

Expanding learning and supports for an equitable recovery

This is Afterschool in New Jersey



Afterschool Alliance April 2021

In New Jersey, afterschool programs provide expanded learning opportunities to 216,503 students and are a lifeline for working families. In New Jersey, 86% of parents report that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Yet, too many kids in New Jersey are being left out. In fact, **for every child in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate** if a program were available.

Helping young people learn, grow, and thrive

Students in afterschool programs in New Jersey are:



Interacting with peers and building social skills **82%**



Getting homework help **89%**



Taking part in physical activities **87%**

A 2019 evaluation of New Jersey's 21st CCLC afterschool programs by the American Institutes for Research found that students attending programs at high levels had lower unexcused school day absences compared to non-attendees. Additionally, among students surveyed, an overwhelming majority reported that the program helped them find out what they are good at (86%), learn things that help them in school (85%), and gain confidence (83%).

Parents in New Jersey agree that afterschool programs:



Provide opportunities to build life skills **85%**



Get kids excited about learning **78%**



Reduce the likelihood that youth will use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors **78%**

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. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Monmouth County, which serves hundreds of K-12 students, expanded its hours and opened a remote learning center, where students could attend virtual school and eat meals. "Little did we know that 'whatever it takes' was really something that put us to the test when COVID hit. Many of our staff lost family members. But day in and day out, they came in with passion and creativity," said Doug Eagles, executive director.

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

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

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

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

21st Century Community Learning Centers

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st 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 New Jersey, approximately 10,000 children in 180 communities take part in a Community Learning Center.

21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding source that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programs is so great in New Jersey that **3** out of every **10** applications cannot be funded.

The 2020 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st 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 New Jersey agree that afterschool programs:

- Build positive relationships between children and adults **84%**
- Keep kids safe and out of trouble **78%**
- Help working parents keep their jobs **86%**
- Provide working parents peace of mind **88%**

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 New Jersey 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



91% Democrats



87% Independents



86% Republicans