

This is Afterschool in North Carolina



North Carolina 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 North Carolina, approximately 664,000 children whose parents want afterschool programs do not have access to them.

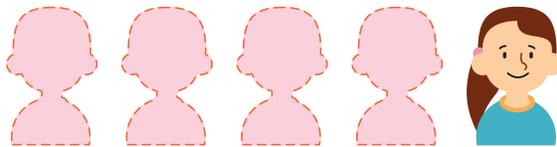
Demand for Afterschool Programs in North Carolina is Enormous

Parents of
852,657 children
want afterschool programs

✓ **188,295**
children are in afterschool programs

✗ **664,362**
children are **not** in programs, but would be if a program were available

Nearly 4 in 5 North Carolina children are missing out.



Afterschool Programs Support North Carolina Children’s Learning and Development

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



Afterschool Works in North Carolina

A 2025 evaluation of North Carolina’s 21st CCLC programs by the SERVE center at the University of North Carolina Greensboro found that regularly participating students saw positive gains related to statewide math assessments and engagement in learning. Programs helped:

- ▲ **Boost academic performance:** Students in grades 4 through 8 increased their end of grade math scores at a slightly higher rate than students across the state.
- ▲ **Improve engagement in school:** Additionally, teachers report that more than 9 in 10 students (93%) in grades 1 through 5 demonstrated improved engagement in learning, comparable to a 2023 evaluation that found 91% of students increased their engagement.

North Carolina Parents Stand Behind Afterschool Programs

89%

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

North Carolina parents report that their child's afterschool program:

92%

Helps them keep their job



96%

Leads to less stress



85%

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?

"Losing the afterschool program would throw our whole lives into chaos. We'd be scrambling to find child care, forcing one of us to either reduce our work hours or shell out a fortune for a babysitter. More importantly, our child would miss out on valuable learning opportunities and social interaction..."

— NORTH CAROLINA 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 NORTH CAROLINA:

18,695

children are served by a 21st CCLC program

354

communities served

Demand for programming in North Carolina is so great that nearly **3 out of every 5** applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

Citations

1. Afterschool Alliance. (2025). *North Carolina After 3PM*, fifth edition [Data set]. <https://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/data/north-carolina/demand>.
2. SERVE at UNCG. (2025). *2023-24 North Carolina 21st CCLC program state-level progress monitoring report: Cohort 15 and 16 subgrantees*. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
3. Afterschool Alliance estimate based on findings from state-level return on investment studies, including California, Georgia, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Vermont.
4. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2026). [Number of children and communities served by NC 21st CCLCs, 2024-2025] [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



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