

The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime Needs Afterschool

High-quality afterschool programs provide a safe learning environment and reduce crime

Juveniles are most likely to commit and be the victims of violent crimes during the hours immediately after the school day ends.¹ Afterschool programs can have short- and long-term academic and behavioral benefits, including reduced crime. The most effective programs incorporate sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) activities that complement the student's grade-level instruction.

However, too many children lack access to afterschool programs²

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLCs) support out-of-school programs for children at high-poverty, low performing schools across the nation and in all U.S. territories.³ Programs funded by CCLCs, including summer, after-school, and before-school, focus on academics, drug and violence prevention, and parental involvement among other subjects.⁴ Over 10 million students currently participate in afterschool programs, including 1.6 million in programs funded by 21st CCLC grants.⁵ But more than 19 million at-risk kids still do not have access to an afterschool program despite qualifying for one.⁶

Quality afterschool programs benefit children and communities

Improve behavior: A meta-analysis of 75 studies and 68 afterschool programs across

the country found nearly 3 in 5 students had improved behavior in and outside of the classroom.⁷ 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.⁸

Reduce crime: The hours after school ends are a prime time for juvenile crime if youth 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 a 28 to 35 percent reduction in total arrests, a 45 to 50 percent decline in violent-crime arrests, and a 21 percent decline in criminal justice system readmissions.⁹ 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, compared to fewer than 3 in 10 of the general population.¹⁰

Improve academic outcomes, including less grade repetition and 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.¹¹ In addition, almost half improved their math and reading grades, close to 2 in 3 improved their homework

completion and class participation.¹² The BAM afterschool programs found a 45 to 50 percent improvement in school engagement and increases in graduation rates.

Afterschool programs save money:

Afterschool programs are cost-effective, saving at least \$3 for every \$1 invested by increasing children's future earning potential, improving their performance at school, and reducing crime and welfare costs.¹³

Policymakers must continue to support high-quality afterschool programs

High-quality afterschool programs can improve students' academic performance, behavior, and help reduce crime by providing a safe, supervised environment during the hours kids are most likely to commit or become a victim of violent crime. Continued state and federal investments in these programs, including through 21st CCLCs, are essential to improving outcomes for children and youth and advancing the safety of our communities.¹⁴

- 1 U.S. DOJ. OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book.
- 2 Afterschool Alliance. America After 3pm Infographics.
- 3 Afterschool Alliance. 21st CCLCs: Providing Locally Designed Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs for Families.
- 4 U.S. Dept. of Education. 21st CCLCs Applicant Info.
- 5 Afterschool Alliance. 21st CCLC: Changing what and how students learn.
- 6 Afterschool funding preserved in proposed FY2018 spending bill, still under attack for 2019. Afterschool Alliance.
- 7 A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. Am J Community Psychology 45:294-309.
- 8 AIR. Texas 21st CCLCs: Year 2 Evaluation Report. Prepared for: Texas Education Agency; Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction. (2013-2014). 21st CCLCs: Executive Summary.
- 9 Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago. NBER.
- 10 Education and correctional populations. NCJ 195670. U. S. DOJ, BJS.
- 11 A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. Am J Community Psychology 45:294-309.
- 12 Afterschool Alliance. 21st Century Community Learning Centers Providing Locally Designed Afterschool and Summer Learning programs for Families.
- 13 The Costs and Benefits of After School Programs: The Estimated Effects of the After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002. The Rose Institute of Claremont-McKenna College.
- 14 GAO. 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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1212 New York Avenue NW / Suite 300 / Washington, DC 20005 / 202.464.7005



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