

SAMPLE GENERAL LETTER FROM A PARENT

[Your Address – VERY important]

[Date]

The Honorable [Member of Congress name]

[Capitol Hill office address]

Washington, D.C. 20510

Via fax: [fax number]

Dear [Member of Congress name]:

[1st paragraph states the reason for your letter and who you are]

I'm writing to let you know what a positive impact the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program has had in our community. My child participates in a quality afterschool program here in Anchorage funded by the 21st CCLC initiative. The program improves the quality of life for our family and many others.

[2nd paragraph gives reasons for your position and includes a personal needs account. Here are three different variations. You only need one paragraph.]

[Example 1: This example highlights how afterschool keeps kids safe]

I'm a single mom and live in an area of the city where crime is a big problem. Before my daughter Jessie's junior high school started its afterschool program, Project Promise, I constantly worried about her getting into trouble or getting hurt. On the days when I worked, Jessie would be home alone for two hours or over at friends' houses without any adults around. My biggest fear was that she would start using drugs, which I knew some of her classmates had experimented with. Since she joined Project Promise I don't have to worry about her safety because I know she's always supervised by adults. She's also become more interested in her classes and is even thinking about going to college to become a teacher. This afterschool program has been a big help for me and my daughter.

[Example 2: This example highlights how afterschool improves grades]

One of the best things about my son Alex's afterschool program is that it has helped him become a better student. Alex is a sophomore in high school and has always had trouble with math. I enrolled him in the new afterschool program, The Community Connection, because it offered tutoring in math, science and reading. Alex wasn't very excited about it at first, because he had tried a tutor before and it didn't help. But this time was different. It helped Alex to be around other kids and do a lot of group problem-solving. Now, Alex has made new friends and he's doing much better in math. I'm thankful that his school is able to offer this program to kids that need extra help with their studies.

[Example 3: This example highlights how afterschool helps working families]

Both my husband and I work. Our 6-year-old son John was diagnosed with a learning disability and although our school has provided some excellent assistance, he needs more. We used up much of our savings to get John the special counseling he needs. We were about to lose hope when Smith Public Schools and the Hope Community Foundation started the Bright Lights Afterschool program. The program offers activities during that critical time from 3 to 6 p.m. before we can get home. John's reading and comprehension skills have improved, and now my husband and I don't have to worry about supervising John after school every afternoon. This program makes a huge difference in our lives.

[3rd paragraph should summarize your message]

I can tell you from personal experience that afterschool programs help working families raise their children in a safe and nurturing environment. Without our local afterschool program, many kids like my son would lose out on a valuable opportunity to learn and develop new skills under the supervision of teachers and other qualified community members. Your continued support of the 21st CCLC program is appreciated.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

[Street Address]