The Benefits of Afterschool Programs

The Unmet Need
Over 534,490 additional afterschool slots are needed in Ohio.
Source: Afterschool Alliance and America After 3PM.

Student Achievement

**Academic:** High quality afterschool programs have a proven track record of improving student achievement in school. Regular participation in such programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits, improvements in school attendance as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students. These programs have a particularly strong impact on low-income and under-performing youth.

**Social and Emotional:** By providing students with consistent enrichment activities such as music, art, sports, conflict resolution, cultural experiences, and other alternative ways of learning, afterschool improves students’ social skills, gives them more confidence, creates higher educational and career aspirations, and motivates them to consistently attend school.

Crime Prevention

Violent juvenile crime triples during the hours from 3:00 to 8:00 PM, and it is during these same hours that children face the most serious danger of becoming victims of crime. High quality afterschool programs are endorsed by law enforcement organizations because they are effective in reducing violence, theft, vandalism, gang activity, and other adolescent crimes.

Drug and Pregnancy Prevention

Consistent participation in quality afterschool programs helps reduce the risk of youth experimenting with alcohol and other dangerous drugs, and teen pregnancy. A survey of teenagers conducted by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids found that teens unsupervised afterschool were four times as likely to have smoked cigarettes, three times as likely to have had sex, and four times as likely to have used drugs as teens who were supervised.

Childhood Obesity Prevention

Afterschool programs have been identified by the Food Research and Action Council as effective venues for improving nutrition and physical activity. A number of studies have proven that afterschool programs help to combat child obesity. For example, an Applied Developmental Science study showed that afterschool program participants in three elementary schools were significantly less likely to be obese after participating in the program.

Cost-Effectiveness

Every dollar invested in high quality afterschool programs saves taxpayers roughly $3, according to a study by the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College. If benefits from crime reduction are factored in, each dollar invested in an at-risk child saves $8-$12.

Working Families

In a study of programs in New York City, parents said that afterschool programs helped them balance work and family life: 60% said they missed less work than before because of the program and 54% said it allowed them to work more hours.

Business Investment

Afterschool programs prepare youth for today’s workforce by providing academic enrichment and teaching skills not taught during the school day. Corporate Voices for Working Families found that American business spends over $60 billion annually on training, much of which is focused on remedial reading, writing, and math. According to the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependant Care, “Companies view their investments in dependent care in the community not as charity, but as sound business practice.”

Public Support

An Afterschool Alliance election eve poll revealed that 3 in 4 voters (76%) say afterschool programs are “an absolute necessity” for their community.
Research Supports the Benefits of Afterschool Programs

Findings Document the Impact and Value of Afterschool Programs in Improving Student Outcomes

Afterschool Programs Improve Student Achievement

- Afterschool programs result in higher school attendance, higher language re-designation rates, increased homework completion, better grades and work habits, and improved behavior in school.
- Afterschool programs have a particularly strong impact on low-performing or at-risk students. Low-income teenagers who participated in the an afterschool program in several large American cities were more likely to be high school graduates (63%) compared to non-participants (42%) and more likely to go to post-secondary schools (42%) compared to non-participants (16%).

Afterschool Programs Are Cost-Effective

- Kids who attend high quality elementary and middle school afterschool programs are less likely to drop out of high school than non-participants. The lifetime earnings losses associated with dropping out of high school are $262,519 and a high school dropout will contribute $59,210 less in federal and state income taxes over his or her lifetime.

Afterschool and Summer Programs Help Prevent Crime, Drug Use and Teen Pregnancy

- When schools close for the summer, safe and enriching learning environments are out of reach and replaced by boredom, lost opportunities and risk for too many children. An America After 3PM study measures the extent of this problem, concluding that just 22% of Ohio’s schoolchildren (443,393 kids) participate in summer learning programs – safe, structured programs that provide a variety of activities designed to encourage learning and development in the summer months. However, 50% of Ohio kids would likely participate, based on parent interest, if enough programs existed.

Ohio Families Favor After School Care

98% of Ohio parents are satisfied with the afterschool program their child attends.

86% of adults surveyed in Ohio agree that there should be “some type of organized activity or place for children and teens to go after school every day that provides opportunities to learn” and 81% support public funding for afterschool programs.

30% (608,657) of Ohio’s K-12 children spend an average of 8 hours per week unsupervised after school. Parents, whose children do not participate, believe afterschool programs would benefit their students in the following ways: by having fun, staying safe and out of trouble, receiving academic enrichment, taking advantage of opportunities for community service and learning and receiving help with homework.