



## News Release

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# America Will Turn The Lights On For Afterschool On Thursday, October 24

## *One Million People to Participate in 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Lights On Afterschool Rally*

Washington, D.C. – At more than 8,000 local events in every corner of the country, students, parents, educators, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) experts, community and business leaders, lawmakers, and others will turn the lights on for afterschool this October. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, [Lights On Afterschool](#) is the only national rally for afterschool. Events will feature science fairs, student performances, family fun nights, academic contests, student art shows, lawmaker visits, community service activities, sporting competitions, and much more.

More than 1 million people will gather at schools, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, museums, public parks, community centers, and other venues to celebrate the critical support that programs provide youth and families. Events will amplify the voices of youth and showcase the many ways afterschool programs support student success and well-being. Programs provide hands-on learning, activities that build teamwork and other life skills, and quality time with peers and mentors with offerings that include homework help and academic support, computer programming, robotics, healthy snacks and meals, job and college readiness, sports and fitness activities, art, dance and music, opportunities to think critically and collaborate, and much more.

*Lights On Afterschool* comes as the federal pandemic relief that has helped afterschool programs meet rising costs and address growing needs winds down. The unmet need for programs is enormous. Today in the United States, for every child in an afterschool program, four more are waiting to get in. Nearly 25 million children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them, [according to a 2022 survey](#) of approximately 1,500 parents commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research. In recent years, Congress has failed to significantly increase funding for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC), the chief federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs.

“Families, schools and communities come together for *Lights On Afterschool* each year to celebrate and support afterschool programs because they do so much to help students succeed in school and in life,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “*Lights On Afterschool* events showcase the skills students gain and the talents they develop in these programs. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of

mind, but tens of millions of children are missing out. We need to change that. Every child deserves access to a quality afterschool program.”

“This fall, we see afterschool programs around the country being forced to turn students away, and in some cases close, due to inadequate funding,” Grant continued. “When afterschool programs aren’t available, students go without academic and social supports, parents can be forced to cut hours or leave their jobs, and children and youth are at risk for isolation, dangerous behaviors, and other harms.”

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in grades, school attendance, behavior, and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that students in afterschool programs are more engaged in school and excited about learning, and they develop critical work and life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and communications.

Capital One and Clear Channel Outdoor are generous sponsors of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

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*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*