

Afterschool Programs in Arizona – A Smart Investment In

- **Keeping Kids and Communities Safer**
- **Helping Kids Succeed in School and Life**
- **Arizona’s Economy and Economic Future**

Quality Afterschool Programs = Success for Arizona’s Children and Youth

Children and youth spend 12% of their time in the regular school day. Before- and afterschool programs are an essential opportunity for children and youth to continue learning if they are in a quality, adult supervised program.

An estimated 144,932 Arizona kids, ages 5 to 14, do not participate in these programs and either go home alone or hang out with friends without any adult supervision.

Recent research shows an investment in afterschool programs is an investment in our children’s success. Afterschool programs provide safe learning environments, a reduction in juvenile crime in our communities, a reduction in youth engaging in risky behaviors, an increase in school success and greater community economic development.

For six consecutive years, 90% of voters in Arizona and across the United States agree that children, youth and teens need some type of organized activity or place to go after school everyday.

Cost benefits analyses show that for every dollar invested in afterschool programs taxpayers can reap a savings of \$8 to \$12.

Keeping Kids and Communities Safer

School days between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with risky behaviors for unsupervised children and youth. Also during these hours unsupervised children and youth face the most serious danger of becoming victims of crime.

Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and engage in sexual activities.

Studies show that quality afterschool programs can reduce juvenile crime and violence, drug use and addiction, risky behaviors such as smoking, alcohol abuse, unsafe sexual behavior and teen pregnancy.

Police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors agreed in a 2002 national law enforcement survey that afterschool programs have a greater impact on juvenile crime than increased numbers of police officers.

Helping Kids Succeed in School and Life

High-quality, school-linked afterschool programs are a proven method for improving academic achievement, decreasing grade retention, and increasing student attendance and interest in school. Because they increase school bonding and engagement, they have the potential to reduce truancy and dropout rates.

Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes at school than teens who do participate.

Numerous studies show that students who participate in afterschool programs are more engaged in learning, show improvement in homework completion and grades, and have higher aspirations for their future.

Studies also indicate that children and youth enrolled in afterschool programs are more cooperative with adults and are more likely to handle conflict by talking or negotiating rather than hitting and fighting.

Contributing to Arizona’s Economy and Economic Future

Afterschool programs support the needs of the current workforce and help develop the future workforce. Census statistics show that 62.9% of Arizona’s children and youth 5 to 14 years of age live with parents or a single parent who work full time. Working parents experience considerable stress when their kids are out of school and unsupervised, which can lead to lower productivity and absenteeism. Childcare related absences cost U.S. companies an estimated \$3 billion annually.

Many afterschool programs provide support for core academic subjects and help children and youth develop skills essential for the 21st century workplace, such as creative thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, valuing diversity, communication, and technology usage.



Threats to Arizona's Children

Arizona faces a crisis in preparing its children to fully participate in 21st century community and economic life. Consider the following indicators, published by Children's Action Alliance, which describe the threats faced by Arizona's children:

- Arizona ranks fourth worst in the nation for children without health insurance.
- Forty-eight percent of our 4th graders score below basic reading levels.
- Arizona ranks 49th for the percent of teens who are high school dropouts (12% compared to the national average of 8%) (2003)
- Arizona ranks 43rd for the percent of children living in single parent households. (2003)
- Twenty-one percent of Arizona's children live in poverty compared to 18% nationally.
- Methamphetamine (meth) production and use is a growing problem in Arizona. Recent studies show that meth is a factor in the increase in domestic violence, robberies and burglaries, and hospital admissions. Sixty-five percent of Arizona's child abuse and neglect cases involve this dangerous drug.

In an environment where so many children lack the support needed to protect their health and well-being, children face a greater risk of committing crime and violence or engaging in risky behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, or teen sex. The need for afterschool programming is even more pronounced to mitigate the impact of these environmental threats to children. The role of quality afterschool programming in reducing juvenile crime, violence, drug and alcohol use, and other risky behavior, as well as improving school success are well-documented by groups such as Fight Crime: Invest In Kids and the National League of Cities, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, etc.

School-age programs currently operating in Arizona are provided by a variety of organizations including schools, parks and recreation departments, private childcare centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, and libraries. The diversity of options gives families the opportunity to select programs most appropriate to their needs. According to Census 2000, there are 768,060 children and youth between the ages of five and fourteen in Arizona, approximately 15% of the State's population. Research by the Afterschool Alliance, released in May 2004, estimated that 22% of Arizona school-age children receive afterschool care or child care and 30% take care of themselves without adult supervision. The following chart estimates the number of children, ages 5-14, in Arizona, as of 2001 who may need school-age activities. In addition, Arizona has 216,481 15-17 year olds who would also benefit from quality out-of-school time activities.

<i>County</i>	<i>School-age Population (age 5-14)</i>	<i>School-age Children with Working Parents (62.9%)</i>	<i>School-age Children in Afterschool or Child Care (22%)</i>	<i>School-age Children who are taking care of themselves (30%)</i>
<i>Apache</i>	15,831	9,958	2,190	2,987
<i>Cochise</i>	17,573	11,053	2,432	2,316
<i>Coconino</i>	19,087	12,006	2,641	3,602
<i>Gila</i>	7,524	4,733	1,041	1,420
<i>Graham</i>	5,709	3,591	790	1,077
<i>Greenlee</i>	1,504	946	208	283
<i>LaPaz</i>	2,382	1,498	330	449
<i>Maricopa</i>	460,278	289,515	63,693	86,855
<i>Mohave</i>	20,569	12,938	2,846	3,881
<i>Navajo</i>	20,133	12,664	2,786	3,799
<i>Pima</i>	117,852	74,129	16,308	22,239
<i>Pinal</i>	25,598	16,101	3,542	4,830
<i>Santa Cruz</i>	7,491	4,712	1,037	1,414
<i>Yavapai</i>	20,205	12,709	2,796	3,813
<i>Yuma</i>	26,324	16,558	3643	4,967
Total	768,060	483,110	106,283	144,932

Source: 2000 U.S. Census; Children with working parents – Department of Labor 2002