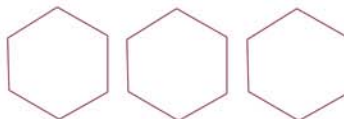




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Afterschool in Washington



Washington Afterschool Network
 A Statewide Effort Led by School's Out Washington

September 2005



Afterschool Programs . . .

People from different walks of life know one thing for sure: Afterschool programs are essential, not only to children and their families, but for the whole community.

Afterschool programs:

keep kids safe

Most parents have to work and can't be at home when children get out of school. School days between 3 and 6 p.m. are peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with risky behaviors. Law enforcement officials are convinced that quality afterschool programs help prevent crime and keep kids out of trouble. They point to studies showing that programs: reduce drug use and addiction; decrease risky behaviors such as smoking and alcohol abuse; and reduce risky sexual behavior and pregnancy. Working parents can rest assured when their children are safe in supervised programs and can concentrate on their jobs.

keep kids learning

Kids' brains don't turn off just because the school bell rings. Their brains are like sponges, soaking up everything around them. Afterschool programs give them a chance to apply what they learn in school through a wide variety of experiential activities. They provide homework help and tutoring. Children are also able to develop relationships with adult role models and peers who have positive aspirations. Studies show that kids in quality programs are more likely to do better on standardized tests, complete their homework and get better grades.

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are a wise public investment

Taxpayers want their money to go towards afterschool programs because they see good returns on this investment. Taxpayer dollars would be saved in the long run from reduced crime and welfare costs. Children would grow into thriving, educated adults who contribute to the community and the tax base. Because quality afterschool programs provide opportunities for physical exercise and nutritious snacks, they can also help fight obesity and promote healthy lifestyles that kids can carry with them for the rest of their lives. That's savings in health care costs too.

make good business sense

Employers want employees who come to work and stay focused. Studies show that working parents experience considerable stress when their kids are out of school and unsupervised, which can lead to lower productivity and increased absenteeism. If an area has abundant affordable, high quality programs available, it increases its attractiveness to new businesses and helps retain current employees.



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