

# This is Afterschool in Arkansas



Arkansas parents value afterschool programs for keeping kids safe and providing them opportunities to learn, connect, and build foundational life skills. Programs also help parents keep their jobs, boost productivity, and reduce stress. But too many families are missing out. In Arkansas, more than 214,000 children whose parents want afterschool programs do not have access to them.

## Demand for Afterschool Programs in Arkansas is Enormous



Approximately 5 in 6 Arkansas children are missing out.



## Afterschool Programs Support Arkansas Children’s Learning and Development

Arkansas parents give programs high marks for quality and for supporting their child with:



## Afterschool Works in Arkansas

A 2025 evaluation of Arkansas 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs found that regularly attending youth demonstrated positive outcomes, including:

- ▲ **Stronger academic performance:** 89% of youth agree their program’s offerings help them to do better in school and roughly two-thirds of 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored above Level 1 on state reading (68%) and math assessments (66%).
- ▲ **Reduced chronic absenteeism:** More than half (53%) of regularly attending students who were chronically absent the previous school year improved their school attendance.
- ▲ **Improved school engagement:** 9 in 10 regularly attending 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders improved their teacher-reported engagement in learning.

Evaluators also found that the number of hours students spend in programs may positively influence test scores, particularly in math.

# Arkansas Parents Stand Behind Afterschool Programs

85%

Agree that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs.



89%

Are in favor of public funding for afterschool programs. Support for public funding is also high across political affiliations.



## Afterschool Programs Help Working Families and Strengthen the Economy

Arkansas parents report that their child's afterschool program:

80%

Helps them keep their job



91%

Leads to less stress



80%

Boosts productivity



Additionally, research spanning several states shows that **every \$1 invested** in afterschool programs **saves at least \$3** by:



Increasing kids' earning potential as adults



Improving kids' performance at school



Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency



**If there were not an afterschool program available, what, if any impact would it have on your family?**

"Working from home with [my daughter] would be really tricky, but mostly, she would lose out on fun and active socializing..."

— ARKANSAS DAD

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) is the only federal funding dedicated to afterschool and summer programs, enabling states to award funds to local programs that meet community needs. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs engage students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth, provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning, and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children.

IN ARKANSAS:

**11,798**  
children are served by  
a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program

**71**  
communities  
served

Demand for programming in Arkansas is so great that **3 out of every 10** applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

### Citations

1. Afterschool Alliance. (2025). *Arkansas After 3PM*, fifth edition [Data set]. <https://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/data/arkansas/demand>.
2. The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. (2025). *Arkansas 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers: Statewide evaluation and key findings from the 2023–2024 program year*. Arkansas Department of Education.
3. Afterschool Alliance estimate based on findings from state-level return on investment studies, including California, Georgia, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Vermont.
4. Arkansas Department of Education. (2025). [Number of children and communities served by AR 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs, 2023–2024] [Unpublished raw data].

### About the Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. Learn more at: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

