



This is Afterschool in Arkansas

"Afterschool programs created so many opportunities for me, and I love the valuable mentorship I have had and the connections I made. Afterschool programs taught me the importance of goals and my dreams."

"From my experience as a military child, I really had to struggle with the difficulty of trying to be myself. ... Having an afterschool program can get kids out of their comfort zone and [help them] make new friends. Meeting people in these programs not only feels great but also allows students to show their true self."

These student quotes are a small sampling of the invaluable supports and experiences afterschool programs are providing young people—from creating a safe space where they can connect with caring adults to helping them build the skills to reach their full potential.

However, in Arkansas, for every child in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate and are missing out, despite strong public support for afterschool. A national fall 2022 survey found that approximately 8 in 10 registered voters said that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (79%) and want their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for programs (80%).

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

Among Arkansas students in afterschool programs:



54% are getting homework help



86% are interacting with their peers and building social skills



61% are engaging in STEM learning opportunities



80% are building confidence



86% are taking part in physical activities



69% are learning responsible decision-making



86% of Arkansas parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program

EVIDENCE OF AFTERSCHOOL'S IMPACT ON STUDENTS' WELL-BEING

Only 10 states* have included questions regarding participation in afterschool programs in their state Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), conducted as a part of an effort by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, these additional questions have produced findings demonstrating positive correlations between participation in afterschool programs and young people's mental and physical health. For example:

ALASKA Students participating in afterschool programs at least two days a week were 18% less likely to use alcohol, 39% less likely to use marijuana, and 28% less likely to have an unexcused absence.

VERMONT High schoolers who participated in at least one hour of afterschool activities were less likely than their non-participating peers to report carrying a weapon or report being threatened or injured by a weapon on school property.

WISCONSIN Students involved in at least one hour of extracurricular activities report lower rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.**

*AK, CT, MI, MN, NM, OH, VT, VI, WA, WI

**The Wisconsin YRBS question in the middle school questionnaire asked, "During an average week when you are in school, how many total hours do you participate in school activities such as sports, band, drama, or clubs" and the high school questionnaire asked, "Do you participate in any school activities, such as sports, band, drama, or clubs?"

Studies have shown that students regularly participating in quality afterschool programs attend school more often, are more engaged in school, get better grades, and are more likely to be promoted to the next grade. A 2022 evaluation by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality of Arkansas' 21st CCLC program found that, consistent with previous years, regularly attending students are getting academic support and building foundational skills in their program. For example, more than 9 in 10 students report that staff in the program understand their homework and help them when they are stuck (92%) and that the activities in the program help make them think (91%). Additionally, nearly 90% of students attending programs report high levels of academic habits and skill development, such as doing well in school, asking for help, and making friends. Parent satisfaction is also high, with 96% of parents agreeing that their child is safe at the program and 88% reporting that the program helps balance working and parenting.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Arkansas parents agree that afterschool programs:



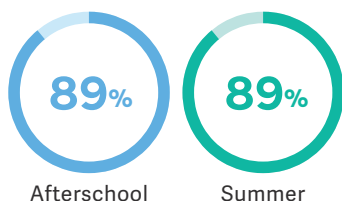
83% are helping working parents keep their jobs



83% are providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

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



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

21st Century Community Learning Centers

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) are local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools. These 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. The 2022 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants in need of improvement:

- ✓ **NEARLY 1 IN 2** improved their language arts or math grades
- ✓ **NEARLY MORE THAN 3 IN 5** improved their behavior in class
- ✓ **NEARLY 7 IN 10** improved their homework completion and class participation

In Arkansas, 7,548 children in 66 communities take part in a 21st Century Community Learning Center. 21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programming in Arkansas is so great that nearly 4 out of every 10 applications were not funded based on the most recently available competition data.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING IS HELPING INCREASE ACCESS TO AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

A spring 2023 survey of afterschool and summer program providers found that while less than 1 in 5 providers (17%) report that they have received COVID-relief funding, those with this funding stream have been able to use it to keep their doors open and increase access to their program. Programs report that they have been able to bolster staff recruitment efforts (47%), hire more staff (44%) and serve more students (44%), expand program offerings (38%), and offer new summer programs (18%).

Funds from American Rescue Plan (ARP) continue to present a tremendous opportunity to help increase access to afterschool and summer programs. For example, in August 2022, Arkansas State University and the Arkansas Out of School Network awarded \$11.3 million in ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III funds from the Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to 84 quality afterschool, summer, and extended year programs across the state. The funds are supporting programs such as the Mansfield School District's Tigers Achieving Greatness (TAG) afterschool program, which was awarded nearly \$155,000. TAG launched in January 2023 and served more than 50 students on the first day. The program focuses on literacy, STEM, arts programming, and outdoor activities such as gardening, while also providing snacks and a third meal for students. Plans for summer 2023 include field trips to local outdoor education experiences and museums.

