

# The Return on Investment of Afterschool and Expanded Learning Programs

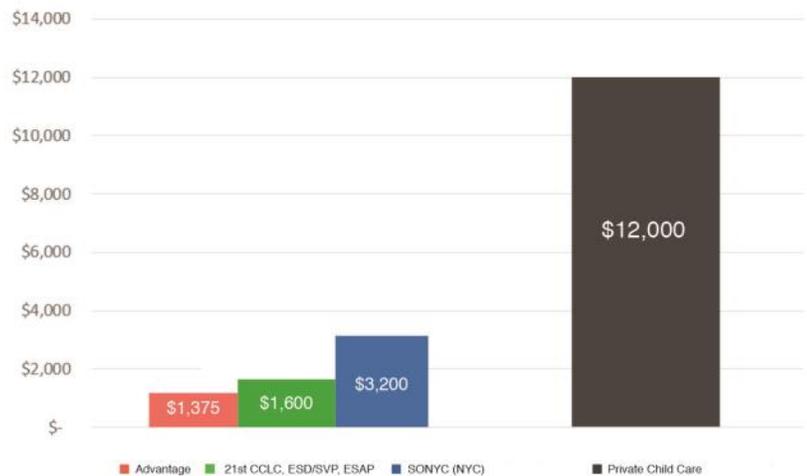
The cost-effectiveness of high-quality afterschool programs, and the ultimate economic and social return on investment these programs provide to society are well documented. Afterschool and expanded learning opportunities—including before-school, summer learning, and expanded school day—provide crucial supplemental learning opportunities for K-12 students. By providing access to stimulating activities outside of the traditional classroom setting, afterschool and expanded learning opportunities increase school and community engagement, and teach students about the career opportunities that education can provide. These opportunities help to level the playing field for students from underserved communities, while also providing significant benefits for communities, businesses, and the nation as a whole.

Despite these benefits, afterschool programming has not consistently received adequate funding in New York. With the prevalence of competitive grant programs, afterschool and expanded learning opportunity programs often face fierce competition for funding, and struggle with long-term sustainability. In New York, 3 out of 4 qualified applications for state funding go unfunded each round due to such limited funding for these programs. **At present, 1.1 million New York students are still waiting for access to an afterschool program.**<sup>1</sup>

As a means of affordable child care, afterschool programs provide parents with the ability to realize their full economic potential that might otherwise be lost due to time spent out of the workforce caring for their children. While the average annual cost of child care for school-aged children in New York for 2017 costs over \$12,000, public funding streams in New York instead fund afterschool programs from \$1,375—\$3,200 per child annually.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1 shows the average cost of a publicly funded afterschool program per child (\$1,375—\$3,200) compared to the cost of care for a school-age child in a private child care center**

**Annual Cost of Afterschool Publicly funded vs. Private child care**



## Why investment in afterschool matters:

**Promote significant economic growth.** Afterschool programs help to close the achievement gaps caused by racial and income inequalities. Recent studies have found that efforts to close the racial and income achievement gap would have increased the 2008 GDP by \$310 to \$525 billion, and \$400 to \$670 billion, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Building on previous findings that afterschool helps to close achievement gaps, afterschool and expanded learning opportunities are promising recipients for increased public spending.

**Reduce crime.** Afterschool programs promote better attendance and positive behaviors, while keeping kids busy during the peak juvenile crime hours of 3pm - 6pm.<sup>4</sup> Together, these factors help to reduce crime, while also encouraging community engagement and lifelong learning for youth. The average career criminal imposes a cost of \$2.1 - 3.7 million on society over his or her lifetime, while the cost to fund an afterschool program for one child from kindergarten through high school is between \$17,875 and \$41,600. As such, youth crime prevention has the potential to save millions of public dollars at a fraction of the cost of criminal detention.<sup>5</sup>

**Decrease high school dropout rates.** Students who participate in afterschool programs are 50 percent more likely to finish high school.<sup>6</sup> This in turn helps to save an estimated \$390,000 - \$580,000 in loss of productivity incurred by each high school dropout.<sup>7</sup> With the additional academic support and skill development that afterschool provides, students are better prepared to enter the workforce following graduation.

**Lower students' chances of substance abuse.** By increasing community involvement and decreasing unsupervised free time, afterschool programs significantly lower the chance of substance abuse among at-risk youth. This saves an estimated \$840,000 to \$1.1 million that the average substance abuser imposes on society.<sup>8</sup>

**Improve health outcomes.** Healthy living is a crucial component of afterschool programs – the majority of programs incorporate physical activity into their curriculum, and federal food reimbursement programs serve more than 4.2 million children nationwide.<sup>9 10</sup> By promoting higher educational attainment, participation in afterschool can prevent childhood obesity and other health problems, such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease, which are correlated with high school dropouts. Childhood obesity alone has an estimated cost of \$242 million annually in New York State, and other chronic diseases carry a lifetime cost of tens of thousands of dollars per person; afterschool thus provides a cost effective intervention.<sup>11</sup>

**Increased investment in communities.** When high-quality afterschool programs employ youth as staff, they place money directly into the hands of community members. Even when adults are employed, studies on similar programs have shown that every dollar spent on high-quality educational opportunities generates \$1.86 of revenue that stays in the community when providers spend wages on local goods and services.<sup>12</sup>

With the evident benefits that afterschool programs provide – both economic and social – it is clear that afterschool is a meaningful and cost effective investment that supports both our children and our communities.

**View the full brief at: [NetworkforYouthSuccess.org/Investment](http://NetworkforYouthSuccess.org/Investment)**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Afterschool Alliance. (2017). Afterschool Works for Students, Families, and the Economy. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/NM-afterschool-facts.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Child Care Aware of America. (2017). 2017 State Fact Sheets. Retrieved by <https://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/research/statefactsheets/>

<sup>3</sup>Mckinsey and Company. (2009). The Economic Impact of The Achievement Gap in America's Schools. Mckinsey and Company. Retrieved from [http://dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ACHIEVEMENT\\_GAP\\_REPORT\\_20090512.pdf](http://dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ACHIEVEMENT_GAP_REPORT_20090512.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2006). Statistical Briefing Book. Retrieved from <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/>

<sup>5</sup>Cohen, M. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2009). New Evidence on The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth. Springer.

<sup>6</sup>Mathematics Policy Research. (2003). The Quantum Opportunity Program Demonstration: Implementation and Short- Term Impacts.

<sup>7</sup>Cohen, M. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2009). New Evidence on The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth. Springer.

<sup>8</sup>ibid

<sup>9</sup>America After 3PM. (2015). Kids on the Move: Afterschool Programs Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/Kids\\_on\\_the\\_Move.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/Kids_on_the_Move.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. (2017, March 29). Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

<sup>11</sup>DiNapoli, T. P. (2008). Preventing and reducing childhood obesity in New York. Office of the State Comptroller. Retrieved from <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/health/childhoodobesity.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>IMPLAN. (2008). Analysis of Type SAM Output Multipliers for New York State.