

Afterschool Helps Keep Kids in School

Chronic absenteeism—missing at least 15 days (or 10 percent) of school each year—puts more than 6.5 million U.S. students at risk for falling behind academically, dropping out of school, and serious long-term health and employment consequences.^{1,2} Afterschool programs offer a safe haven where kids engage with positive role models and gain valuable life skills. These programs can help to address underlying causes of chronic absenteeism,³ such as food insecurity, bullying, fear of violence, poor academic performance, and social anxiety.^{4,5}



Students in afterschool programs[†] have better ABCs—attendance, behavior, and coursework.

Research shows that students whose ABCs are “on track” have a lower risk of dropping out and links afterschool programs to increased graduation rates and skills critical to lifelong success.

Quality afterschool programs are safe, fun, academic, enriching spaces that take a whole-child approach to development during the time before school starts, after school between 3 to 6 p.m. when risky behaviors spike, and over the summer when academic progress can slip. Students who regularly participate in quality afterschool programs:⁶

- Improve their self-perception and esteem.
- Have opportunities for physical activity, healthy snacks and nutrition.
- Take fewer negative risks and make better decisions.
- Are excited about and more engaged in learning.
- Behave better in the classroom.
- Can connect with adults and mentors to broaden their base of support.
- Are more likely to advance to the next grade and graduate from high school.

[†]According to experimental and quasi-experimental studies

Title I funds aim to improve students' academic outcomes and support their well-rounded development. Research shows that afterschool programs are an effective part of the solution and supports the link between afterschool and regular school attendance:



- Afterschool programs can help ensure young people attend school, often by requiring students to be in school in order to attend programs after school. Several large-scale, multi-site afterschool programs have documented that participants improved school attendance, were less likely to drop out of school, and more likely to graduate on time.⁷
- Students—from the pre-K level through high school—who participated in The After-School Corporation (TASC, now ExpandedED) increased their school day attendance.‡ Among high schoolers, regular school day attendance for participants in the lowest attendance quartile increased by 4.4 days, compared with nonparticipants in the lowest attendance quartile.⁸
- Students in the Pathways to Progress program in St. Paul, Minnesota, greatly improved their school attendance: participants attended 18.4 more school days and missed 9.6 fewer school days than their nonparticipating peers.⁹
- Students who participated in California's After School Education and Safety Program improved their attendance by an additional 5 to 17 school days per year. Students with the lowest attendance records before starting the program had the greatest improvements.¹⁰
- High school students who participated in California's EduCare afterschool program attended school 3 days more per year on average than those not enrolled in the program.¹¹
- Among students who participated in North Carolina's Young Scholars afterschool program, school day absences decreased by 48 percent.¹²

‡ A 5-year study that compared TASC participants to non-participating peers

Additional research about the benefits of afterschool is available at: afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm

¹ U.S. Department of Education. (2016). 2013-2014 *Civil Rights Data Collection—A First Look*. www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf

² The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2016). *The relationship between school attendance and health*. www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwjf431726.

³ National Collaborative on Education and Health. (2015). *Leading Health Conditions Impacting Student Attendance*. <https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/School-Health-and-Attendance-Chart.pdf>

⁴ <http://absencesaddup.org/additional-resources/for-afterschool-stakeholders>

⁵ Center for Safe Schools. (2014). *Bullying prevention in out-of-school and afterschool settings*. www.safeschools.info/content/BPOSTAfterschoolGuide2014.pdf

⁶ www.afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm

⁷ Robert Goerge et al., *After-school Programs and Academic Impact: A Study of Chicago's After School Matters* (Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children, 2007), 2-4; Lee M. Pearson, Juliet Diehl Vile, and Elizabeth R. Reisner, *Establishing a Foundation for Progress Toward High School Graduation* (Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, 2008); Erikson Arcaira, Juliet D. Vile, and Elizabeth R. Reisner, *Achieving High School Graduation: Citizen Schools' Youth Outcomes in Boston* (Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, 2010), i-iv, 20-23

⁸ Reisner, E. R., White, R. N., Russell, C. A. and Birmingham, J. (2004). *Building Quality, Scale, and Effectiveness in After-School Programs: Summary Report of the TASC Evaluation*. Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

⁹ Wahlstrom, K., Sheldon, T. and Lewis, A. (2004). *Final Evaluation Report: 21st Century Community Learning Centers Pathways to Progress, Saint Paul Public Schools*. Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota.

¹⁰ Bissell, J. and Malloy, J. (2002). *Evaluation of California's After-School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2001*. University of California-Irvine.

¹¹ Educational Resource Consultants. (2012). *EduCare Foundation After School Program Report Card for 2010-2011*.

¹² Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. (2006). *Young Scholars Program: An overview of the benefits that promising students gain from extended day programs*.