

Afterschool and Youth-Serving Organizations in the COVID-19 Landscape

Across the state, afterschool programs and youth-serving organizations are stepping forward in all kinds of important and creative ways to extend supports to children, youth, and families in their local communities.

How local afterschool & youth-serving organizations are showing up:

- Providing safe and engaging childcare for the children (up to grade 8) of Vermont's essential workers
- Creating systems to help working parents find in-home childcare when needed (especially for second and third shift work)
- Serving as part of the food preparation and delivery teams for school meals
- Holding virtual affinity groups for youth to talk with one another about issues they care deeply about
- Offering online spaces for youth to connect, share music, do activities together, etc.
- Creating YouTube channels and websites for families around activities and learning
- Offering virtual Homework Help for students
- Arranging for virtual community service opportunities for youth
- Mailing home cards and letters to the children and youth in their programs
- Sending home enrichment packets, including art materials and supplies with project ideas included
- Serving as one-to-one coaches for families and reaching out to families to make sure they are connected to the food, medical, mental health, employment, housing, and other resources that they need
- Planning for expanded summer programs (if and when students are able to return) to help address learning loss, social-emotional learning needs, connection, access to healthy food, and more

We encourage you to reach out to your local afterschool program and find out more about what they are doing to support the children, youth, and families in your community.



How we are responding:

The team here at Vermont Afterschool is operating on an “all hands on deck” mentality. We have shifted to prioritize the immediate needs of afterschool, youth workers, and third space programs while the situation continues to evolve. Here’s what Vermont Afterschool is working on to help support staff and programs across Vermont:

- Compiling resources and sharing out guidance from all relevant agencies (AOE, CDD, VDH) for those who are running on-site programming for children and youth of essential workers
- Creating a system for afterschool directors and others providing childcare at this time to share and network with one another
- Developing online training options for childcare/afterschool staff as well as regional discussion forums for site coordinators and program directors
- Developing Social Emotional Learning resources for supporting students and connecting programs with local supports for mental well-being of youth and families
- Hosting open calls and Zoom meetings every day of the week for different segments of the field, including with the Department of Health to answer questions about health and safety procedures
- Creating a COVID-19 Resource Library of online tools and resources that can be used to support enrichment, virtual learning, and connectedness
- Public policy and advocacy support for afterschool programs and youth-serving organizations throughout emergency response and recovery
- Collecting stories and mapping up-to-date information on what services afterschool programs, schools, and youth-serving organizations are offering to children, youth, and families across the state
- Working with national partners to bring in specialized virtual training and guest speakers to support Vermont’s afterschool programs and youth-serving organizations

With gratitude:

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