In Arkansas, afterschool programs provide expanded learning opportunities to 61,717 students and are a lifeline for working families. In Arkansas, 82% of parents report that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Yet, too many kids in Arkansas are being left out. In fact, for every child in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate if a program were available.

Helping young people learn, grow, and thrive

Students in afterschool programs in Arkansas are:

- Interacting with peers and building social skills 86%
- Getting homework help 54%
- Taking part in physical activities 64%

A 2021 evaluation by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality of Arkansas' 21st CCLC programs found that, consistent with previous years, an overwhelming majority of students report that the programs helped them improve their social and emotional skills, including working well with others (86%) and sharing their thoughts even if they disagreed (82%), as well as academic habits, such as finishing their work on time (87%). While state assessments were cancelled due to COVID-19, programs continued to provide academic enrichment, including literacy (98%) and STEM (92%) activities. However, in the 2018-19 school year, a majority of regularly attending participants increased or maintained advanced or proficient levels in math (61%) and English (55%).

Parents in Arkansas agree that afterschool programs:

- Provide opportunities to build life skills 81%
- Get kids excited about learning 71%
- Reduce the likelihood that youth will use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors 73%

Call and response: Afterschool programs stepping up during the pandemic

From the outset of the pandemic, afterschool programs have adapted and expanded their services to best meet the needs of the children and families they serve. The Boys & Girls Club of McGehee provided in-person and virtual programming, as well as meals. They launched programs like Lyricism 101, in which students write their own songs and books, and Teen Shark Tank, in which students learn to bring a business concept to life. Camp Raider in Jonesboro also distributed meals, in partnership with Nettleton Schools, and City Youth Ministries partnered with a local church to deliver snacks, reading materials, and activities to students.

A 2021 national survey of afterschool providers finds programs continue to provide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic enrichment</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to interact with peers</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks or meals</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-ins with student and families</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person services during virtual school days*</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking toward the summer, 79% of providers will be offering summer programming.

*Among program providers that report that they are offering in-person services.
Support is strong and bipartisan

94% Democrats
91% Independents
86% Republicans

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