



Afterschool Helps Florida Thrive

Afterschool programs operate at the nexus of schools, families, and communities to expand learning opportunities for all kids. These programs provide more time for deeper learning, creative spaces for exploring careers, and caring mentors who are trained to help young people build healthy relationships and heal from trauma.

Here in Florida, before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 500,000 students were enrolled in afterschool programs. And nearly 1.5 million students were waiting for an available program.¹



Decades of research prove afterschool programs effective at helping young people do better in school, graduate from high school, make smart choices and avoid risky behaviors.² In Florida, demand for afterschool is high and programs are seeking partnerships with more schools, businesses, and community organizations to meet the needs of kids and families today.

Unique Value of Afterschool Programs

Afterschool and summer learning programs provide students—from elementary to high school—with a ladder of supports that help them reach their full potential, offering a step up to discover who they are and what they love to do. Afterschool programs:

-  Build foundational skills—such as teamwork, communication, and critical thinking—that will help students succeed in school, the workforce, and in life.
-  Introduce students to new interests, opening their eyes to potential career pathways.
-  Create a safe place where young people feel included and are encouraged to find their voice, take ownership of projects, and become leaders.
-  Provide students opportunities to gain real world work experience—including volunteering, apprenticeships, and internships—and practice skills that will help prepare them for college and their career.

Established with the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Florida Afterschool Network is one of the 50 state afterschool networks dedicated to informing policy, developing partnerships, and shaping practices to ensure youth have access to quality afterschool programs. The Florida Afterschool Network brings together resources, expertise, and best practices in afterschool to improve funding and expand learning opportunities to K-12 students across the state.



*Among Florida parents with kids enrolled, **89%** support public funding of afterschool programs.³*

Helping Florida Recover and Rebuild

Afterschool leaders are helping address the crises we face in providing child care, quality learning, and social-emotional support that young people need to emerge from this crisis strong, resilient, and hopeful. Since the start of the pandemic, programs have been innovating to keep kids safe and engaged in learning, help parents return to work, and provide food for families in need.

And as we continue to think about and invest in Florida's future, preparing young people for emerging career fields such as STEM is critical for our state's long-term economic recovery. In Florida, kids use time in afterschool—about 1,080 hours per year or 144 school days⁴—for career exploration, development, and skill building, inventions and innovations, job shadows, mentorships, and internships. Programs foster professional connections with local businesses that encourage young people to stay in our state, increase their earning potential, and contribute to building a prosperous economy that we need to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We Need Your Partnership and Support

Right now, we have the opportunity to forge a new future, redesign the learning day, and build a stronger support system that helps all children reach their full potential. By expanding partnerships and increasing collaboration between community organizations and schools, we can provide more places for young people to learn, more educators, and more resources. Afterschool programs across our state stand ready to support our school districts, businesses and working parents by providing care and expanded learning for students.

It's up to us to ensure every child in Florida has the opportunity to thrive. We cannot leave any resource on the table.

Will you join us?

- Invite afterschool programs to your planning discussions, involving them early so they can identify the best ways to share resources and facilities and meet the needs of all students.
- Collaborate with parents, teachers, students and community organizations to support needs-assessment gathering.
- Establish a thoughtful distribution of resources between schools and afterschool programs to help alleviate budget constraints and ensure students' academic, social and emotional needs are met.
- Donate space, equipment, or other resources to support afterschool operations.



Sources

- ¹ <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AL-AA3PM-2014-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- ² http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/What_Does_the_Research_Say_About_Afterschool.pdf
- ³ https://afterschoolalliance.org/aa3pm/detail.html#/AL/support/p_of_children_in_programs_2014
- ⁴ LIFE Center: Stevens, R. Bransford, J. & Stevens, A., 2005. <http://life-slc.org/about/citationdetails.html>

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