



This is Afterschool in Vermont

"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 Vermont, for every child in an afterschool program, 1 more would participate and is 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 Vermont students in afterschool programs:



66% are getting homework help



90% are interacting with their peers and building social skills



74% are engaging in STEM learning opportunities



77% are building confidence



82% are taking part in physical activities



82% are learning responsible decision-making



85% of Vermont 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 2019 evaluation of Vermont's 21st CCLC programs by the Vermont Agency of Education found that students participating in programs reported a positive experience. When asked their feelings about the programs, 7 in 10 students reported that they feel like they belong (70%) and that they matter (69%) in the program. More than half of students responded that in the program they feel challenged in a good way (52%) and that the activities are important to them (51%). A 2020 evaluation found that programs were providing holistic supports to students, where most program sites offered a strategy outside of homework help for students struggling academically (81%); provided time for physical activity (97%); and scored a 4 or higher (92%) on a 5-point Nourishment scale, indicating that items such as healthy food and drinks are available in the program.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Vermont parents agree that afterschool programs:



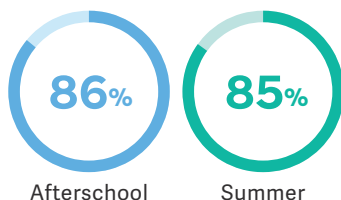
81% are helping working parents keep their jobs



82% are providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

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



Research has found that **every \$1 invested** in Vermont afterschool programs leads to a **return on investment of just over \$2** by:

- ✓ Reducing student drop out rates
- ✓ Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency
- ✓ Reducing drug and alcohol addiction and teen pregnancy

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 7 IN 10** improved their homework completion and class participation
- ✓ **NEARLY MORE THAN 3 IN 5** improved their behavior in class

In Vermont, 10,420 children in 95 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.

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 2021, with funding from the Summer Matters for All grant program, Audubon Vermont offered experiential learning camps to teach youth how to use a compass, identify wild edibles, make their own lip balm, and more. The summer camp, located in in Huntington, Vermont, increased its staff so that it could serve an additional 64 children. New staff included teens, thereby creating leadership opportunities and helping them develop workforce skills.

