



LEARNING STILL IN DEMAND WHEN TEMPERATURES RISE

Summer learning programs for kids are facing growing enrollment and tighter budgets, according to a [survey](#) released on June 21 by the Afterschool Alliance in conjunction with [Summer Learning Day](#). Nearly a fifth of summer programs (17 percent) reported reducing their services last summer due to budget pressures, while more than half (54 percent) said they expect increased enrollment this summer.

“Summer learning programs and their related afterschool programs are facing severe hardships,” said Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance, “and it’s having a very real impact on their ability to serve children and families across the nation. We’ve seen any number of afterschool programs close their doors in recent years as a result of funding cutbacks from government at all levels and the challenging fundraising environment programs face in today’s economy. These new survey results tell us that summer learning programs are not immune to those pressures. As a result, programs are forced to stretch beyond capacity or make severe budget cuts, just when families need them the most.”

According to the survey, *Uncertain Times 2012: Summer Learning Matters*:

- In 2011, 80 percent of the afterschool programs in the survey offered summer learning programs.
- More than six in 10 summer learning programs (61 percent) reported operating at maximum capacity or over maximum capacity. The problem

Summer Learning Programs at a Glance



was even more acute in urban areas, where almost seven in 10 summer learning programs in the survey (69 percent) reported operating at or over maximum capacity.

- Seventeen percent of summer learning programs reported reducing their services due to a decrease or stagnation of funds.
- More than one-third of programs (36 percent) reported having a waiting list. In urban areas, more than four in 10 (42 percent) reported having a waiting list.
- Fifty-four percent of summer learning programs expected their 2012 enrollment to be higher or much higher than in 2011.
- Almost six in 10 programs (59 percent) surveyed served as a summer food service program sponsor, a summer feeding site, or both.

Summer Learning Day

To kick-off the summer season, more than 300 summer programs across the country celebrated Summer Learning Day last week. Programs presented workshops on the benefits of summer programs, emphasized literacy, showcased youth activities that engage in interactive learning, conducted science experiments and more.

Summer continued on page six...

OUTREACH

During the summer months, too many children, especially those in disadvantaged communities, lose academic ground and suffer from what's known as the "summer slide," which causes them to fall further behind academically. Summer learning programs, often run by afterschool providers, keep students on track and provide critical support to working families by keeping kids safe and offering healthy meals and snacks.

Consider using the following text as a letter-to-the-editor or blog post to make the case for supporting afterschool and summer learning programs. The text may need to be shortened to be submitted as a letter-to-the-editor; check your local newspaper's submission guidelines.

SAMPLE TEXT

Many afterschool programs in [city name] and across the nation are transitioning into summer learning programs. And just as in the afternoons during the school year, summer programs are keeping kids safe, inspiring them to learn and helping working families.

Summer programs are successful because they use the afterschool formula for hands-on, experiential learning. Working with community partners [give example of local partners if applicable], programs give kids access to opportunities and experiences they might not otherwise have. Some give children the chance to design and build robots or cars, for example. Others focus on the arts, letting kids dance and sing their way through the dog days of summer. Our program at [insert name] offers [details about the program].

Research tells us that programs like these help combat kids' "summer learning loss." *Uncertain Times 2012: Summer Learning Matters*, a new nationwide survey from the Afterschool Alliance, finds that most afterschool programs offer summer learning programs, yet are stretched thin and struggle to meet increased demand. Three in five summer learning programs (61 percent) and seven in 10 urban programs reported operating at or over maximum capacity in 2011. Seventeen percent of summer learning programs reported reducing their services due to a decrease or stagnation of funds. [Include local example if your program has had to reduce services.]

This fall, as part of the looming budget fight, Congress will decide whether to expand, maintain, reduce or divert 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds, which in the past have supported afterschool and summer programs that offer the kinds of engaging learning opportunities not available during the regular school day. Such debates usually end up focusing on numbers. But when it comes to afterschool and summer learning programs, it's our kids and their education that'll be at stake.



FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance's website has numerous resources for afterschool providers looking for new ways to raise money for their programs, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities.

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

Best Buy Community Grants

Through its Community Grants program, Best Buy is awarding grants to nonprofit organizations across the United States that give teens opportunities through technology to excel in school and develop 21st-century skills. Applicants must have 501(c) 3 and tax-exempt status and be located within 50 miles of a Best Buy so that employees and managers can volunteer. Grant amounts will not exceed \$10,000; most will average \$4,000 to \$6,000. More information, including the application, is [online](#). The deadline to apply is July 1.

American Honda Foundation

The American Honda Foundation is supporting broad, innovative and forward-thinking projects that meet the needs of youth, especially minority students. The Foundation is awarding grants of \$20,000 to \$75,000 for projects that emphasize youth education, specifically in the areas of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), the environment, job training and literacy. Nonprofit charitable organizations, public school districts and private/public elementary and secondary schools (as listed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics) are encouraged to apply by the August 1 deadline. More information and guidelines are [online](#).

Mockingbird Foundation's Music Education Grants

The Mockingbird Foundation provides funding for music education for children through schools, community centers, hospitals, shelters, workshops, camps and scholarship programs in the United States and abroad through a competitive grants process. Preference will be given to applications that recognize the importance of music education **for its own sake**, not music therapy; engage students directly with music; support unconventional forms of instruction, composition, vocalization and improvisation; recognize that outcomes may not be assessable; and engage disadvantaged students under 18. Apply by August 1. More information is [online](#).

Art Works

Making the arts more widely available, especially in areas where they can strengthen communities or serve populations limited by geography, ethnicity, economics or disability, is a priority for the National Endowment for the Arts. The Endowment will prioritize applicants who emphasize creation, engagement, learning and livability through the arts. School-based projects must be directly connected to the school curriculum and instructional program, and activities may take place in or outside of the school building at any time of the day, including during afterschool and summer enrichment programs formally connected to school curricula. The deadline to apply is August 9. Click [here](#) for additional guidelines and directions on how to apply.

Advancing Informal STEM Learning

The National Science Foundation has released its new *Advancing Informal STEM Learning Program Solicitation*. The solicitation invites proposals that promote ideas, concepts, research, models, programs or other opportunities for innovative and field-advancing informal out-of-school science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning and emerging STEM learning environments. Depending on the project type, projects may be funded for up to \$250,000 over two years or up to \$2.5 million over five years. Preliminary proposals (optional) are due August 14, and first-time applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a preliminary proposal. The full proposal deadline is January 14, 2013. Click [here](#) for more information.



VICTORY FOR WORKING FAMILIES IN NEW YORK CITY

After an intense, powerful and highly effective campaign led by the afterschool community and other advocates for children and families, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn have announced that they will restore \$150 million for child care and afterschool programs to the city's budget. Supporters of the [Campaign for Children](#) held rallies, generated news coverage, and gathered more than 60,000 petition signatures and handwritten letters that ultimately convinced lawmakers to reverse the proposed budget cuts.

Instead of losing 6,500 child-care spots and 30,000 afterschool spots, it is possible the city may have more spots next year than this year, [Gotham Schools reports](#). Afterschool leaders are waiting to learn how the money will be allocated, and details of the new contracting process. Read more in the [New York Times](#) and watch for further details in the next issue of the *Afterschool Advocate*.



START PLANNING FOR LOA 2012 NOW



The start of the 2012-2013 school year is just around the corner. Get a

jump start on this year's *Lights On Afterschool* planning by downloading the Afterschool Alliance's [Lights On Afterschool Event Planning Kit](#). Make sure your program is ready to join the more than 7,500 communities and one million Americans who will celebrate afterschool programs on October 18.

Lights On Afterschool was created to help as many communities as possible tell the story of afterschool. Use *Lights On Afterschool* to:

- Get parents, community leaders, elected officials, students, the news media, potential funders, volunteers and others excited about afterschool.
- Showcase the achievements of your program and your students. Highlight local partners and invite them to participate.
- Convey your message about afterschool—celebrate your afterschool accomplishments and call for support to ensure that afterschool programs in your community and across the country thrive. Every child should have access to an afterschool program!

Like afterschool programs, *Lights On Afterschool* events come in all shapes and sizes—from stadium rallies and town parades to open houses and program tours. The Event Planning Kit will help afterschool program leaders decide how to celebrate in the way that works best for their programs and communities.

To get started, program organizers can:

1. Ask yourself key questions in our [Who, What, When & Where](#) to start thinking about the goal of the event and what it might look like:
 - What would you like to get out of your event? Media coverage? A new or better relationship with your mayor? More parental involvement? To impress funders or potential funders?
 - What message do you want to communicate? How can you demonstrate to your target audience that afterschool is key to kids' success? What is the value of your

program from the perspective of the community, parents, funders, students, local businesses?

- Who are the best people to deliver your message? Parents, students, principals, the mayor?
- How can you best highlight the students' and program's achievements? What interesting perspective or project can make a good media story or visual for a news article?

2. Look over the [Timeline/Checklist](#) for an overall sense of a planning time frame and how to manage events.

3. Check out [Event Ideas](#) to get creative juices flowing. This section includes case studies of successful *Lights On Afterschool* events, proclamation how-to's, using an afterschool petition, celebrating *Lights On Afterschool* in an election year and going green.

Start planning now by downloading the [Lights On Afterschool Event Planning Kit](#) today.



‘DISAPPOINTING’ NEWS FROM CAPITOL HILL

In a move that caused deep concern for afterschool advocates and for families that rely on afterschool programs, the Senate Appropriations Committee [passed legislation](#) that would provide level funding, \$1.15 billion, for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) in the 2013 fiscal year—but would also let states divert 21st CCLC funds from afterschool and summer learning programs.

“21st CCLC language in the fiscal year 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill is disappointing,” said Afterschool Alliance

Executive Director Jodi Grant. “If Congress were to adopt it, states could divert 21st CCLC afterschool funds to extend the school day, putting countless afterschool programs at risk for closing. That would mean more students unsupervised in the afternoons and without hands-on learning, tutoring, mentoring, physical fitness and other opportunities, and more working parents without safe, supervised, educational activities for their children after the school day ends and before they get home from work.”

Using afterschool funds to extend the school day is deeply controversial. More than 20 states have rejected the Department of Education’s invitation to divert 21st CCLC funding to extended day programs. For more than a decade, 21st CCLC funds have been used for before-school, afterschool and summer programs.

“Appropriations language should not be used to make a major and controversial change to current law, and is not the place to resolve this issue,” Grant added.

The evidence base for extended learning is inconclusive. “Diverting afterschool funds to extended learning programs that in many cases only keep schools open for another 45 to 90 minutes is a huge gamble with our children’s future,” Grant warned. “Congress should thoroughly test extended day programs, using school reform funding streams that are already supporting the creation of extended day programs, rather than plundering a funding stream that supports afterschool programs that work.”

Grant praised the Senate Appropriations Committee for increased funding for Child Care and Development Block Grants, Promise Neighborhoods, Title I and Community Development Block Grants, but added, “at a time when resources are so scarce, funding is best spent where we know it will make a difference,” Grant concluded. “Afterschool and summer programs work.”

There is still time to take action and encourage lawmakers to reject this move to

divert afterschool and summer program funds. [Take action now.](#)



Summer continued from page one...

Recent [research from the RAND Corporation](#) shows that high-quality summer programs with individualized instruction, parental involvement and small classes can help boost student achievement. Most youth lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math computational skills over the summer, and students from low-income households can fall even further behind.

“Summer Learning Day is an important opportunity to highlight the vital role that summer learning programs play in our children’s education,” Grant said. “By keeping kids learning over the summer, and by reinforcing the core concepts they learned during the previous nine months, summer programs help kids at all levels avoid summer learning loss and arrive in school ready to achieve in the fall.”

Gary Huggins, chief executive officer of the [National Summer Learning Association](#), wrote in the *Washington Post*, “No matter how much other school reforms accomplish, the traditional school calendar sorely underutilizes summer. At a time when budgets are tight and resources are strained, we simply cannot afford to spend nearly 10 months of every year devoting enormous amounts of intellect, energy and money promoting student achievement, and then walk away from that investment each summer. We must support high-quality programs so that all youth...have a fighting chance to overcome the summer slide and achieve success.”

Uncertain Times 2012: Summer Learning Matters is part of the Afterschool Alliance’s ongoing *Uncertain Times* survey project, gauging the effect of budget pressures and the economy on out-of-school-time programs. A [fact sheet on the most recent findings is available online](#). The Afterschool Alliance

will release the full results of this year’s *Uncertain Times* survey in the upcoming back-to-school season.



IN THE NEWS

CALIFORNIA—Contra Costa County’s only professional symphony is helping first-grade students excel in English, improve their reading skills and learn to play the violin and cello after school. Last month, Sound Minds afterschool students gave a concert for parents and school officials during which students “completed the transition from playing cardboard violins and cellos they designed themselves to playing the real things,” the *Contra Costa Times* reports. About 60 of Downer Elementary School’s 93 first-graders participated in the program. Organizers hope to continue the program until this first class of students reaches the fourth grade, while adding a new group of first-grade students each year.

FLORIDA—Students from the Buchholz High School math team travel to Duval Elementary School three days a week to help afterschool students with basic arithmetic or other homework. “What started as a basic after-school tutoring program for the elementary students—and community service hours for the high school students seeking scholarships—has become a joint effort to encourage confidence and understanding of all school subjects,” the *Gainesville Sun* reports. The high school students consider it an accomplishment to be able to break down problems into their simplest forms and help the younger students understand basic concepts.

IOWA—The Iowa Afterschool Alliance held a daylong symposium on the latest research and policy on out-of-school-time programming earlier this month. The verdict, according to the *Gazette*, is, “Extending the

school day or school year is an expensive reform proposal that works in some cases, but not all.” The Iowa Department of Education will likely propose extending the school day for some of the state’s students in its education reform package for 2013.

NEW YORK—The New York Philharmonic’s Very Young Composers program gives 72 students from six New York area schools a chance to compose their own music and learn the rudimentary elements of composition, musical notation and the orchestra. One student, 10-year-old Milo Poniewozik, expanded a quintet he wrote last year so it can be played by the entire Philharmonic. Milo told NPR he was nervous but that the experience was “really cool.” Listen to Milo’s piece [online](#).

OKLAHOMA—After finding seeds while hiking, afterschool students from St. Mary’s Episcopal School in Edmond started an organic vegetable garden. Third-grade student Charlie Schultheis told the *Daily Oklahoman* that growing the vegetables will make life easier for the school’s lunch coordinator: “We can grow and pick fresh vegetables, and she can cook them for lunch.”

PENNSYLVANIA—A new consignment store created by the Learning Lamp will support the group’s free afterschool programs through the sale of gently worn, brand-name baby and children’s clothes, shoes, accessories, furniture and toys. Learning Lamp Development Director Angela Rizzo told the *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat* that she expects the store to bring in \$175,000 in gross sales in the first 18 months of operation and generate \$45,000 for afterschool programs. EcoKids expects to open on July 2.

VERMONT—Brattleboro Area Middle School (BEAMS) afterschool students and families gathered earlier this month to celebrate the end of the school year and help

the local Humane Society with the BEAMS program’s first dog show. Twelve dogs participated in the fundraiser in categories such as Best in Show, Funniest, Most Talented, Friendliest and Cutest, the *Brattleboro Reformer* reports. The dog show raised money for the Windham County Humane Society.

WEST VIRGINIA—The West Virginia University Extension Service kicked off its Energy Express summer learning program on June 11. The program is serving 3,000 first-to sixth-graders with six weeks of summer learning and nutrition opportunities. Energy Express is partnering with AmeriCorps to combine art-based learning with literacy activities to help students maintain and gain reading skills during the summer. Energy Express has 78 sites in 38 counties.



LISTEN TO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL CHALLENGE



A [special episode](#) of the podcast [Please Speak Freely](#) from [Development Without Limits](#) was recorded live from the Afterschool

Alliance’s [Afterschool for All Challenge](#) last month. The *Challenge* episode features an interview with Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant, along with highlights from the opening panel, “Afterschool Works: Understanding the Evidence and Transforming Research into Action,” and the 11th annual “Breakfast of Champions,” which honored movers and shakers in the afterschool field and featured

rousing speeches by elected officials who support afterschool. Eric Gurna, executive director of Development Without Limits, also joined Afterschool Ambassador Julie Wild-Curry of Fairbanks, Alaska, as she met with her senator and made the case for legislative support for afterschool programs.

On *Please Speak Freely*, Gurna interviews leaders in the fields of youth development and education to shed light on key issues and explore different perspectives. The podcast aims to get past platitudes and institutional positions, and have honest, nuanced conversations about things that really matter to young people and communities.

Listen to *Please Speak Freely* [online](#).



RESOURCES

Disney Friends for Change Resources

Youth Service America and Disney have designed an action kit to help young people make a difference for people, communities and the planet. The [Friends for Change Action Kit](#) includes five easy-to-use tip sheets designed for youth:

- [Sparking an Idea](#)
- [Making It Happen](#)
- [Finding Friends for Change](#)
- [Get the Word Out](#)
- [What Comes Next?](#)

‘After-School Data: What Cities Need to Know’

Data, smartly employed, can help afterschool programs with everything from allocating resources fairly to improving program quality. A new set of tip sheets gives afterschool providers, intermediary organizations and others strategies on how to best collect data, what to collect and how to use the findings.

“[After-School Data: What Cities Need to Know](#)” was designed, in part, to help bolster city efforts to coordinate the work of municipal agencies, schools, nonprofit youth

programs and other institutions valuable to providing afterschool services.

STEM GraffitiWall

Foundations, Inc. has launched a new guide with information on how to include science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in afterschool and summer programs. STEM GraffitiWall activities are linked to school-day content and promote positive social development for youth of all ages. [Like STEM GraffitiWall on Facebook](#) to download the activity guides!



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

“In this time of taking a knife to state and federal budgets, big cuts in government funding for children are in process or on the way. In particular, many states have slashed funds for preschool and after-school programs, and Congress is considering more. To deal with deficits, some of these kinds of cuts may be necessary. But lest they move recklessly, legislators should think carefully about which government investments have helped kids most and why.... Research has begun to demonstrate the importance...of connecting children with caring adults. We’ve come to understand that these relationships are critical for helping children overcome adversity—they can actually alter how a child’s brain changes. Over the past 40 years, the number of programs in this category, such as Big Brother and Big Sister, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other after-school programs, has grown enormously. Efforts like these are rarely cataloged, let alone evaluated, so researchers are cautious in making broad claims about impact. But the importance of adult-child connections supports government spending on a range of programs that foster them. There’s no magic-bullet program. But it’s also wrong to blast the government for throwing money at a problem it can’t solve. We’ve been making

wise investments, and we've been getting results."

—Michael Wald, "[Big Government, Better-Off Kids](#)," *Slate Magazine*, May 14, 2012

Q: Do we need a longer school day or a longer school year? **A:** Longer maybe, but it's got to be better. I think we need a real change in how kids get educated. I envision a hard-core [academic] bloc—four hours of math, science, social studies, English in the morning—then a two-hour fitness bloc; I've never seen so many kids who need exercise. And then an afternoon of hands-on enrichment, kids taking computers apart and putting [them] back together, kids filming movies, kids cooking. There has to be part of the day where they are learning by doing."

Q: Patt Morrison and **A:** Rebecca Mieliwocki, "[Patt Morrison Asks: The National Teacher of the Year on What Makes a Great Teacher](#)," *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 2012

Voices from the Afterschool Storybook...

"To my congressman I say: Afterschool does matter to me because without it I would not be half the person I am today. In culinary I've become a lot better because of what I practice and I've met people I would have never had the chance to meet with outside of [Afterschool Matters]."

—Vanessa Arnold, Chicago, Illinois.

[Vanessa](#) created a pamphlet at the *Afterschool for All Challenge* to communicate a personal advocacy message across platforms. It was originally designed to be used as a leave-behind during meetings with members of Congress and their staffs on Capitol Hill. To read more from Vanessa and other afterschool voices from across the country, click [here](#). Share your story [here](#).



FILL UP ON NEWS AT AFTERSCHOOL SNACK!

How successful is afterschool in engaging youth in STEM activities? How can afterschool programs access funding to provide meals? What is the latest news on the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*? Find out all this and more in recent *Afterschool Snack* posts, including:

- [Celebrate Summer Learning Day and Check Out Our New Summer Research!](#)
- [Report from the Clinton Global Initiative America](#)
- [New Report: Summer Meal Program Participation Down](#)
- [Changes to 21st CCLC Included in FY2013 Senate LHHS Spending Bill](#)

And be sure to tune in every Wednesday for a national news round-up, and throughout the week for your daily dose of afterschool. Check out *Afterschool Snack* [here](#).



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

June 29, 2012

Foundations, Inc.'s Beyond School Hours Conference is searching for presenters to explore best practices and cutting-edge issues that influence healthy academic, social and emotional development of children and youth. Proposals should address school-day, before-school, afterschool, extended-day, community-based and summer opportunities as well as workforce development, higher education and field-building research. The presenters' application deadline is June 29. The conference will be held February 20-23, 2013, at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront in Florida. More information on

the conference and the call for presenters is available [online](#).

July 23-27, 2012

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time will host its Summer Seminars in Boston at the Wellesley Centers for Women. The seminars will offer professional development opportunities for those working in afterschool, out-of-school time, youth development, education or related fields. Workshops will address using the Afterschool Program Assessment System, systems building in a new age of education reform, using data to improve programs, promoting healthy eating and active out-of-school time, and more. Click [here](#) for more information.

July 24-25, 2012

After School Matters and the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS) are hosting a two-day national conference in Chicago to discuss promising practices in older youth programming. Afterschool providers, intermediaries, funders and other supporters of high school out-of-school-time programs will discuss creating innovative and engaging opportunities for teens, measuring the success and outcomes of programs, advocating for older youth programs during these challenging economic times, and more. To learn more about “Best in Class: Out-of-School Time High School Conference,” click [here](#).

July 30-August 1, 2012

Registration is open for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers [Summer Institute](#), taking place this year in New Orleans, La. This year’s theme, “Gateway to the Future: Supporting the Next Generation of Learners in 21st CCLC Programs,” captures the direction of the program as the U.S. Department of Education strives to develop afterschool activities that include and support President Obama’s education goals and initiatives. Speakers and presenters will share invaluable experiences and insight related to developing, implementing and sustaining afterschool programs today and into the future. The agenda offers a selection of more than 100 interactive breakout sessions, which include new and innovative ideas for activities, technical assistance for managing programs, and strategies and data on afterschool programming. [Register online](#) today. Email 21stCCLC@seiservices.com or call 240-485-1700, ext. 3609, with questions.

October 18, 2012

The Afterschool Alliance will sponsor the 13th annual *Lights On Afterschool*, raising awareness about the benefits that afterschool programs offer to families and communities across the country. *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs, and in recent years it has included some 7,500 events throughout the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide. Be a part of it! For more information, to plan a *Lights On Afterschool* event or share your plans, and to sign up for free materials, click [here](#).

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, jcpenny Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.

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