



Afterschool: A Solution to The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime in Missouri

High-quality afterschool programs help lower crime, improve behavior, and increase academic success.

The 100 law enforcement leaders throughout Missouri who are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids have long known that the hours immediately after school let out are the prime time for juvenile crime.¹ In communities ranging from urban centers to the bootheel, and everywhere in between, the hours between 2 and 6 p.m. are a time when youth are more likely to commit a crime or become a crime victim, and present a critical opportunity to keep them safe while also developing their social and academic skills.

Since 2000, juvenile arrest rates have decreased by 70 percent nationwide, partially due to increased access to high-quality afterschool programming, as evaluations of a number of programs have shown. Yet, juvenile crime continues to peak in the after school hours.² Law enforcement leaders statewide rely on high-quality afterschool programs to

provide supportive, stable, and enriching environments with caring adults that keep children and youth out of trouble and safe while supporting their academic success and socioemotional development.

 Afterschool programs are critical to supporting both the academic success of our students and the safety of our communities. Investing in these programs is the responsible, sensible thing to do."

Sheriff Kevin Bond
Pettis County Sheriff's Office

Increased Access to Afterschool Programs Will Keep More Kids Safe

Across the state of Missouri, nearly 140,000 students are currently enrolled in afterschool programs.³ Meanwhile, the unmet need for afterschool programming leaves over 260,000 students waiting to enroll in afterschool and nearly 250,000 alone and unsupervised in the afterschool hours. In other words, for every student who gets to reap the benefits of afterschool programs, two more would participate if one were available. 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants are the only dedicated federal funding source supporting afterschool and summer programs, and current demand leaves half of applicants unfunded.⁴

Quality Afterschool Programs Benefit Children and Communities

The most effective afterschool programs incorporate sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) activities that complement the student's grade-level instruction.⁵ These programs use a connected and coordinated set of activities, have active forms of learning, target specific personal and social skills, and have at least one component devoted to developing these skills. Not only do high-quality programs provide youth with a safe and stable environment that can help keep them from engaging in dangerous behavior or becoming the victim of a crime, these programs also contribute to positive outcomes such as improved attendance, improved classroom behavior, better academic outcomes, and increased graduation rates. The positive impact that high-quality afterschool programs have on high school graduation rates is particularly important to law enforcement leaders because they

know that six in 10 inmates nationwide do not have a high school diploma.⁶

The Benefits of High-Quality Afterschool Programs Are Numerous

Afterschool programs both help keep kids safe and build their academic, social, and emotional skills in a number of critical ways.

GIFTS, Greene County

Each year, the Greene County Juvenile Office receives between 1,400 and 1,600 referrals for delinquency violations and status offenses. As a strategy to prevent formal involvement with the juvenile court system and ultimately reduce recidivism for youth involved in less serious offenses—such as truancy, or first-time offenders, the Greene County Juvenile Justice Center has created a series of diversionary programs for youth.

Although typically used for younger youth, a School Age Community (SAC) grant from the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) quality set aside contributes to the Getting Involved for Today's Students (GIFTS) Afterschool Program. Students court-ordered to attend the Green County Youth Academy (GCYA), a community-based treatment program, will attend school at GCYA during the day and have the opportunity to participate in the GIFTS Afterschool Program after school. Program components like GEMS (Girls Empowering Minds and Spirits), which focuses on building strong and confident girls, and the Homework Assistance Program, which provides tutoring and additional enrichment opportunities, promote positive youth development and community engagement.

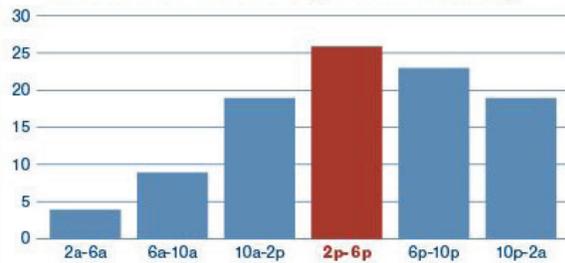
Greene County Commissioner Harold Bengsch spoke to the economic benefit of keeping youth out of trouble, saying, "Preventing only one person from being incarcerated in our jail at the current cost of \$63 per day, we would recoup the \$16,000 county investment in this venture in 254 days."

2 to 6 p.m.: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime in Missouri

Quality Afterschool Programs:

-  Reduce Crime
-  Boost Academics
-  Improve Behavior
-  Lead to Healthier Habits
-  Save Money

Juvenile Crime by Time of Day



Critically, high-quality afterschool programming has been demonstrated to reduce crime among youth. For instance, Chicago’s Becoming a Man program led to a 35 percent reduction in total arrests, a 50 percent decline in violent-crime arrests, and a 21 percent decline in recidivism among participants.⁷ Afterschool programs also help boost student performance. A meta-analysis of 68 afterschool programs across the country found that participants did better on state reading and math achievement tests, had higher GPAs, and had higher school-day attendance.⁸ Here in Missouri, a 2017 evaluation found that nearly all 21st CCLC sites reported a majority of students maintaining or increasing their academic achievement in reading (93 percent) and math (94 percent).⁹

Other benefits of high-quality afterschool programming include improved behavior and healthier habits. For instance, a statewide evaluation of Missouri’s 21st CCLC programs found that participating students had a host of improvements in school behavior, including being more attentive in class, having better attendance, coming to school more motivated to learn,

and getting along better with others.¹⁰ Additionally, youth who attend afterschool programming on a consistent basis have been found less likely to use marijuana and drink alcohol than their peers that do not attend afterschool programming.¹¹

Conclusion

The evidence from high-quality afterschool programs from across the country demonstrates that these programs yield positive outcomes, including reducing crime and improving students’ behavior, academic performance, and graduation rates. Unfortunately, these proven programs are not available to all children who need and want the opportunity. Currently, the state of Missouri allots no funding for afterschool programs, and federal funds are extremely limited. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids members know that high-quality afterschool programming is critical to decreasing juvenile crime and victimization and to putting kids on the right track for success later in life. We must seek and pursue opportunities to provide more kids with access to high-quality afterschool programs.

Endnotes

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- 11 Garcia, G. M., Price, L. and Tabatabai, N. (2014). Anchorage Youth Risk Behavioral Survey Results: 2003-2013 Trends and Correlation Analysis of Selected Risk Behaviors, Bullying, Mental Health Conditions, and Protective Factors. UAA Department of Health Sciences. https://safealaskans.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Anchorage-YRBS-Report-2003-2013_final.pdf

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

Thousands of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and violence survivors protecting public safety by promoting solutions that steer kids away from crime.

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