



This is Afterschool in South Carolina



Throughout the pandemic, afterschool and summer programs adapted and expanded services to meet the needs of children and families. They are vital partners today in supporting students' well-being and academic growth. Yet, too many kids in South Carolina are being left out. Prior to the pandemic, a survey of South Carolina parents found that for every child in an afterschool program, **3 more would participate if a program were available**. These programs provide safe and supportive spaces to keep young people engaged in learning during a difficult and trying time. So it comes as no surprise that in a national fall 2020 survey, 75% of parents agreed that the experience of the pandemic made them appreciate teachers and afterschool providers more than ever before.

Accelerating students' learning and growth

Students in afterschool programs in South Carolina are:

- Getting homework help – **81%**
- Interacting with their peers and building social skills – **95%**
- Taking part in STEM learning opportunities – **66%**

Promoting healthy futures

Parents in South Carolina agree that afterschool programs are helping young people to:

- Learn life skills – **83%**
- Be physically active – **83%**
- Build positive relationships with caring adults and mentors – **77%**
- Access nutritious foods – **69%**
- Build confidence – **82%**
- Stay safe and out of trouble – **72%**

A 2021 statewide evaluation of South Carolina's 21st CCLC programs by the American Institutes for Research found that students regularly attending programs saw gains in their academics and behavior in school. Among regular program attendees in need of improvement, teachers report that most students improved their academic performance (69%), class participation (65%), motivation to learn (60%), turning in homework on time (58%), classroom behavior (51%), and peer relations (51%).

American Rescue Plan Funding Helping Increase Access to Afterschool and Summer Programs During the Pandemic




Over the past two years, an overwhelming majority of afterschool and summer program providers have been concerned about their program's long-term funding and future. Costs associated with recruiting and retaining staff, instituting new COVID-19 health and safety protocols, and adding program space to allow for social distancing are a few of the added expenses afterschool and summer programs faced through the pandemic. Funds from American Rescue Plan present a tremendous opportunity to help afterschool and summer programs support the children and families in their communities. For example, in rural, Western Horry County, the Finklea High and Lorris Training Schools Alumni Association, operating as the Finklea Community Center, received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) COVID-19 response funds and South Carolina Afterschool Alliance American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support its afterschool and summer programming and build young people's life skills and stem academic learning loss due to the pandemic. The funds will allow the program to expand its staffing and provide more intensive, individualized year-round learning opportunities for the next two years, as well as offer limited transportation for low- to moderate-income households without transportation.



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Supporting working families

Parents in South Carolina agree that afterschool:

-  Helps working parents keep their jobs – **83%**
-  Helps parents build connections to their child’s school day education – **67%**
-  Provides working parents peace of mind – **83%**

A smart investment

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

-  Increasing kids’ earning potential as adults
-  Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency
-  Improving kids’ performance at school

South Carolina parents want investment in afterschool and summer programs

The overwhelming majority of parents in South Carolina favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs:

85%
favor public funding
for afterschool opportunities

90%
favor public funding for
summer learning opportunities

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. These 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.

The 2021 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants:

- 1 in 2** improved their language arts or math grades
- 7 in 10** improved their homework completion and class participation
- MORE THAN 3 in 5** improved their behavior in class

In South Carolina, **16,081 children in 189 communities** take part in a 21st Century Community Learning Center.

21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities’ afterschool and summer programs.

Demand for programming in South Carolina is so great that **1 out of every 5** applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

Transforming Lives

“During the pandemic, it was challenging because I was social distancing and not doing certain activities. But, my 21st Century [Community Learning Center] program has been a place where I’ve been able to meet new friends, communicate, and be social with others. I wasn’t a talker, but now I am! The mentors in my program also helped me stay on top of my work and encouraged me. Without my program, I wouldn’t have the grades I do now, and I wouldn’t be as social as I am. I wouldn’t be able to do a lot of things without my program.”

Kyla Anderson

High school student attending a 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool program



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