

VERMONT'S AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS:

Building Youth Resilience and Strengthening Families



AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS INCREASE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).** Research demonstrates that children and youth who regularly attend afterschool programs with consistent SEL practices benefit from improved self-awareness, positive social behaviors, increased academic achievement, and significant reductions in problem behaviors.¹
- **Self-Esteem and Workforce Development.** Positive afterschool experiences help children and youth build healthy self-esteem, personal agency, and problem-solving skills, which translate to increased employability skills and career readiness.²
- **Community-Wide Support.** Afterschool programs provide children and youth with a safe place to learn and grow, even in the face of trauma, family addiction, and other disruptions. Programs that provide meals and snacks help families make ends meet and may be a child's only source of healthy food until the next school day.
- **Healthy Relationships.** Afterschool helps youth build healthy social skills with peers and develop trusting, stable relationships with adults. Over 70% of teens who take part in afterschool activities for at least 10 hours per week say they feel like they matter to the people in their community, compared to 47% who do not participate in afterschool activities.³

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS REDUCE RISKY BEHAVIORS AND SUPPORT YOUTH IN TRAUMA

- **Positive Youth Development.** Afterschool programs reduce the risk of substance abuse by helping youth strengthen their connection to school and build self-control, self-confidence, and quality peer relationships. They also keep kids away from drugs and engaged in educational, stimulating activities.⁴
- **Reduced Substance Use.** Vermont students who participate in up to 19 hours of extracurricular activities each week are less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana than those who do not participate in any activities.³ Two out of three Vermont parents agree that afterschool programs make it less likely youth will engage in risky behaviors.⁵
- **Response to the Opioid Epidemic.** One in seven Vermont youth have lived with someone who had a problem with drugs or alcohol, an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE).⁶ ACEs can increase a child's long-term risk of substance use disorders and other future health concerns,⁷ but quality afterschool programs use trauma-informed practices that offset these impacts.



VERMONT NEEDS MORE INVESTMENT IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

- **Return on Investment.** Vermont gets over \$2 in benefits for every dollar spent on quality afterschool and summer learning programs, because afterschool can boost high school completion rates and work productivity, and lower criminal activity and substance abuse treatment costs.⁸
- **Need for Programs.** In Vermont, 77% of children and youth ages 6-17 have all available parents in the workforce.⁹ For most families, there are 15-25 hours per week when kids are out of school but parents are still at work. The need for programs is even greater during school vacations and over the summer.
- **Unmet Demand.** Approximately 24% of Vermont youth in grades K-12 are currently enrolled in afterschool programs. Of those not currently in programs, 33%, or more than 22,000 children and youth, would participate if a program were available.¹⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase state funding for afterschool programs, especially for children and youth in low-income families, young adolescents and teenagers, and in underserved areas of the state.
- Convene a cross-sector legislative committee on afterschool programming and out-of-school time opportunities.
- Include afterschool providers in existing state supported initiatives connected to prevention and youth resiliency, including school-based models and community-based initiatives.
- Connect to the Vermont Youth Declaration of Rights and set a statewide expectation that prevention efforts and related discussions will incorporate youth voice in sustained and meaningful ways.

LEARN MORE

Read the full report, *Youth Resilience: Strategies for the Third Space*, at www.vermontafterschool.org.

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