Success in school and life requires a solid academic foundation, as well as skills such as the ability to work collaboratively, problem solve, make responsible decisions, and communicate effectively.

Quality afterschool and summer programs support and supplement what students learn during the school day without being “more of the same.”

They provide a wide range of activities and opportunities and are consistently shown to help students attend school more often, get better grades and test scores, demonstrate gains in reading and math, and improve their work habits.

Quality afterschool programs are safe, fun, academic, enriching spaces that take a whole-child approach to development during the time before school starts, after school between 3 to 6 p.m. when risky behaviors spike, and over the summer when academic progress can slip. Students who regularly participate in quality afterschool programs:

- Improve their self-perception and esteem.
- Have opportunities for physical activity, healthy snacks and nutrition.
- Take fewer negative risks and make better decisions.
- Are excited about and more engaged in learning.
- Behave better in the classroom.
- Can connect with adults and mentors to broaden their base of support.
- Are more likely to advance to the next grade and graduate high school.
Participation in The After-School Corporation (TASC, now ExpandED) program, which emphasizes academic enrichment, homework assistance, the arts and recreation, helped students achieve gains in math and English, earn academic credits, and perform better on tests. Participation in 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which serve at-risk students and focus on academic enrichment, art, music, recreation, and character development, helps students achieve academic gains, including improved grades and test scores.

Students who regularly participated in Teach Baltimore for two or more summers had significant improvements across each of the three learning domains evaluated. The program addressed literacy learning loss over the summer among high poverty populations.

Participation in 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which serve at-risk students and focus on academic enrichment, art, music, recreation, and character development, helps students achieve academic gains, including improved grades and test scores.

Evaluations of 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs from many states, including California, Florida, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin, show participants improved their reading grades, standardized test scores, and/or literacy skills assessments.

In Pinellas County, Florida, 94% of middle school students attending 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs showed growth in or maintained language arts skills (compared with 59% of non-participants); 84% showed growth in or maintained math skills (compared with 62% of non-participants).

In Texas, students enrolled in 21st Century Community Learning Centers sessions that focused on math were significantly more likely to pass the math portion of the state’s Assessment of Knowledge and Skills examination.

Additional research about the benefits of afterschool is available at: afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm