the only federal funding dedicated to afterschool and summer programs, enabling states to award funds to local programs that meet community needs. 21st CCLC programs engage students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth, provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning, and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children.

IN ILLINOIS:

53,714

children are served by a 21st CCLC program

196

communities served

Demand for programming in Illinois is so great that **7 out of every 10** applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

Citations

1. Afterschool Alliance. (2025). *Illinois After 3PM, fifth edition* [Data set]. <https://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/data/illinois/demand>.
2. Goodyear, L., Mansori, S., Cox, J., Rodriguez, S., & van Wassenaer, N. (2025). *Illinois 21st CCLC: FY24 Statewide Annual Evaluation Report*. Educational Development Center.
3. Afterschool Alliance estimate based on findings from state-level return on investment studies, including California, Georgia, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Vermont.
4. Illinois State Board of Education. (2025). [Number of children and communities served by IL 21st CCLCs, FY2024] [Unpublished raw data].

About the Afterschool Alliance

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

