

The core afterschool message is:

Afterschool programs inspire students to learn, keep kids safe, and give working parents peace of mind.

This document provides additional messaging guidance related to how afterschool can inspire future careers.

## Tips for Effective Messaging

- ✓ Connect afterschool to student outcomes when talking with education leaders, business leaders, and parents. Focus on the skills young people are developing, describe hands-on projects they're involved in and real-world experiences that allow them to try new things and practice making decisions, solving problems, cooperating, leading and communicating.
- ✓ In surveys, **business leaders** flag concerns about certain skills lacking in the workforce today: strong teamwork, problem solving, written and verbal communication skills, and critical thinking.
- ✓ **Business leaders** see afterschool programs as helping young people prepare for future jobs by providing them with opportunities to connect with mentors, explore career paths, and develop foundational skills like working in teams, communication, and problem-solving.
- ✓ **Caution: Business leaders** are less convinced that afterschool can help with the more technical “tools of the trade” or career-specific skills.
- ✓ For **parents**, workforce development means learning ‘tools of the trade’ and career-specific skills, communication, and interpersonal skills. They believe afterschool can help young people prepare for the workforce, but feel there are limits to how much it serves as an on-ramp to careers.
- ✓ Remember that “learning” and “fun” are top of mind when people think about afterschool programs. Position afterschool as a place where kids are exposed to new learning experiences and opportunities that spark interest and allow young people to explore possible career paths.
- ✓ Briefly reference citations when offering statistics to counter cynicism.

## Core Messages (Use these consistently and repeatedly)

- Afterschool programs open a new world of opportunities to help young people prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.
- Young people gain hands-on experience and learn to communicate, collaborate, and lead.
- Businesses want to hire responsible problem solvers and team players, and afterschool develops these skills.
- Today, STEM jobs are driving global economic growth, and 7 million students are getting opportunities to develop an interest in science and gain STEM-related skills in afterschool.
- Afterschool helps students learn by doing, build skills, connect with mentors and prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.
- Afterschool programs are locally-driven solutions that help children learn and grow, families balance work with home, and employers hire the workforce they need.

## Language to Emphasize—and Avoid

Messages that resonate best are clear and simple. They use everyday language free of jargon and **communicate shared values and emotion**. We encourage you to use the words and phrases on the left. The right-hand column includes language that’s harder to understand and may have less of an impact.\*

Use This Language	Instead of This Language
✓ Name specific skills, such as: teamwork, leadership, communication skills, problem-solving	✗ Workforce skills or soft skills
✓ Afterschool programs teach children foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving, that prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow	✗ Afterschool helps young people develop workforce skills
✓ Getting kids ready for college and career	✗ Workforce preparedness
✓ Sparking passion and fueling imagination	✗ Providing career and technical programs
✓ Helping kids discover who they are and what they love to do	✗ Contributing to a prosperous economy
✓ Jobs of the future	✗ Land that first job

\*Overall, the terms “children,” “kids,” and “students” can be used interchangeably, with a slight audience preference for the use of “students” in an educational context.