

Afterschool & Summer Learning Programs Supporting the Behavioral Health Needs of Georgia's Youth



The 2017-2018 National Survey of Children's Health:
24% of Georgia's youth aged **3 – 17** years had one or more mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral problem.¹

High Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs



Provide supportive environments & incorporate healthy habits into routine ²



Promote positive behavioral factors like positive decision-making skills, self-control, and self-awareness ⁶



Offer protective factors that improve youth outcomes & mitigate the effects of risk factors ^{3, 4}



Provide opportunities to learn from mentors ⁷



Help overcome Adverse Childhood Experiences & reduce chances of developing substance use disorders ⁵



Lead to improved work habits and classroom behavior, gains in reading and math, and increased school attendance and graduation rates ^{8, 9}

These programs are an ideal opportunity to foster positive behavioral health, which increase a child's sense of well-being, supports healthy relationships, and enables children to achieve their full academic potential.^{10, 11}

Spring 2019 Behavioral Health Round Table Discussions



Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network hosted

**5 Behavioral Health round table discussions with
37 Afterschool & Summer Learning providers**

to identify strategies, tools, and resources to address program challenges in supporting youth's behavioral health needs.

What We Heard



Behavioral Health Issues Observed

- Attention seeking behavior
- Defiant behavior and testing boundaries
- Physical and verbal altercations



Resources Needed

- Training and professional development
- Education and awareness
- Vetted master list of services, partners and referral organizations



Obstacles to Supporting Youth

- Lack of behavioral health knowledge, understanding, and training
- Program capacity stretched too thin
- Lack of access to a list of referral services and organizations



Successful Strategies

- Raise awareness and knowledge
- Include families in services and intervention methods
- Offering youth choice, nurturing relationships, supportive age appropriate environments, and enriching activities

Recommendations

When properly trained and given the necessary resources, youth development professionals can support schools and teachers in creating positive environments that encourage learning and lessen the burden of Georgia's behavioral health workforce. GSAN's recommendations include the following:

1. Create incentive grants for afterschool programs to use trauma-informed practices and evidence-based programs to build protective factors.
2. Enable access to trauma-informed and behavioral health training to afterschool and youth development professionals.
3. Encourage all Community Service Boards to offer training to community partners, including afterschool and youth development professionals.
4. Link Georgia Apex providers with afterschool and summer learning programs as a referral source – particularly the Georgia Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services' Afterschool Care Program.
5. Encourage Georgia Apex program participants to create partnerships with summer learning programs to utilize their facilities and extend services to youth during out-of-school time or as a referral source to schools served.
6. Share school-age specific guidelines similar to the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning's SEEDS that can be used in school age classrooms by professionals to address age appropriate developmental needs, cultivate social emotional skills, and decrease challenging behaviors in school age youth.

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For more information on afterschool in Georgia, go to www.afterschoolga.org.