

Keeping Students Engaged in Learning Afterschool

High-quality afterschool programs help keep students out of trouble during the prime time for juvenile crime

Juveniles are most likely to commit violent crimes during the hours immediately after the school day ends.¹ High-quality afterschool programs provide students with safe learning environments during non-school hours. These programs can have short-term and long-term academic and behavioral benefits, including reduced crime. The most effective programs incorporate sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) practices.

Afterschool programs serve 1.6 million at-risk kids

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLCs) support non-school hour (includes after-school, before-school, and summer) programs that focus on academics, enrichment activities, and other educational supports.² As of 2015, there were 10.2 million children in afterschool programs, 1.6 million of whom attended programs funded by 21st CCLC grants.³ Children served by CCLCs attend high-poverty, low performing schools in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and three territories.⁴

Quality afterschool programs

Improve behavior: A meta-analysis of 75 studies and 68 afterschool programs across the country found significant improvements in students' behavior in and outside of the classroom.⁵ For example, evaluations in Texas

and Wisconsin found that students who participated in afterschool programs were 58 percent more attentive in class and 10 to 19 percent more likely to attend class regularly compared to non-participants.⁶

Reduce crime: The hours after school gets out are a prime time for juvenile crime if children don't have a safe environment that reinforces the skills they are learning in school. Three large-scale randomized studies of Becoming A Man (BAM) afterschool programs found improvements in school engagement and increases in graduation rates (45-50 percent), as well as a substantial reduction in total arrests (28-35 percent),

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declines in violent-crime arrests (45-50 percent), and criminal justice system readmissions (21 percent).⁷ Increasing graduation rates is essential to reducing crime, given that 7 out of 10 inmates in state prisons nationwide do not have a high school diploma.⁸

Improve academic outcomes, including increased promotion and less dropout:

The aforementioned meta-analysis found that afterschool participants did better on state reading and math achievement tests, had higher GPAs, and were more likely to earn credits toward graduation.⁹ In addition, an evaluation of Texas' 21st CCLC programs increased grade promotion.

Afterschool programs save money: After school programs are cost-effective and can provide a return of \$3 to \$13 for every \$1 invested as a result of higher incomes, higher taxes being paid, and lower crime rates.¹⁰

Policymakers must continue to support high-quality afterschool programs

High-quality afterschool programs can improve students' academic performance, behavior, and even help reduce crime. Continued investments in these programs are essential, as is updating programs' performance measures and data collection methods to align with the program objectives.¹¹

1 OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book.

2 21st CCLC Performance.; 21st CCLCs Grants Request for Proposals, 2014-2015 FAQs.

3 21st CCLC: Changing what and how students learn.

4 21st CCLCs: Providing Locally Designed Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs for Families.

5 A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents.

6 Texas 21st CCLCs: Year 2 Evaluation Report.; WI Dept. of Public Instruction. 21st CCLCs: Executive Summary.

7 Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago.

8 Education and correctional populations.

9 A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents.

10 The Costs and Benefits of After School Programs: The Estimated Effects of the After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002.

11 K-12 Education: Education Needs to Improve Oversight of Its 21st Century Program.

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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