

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

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How are Vermont's Youth

- 90.5% middle school students report that it's easy to receive caring and warmth from parents
 - 93% of high schoolers say that their parents know where they are in the evenings
 - 73% of high schoolers say that their parents know the parents of their friends
 - 74% of middle schoolers feel safe in their community
 - 46% of youth would like to live in the same community in the future
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- Data from Oct 2020 Planet Youth Survey
 - Vermont Youth Project (5 Communities)
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How are Vermont's Youth



- In the past month 28% of youth never felt confident in their ability to handle their personal problems and 29% never felt like things were going their way
- 38% of youth report that they felt difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them sometimes or often in the past month
- 45.5% of high schoolers say that COVID has made their mental health worse
- 47% of high schoolers report that COVID has worsened school connections and 57% of 11th/12th graders say it hurt their educational experience
- 52% of 11th/12th graders say that they are more lonely due to COVID and 48% feel more anxious
- 41% of youth had nervousness in the last week and 35% had sleeping problems

Response from the Field

- Focusing on Childcare and Learning
- Connecting Families with Resources
- Offering Expanded Hours
- Supporting Access to Food
- Developing Virtual Programming
- Addressing Social-Emotional Needs
- Rebuilding Resilience
- Elevating Youth Voice



What We've Learned

- Strong network of providers
- School and community partnerships
- Timing and communication
- Need for existing providers
- Funding and flexibility for the field
- Capacity has been lowered
- Cross-agency collaboration
- Local context



Unaddressed Gaps

- Many afterschool providers have been running significantly extended hours, even in areas without remote learning days, without additional support.
- Participation fees can be a heavy burden on families.
- Middle school youth need access to afterschool programs and safe spaces to be on remote learning days as well.
- In addition to addressing learning loss, supports for children and youth in 2021-2022 will need to focus on mental health, resilience, youth voice, connection, and engagement.
- Funding for the hub initiative was not able to be used to establish new hub locations in late fall/early winter or to help communities after December 2020.
- The demand for more afterschool and summer program options is high across the state with more than 26,000 children/youth who would be in programs today if more were available, affordable, and accessible.

Recommendations

- When considering the childcare needs of Vermont’s working families keep the full age range from birth through 8th grade in mind. Provide parity for the field in funding and in COVID testing and vaccination.
 - The increased need for childcare due to remote learning days and modified school schedules, as well as additional time for remediation and enrichment learning opportunities, should be supported through state and federal recovery dollars and not fall to parents and families.
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Recommendation (cont.)

- As essential partners in providing additional time, supports, and resources for students, afterschool and summer learning programs should be incorporated into local school and community COVID recovery plans in 2021-2022 to address learning loss, young people's need for connection, and social-emotional learning.
 - Winter/Spring- increased hours and family supports
 - Summer- learning loss and community connection; resilience building
 - 2021-2022 School Year- continued increased supports around youth engagement and resilience; Summer 2022 will also be important

