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Meta Settlement a Chance to Begin Addressing Our Devastating Failure to Adequately Fund Afterschool, Summer Programs

Statement of Jodi Grant, Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance

“Today’s announcement of [a settlement](#) between social media giant Meta and 47 states, and the reforms it will bring, is good news for America’s children and families who for too long have struggled with mental health and safety problems caused or exacerbated by social media. Despite painful long-term underfunding, afterschool and summer learning programs have been doing herculean work to provide safe spaces for young people to connect with peers and caring adults, help students access mental health and other services, and to provide real-life experiences that prepare them to succeed in school and in life. These include team-based, hands-on learning; community service opportunities; STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and arts engagement; connections to caring mentors; outdoor and sports activities; and much more.

We are thrilled to see that several state leaders referenced the importance of afterschool and summer learning in their comments on this settlement. We encourage all states to use some of this settlement money to fund these essential programs, which give children and youth alternatives to screens and access to the real-life experiences they need to thrive.

Federal afterschool funding is grossly inadequate. A [2025 household survey](#) found the parents of 29.6 million children want afterschool programs for their children – but less than 7 million are currently enrolled. A [national survey of afterschool providers](#) concluded that 85% report children in their community need afterschool programs and are unable to access them. It also found large increases in concern about students’ overall well-being, including their mental health. This settlement offers the chance to support the afterschool and summer programs that support the next generation, which will in turn make our children and youth, our workforce, and our country stronger.”

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.