

Top Five Reasons Afterschool Programs Are on the Rise

5. Neglected areas get attention.

Areas that are becoming increasingly neglected during the school day—such as art, music, and exercise—are integrated into afterschool programs. For example, the “obesity epidemic” is an area in which afterschool programs—through exercise, diet and nutrition, and sports—can play a role.

4. The push is on to raise academic competitiveness.

Afterschool programs offer more hands-on learning opportunities in science, mathematics, technology, and engineering. Museums, libraries, and other organizations are making their resources available to afterschool programs.

3. The money is there.

Foundations, businesses, and municipalities are expanding their investments in afterschool activities as a way to effectively address social challenges. The U.S. Department of Education has the opportunity to reauthorize the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, providing \$1 billion of federal funds to afterschool programs.

2. The proof is in the program.

Recent research strongly suggests that well-designed programs are having significant effects on student behaviors. At the same time, more rigorous program evaluations are being conducted to provide proof that high-quality afterschool programs have the potential to improve student achievement.

1. Kids just want to have fun.

High-quality afterschool programs use a range of enrichment activities to expand student learning in ways that differ from methods used during the school day. The activities are interactive, project-focused, and fun for the student—but they also teach new skills and knowledge. Most importantly, they help children to apply what they study in school to their real-life experiences.