

## Afterschool Advocacy Toolbox. (December 2020) Local & National Research Resources

**About This Toolbox.** Does your organization need to demonstrate how afterschool and summer programs keep youth safe, inspire them to learn, and prepare them for the future? The Denver Afterschool Alliance (DAA) has compiled the highest-quality local and national resources to help youth-serving organizations and advocates inform funders, policymakers and other potential partners about the value of afterschool and summer programming and the state of the field.

### Local Research Resources

**1) Denver Thrives Report.** Since it was founded in 2012, the DAA has made investments in data and evaluation that shows the positive impact afterschool programming has on Denver youth and families. Our latest afterschool impact report, *Denver Thrives*, provides insight into how Denver's afterschool providers are making a difference in our community. [Access the report here.](#)

**2) Collective Impact Studies.** DAA supports the development of the local field by inviting select afterschool providers to participate in capacity-building projects.

- The first of these was the *Demonstration Project*, which began in 2014. This initial report shows how DAA developed a data-driven decision-making strategy that helped these providers enhance their program quality and increase youth outcomes. [Access the report here.](#)
- Following up on the first *Demonstration Project*, this report from 2016 shows how providers deepened their commitment to data-driven decision-making and program quality. [Access the report here.](#)
- Our second capacity-building project, *360 Builders*, began in 2016, and continued the focus on data usage through the lens of social emotional learning and partnerships. This report highlights how DAA provided supports that impacted the work of a diverse group of providers. [Access the report here.](#)

**3) Research and Reports from the SEAL Initiative.** In 2016, the Wallace Foundation selected Denver as one of six cities to implement the Partnerships for Social Emotional Learning Initiative, known as the SEAL Initiative, to help build the capacity of select day-schools and afterschool programs to integrate social, emotional and academic learning into their practices, structures and goals for youth.

- After the [SEAL Initiative's](#) first year of implementation, researchers from the DAA and Denver Public Schools developed the *Year 1 Status Report* to inform our local leadership teams on emerging trends at Phase I sites. [Access the report here.](#)
- Using a variety of data sources, the *Year 2 Status Report* shows four key areas where Phase I sites were developing a culture and instructional strategies to support the social, emotional and academic learning of youth. [Access the report here.](#)
- The *Year 3 Status Report* revisits the same topics, exploring how the culture of Phase I sites continue to strengthen. The report concludes with a "playbook of promising practices" for afterschool providers, intermediaries, and school districts to consider as they begin their SEAL efforts. [Access the report here.](#)

- The RAND Corporation, the DAA's technical assistance partner, released *Early Lessons*, a report on how Denver and five other communities have implemented social emotional learning practices. [Access the report here.](#)

## National Research Resources on Afterschool Issues.

National partners have extensive resources that show how afterschool programs make a difference for youth and families. Below are high-quality briefs, reports and studies on some of the most important afterschool issues. The DAA realizes that many providers are interested in additional issues, like marijuana/alcohol prevention, physical health, computer skills and more, so please reach out if you need support finding research on those topics.

### Issue 1: How afterschool programming supports working families.

- This recent policy paper from the Urban Institute discusses how school-age child care programs support working families. Framed within the context of COVID-19, it shows how afterschool programs are vital to the health of families and our economy. [Access the report here.](#)
- In 2018, the Afterschool Alliance commissioned an opinion survey to understand how adults viewed afterschool programs. The results show that the majority of Americans support funding for afterschool, and that most recognize that these programs are a necessity for their community. [Access the report here.](#) [Data for Colorado can be found here.](#)
- The Afterschool Alliance also produced this brief on how to talk about how afterschool supports for working parents. [Access the brief here.](#)

### Issue 2: Afterschool's influence on social, emotional and academic learning.

- The Search Institute frames youth development from the perspective of high-quality relationships. This 2017 report dissects. [Access the report here.](#)
- From Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan comes this 2010 analysis of afterschool programs' impact on social emotional learning. Their meta-analysis presents a case for how and why youth benefit from programs that promote social and emotional learning skills. [Access the report here.](#)
- In 2015, researchers from the University of Chicago's Consortium on School Research asked the question "what are the ingredients necessary for young adults to succeed?" The response was a framework called the *Foundations for Young Adult Success*, which places afterschool as a key developmental activity that supports social emotional learning. [Access the report here.](#)
- This 2017 research paper from Hurd and Deutsch synthesizes the known literature on afterschool programs' impact on social emotional learning, concluding with a series of policy recommendations that are likely to enhance that impact. [Access the report here.](#)
- Today's employers require the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that afterschool programs help build. This 2019 research brief from the Afterschool Alliance shows why investing in afterschool is an investment in our future workforce. [Access the report here.](#)

### Issue 3: Afterschool's positive impacts on academic achievement and school engagement.

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers are required to undertake evaluation activities as a part of their grant, and state agencies compile this information into annual reports. The Colorado Department of Education has produced nearly a decade of statewide evaluation. [Access the report here.](#)
- This comprehensive review from the Afterschool Alliance discusses the school outcomes that are impacted by afterschool attendance, and how programs can be designed and implemented to maximize those outcomes. [Access the report here.](#)

- The Afterschool Alliance also released this research summary that draws from numerous evaluations to show the key academic areas where afterschool is making a difference in the lives of youth. [Access the report here.](#)
- The Wallace Foundation commissioned a review of evidence to better understand the rigor that is being applied to afterschool programs. Using the ESSA evidence framework, it discusses the effectiveness of afterschool programs. [Access the report here.](#)