



Telling Your Story: Communicating About Your Afterschool Program

June 27, 2023

Type in the Chat Box

How comfortable is your 21st CCLC program with communications?

1. We are just getting started.
2. Communications seems to time consuming. Help change my mind.
3. We are doing well, but it is time to kick things up a notch.
4. We could lead this breakout session.



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Who needs to hear our story?

Families

Young
people

Partner
organizations

Schools and
educators

Lawmakers

Business
leaders



What do they want to hear?



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Think aspirational



Using language like “thrive” and “reaching full potential” is values driven and has a broader range of positive outcomes

Learning is key



Position afterschool as an integral component in the learning process

Broaden notion of safety



Concerns remain around how children spend the hours between 3 and 6 p.m., but focus is now on technology and social media versus crime and drugs in years past

Define the benefits



Try to assert the positive benefits of afterschool without bridging or hedging language

Source: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Lets%20Talk%20About%20Afterschool_WebFinal.pdf

See full Afterschool Alliance national poll results at: <https://bit.ly/2VMSRHv>

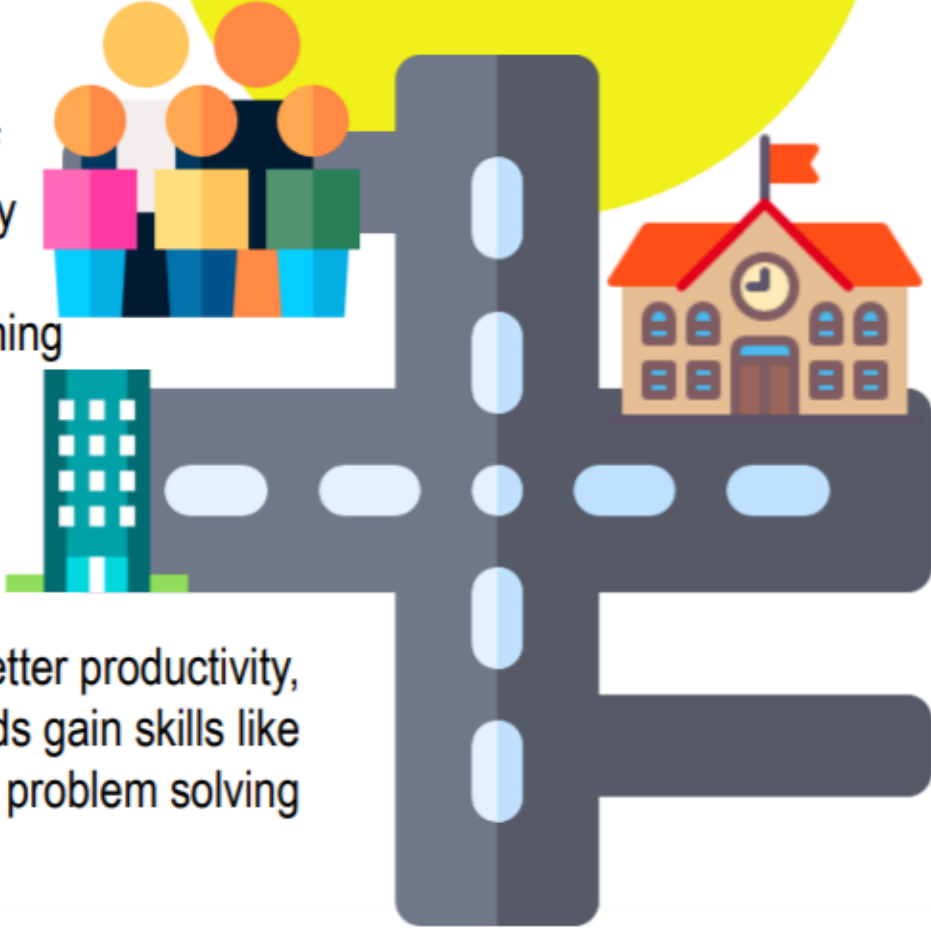


This infographic helps to summarize the message research. The core message stays the same, but the emphasis shifts slightly depending on the audience.



Give working parents peace of mind

Parents: Peace of mind, work & family balance, gets kids excited about learning



Educators: Increases interest in learning, provides mentorship, sparks new interests

Business: Better productivity, helps kids gain skills like teamwork & problem solving

Source: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Lets%20Talk%20About%20Afterschool_WebFinal.pdf

Who is your audience for afterschool communication?



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Planning for Communication



Understanding Your Impact

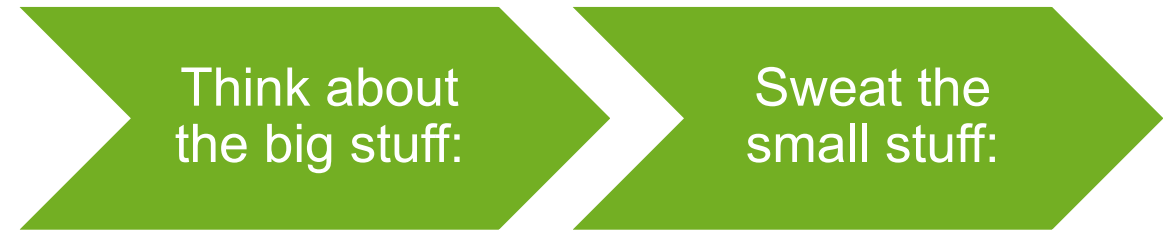


- What impacts does your program have on young people, on communities, on schools?
- What impacts and messages resonate with your audience?
- How will you collect information on your program impacts?

See: [Y4Y webinar series](#) and related [resources](#).

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Creating an Intentional Strategy



- What do you want to accomplish?
- How will you measure effectiveness?
- Who will manage and be responsible for this work?
- What approaches will you use?
- What is the timeline and frequency for communication?

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[Program Name] Communication Strategy

Objective	Audience	Message	Tools/Activities	Resources	Timeline	Feedback
To share program information so our stakeholders are up-to-date	Youth	Short program reminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates via social media sites— Facebook, Twitter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to set up online accounts, link to program website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily 	Will survey all stakeholders twice a year using the Communication Satisfaction Survey
	Families	Sharing program schedule and changes or updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email updates Posting on website Monthly newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain program website, email account Work with local printer to distribute monthly newsletter via mail and email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly emails and updates to website Monthly newsletter 	
	Community members	Sharing program schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting on website Monthly newsletter 			

Creating an “Elevator Speech”



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Communications & Action Toolkit

Vermont Afterschool has developed a Communications & Advocacy Toolkit to help afterschool leaders across the state connect with legislators and other policymakers. This toolkit expands upon the notion that in order to effect change, we must speak with one voice. This is also a great place to start for those of you who are looking to take action and communicate about your programs.

Navigate through our communications toolkit with the links below, or download a digital copy [here](#).

Why are afterschool programs important for kids and communities?

How does your program address these needs?

What does your program do to effect change?

Ask for what your program needs to be successful.

Source: <https://www.vermontafterschool.org/impact/toolkit/> ; Y4Y Elevator Pitch worksheet: <https://y4y.ed.gov/tools/creating-a-program-elevator-pitch>



One-pager: Inform or Mobilize

Key Tips:

- Be clear with purpose for one-pager (what ONE thing are you trying to get this audience to do or to know?)
- Have adaptations for different audiences with a focus on the messages that resonate
- Less is more
- Put your contact information on there!

Source: [Afterschool Alliance](https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/)

[Insert Logo] [Insert Header/Program Name]

[Customize Photos]

[Sub-Header A: Quantitative Data]
Use this space to highlight quantitative data about your program or community statistics. The point is to quickly grab the attention of a parent, politician or funder with key data points that underscore the need for/ success of your program.

If you do not have evaluation data for your program, you can find nationwide and state-specific data on our website! www.afterschoolalliance.org

20% of school-age children are on their own after school

18% participate in afterschool programs

[Sub-Header B: Community Needs & Program Overview]
In this section, you may include a sentence or two on the needs in your community: e.g. number of children alone after school, graduation rate, involvement in negative activities. Briefly highlight how your program addresses these challenges – be sure to include your mission statement.

[Sub-Header C: Program Details]
This should be followed by facts about your program – use bullet points instead of full paragraphs wherever possible. Succinctly describe the impacts of your program that may include social/emotional benefits or increased engagement in learning. Other information may include:

- Types of activities offered
- Hours of operation
- Data on children served (number of attendees, ethnic/gender make-up, percentage that qualify for free/reduced lunch)
- Partnerships
- Program accomplishments
- Area or community served
- How long the program has been operating

For more information, contact:
Your Contact Name
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
City, State ZIP
Phone
Preferred Email

“Insert a quote from a student, parent or other stakeholder that reinforces key program goals and/or outcomes.”
- Jane Doe, Program Stakeholder

Communication Strategies 101

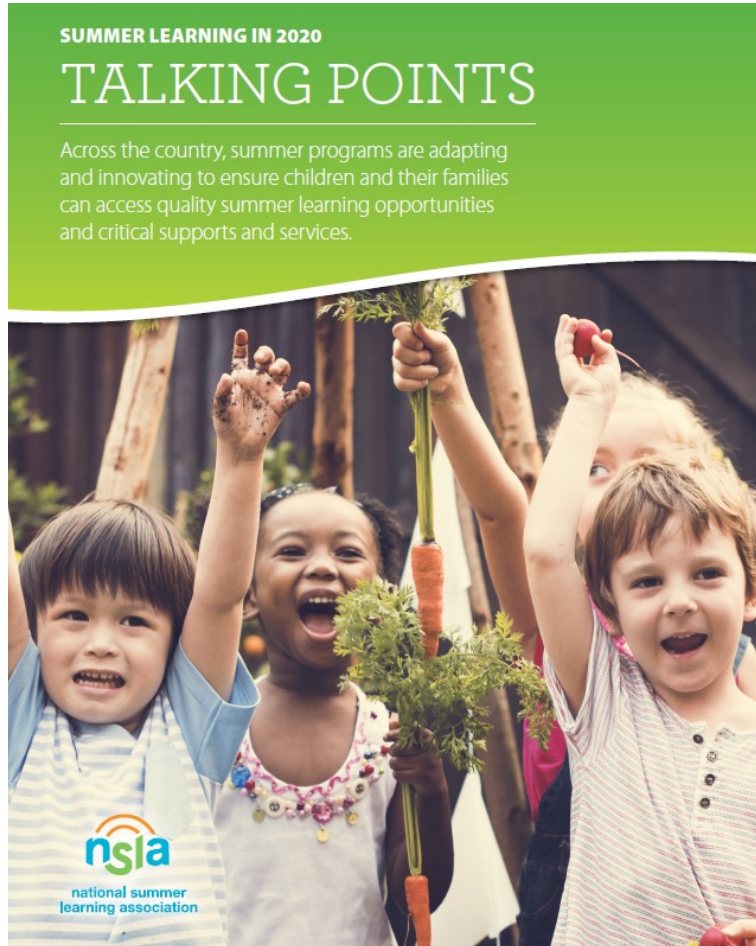


Shared Message

- Talking points to share your impacts
- Messaging embedded in organization culture
- Explicit training around messaging



Talking Points for Today



Expanding Learning and Supports For All Students

Afterschool and Summer Programs Are Essential for Equitable Recovery

This is Afterschool

Throughout the pandemic, afterschool and summer learning providers have pivoted their services to keep kids engaged in learning and meet the needs of millions of families nationwide. As we look ahead, these programs are uniquely positioned to help students—especially those who need extra support—catch up and accelerate their learning with the academic, social and emotional supports that kids will need for a robust recovery.



Proven to help young people learn, grow and thrive

Students need to feel safe and supported to re-engage in learning after this period of loss and isolation. Afterschool and summer learning programs serve a diverse range of students and focus on the whole child, offering enriching activities that engage young people in hands-on learning and encourage them to try new things. Staff are trained to help kids talk about their

After going to afterschool programs:⁵

- 69%** of students improve their homework completion and class participation
- ~1 in 2** students improve their math and reading grades

All kids benefit, kids from low-income families benefit most—and the benefits last

NSLA, Summer Talking Points: [Summer Learning in 2020 Talking Points - Summer Learning](#); Afterschool and Summer Programs Essential for Equitable Recovery: [COVID-recovery-national-Factsheet-020121.pdf \(afterschoolalliance.org\)](#)



All dressed up, with nowhere to go?



Who will you communicate with?



What types of strategies are available for this audience?



Why?



Calendar of events



Your Program: Working to Be Front of Mind



Reflecting on Communications



Measuring Communications Impact

Check back in on your strategy documents and communication plan. Has there been any change? How do you know? (Tip: Make sure you ask.)

- More awareness
- More volunteer support
- More funding
- More enrollment
- Request to expand or adjust approach



Reflection and Next Steps



Resources

Beyond the Bell:

- [Tool 28: Developing a Communications Strategy](#)
- [Tool 33: Communication Survey](#)
- [Tool 35: Conducting a Needs Assessment](#)

Afterschool Alliance:

- [Webinar, April 2020: Let's Talk About Afterschool: Telling Your Story](#)
- [21st CCLC Summer Symposium, July 2020: Afterschool Works- Telling Your story](#)
- [What You Can Do to Market Afterschool- Toolkit](#)



Resources (continued)

Y4Y: Telling your story with data

- [Telling Your Data Story- 2 part Webinar Series, November 2020](#)
- [Templates and Tools for Telling Your Data Story](#)

Talking Points

- NSLA, Talking Points: [Summer Learning in 2020 Talking Points](#)
- Afterschool Alliance, Afterschool and Summer Programs Are Essential for Equitable Recovery: [COVID-recovery-national-Factsheet-020121.pdf \(afterschoolalliance.org\)](#)

