

Support Working Families

Afterschool Programs Pay by Improving Our Future Workforce, Creating Jobs, and Helping Working Parents

Afterschool, as it is used in this report, refers broadly to out-of-school time programs for youth from kindergarten to high school age that take place during summer, school vacations, weekends and the hours immediately preceding and following the regular school day.

In Brief

The quality of our Oregon workforce in the future depends on the investments we make today. Investing in afterschool programs improves Oregon's future workforce by laying the groundwork for educational success and by giving youth the skills and experiences they need to succeed at work. At the same time, investments in afterschool programs boost our current Oregon economy by creating jobs and by supporting working families.

Afterschool Programs . . .

Prepare Students for Future Academic Achievement

Studies have linked quality afterschool programs with higher achievement scores in reading, language arts, mathematics,¹ and science,² as well as higher grades in school³ and improvements in work habits and task persistence.⁴

Afterschool programs provide students with the motivation and discipline they need to achieve future academic and professional success. Studies show that out-of-school time program participation is associated with increases in attendance⁵ and decreases in tardiness, dropout rates, and disciplinary action;⁶ lower rates of truancy;⁷ increases in time spent on homework;⁸ greater attentiveness and preparedness in class;⁹ and increased enjoyment and effort⁸ in school.

Provide Students with Key Social and Emotional Benefits

Afterschool programs not only encourage academic achievement but also enable social and emotional growth that is key to academic, professional, and personal success.

Studies show that students who participate in afterschool programs exhibit decreased behavioral problems; improved social and communication skills and relationships with others; increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy; lower levels of depression and anxiety; and the development of personal initiative and motivation.¹⁰

Enable Adolescent Success

Though adolescents are more frequently in self-care in their out-of-school time than elementary-age students, they too can benefit academically from afterschool programs.¹¹ Studies have shown that teens who are in self-care most days are more likely to be D students, while teens who are supervised are more likely to earn A's and B's.¹²

Other benefits of afterschool programs for adolescents include increased likelihood of grade promotion on schedule, improved high school completion rates, and increased college attendance rates.¹³

Benefit Those of High Academic Risk

Since students who come from low-income households are less likely to participate in afterschool activities and programs,¹⁴ it is important that afterschool programs focus on economically disadvantaged students or students with the greatest academic risk.¹⁵ Studies show that low-income students struggling in mathematics and reading showed the greatest gains in these subjects when they attend afterschool programs.¹⁶

Give Youth Tools They Need to Succeed in the Workforce

Many afterschool programs for youth include a workforce training or apprenticeship component. These programs produce positive effects similar to recreational and educational afterschool programs; adolescents in school-to-work afterschool programs reported reduced rates of risk-taking behavior,⁹ improved social and communications skills, and increased engagement in their communities.¹³

Beyond these benefits, school-to-work programs also provide students with role models, offer youth real work experience, and teach valuable skills that enhance both employability and earnings potential.

Support the Current Workforce and Economy

Afterschool programs support the current workforce not only by creating jobs for afterschool professionals but also by supporting working families. The hours between the end of a school day and the end of a parent's work day can be many as 25 hours a week; this creates a challenge for working parents, who must find someone to care for their children while they are at work, or else leave them unsupervised. Between two and six million children across the nation under the age of thirteen care for themselves during these afterschool hours.

This time causes stress for working parents who worry about the safety of their children; during these hours, the chances for juvenile crime, car accidents, or drug and sex experimentation increase greatly. This stress affects parents' wellbeing but also their productivity and presence in the workplace, a great cost to businesses with working parents. Child care related absences cost U.S. companies an estimated \$3 billion annually, while research shows that parents who stress about their children during these hours are more likely to report high levels of job disruption, missed days of work, increased errors, and decreased productivity. However, when employees have access to high quality afterschool programs for their children, they are able to better concentrate on their work and subsequently decrease economic costs to their employers.

Footnotes

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