

How to contact us:

PHONE: 612-627-0160



Research BRIEF

Youth Community Connections

Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Alliance

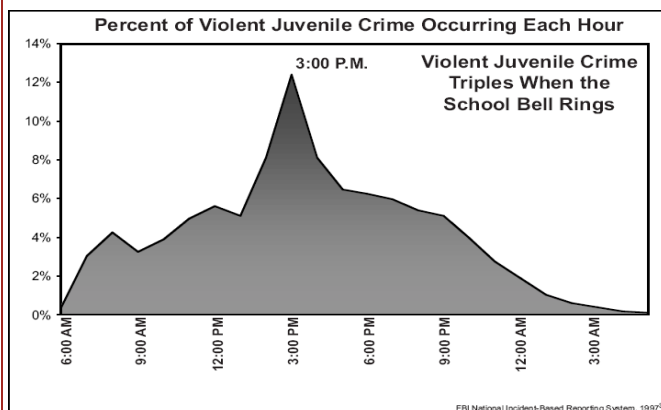
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Afterschool Programming Helps Prevent Juvenile Crime

Quality afterschool programs provide one of the best and most effective ways to reduce juvenile crime.

THE TIME AFTER SCHOOL IS CRITICAL

The time between 3 PM and 6 PM sees the highest levels of juvenile crime and violence. It coincides with the time that youth are leaving school and parents are still working. When youth are left alone after school, without the supervision of a caring adult, they are more likely to engage in, or be victims of, risky and/or criminal behavior.



MINNESOTA'S CHALLENGE

- ◆ Minnesota has consistently ranked #1 or #2 in the number of parents working outside the home.
- ◆ Over the past five years, Minnesota has seen a 46% increase in the number of 10-12 year olds going home unattended
- ◆ Nationwide up to 15 million children come home to an empty house after school

WHEN LEFT ALONE TOO MANY YOUTH ENGAGE IN RISKY BEHAVIOR

- ◆ The highest number of arrests in 2006 came from 18-24 year olds (73,986). The second highest came from those under 18 (54,384), and the third highest came from those under 15 (36,033).
- ◆ 33% of all Part 1 (generally more serious offenses) arrests in Minnesota were under the age of 18

- ◆ 22% of murder victims and 21% of murder offenders in Minnesota were age 19 and under. When including young people up to age 24, the percentages increase to 43% of victims and 45% of offenders.

QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE JUVENILE CRIME AND AT RISK BEHAVIOR

- ◆ Families and communities benefit when young people are regularly engaged in quality afterschool programs.
- ◆ Afterschool programs can reduce juvenile arrests by up to 75%.
- ◆ Afterschool programs can reduce drug use by over 40%, violent acts by a third, and truancy by over 50%.

QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR YOUTH IN THREE CRITICAL AREAS

- ◆ Afterschool programs provide positive learning opportunities for youth to engage in when they leave school. If a young person is engaged, they will not have the opportunity to explore risky behaviors or commit crimes.
- ◆ Afterschool programs can teach youth important social skills such as problem solving, teamwork, honesty, and how to get along with other youth. They can also provide education about the dangers of weapons and drugs. This is especially important because the areas of the brain associated with good judgment are still developing in adolescence.
- ◆ Afterschool programs allow youth to form and maintain relationship with caring adults. Having such a relationship is one of the strongest indicators against youth becoming involved in criminal activities.

BENEFITS OF REDUCING JUVENILE CRIME

- ◆ Reducing juvenile crime means that more young people will become successful members of, and contributors to, our communities.
- ◆ It is estimated that for every youth prevented from turning to a life of crime saves the United States about **\$2 million** over the course of their lifetime.

Sources

- ◆ 2006 Minnesota Crime Data Information: Uniform Crime Report. State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety
- ◆ Afterschool Alliance Issue Brief #7: “Afterschool Keeps Kids Safe.” May 2002.
- ◆ “Youth Violence Prevention Works,” Virginia Youth Violence Project, School of Education, University of Virginia.
- ◆ Newman, S.; Fox, J.A.; Flynn, E.A.; and Christiansen, W. “America’s After-school Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime,” Fight Crime: Invest in Kids research brief, 2000 (www.fightcrime.org)
- ◆ Patten, Peggy and Robertson, Anne S. “Focus on After-School Time for Vio-