

# Expanding learning and supports for an equitable recovery

## This is Afterschool in Illinois



Afterschool Alliance

April 2021

In Illinois, afterschool programs provide expanded learning opportunities to 283,120 students and are a lifeline for working families. In Illinois, 83% of parents report that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Yet, too many kids in Illinois are being left out. In fact, **for every child in an afterschool program, 4 more would participate** if a program were available.

### Helping young people learn, grow, and thrive

#### Students in afterschool programs in Illinois are:



Interacting with peers and building social skills **91%**



Getting homework help **67%**



Taking part in physical activities **86%**

A 2020 Education Development Center evaluation of Illinois' 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs found that based on teacher surveys, a strong majority of elementary schoolers improved their academic performance (74%), classroom behavior (73%), motivation to learn (64%), and ability to get along with their peers (62%). Among middle and high schoolers, most saw improvements in their classroom behavior (73%), academic performance (70%), relationship with peers (62%), and motivation to learn (62%). Additionally, more than 8 in 10 programs serving high school students offered students career exploration opportunities (82%) and supported career skill development (81%).

#### Parents in Illinois agree that afterschool programs:



Provide opportunities to build life skills **80%**



Get kids excited about learning **73%**



Reduce the likelihood that youth will use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors **75%**

### Call and response: Afterschool programs stepping up during the pandemic

From the outset of the pandemic, afterschool programs have adapted and expanded their services to best meet the needs of the children and families they serve. In Chicago, Gary Comer Youth Center connected students with employment opportunities, resources, and recreational activities. Its youth employment program at Comer Education Campus continued virtually and in-person, giving youth opportunities to have apprenticeships in arts, engineering, urban agriculture, peacemaking, and more. WeGo Together for Kids conducted weekly family surveys to establish needs and then worked with community partners to supply families with gift cards, diapers, PPE, and more.

#### A 2021 national survey of afterschool providers finds programs continue to provide:

Academic enrichment	<b>94%</b>
Time to interact with peers	<b>86%</b>
Physical activity	<b>81%</b>
Snacks or meals	<b>77%</b>
Check-ins with student and families	<b>32%</b>
In-person services during virtual school days*	<b>24%</b>

Looking toward the summer, **79%** of providers will be offering summer programming.

*\*Among program providers that report that they are offering in-person services.*

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) are local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools, engaging students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth. They 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, 58,951 children in 449 communities take part in a Community Learning Center.

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding source that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programs is so great in Illinois that **3** out of every **8** applications cannot be funded.

The 2020 Department of Education annual performance report of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC found that among regular participants:



Nearly half improved their math (**48%**) and English grades (**48%**)



**69%** improved homework completion and class participation



**62%** improved their behavior

## A lifeline for working families

A national survey of parents in the fall of 2020 found that as the pandemic continued to disrupt school schedules, most parents were concerned about their child's social and emotional well-being and connection to peers, as well as their own ability to continue to provide learning support and/or care for their child as virtual school and distance learning extends into 2021.

**Based on the 2020 America After 3PM household survey, parents in Illinois agree that afterschool programs:**

- Build positive relationships between children and adults **75%**
- Keep kids safe and out of trouble **77%**
- Help working parents keep their jobs **82%**
- Provide working parents peace of mind **82%**

## A smart investment

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



- 1** Increasing kids' earning potential
- 2** Improving kids' performance at school
- 3** Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

Additionally, Community Learning Centers leverage diverse partners to meet community needs. A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners to supplement its federal funding. Nationwide, partner contributions totaled more than \$1 billion between 2006 and 2010.

## Parents in Illinois are behind public investment in afterschool programs

**89%** of parents favor public funding of afterschool programs to expand opportunities for kids in underserved communities.



## Support is strong and bipartisan



**90%** Democrats



**94%** Independents



**83%** Republicans