

Afterschool Essentials: Research and Polling

The Afterschool Hours in America

More than 15 million school-age children (26 percent) are on their own after school. Among them, more than 1 million are in grades K-5. (Afterschool Alliance, 2009)

More than 27 million parents of school-age children are employed, including 23 million who work full time. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012)

Only 8.4 million K-12 children (15 percent) participate in afterschool programs. An additional 18.5 million would participate if a quality program were available in their community. (Afterschool Alliance, 2009)

The hours between 3 and 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex. (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2003)

During the summer months, first time use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs peaks among kids 12 to 17. (SAMHSA, 2012)

Eight in 10 Americans want all children and teens to have some type of organized activity or safe place to go after school. (Afterschool Alliance & Lake Research Partners, 2008)



Afterschool Offers a Range of Benefits to Youth and their Families

Early childhood education expert James Heckman concludes that a complement of early education and participation in afterschool programs can reduce initiating drug use among youth by nearly 50 percent. (University of Chicago, 2006)

An analysis of 68 afterschool studies concluded that high quality afterschool programs can lead to improved attendance, behavior and coursework. Students participating in a high quality afterschool program went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests compared to non-participating students. (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010)

Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and are more likely to drink, smoke and engage in sexual activity. (YMCA of the USA, 2001)

Parents miss an average of five days of work per year due to a lack of afterschool care. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about afterschool care costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year. (Catalyst & Brandeis University, 2006)

Afterschool Supports Student Success

The Promising Afterschool Programs Study found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students. (University of California at Irvine, 2007)

Annual teacher-reported performance data from 21st CCLC grantees across the country demonstrate that students attending 21st CCLC programs raise their Math grades (37 percent) and English grades (38 percent), while also improving their homework completion and class participation (72 percent) and their behavior in class (67 percent). (Learning Point Associates, 2011)

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University concluded that two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth results from unequal access to summer learning opportunities. (American Sociological Review, 2007)

Afterschool Programs Are Seen as Critical and In Demand

A 2011 NAA/Champions survey found that 82 percent of school superintendents from across the country agree that afterschool programs are important.

A 2008 Afterschool Alliance election eve poll revealed that 3 in 4 voters (76 percent) say afterschool programs are “an absolute necessity” for their community.

According to a 2004 Public Agenda survey, low-income and minority parents are much more likely than higher-income and white parents to say they have trouble finding high-quality, convenient and affordable activities for their children.

Eighty-three percent of National School Board Association members surveyed in 2003 asserted that it is essential or very important that afterschool programs are maintained in their district.

A 2012 Afterschool Alliance election eve poll found that 92 percent of working mothers believe that afterschool programs are “very important” given that kids in afterschool programs are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as criminal activity and drug or alcohol use.



Afterschool Meets a Variety of Needs

A 2010 Afterschool Alliance election eve poll found that more than half (52 percent) of likely voters agree that afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs are the best way to expand learning opportunities for students in order to help them do better in school, motivate them to stay on track and prepare them for the future. Comparatively, only 30 percent agreed that extending the school day was the best way to help the nation’s students.

Afterschool programs are serving a high need population. The Afterschool Alliance’s 2009 *America After 3PM* study revealed that an average of 67 percent of kids participating in afterschool programs qualify for free/reduced price lunch, 14 percent are Limited English Proficient and 11 percent have special needs/disabilities.

A 2007 study by the Black Alliance for Educational Options found that low-income and working class African-American parents express a strong need for afterschool programs and feel hopeful that these programs will improve their children’s life chances.

Funding is a Major Concern For Families and Programs

A 2012 Afterschool Alliance election eve poll found that more than three-quarters of Americans (76 percent) believe federal, state and local leaders should increase funding for afterschool programs given the current challenging economic environment.

According to a 2003 Fight Crime: Invest in Kids poll, 9 in 10 working mothers agree with the statement: “America could greatly reduce youth violence if Congress expanded prevention efforts like after-school programs.” Further, when asked which strategy would be more effective in reducing school and youth violence, 7 out of 10 mothers choose investments in afterschool programs over investments in security measures like metal detectors.

The Afterschool Alliance’s 2009 *Roadmap to Afterschool for All* reports that the federal government contributes only 11 percent of the cost of afterschool, while on average, parents pay more than three-quarters (76 percent) of afterschool costs through tuition and fees.