

How to contact us:
PHONE: 612-627-0160

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Afterschool & Community Learning Opportunities Act Talking Points

Annually, each young person in Minnesota has about 2,000 hours of discretionary, nonschool time, without structure or supervision – roughly equivalent to a full-time job. Helping them use their time wisely is a great investment for everyone:

- How young people use their time when they are not in school is directly linked with how successful they are as they learn, grow and develop through adolescence and into adulthood.
- When young people engage in meaningful afterschool and community learning opportunities, they are more connected with learning, with school and are more civically connected with their community.
- These intentional connections can help young people avoid crime, teen pregnancy and other negative issues they face.

Participants of afterschool and community learning programs have better school attendance, better grades, more positive attitudes towards school, and higher aspirations for post-secondary education. Afterschool and community-based programs are an important part of the solution for addressing educational disparities and closing the achievement gap.

Studies show that adolescents who join youth programs are more likely to grow into people their families can be proud of – active, engaged voters who are employed, economically self-sufficient, settled in stable personal relationships, and happy with their lives.

Afterschool and community-based learning opportunities provide young people access to learning about and building character skills in the safety of their communities and with caring adults. These skills include decision-making, leadership and problem-solving and team-building. Many business leaders are calling for these skills.

Over the past five years, Minnesota has seen a 46% increase in the number of 10-12 year olds going home alone unattended.

Afterschool and community learning programs help protect investment in early childhood education. In fact, the percentage of children graduating from high school rises from 65% to 91% when investments in children's nonschool hours continue through childhood and adolescence.

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