

Promoting Promising Futures

This is Afterschool



After the school day ends and while many parents are still at work, 1 in 5 kids across America are alone and unsupervised. These hours—from 2 to 6 p.m.—are the peak time for juvenile crime according to the latest report by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a national organization of law enforcement leaders.¹ Research has also found that young people not involved in structured activities after school are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, experiment with drugs, and skip school.²

Afterschool is changing that.

“At its core, our overall afterschool system is built to promote resilience and thriving, provide protective factors, and elevate assets that can buffer and overcome the effects of trauma and adversity.”³

—American Institutes for Research

Afterschool programs provide integral developmental supports:



Caring and supportive mentors



Safe spaces where students build confidence and feel a sense of belonging



Opportunities to work collaboratively and reach consensus



Activities that promote problem-solving and critical thinking

In turn, these supports help kids:⁴



Gain self-control and confidence



Improve work habits and grades



Develop strong social skills



Improve school day attendance and behavior



Build healthy relationships with their peers and adults



Reduce risky behaviors, such as tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol use

Afterschool is Essential to Healthy Youth Development

In addition to helping youth build a range of skills and relationships, afterschool acts as a key setting for healthy development and learning. Science shows that, **from birth through young adulthood, our brains are continuously developing**: brain pathways grow stronger, information is processed more rapidly, and we build more complex connections that enable more complex thinking.⁵



Children and youth need **continued support throughout this development and across the different learning environments they inhabit, whether home, school, afterschool, or the broader community.** Afterschool programs are a part of this continuous system of support, in particular providing key services during one's adolescent years, which are characterized as, "the second most critical period of development."⁶



Recent research found that children who participated in **both** quality early childcare and afterschool programs saw a positive cumulative effect on their academic achievement in math and reading at age 15. The study also found that greater participation in afterschool programs was related to higher levels of confidence among young people.⁷

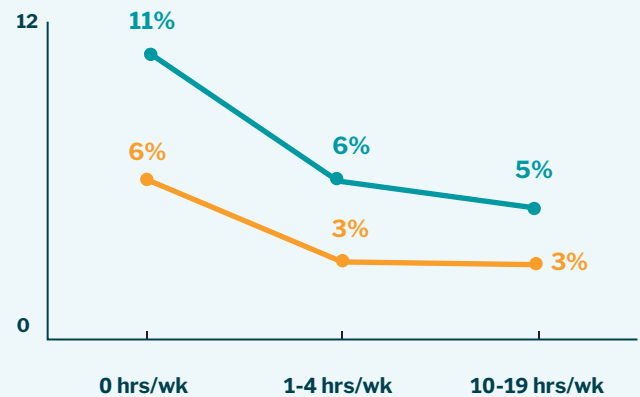
This is Afterschool

Helping students thrive.

In response to Vermont's opioid epidemic among young people in the state, the Vermont Youth Project was created. The project centers on locally driven positive youth development and brings together six communities in Vermont who are building a coalition of community stakeholders that include youth agencies, public health officials, afterschool and summer programs, schools, policy makers, parents, and youth.

According to a 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, young people in Vermont who participated in afterschool activities were found to be less likely to engage in drug or alcohol use than nonparticipants. That's why the project is aimed at increasing afterschool opportunities for Vermont's young people, helping them make healthy decisions for themselves, and strengthening the social connections between young people, caring adults, and the community.

Afterschool Helps Vermont Youth Avoid Non-prescription Pain Medication and Alcohol



Percentage of high school students who used drugs or binge drank by hours of participation in afterschool activities

Sources

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- 4 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). *Preventing Youth Marijuana Use: Programs and Strategies;* Vandell, D.L., Reisner, E.R. & Pierce, K.M. (2007). *Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs.* Policy Studies Associates, Inc; DuBois, D.L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J.E., Silverthorn, N., Valentine, J. (2011). "How Effective Are Mentoring Program for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence". *Psychological Science in the Public Interest: Afterschool Alliance.* (2017). *What does the research say about afterschool?*
- 5 Cantor, P., Osher, D., Berg, J., Steyer, L., & Rose, T. (2019). "Malleability, plasticity, and individuality: How children learn and develop in context". *Applied Developmental Science* 23(4).
- 6 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth.*
- 7 Vandell, D.L., Lee, K.T.H., Whitaker, A.A., & Pierce, K.M. (2020). "Cumulative and Differential Effects of Early Child Care and Middle Childhood Out-of-School Time on Adolescent Functioning". *Child Development.*