

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 keeps kids safe.

Tips for Effective Messaging

- ✓ Don't hedge when asserting the benefits of afterschool in helping children avoid risky behaviors. Be direct: **Afterschool programs help young people avoid drug and alcohol use and abuse.**
- ✓ Crime and drugs were once the primary concerns of parents and the public during the afterschool window. Today, those concerns have broadened to also focus on technology and online safety, including cyberbullying and kids spending too much time on social media and video games.
- ✓ Specify the peace of mind provided to working parents. Using "working parents" in a safety dimension provides helpful context for benefits of supervision.
- ✓ **Educators and business leaders** are apprehensive about kids' safety during the 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. window, an often unsupervised time today because both parents are working.
- ✓ Educators and business leaders are also concerned about how kids spend their time after school lets out and the type of activities in which they are engaged.
- ✓ **For parents**, safety is a very important concept, but pair it with learning. Parents need to know that their kids are safe but the most convincing reasons to provide afterschool to all children tie back to learning, personal growth, and fun opportunities to learn new things.
- ✓ **For policymakers**, briefly reference citations when offering statistics to counter cynicism.

Core Messages (Use these consistently and repeatedly)

- Afterschool programs keep children safe and supervised.
- Afterschool programs help children make smart decisions and avoid risky behaviors after the school day ends.
- Afterschool programs help young people avoid drug and alcohol use and abuse.
- Juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs and alcohol spike in the hours of 3:00 to 6:00 pm.
- Without afterschool programs, many kids would spend the afternoon glued to their phones and computers. Screen time and social media create a whole new set of risks for kids today.
- Working parents gain peace of mind from afterschool programs. They don't have to worry about where their kids are or what they are doing after school lets out.
- By increasing earning potential, improving academic achievement and reducing juvenile crime and delinquency, afterschool saves up to \$3 for every \$1 invested, according to state-level return on investment studies.

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
✓ Many parents are working two or three jobs—or going back to school—to provide for their children	✗ Too many kids are unsupervised afterschool
✓ Keeping kids out of harm's way	✗ Keeping kids off the streets
✓ Help children make smart decisions and avoid risky behaviors	✗ Keeping kids out of trouble
✓ Protecting kids from risky behaviors—both online and offline	✗ Protecting kids from risky behaviors
✓ Use direct language, e.g., Afterschool programs help young people avoid drug and alcohol use and abuse	✗ Indirect or hedging language, such as, help young people build the relationships and skills to avoid drug and alcohol abuse

*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.