

Expanding Learning and Supports For All Students

Afterschool and Summer Programs Are Essential for Equitable Recovery

This is Afterschool



Throughout the pandemic, afterschool and summer learning providers have pivoted their services to keep kids engaged in learning and meet the needs of millions of families nationwide. As we look ahead, these programs are uniquely positioned to help students—especially those who need extra support—catch up and accelerate their learning with the academic, social and emotional supports that kids will need for a robust recovery.

Proven to help young people learn, grow and thrive

Students need to feel safe and supported to re-engage in learning after this period of loss and isolation. Afterschool and summer learning programs serve a diverse range of students and focus on the whole child, offering enriching activities that engage young people in hands-on learning and encourage them to try new things. Staff are trained to help kids talk about their emotions, gain confidence, build healthy relationships, and heal from trauma. Decades of research shows that kids who participate in afterschool:¹⁻⁴

-  Develop strong social skills
-  Engage in physical activity
-  Get excited about learning
-  Attend school more often
-  Make gains in reading and math
-  Improve work habits and grades
-  Explore career paths and gain workforce skills
-  Have higher graduation rates

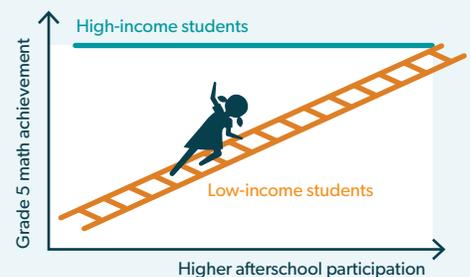
After going to afterschool programs:⁵

-  **69%** of students improve their homework completion and class participation
-  **~1 in 2** students improve their math and reading grades

All kids benefit, kids from low-income families benefit most—and the benefits last

Students who regularly attend afterschool programs continue to improve their academic performance and see meaningful benefits into young adulthood. Kids from families with low-income demonstrate the greatest gains.

Afterschool raises math achievement to an even level among elementary school students from low- and high-income families.⁶



Students who consistently participate in afterschool during elementary school have higher grades when they transition to high school—and improved test scores in math and reading.⁷

Non-participants	2.64
Consistent participants	3.32

Grade point average in 9th grade (4.0 scale)

A Critical Investment for Equitable Recovery

Rooted in local partnerships, afterschool and summer learning programs operate at the nexus of schools, families and communities to expand learning opportunities and essential supports for all kids. These programs have deep reach in low-income communities, communities of color and rural areas—they keep kids safe and make good use of buildings and playgrounds outside of school hours and while parents are working. As we recover and rebuild, these programs are more critical than ever.



A lifeline for working families, with deep reach in historically underserved communities

Parents with kids in afterschool say the programs:⁸

	Help working parents keep their job	89%
	Provide support to parents who are trying to find jobs during the pandemic*	77%
	Keep their kids safe	92%
	Give their kids time to interact with peers and build social skills	90%

Programs support millions of kids from families with low-income and kids of color.^{5,8}

- Offer a safe place for students from all backgrounds to gain confidence through hands-on learning experiences
- Promote opportunity in fields where minorities and women are under-represented, such as STEM
- Provide healthy meals and snacks
- Connect caregivers with healthcare, employment, and other community resources



Program Spotlight: ourBRIDGE for KIDS in Charlotte, NC

OurBRIDGE serves 150 K-8 students who represent 22 different cultures and more than 80% of their students are English language learners. Throughout the pandemic, the program has kept students engaged in learning and distributed tens of thousands of meals to local immigrant and refugee families.

Rising to the moment to meet the needs of kids and families

Before the pandemic, nearly 8 million school-age youth nationwide relied on afterschool and summer learning programs.⁸ These programs operate in all 50 states and include: 4-H clubs; Boys & Girls Clubs; YMCAs; teen leadership and service programs; summer camps; academic enrichment services; and robotics, college readiness, science and technology, sports, arts and music, and drama programs. In the midst of COVID-19, with many schools operating in fully virtual or hybrid models, many afterschool programs have expanded their hours and services:*

58% serving youth remotely and finding alternate ways to connect with youth

53% distributing meals to families

47% serving children of essential workers

*Results were collected Sep. 28 to Oct. 27, 2020, from 1,445 program providers representing more than 7,300 program sites in 48 states and the District of Columbia.⁹

Invest in afterschool and summer for students' recovery—too many kids are missing out!

Before the pandemic, **24.6 million students** nationwide were on the afterschool waitlist. Among Black and Latinx children without afterschool, more than half would be enrolled in an afterschool program if one were available to them.⁸

For every child in afterschool, **3 are waiting** for an available program.



The need is even greater today, as students must overcome learning losses and social isolation. Yet without support from state and local government, **3 in 5** afterschool programs are at risk of closing or laying off staff.⁹

Support for investment in afterschool is high among parents:⁸



87% favor public funding of afterschool



77% agree Congress should provide funding for programs to operate during virtual school days

With federal and state COVID-19 relief funds, afterschool and summer programs can help address learning loss and re-engage students by:

- Increasing access to quality in-person programs that serve a diverse range of students, especially those who need robust academic, social and emotional supports.
- Providing tutoring; social and emotional wellness services; enrichment activities; food distribution or other efforts to meet families' basic needs.
- Addressing childhood hunger by providing meals and snacks for students.
- Supporting additional staffing and professional development to respond to the increased needs of children and families, as well as necessary COVID-19 safety procedures and wellness checks.
- Providing PPE and other safety supplies for students and staff.

Funding priority would be given to programs in communities demonstrating the greatest need and fewest resources. This immediate relief funding for existing programs is just a start. Sustained investments are needed over time to ensure that youth across the country have access to quality out-of-school time programs.

Sources

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