



GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

INVESTING IN GEORGIA'S YOUTH

Why Afterschool Makes “Cents”

From Afterschool to...

- ... a High School Graduate*
- ... Safer Communities*
- ... a Stronger Workforce*
- ... a Brighter Future for Georgia*

Photo provided by The 50 Cent Afterschool Network

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About the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network

The Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) is a public-private collaborative that envisions a day when all communities in Georgia have the resources to provide exceptional afterschool programming. Our mission is to advance, connect, and support quality afterschool programs to promote the success of children and youth throughout Georgia. Serving as Georgia’s statewide afterschool network since 2004, GSAN is a resource, convener, and thought leader for afterschool and summer learning programs across the state. To learn more, go to www.afterschoolga.org.

About the *Investing in Georgia’s Youth: Why Afterschool Makes “Cents”* Report

With funding from the National Conference for State Legislators and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, GSAN worked with the University of Georgia to analyze the return on investment of afterschool and summer learning programs in Georgia and other key student outcomes. Dr. Justin Ingels, research director for the economic evaluation research group and an assistant research scientist of health policy and management at the University of Georgia, served as the lead researcher for the analysis. To view the full methodology, calculations, and references, go to www.afterschoolga.org/return-on-investment. Unless noted otherwise, the data in this report is from the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016.

Special thanks to the Georgia Department of Education, the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, the Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, and the Towns County 21st Century Afterschool Program for providing data and information for this report.



Image Provided by The 50 State Afterschool Network

Executive Summary

It's 3:00 PM. The last bell rings at schools across Georgia. Instead of going home unsupervised, Sarah learns to code robotics underwater with her afterschool mentor. Instead of spending time on the streets, Will builds workforce skills through his internship at a local business. Instead of leaving mental health issues unaddressed, Jamal talks to a caring adult to address his depressive and suicidal thoughts.

This is just a snapshot of **the unique, safe spaces** provided by afterschool and summer learning programs across Georgia. These programs provide not only a wide range of benefits to more than 280,000 of Georgia's young people in attendance,¹ but also positively impact the lives of working families and strengthen communities across Georgia. With children spending **more than 80% of their waking hours** outside of formal classroom learning,² afterschool and summer learning programs are an essential strategy in improving outcomes for Georgia's youth, decreasing the achievement gap, and supporting Georgia's economy.

This report, *Investing of Georgia's Youth: Why Afterschool Makes "Cents,"* explores the benefits of out-of-school time programs funded through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program housed at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Afterschool Care Program housed at the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). These **locally-driven, federally-funded** programs are the largest funding streams for out-of-school time programs in Georgia, serving almost 100,000 youth at 521 programs across the state with high-quality programming.

Research shows that afterschool and summer learning programs work. This report found that every \$1 invested in these programs leads to a return on investment to Georgia's taxpayers of \$2.64.

Georgians recognize the critical need for these programs, with a 2017 poll by PDK International showing that **94%** view afterschool programs **very or extremely important.**³ At the state level, Georgia has also recognized this need and made a commitment to high quality afterschool and summer learning programs with the 2015 release of the Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development (ASYD) Quality Standards, which are research-based best practice guidelines that provide a framework for afterschool providers to evaluate and continuously improve the quality of their programming.

Despite this, many of Georgia's parents struggle to find **high quality, affordable** options, with nearly 600,000 more of Georgia's children who would enroll if a program was available in their community.⁴ In addition, demand for afterschool and summer learning is not equal, with research showing major gaps by race, socioeconomic status,⁵ and location. Despite funding 521 programs across the state, 42% of Georgia's counties, with a median population of 17,103, have no program funded through 21st CCLC or Afterschool Care Program.⁶ To make matters worse, in contrast to several other states, Georgia **does not currently have dedicated state funding** allocated to afterschool and summer learning programs.

Now, more than ever, it is critical to invest in Georgia's youth and provide them a safe and enriching place to go when the school day ends.



21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program is the only federal funding dedicated to afterschool, before school, and summer learning.

Operating in all 50 states, the program was reauthorized under Title IV, Part B of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. The 21st CCLC Program supports states and communities in meeting the needs of their students and families, while meeting existing education priorities and aligning to other programs.⁷

Administered by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Georgia's 21st CCLC Program funds out-of-school time programs that serve three specific purposes:

- To provide opportunities for **academic enrichment** and tutorial services to help students
- To offer students **a broad array** of additional services, programs, and activities that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program
- To offer families of 21st CCLC students opportunities for active and **meaningful engagement in their children's education**

Competitive Application Process

The GaDOE awards 21st CCLC funding through a competitive grant application process. Any eligible public or private organization may apply for a 21st CCLC grant including school districts, charter schools, non-profit organizations, city or county governments, faith-based organizations, and for-profit corporations.

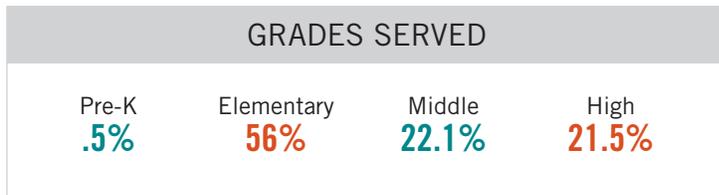
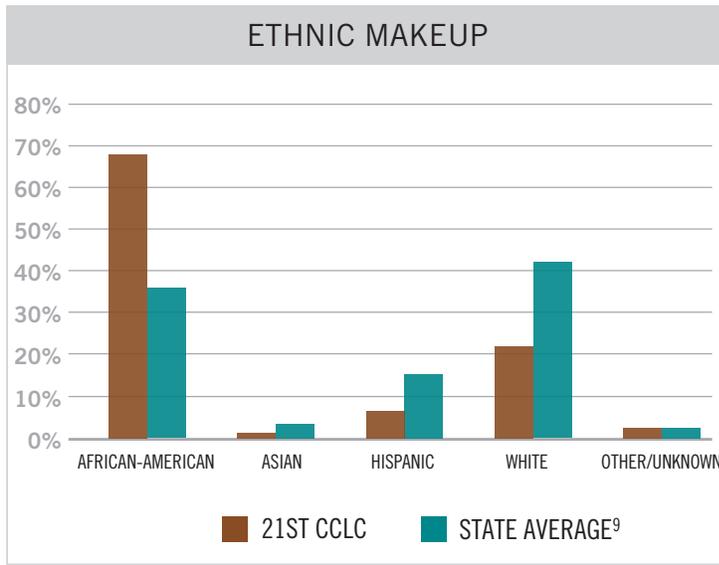
The GaDOE awards subgrants only to applicants primarily serving students who attend schools with a high concentration of low-income students and families. Applicants can be awarded additional priority for several reasons, including serving high-school youth, continuing operation during the summer, or serving schools designated as an opportunity, focus, or priority school under Georgia House Bill 338 (often called the school turnaround bill passed in 2017).⁸

73% of eligible programs that applied for 21st CCLC in the 2015-16 school year were not funded.

21st CCLC Demographics

21st CCLC serves **27,139 students** of whom **76%** regularly participate, an increase from **72%** the previous year.

89.8% of youth served are eligible for free and reduced lunch in comparison to the Georgia average of **62%**.



Community and Parent Engagement

21st CCLC programs **go beyond the walls of their programs to reach parents, families, and the broader community**. 21st CCLC sites provide families of students with opportunities to actively and meaningfully engage in their child's education and development. Georgia's program sites hosted a total of 1,950 parent involvement events (an increase of 16% from the year before) engaging a total of 35,787 parents (an increase of 34% from the year before). These events range from art performances and sporting events to events tailored to supporting parents' well-being and personal development, such as GED prep classes.

Although there is no match requirement for this program, community partners contributed **a total of \$14,552,374 worth of in-kind services and funding**.¹⁰

OVERVIEW

In 2016, Georgia awarded **\$39,441,669**

21st CCLC awarded 126 subgrants which operate **243 programs** in 51 counties

123 of the programs operate over the summer

54% of sites are in urban areas

46% of sites are in rural areas

70% are operated by local school districts



24% are operated by community based organizations



6% are operated by institutes of higher education



Promoting Academic Success

21st CCLC programs must have a **strong academic component** to support student achievement and success. Academic activities can include English and math activities, tutoring services, and credit attainment or recovery opportunities.

80% of children who participated in 21st CCLC increased homework completion.

70% of children who participated in 21st CCLC improved classroom behavior.

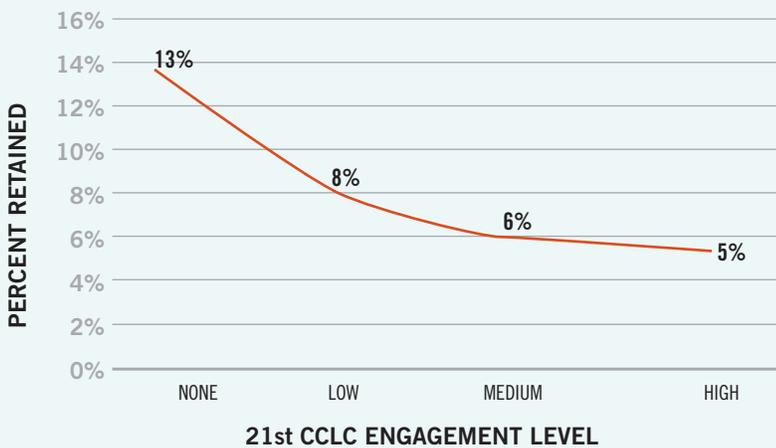
73% improved/maintained an A, B or C in their English grades.

74% improved/maintained an A, B, or C in their Math grades.

64% scored developing or higher on English Language Arts Milestones.

54% scored developing or higher on Mathematics Milestones.¹¹

These outcomes are particularly noteworthy given that 21st CCLC programs attempt to enroll students **who previously did not meet state standards** and/or are traditionally underserved populations.



As engagement in 21st CCLC increases, there is strong decrease in grade retention.

PARTICIPATION IN 21ST CCLC ALSO IMPROVES SCHOOL DAY ATTENDANCE.

	5 OR FEWER DAYS ABSENT	6 TO 15 DAYS ABSENT	MORE THAN 15 DAYS ABSENT
State Free or Reduced Lunch	53%	35%	12%
State Overall	55.8%	34.1%	10.1% ¹²
21st CCLC	60% ↑	33.6% ↓	6.4% ↓

In addition, as engagement in 21st CCLC increased, **school day attendance also increased**. For example, attendees **without regular engagement** missed an average of **4.7%** of days versus attendees **with high engagement** missed only an average of **2.2%** of days.

Supporting the Whole Child

21st CCLC programs must offer a **broad array of additional activities** that reinforce and complement the academic programming during the regular school day. Activities often include academic enrichment, counseling programs, arts, music, physical fitness and wellness programs, financial literacy programs, environmental literacy programs, career and technical programs, internships and apprenticeships, and substance abuse prevention programs.

21ST CCLC GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Towns County 21st Century Afterschool Program

The Towns County 21st Century Afterschool Program operates at Towns County Elementary and Towns County Middle/High School in Northeastern Georgia. The program serves 319 youth from ages 4 to 18. The program is designed to **enrich each child's school experience** by providing them with extra academic support, homework assistance, and enrichment activities on a daily basis. Enrichment activities include hands-on STEM activities, cooking, art, archery, physical activity, and driver education.

One example of an academic enrichment provided by the program is a credit recovery class for high-school youth. This past year, 16 high school credits were earned through this class. By offering credit recovery opportunities, students who fall behind during the school year are given a **second chance to stay on pace to graduate**.

The Towns County Family Connections serves as the co-applicant for their grant and provides office space, supplies, advisory council participation, and implementation guidance to the program. Despite being in a small county of less than 15,000 people, the program has partnered with many other community organizations including Young Harris College and McConnell Memorial Baptist Church to bring in volunteers and mentors for the youth.





Afterschool Care Program

Housed at the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), the Afterschool Care Program **provides quality out-of-school time youth development programs and services to youth between the ages of 5 and 17**. The Afterschool Care Program supports youth in successfully preparing for and transitioning into young adulthood, particularly youth from low to moderate income communities as well as the foster care system.

The Afterschool Care Program is funded through Georgia's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars, a federal program designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. In 2015-16, Georgia allocated \$15,440,500 to the Afterschool Care Program.

By supporting youth after school, before school, and during the summer, the Afterschool Care Program supports two of TANF's goals:

- 1. End the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage**
- 2. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies**

The Afterschool Care Program works to achieve these goals by increasing afterschool and youth development programs' capacity to design, implement, and sustain quality programs and services. In particular, the Afterschool Care Program emphasizes the importance of programs supporting youth in establishing positive relationships with their peers and caring adults.¹³

The Afterschool Care Program serves 72,191 students.

Competitive Application Process

DFCS awards funding for the Afterschool Care Program through a competitive grant application process. All community-based organizations, school systems, and public agencies are eligible to apply. Youth served in funded programs **must be from low-to-moderate income families, the foster care system, or congregate care settings** within the state of Georgia. Priority is given to programs that serve 50% or more middle and/or high school youth or 70% or more of youth attending a Title I school and programs that operate within targeted communities, most located in rural areas.

Types of Programming Offered

Although programs often provide additional enrichment, all programs are **required to provide the following on a regular basis:**



Science, technology, engineering, the arts and/or math (STEAM) or youth apprenticeship programming



Georgia TeenWork Internship Program youth opportunities and internships (when applicable)



Health-related activities such as Georgia Shape



Well-being activities such as substance abuse prevention



Family engagement activities



A nutritious snack and/or meal each day

Leveraging Community Resources and Funding

The Afterschool Care Program has a mandatory match requirement of its programs, which can be met through a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. Match requirements vary based on the amount of funding requested by a ratio of 1-3.¹⁴ In total, \$38,079,750 was generated in match funding in 2015-16. This funding contributes to Georgia's state-spending requirement (known as maintenance of effort or MOE) required by the federal government to receive TANF.

This means that for every \$1 of funding, an additional \$2.47 is leveraged through local partnerships to provide high quality out-of-school time programming.

OVERVIEW

Afterschool Care Program awarded 45 subgrants which operate **278** programs in 74 counties.

69.4%

of sites are in urban areas.

30.6%

of sites are in rural areas.

87.1%

are operated by community based organizations



4.7%

are operated by institutes of higher education



4.0%

are operated by public agencies



3.6%

are operated by local school districts



.7%

are operated by private schools



Boys & Girls Clubs of Georgia

The Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs operates 127 clubs across the state serving 63,612 youth from the ages of 5 to 18 with high quality programming. The Clubs provide a world-class experience that assures success is within reach of every young person who enters the doors, with all members on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future, demonstrating good character and citizenship, and living a healthy lifestyle.

These 127 programs are staffed by 1,880 adult staff and 6,757 volunteers to ensure support for participating youth. Although every Club in Georgia receives funding from the Afterschool Care Program, programs receive additional funding from various sources, including community partners, individuals, and corporations. Six clubs also receive funding from 21st CCLC.

The Boys & Girls Clubs mission is always to locate in areas that are accessible to the children and families who need us most. This includes rural Georgia, small towns, school sites, cities, public housing and military bases across the state from the mountains to the coast.

81%
are of a minority
race or ethnicity

72%
qualify for free or
reduced lunch

56%
live in single parent
households¹⁵

KEY OUTCOMES



ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- **85.3%** report making mostly A's or B's
- **89%** of youth under the age of 12 say that their highest level of expected schooling is college
- **96%** expect to complete high school
- **76%** of teens expect to complete a four-year college degree



GOOD CHARACTER AND CITIZENSHIP

- **93%** have not been arrested in the past 12 months
- **49%** of teens volunteer at least once a month



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

- **794,642** hot meals provided
- **80.5%** exercise 3+ days a week
- **96%** abstained from alcohol in the past 30 days
- **97%** abstained from smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days¹⁶



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF GEORGIA**





Image Provided by The 50 State Afterschool Network

Why Afterschool?

Combined, the 21st CCLC and Afterschool Care Programs funded a total of 521 afterschool and summer learning programs serving 99,330 youth during the 2015-2016 school year and the following summer. These programs provide a wide variety of short- and long-term benefits to the youth they serve by supporting their physical, academic, and social-emotional well-being. **The next pages explore these benefits and why afterschool makes “cents” for Georgia’s youth.**

Improving Academic Performance & Outcomes

Participating in Georgia’s afterschool programs increases the probability of graduating by 11.6%.

There is a strong body of research demonstrating the positive impacts of afterschool programs on academic performance and outcomes, including improved test scores, better grades, and improved classroom behavior.¹⁷ Studies have found that **students participating in afterschool programs were 1.5 to 2 times less likely to dropout** than a comparable group of students, regardless of the age of the student.¹⁸

Better academic performance and likelihood to graduate from high school are associated with increased lifetime earnings, higher tax payments, reduced dependence on the welfare system, and a reduced likelihood of interaction with the criminal justice system.¹⁹

Increasing School Day Attendance

Regular school day attendance is a critical indicator for a child’s academic success. For many low-income students, chronic absence in kindergarten can translate into poor academic performance throughout elementary school. By ninth grade, missing excessive amounts of school can predict the likelihood of dropping out with more accuracy than past test scores.²⁰

Research has long shown that high quality afterschool programs can improve school-day attendance. Afterschool programs can **provide students with a sense of belonging and a connection to a caring adult** who can help identify and address barriers to school day attendance, such as lack of food or transportation. In addition, afterschool and summer learning programs are often a gateway to deeper family and parent engagement in a child’s education by developing relationships with families and creating resources that are more accessible.²¹

Reducing Grade Retention

Regular participation in afterschool programs can reduce the number of student retained or “held back” from advancing to the next grade level. A study conducted on California’s After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program concluded that regular participation in afterschool programs could **reduce a student’s risk of retention by 53.4%.**²²

In 2016, an average of \$9,202 dollars was spent on educating a student in Georgia.²³ Grade retention is costly to the state and can negatively impact the student by increasing behavioral problems and the likelihood that the student will one day drop out.²⁴ Afterschool and summer learning programs can provide academic enrichment and remedial education to support children. In fact, afterschool and summer learning programs, including those funded by 21st CCLC, sometimes target those who are not meeting state standards and therefore most likely to benefit from the programs.

Reducing Juvenile Crime

It costs \$91,126 to incarcerate a youth in Georgia for a year.²⁵ Afterschool programs only cost an average of \$633 per year.

More than 317,000 of Georgia’s youth are alone and un-supervised after the school day ends.²⁶ These youth are at risk for a number of potential dangers and are more likely to develop risky behaviors. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports that 63% of violent crimes committed by juveniles occur on school days, **with crime peaking during the hours of 3 to 7 PM.** In addition, more than one out of five violent crimes involving youth as victims occurs during these hours.²⁷

Afterschool programs provide a strong research-based, affordable solution to decrease juvenile crime. The longitudinal study of LA’s BEST afterschool program found that students participating in the program were **30 percent less likely** to participate in criminal activities than a comparison group. As the engagement level of the students increased, so did the reduction in the probability of juvenile crime.²⁸

Reducing Drug and Alcohol Dependence

Afterschool programs can cut the risk of addiction to drugs and alcohol in half.²⁹

The hours after school are not only peak hours for juvenile crime, but also experimentation with drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes.³⁰ In addition, first time use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs **peaks among teenagers during the summer months.**³¹ In Georgia, 13.3% of high-school youth report binge drinking and 20.3% report using marijuana at least once during the past 30 days.³² Abusing harmful substances such as drugs and alcohol has serious negative impacts on both the physical and mental health of a teenager beyond their teenage years.

Drug and alcohol dependence is not only harmful to youth, but also expensive. Every dependent teen costs taxpayers an estimated \$7,469.³³ Afterschool programs offer a solution by decreasing the risk of addiction during teen years from 11% to 5.5% for those regularly participating. Beyond providing youth with a safe place to go after the school day ends, afterschool programs allow youth to develop trusting relationships with caring adults who can support them in **making better decisions.**

Roadmap of Benefits

The short- and long-term benefits to the youth participating in 21st CCLC and the Afterschool Care Program yield a financial benefit to society greater than their accompanying cost.

Every \$1 invested in Georgia's afterschool and summer learning programs generates a return of \$2.64 in benefits to taxpayers.

Let's start with an investment of
\$25 MILLION

to increase access to high quality afterschool and summer learning programs for Georgia's youth.

This investment would allow communities to leverage an estimated
\$4,225,000

in additional funds from community partners and businesses to support programming

In total, this investment would provide an additional
45,409 YOUTH

with high-quality programming that puts them on track for success in college, career, and life.

We know that regular participation in high quality afterschool and summer learning programs support Georgia's youth by:



Increasing graduation rates by reducing grade retention and increasing school day attendance



Reducing juvenile crime between the peak hours of 3 and 7 PM



Decreasing the number of teens dependent on drugs and alcohol

By providing 45,409 of Georgia's youth access to high quality afterschool and summer learning programs, immediate and long-term savings and benefits to taxpayers would be:

\$2 MILLION

for reducing drug and alcohol dependence

\$3 MILLION

for reducing grade retention

\$18 MILLION

for reducing juvenile crime

\$131 MILLION

from increased tax payments, reduced reliance on welfare systems, and reduced criminal justice costs over the years due to a reduction in crime and dropout rates

Leads to \$154 MILLION

in benefits to Georgia taxpayers for increasing access to high quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

The analysis assumes that an investment is made in Georgia's afterschool and summer learning programs over a number of years and only regular participants will benefit from the program. See the calculations and methodology at www.afterschoolga.org/return-on-investment.

Additional Benefits of Afterschool

Afterschool and summer learning programs **offer a number of additional benefits to society** not included in this return on investment analysis, which was designed as a conservative estimate of benefits. Below are additional ways afterschool and summer learning programs support Georgia's youth, families, and economy.

Supporting Working Families

78% of Georgia's parents agree that afterschool programs help parents keep their jobs.³⁴

Afterschool and summer learning programs support working families in maintaining stable employment by providing safe, enriching places for kids to go while parents are at work. This is critical given that 67% or **678,000 of Georgia's children** between the ages 6 to 12 had **all available parents** in the labor force in 2016.³⁵

For businesses, afterschool and summer learning programs increase employee engagement and reduce distracting phone calls from children and caregivers. Working parents miss up to eight days per year over concerns about afterschool care. This costs businesses **up to \$300 billion per year nationally** in decreased worker productivity.³⁶

Creating the Workforce of Tomorrow

It is estimated that 65% of today's youth will be working in careers that have not been invented yet, with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills becoming increasingly mandatory in a broad range of occupations.³⁷

Afterschool and summer learning programs can greatly increase the amount of time youth have to explore STEM subjects and engage in **hands-on, project-based learning through real-world experience.** Afterschool and summer learning programs provide opportunities to cultivate interest in STEM, build practical skills, and connect those skills to their lives. Some programs for older youth even offer opportunities for internships or apprenticeships.

Many afterschool and summer learning programs, including those funded by the Afterschool Care Program, are required to incorporate STEM into their program. In fact, 65% of Georgia's parents report that their child's afterschool program provides STEM programming.³⁸ In addition to STEM, afterschool and summer learning programs help create the workforce of tomorrow by fostering creativity, problem solving, and emotional intelligence - skills that **are increasingly critical** to be successful in the workforce.³⁹

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Only 46.1% of middle-school students and 33.6% of high-school students in Georgia attend daily physical education classes in school.⁴⁰

The high percentages of youth not receiving the recommended amount of physical activity is contributing to Georgia's childhood obesity problem, with 32% of Georgia's youth between the ages of 10 and 17 overweight or obese.⁴¹ Afterschool programs can have a lasting positive impact on children's health by providing opportunities to build healthy habits, **with 4 out of 5 of Georgia's parents** reporting that their child's afterschool program **provides opportunities for physical activity.**⁴² Beyond physical activity, afterschool programs also play a critical role in promoting healthy lifestyles by providing nutritious snacks and meals.

Research has long shown that participation in afterschool programs is associated with positive health outcomes, including **reducing obesity.**⁴³ One study of 18 schools in Georgia operating an afterschool program that used a fitness curriculum developed by the Medical College of Georgia showed a reduction in childhood obesity on a number of different measures.⁴⁴



Where Do We Go From Here?

The research is clear. High quality afterschool and summer learning programs support the whole child. How do we ensure that all of Georgia's kids, particularly those most in need, have access to high quality out-of-school time programs?

1. **Create a dedicated funding stream** for afterschool and summer learning programs in Georgia to increase access for the **nearly 600,000 more children** who would enroll if a program was available in their community.⁴⁵
2. **Increase public, corporate, and philanthropic investment** in afterschool and summer learning programs and ensure that those dollars address the need by:
 - Ensuring the **affordability** of care
 - Increasing the **geographic diversity** of programs funded through state and federal dollars
 - Increasing the number of programs that provide **transportation** to/from school and a child's residence
3. Increase **access to and utilization of** quality improvement opportunities aligned to the **Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards**, including technical assistance, in-person and online training, and professional development.
4. **Expand access** to developmentally appropriate resources and training for school-age child care and **Quality Rated**, Georgia's quality rating and improvement system for child care.
5. **Strengthen partnerships** at the local, regional, and state level between school districts and community-based programs **to align learning experiences** for children and support academic enrichment by:
 - **Leveraging** the opportunities for supporting Georgia's youth beyond the school day in the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
 - Increasing **communication and data sharing** between school day teachers and afterschool and summer learning providers
6. **Align the goals, objectives, and accountability systems** of the state agencies that serve school-age children, particularly the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services and the Georgia Departments of Education, Public Health, Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and Early Care and Learning (DECAL).
7. **Increase funding** for the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program given that **43% of childcare subsidies are used for school-age children** in Georgia for those that do not have access to free or low cost programs.⁴⁶ Despite a \$5.5 million increase approved by the Georgia General Assembly in 2017, demand for CAPS remains high.
8. Ensure that **summer** is not a lost opportunity to support the holistic development of children, including maintaining and building upon academic skills developed during the school year **to prevent the "summer slide."**



Photo: AfterschoolGA
The 50 State Afterschool Network

“My favorite thing about my summer program is the bond that everyone shares and the connection that we all, whether it be staff or participants, have. [It] is a place that anyone can come to and feel safe and free to be themselves.”

**– A. Bush, Snellville, Georgia
Georgia Teen Institute**



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For references and the methodology, go to www.afterschoolga.org/return-on-investment