Expanding learning and supports for an equitable recovery

This is Afterschool in New Jersey

In New Jersey, afterschool programs provide expanded learning opportunities to 216,503 students and are a lifeline for working families. In New Jersey, 86% of parents report that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Yet, too many kids in New Jersey 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 New Jersey are:

- Interacting with peers and building social skills 82%
- Getting homework help 89%
- Taking part in physical activities 87%

A 2019 evaluation of New Jersey’s 21st CCLC afterschool programs by the American Institutes for Research found that students attending programs at high levels had lower unexcused school day absences compared to non-attendees. Additionally, among students surveyed, an overwhelming majority reported that the program helped them find out what they are good at (86%), learn things that help them in school (85%), and gain confidence (83%).

Parents in New Jersey agree that afterschool programs:

- Provide opportunities to build life skills 85%
- Get kids excited about learning 78%
- Reduce the likelihood that youth will use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors 78%

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 Clubs of Monmouth County, which serves hundreds of K-12 students, expanded its hours and opened a remote learning center, where students could attend virtual school and eat meals. “Little did we know that ‘whatever it takes’ was really something that put us to the test when COVID hit. Many of our staff lost family members. But day in and day out, they came in with passion and creativity,” said Doug Eagles, executive director.

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

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

A national survey of parents in the fall of 2020 found that as the pandemic continued to disrupt school schedules, most parents were concerned about their child’s social and emotional well-being and connection to peers, as well as their own ability to continue to provide learning support and/or care for their child as virtual school and distance learning extends into 2021.

**Based on the 2020 America After 3PM household survey, parents in New Jersey agree that afterschool programs:**

- Build positive relationships between children and adults 84%
- Keep kids safe and out of trouble 78%
- Help working parents keep their jobs 86%
- Provide working parents peace of mind 88%

A smart investment

Research spanning several states shows that every $1 invested in afterschool programs saves at least $3 by:

1. Increasing kids’ earning potential
2. Improving kids’ performance at school
3. Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

Additionally, Community Learning Centers leverage diverse partners to meet community needs. A typical program receives $67,000 from partners to supplement its federal funding. Nationwide, partner contributions totaled more than $1 billion between 2006 and 2010.