The investment in afterschool and summer programs through American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds led to new learning opportunities for 5 million children across the country. But, as ARP and other pandemic relief funding expires, many young people will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken.

For every child in an afterschool program, four more would participate if a program were available. And a fall 2023 survey of afterschool program providers found that nearly 3 in 4 are concerned about their program’s long-term funding and future. Afterschool and summer programs across the country are accelerating students’ growth, supporting students’ well-being, and helping working families. To keep their doors open, these programs need additional investments at the local, state, and federal levels.

**AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACCELERATE STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC GROWTH AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING**

From providing opportunities for reading and writing to helping students build their social skills and confidence, afterschool programs are providing a set of supports that foster young people’s academic, social, and emotional development.

Students in afterschool programs are:

- **Interacting with their peers and building social skills**: 91%
- **Working on their reading and writing skills**: 80%
- **Taking part in physical activities**: 87%
- **Getting homework help**: 79%
- **Building confidence**: 86%
- **Engaging in STEM learning opportunities**: 67%

**9 IN 10** parents rate the quality of their child’s afterschool program as excellent or very good.

“…This special environment we are all able to come to every day after school has helped me become a kinder, smarter, more empathetic, and more self-expressive person.”

—ISSA, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDING A 21ST CCLC PROGRAM
**AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT**

An overwhelming majority of parents favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.

**AFTERSCHOOL WORKS**

A 2020 study in *Child Development* found that participation in children’s organized afterschool activities was directly associated with fewer problem behaviors later in life. Specifically, the study found that those who consistently participated in afterschool activities in elementary school reported less impulsivity and less police contact at age 26. A similar study published in the journal *Development and Psychopathology* found that participation in organized activities in elementary school contribute to better academic grades and a more rigorous course load taken in high school, leading to greater adult educational and occupational attainment.

**AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES**

Parents agree that afterschool programs are:

- Helping working parents keep their jobs (83%)
- Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe (85%)
- Providing support to parents who are trying to find jobs (77%)

**INCREASING SCHOOL-DAY ENGAGEMENT, REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM, AND IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

A 2023 U.S. Department of Education report on 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)—local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—found that:

- **7 IN 10** improved their engagement in learning
- **NEARLY 1 IN 2** improved their attendance (among students who were chronically absent the previous year*)
- **MORE THAN 4 IN 10** demonstrated growth on their state’s math or reading assessments
- **MORE THAN 1 IN 2** improved their GPA
- **2 IN 5** saw a decrease in school suspensions

Nationally, nearly 1.4 million children in close to 10,500 communities take part in 21st CCLC. 21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities’ afterschool and summer programs. However, only 1 in 3 funding requests are awarded due to intense competition and lack of adequate federal funding.

*Students who had a school-day attendance rate at or below 90% the previous school year.

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