

# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The VOX Teen survey has reached its 10th year in circulation, gauging issues important to teens and the adults who support them. In 2015, VOX ATL sought to answer how we could best support teens and partners working with teens in Atlanta, and later expanded our footprint to encompass all of Georgia. Over the years, we have engaged thousands of teens in our surveys, enabling us to refine our line of questioning, develop tailored programs that support teens, and build trust within Georgia communities. The 2024 Teen Survey has been designed to contribute to the discussion of teen motivators, behaviors, and support systems.

# METHODOLOGY

This year, the survey received 226 responses. The data cleaning steps included removing IP addresses from foreign countries, disqualifying responses from non-Georgia residents, and evaluating our stop questions. This resulted in a full data set of 146 teen responses for analysis. The report is structured into three primary categories: **time spent after school, attitudes toward mental health, and communication.**

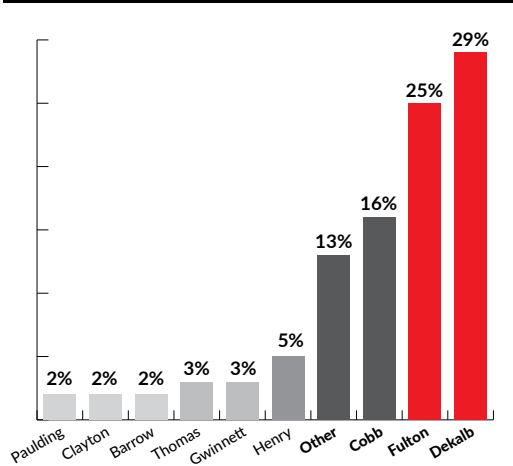
## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### AGE OF RESPONDENTS

11	0%
12	2%
13	4%
14	14%
15	14%
16	14%
17	27%
18	8%
19	2%
20-25	15%

▲ The majority of respondents were ages 14-17

### GEORGIA COUNTIES RESPONDENTS LIVE IN



### RACE AND ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS

Multi Race	0%
American Indian or Alaska(n) Native	2%
Asian	8%
Black or African American	40%
Hispanic or Latinx	8%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%
White	39%
Middle Eastern / North African	1%
Other	2%
Did Not Identify	1%

▲ There was an almost even distribution of teens who identify as Black and White across the state.

# TIME SPENT AFTERSCHOOL

How teens spend their time after school is increasingly important to not only teens but also their parents, teachers, and mentors. A report by America After 3 PM reported that 85% of parents believed that afterschool programs help children by reducing screen time and enabling better connections with peers; 81% of parents believe that these programs aid in building confidence for skills that contribute to a child's upward development in life; and 75% of parents feel that quality afterschool programs reduce the likelihood of risky behaviors (America After 3PM, 2022). The VOX Teen Survey has sought teen input to inform how Georgia afterschool programs can improve in quality and retention since 2021.

The most popular choice for what kids do after school in 2024 was going home and participating in an afterschool club. Here is how it compares to previous years. ▼

## VOX TRACKING THE TREND

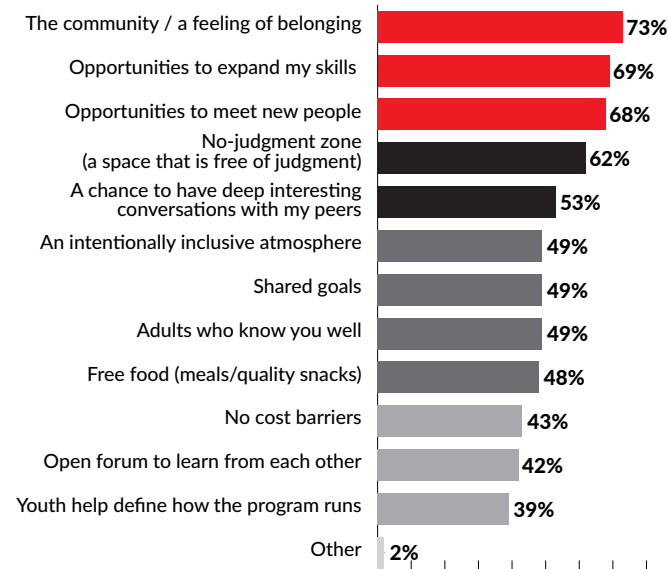
When asked what makes an afterschool program quality, the number one answer from teens in 2021 and 2024 was creating a community that fostered a sense of belonging, 60% and 73%, respectively. The second-most popular answer from teens in 2024 was that quality afterschool programs should prepare them for opportunities for their future, with 85% of teens receiving guidance from their parents.



### DURING A TYPICAL WEEK THIS PAST SCHOOL YEAR, WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER SCHOOL?

Rank	2015	2021	2024
First Choice	Go home after school 72%	Go home after school 60%	Go home after school 56%
Second Choice	Sports teams 38%	Clubs or sports after school 25%	Clubs or sports after school 55%

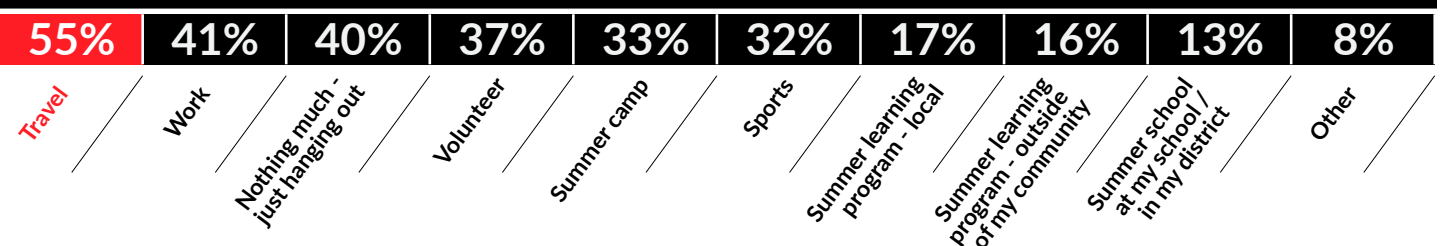
### WHAT MAKES AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM A QUALITY EXPERIENCE IN YOUR OPINION?



### TOP ACTIVITIES TEENS WOULD LIKE TO DO AFTER SCHOOL



### WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?



### WHO HELPS YOU PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

My parent/guardian	85%
School guidance counselor	43%
A teacher	40%
A sibling or other relative who's already graduated high school	34%
An older peer (who's been there)	29%
A mentor not at my school or afterschool program	22%
No one/myself	17%
Afterschool program staff	14%
Private tutor or counselor	11%
Other	1%

◀ Parents, school guidance counselors, and teachers are the individuals who assist most with students' goals after high school.

### DURING A TYPICAL WEEK, HOW MANY DAYS ARE YOU HOME ALONE OR SOMEWHERE WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION?

	2015	2024
0 Days	29%	0%
1 Day	15%	30%
2 Days	15%	22%
3 Days	13%	18%
4 Days	5%	10%
5+ Days	23%	20%

### WHERE DO YOU USUALLY HEAR ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES YOU MAY WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

From social media	64%
From my friends	61%
From my parent/guardian	53%
From a teacher or another adult in my life (not my parent/guardian)	51%
From a flier I saw at school or in my community	41%
Other	7%

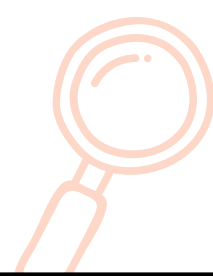
◀ When we first asked this question in 2015, about one-third of students did not stay home alone for even 1 day. However, in 2024 the majority of students stay home alone at least one day a week, if not more.

# MENTAL HEALTH

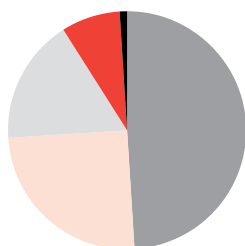
Mental health has become a critical conversation among teens and those looking to support them. In the Annie E. Casey Foundation's profile of youth and young adults in Atlanta, 50% of high schoolers surveyed felt depressed, sad, or withdrawn from their day-to-day lives (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2023). Additionally, 13% of surveyed high school students across the state said they contemplated suicide (2023). Our 2024 survey shows that 71% of teens openly discuss mental health, down from its peak of 87% in 2022. Three out of four high school students stated that their high usage of social media contributed to higher rates of bullying, sadness, and suicidal thoughts (Brenner et al., 2023).

## VOX TRACKING THE TREND

Our 2024 report noted that 61% of teens used social media to gather information about mental health, **nearly double the 34% of teens who reported using social media for mental health advice in 2023**. Noting this shift, VOX's teen survey will keep a pulse on teens' mental health to identify areas where we can best support them.

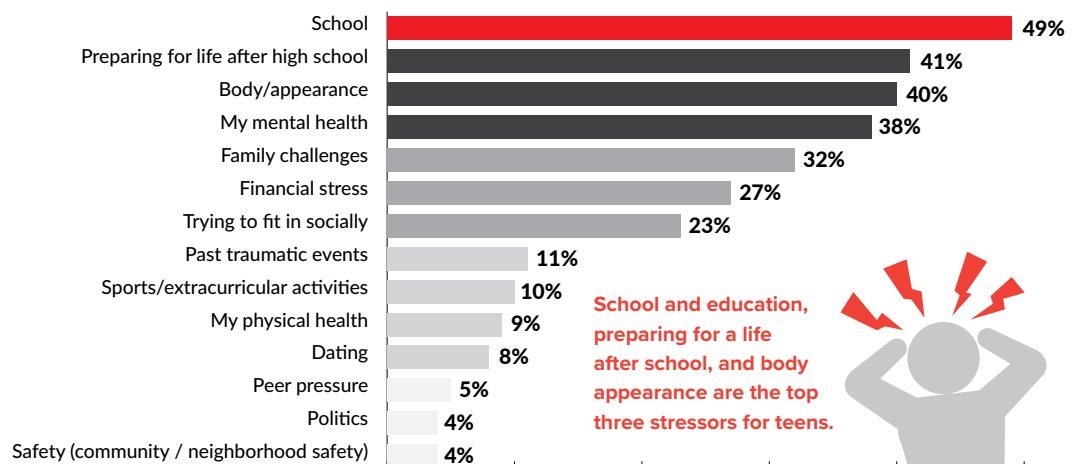


### THINKING ABOUT A TYPICAL DAY IN THE PAST YEAR, WHAT IS YOUR AVERAGE DAILY LEVEL OF STRESS?



- Extremely High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- None

### WHAT CAUSES YOU THE MOST STRESS?



School and education, preparing for a life after school, and body appearance are the top three stressors for teens.



### WHAT HELPS YOU RELAX OR COPE WITH STRESS?

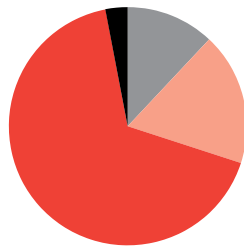
Consuming media	73%
Having a space away from others	55%
Making something creative	54%
Exercise	50%
Reading	42%
Talking it out with peers	39%
Gaming	38%
Getting involved in an extracurricular activity or sport	34%
Journaling	30%
Seeking support from a parent/guardian or other caring adult	28%
Mindfulness or meditation	24%
Other	5%

### HAVE YOU EVER HAD SUICIDAL THOUGHTS?



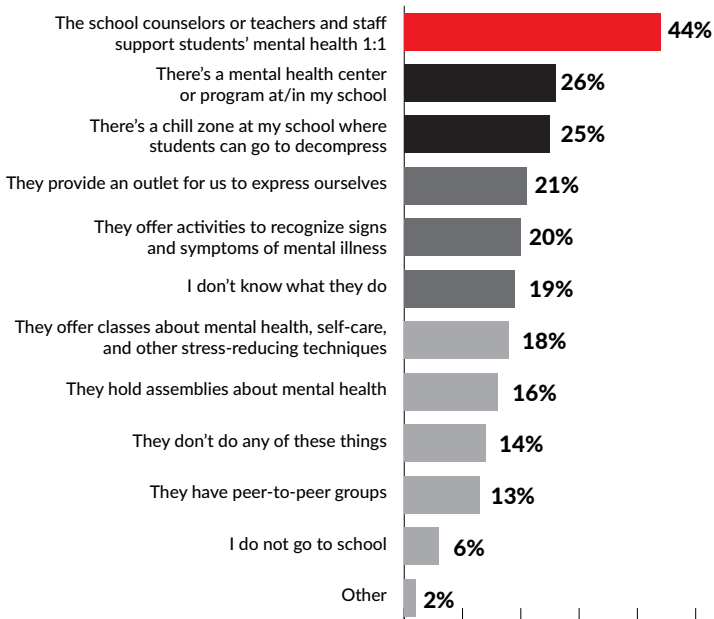
- Yes, I have
- Not Sure
- No, I haven't
- N/A

### DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO HAS HAD SUICIDAL THOUGHTS?



- Yes, I have
- Not Sure
- No, I haven't
- N/A

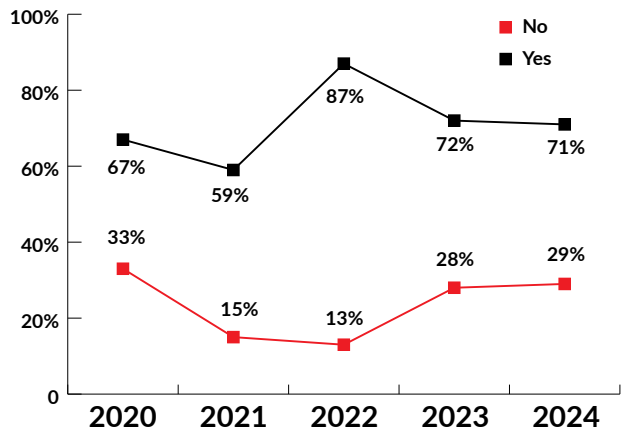
### WHAT DOES YOUR SCHOOL DO TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH?



### TEEN RESPONSE

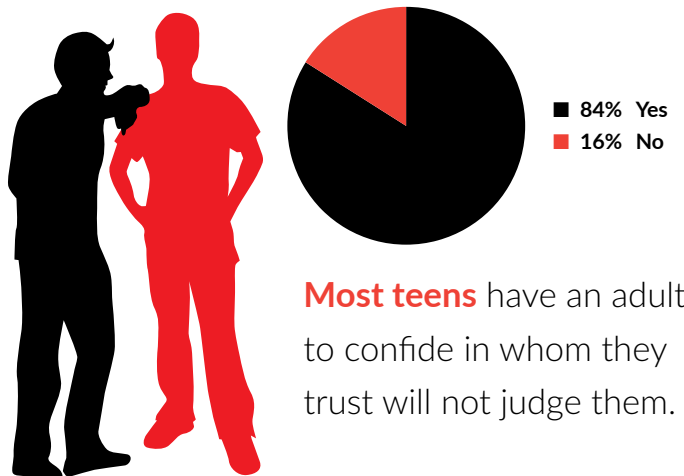
“More access to people to talk to. A comforting area that can help calm the mind. More opportunities to meet with other teens to just decompress like a community thing.”

### DO TEENS OPENLY TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?



There has been a decline since 2022 in teens openly talking about mental health. However, the percentage of respondents who openly talk about mental health has increased by 4 percentage points since we began to asking this question in 2020. In 2022, an overwhelming amount of teens reported talking about mental health. This may have coincided with the post-pandemic heightened awareness of mental health.

### DO YOU HAVE A CARING ADULT TO CONFIDE IN WHO WON'T JUDGE YOU IF YOU EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS?

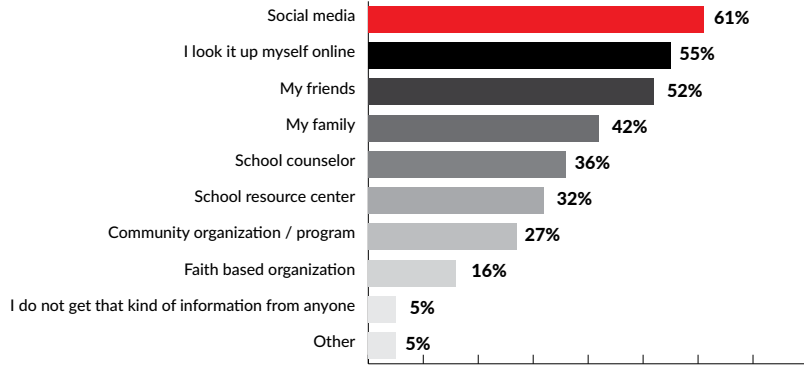


Most teens have an adult to confide in whom they trust will not judge them.

### TEEN RESPONSE

“Having someone who will listen, not speak over us/give advice immediately. Take what we're saying into consideration and take it seriously.”

### WHERE DO YOU GET INFORMATION ON MENTAL HEALTH?

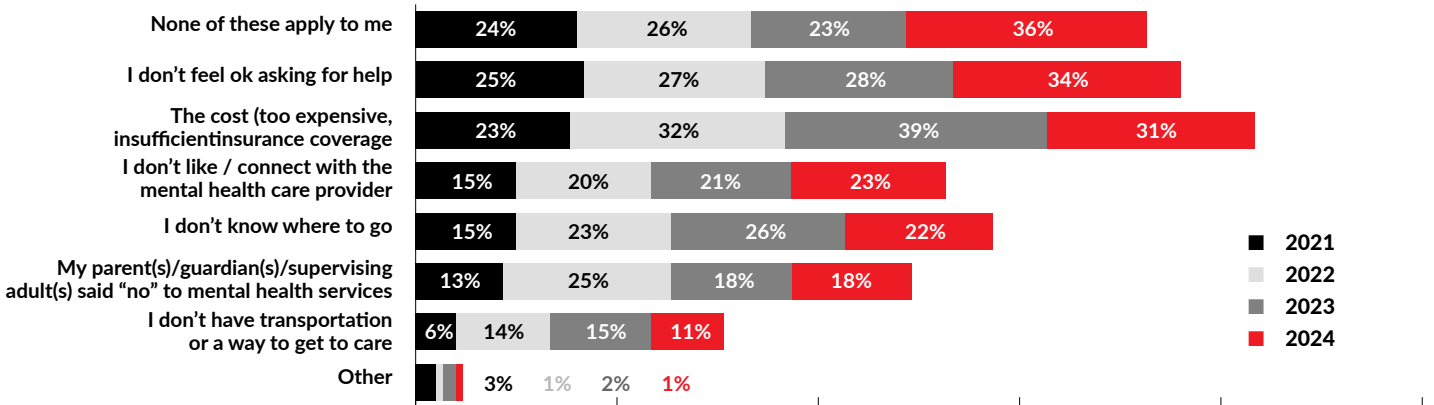


The increasing prevalence of technology has led more teens to rely on social media and the internet more broadly for mental health information, identifying a gap and a need in teen mental health services. For the past four years, VOX has been conducting this survey, and looking up mental health information online has been in the top 3 responses, indicating that mental health is a self-guided action by teens.

### TEEN RESPONSE

“Anonymous access to resources. A lot of kids are dissuaded by the laws that mandate their parents to be informed about everything regarding their mental health. It’d be nice if they could enjoy some mental health tools without worrying that someone’s going to call their parents.”

### DO ANY OF THESE THINGS KEEP YOU FROM ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH CARE?



### WHAT TOOLS AND SUPPORT COULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR TEENS MENTAL HEALTH?

- Education and awareness
- Safe spaces
- Access to professional help
- Peer support
- Self-help tools



### WHAT PREVENTS TEENS FROM TALKING OPENLY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

- Fear of judgment or stigma
- Lack of understanding or support
- Fear of consequences
- Personal barriers
- Lack of awareness or education

### TEEN RESPONSE

“A safe space to decompress or a class or assembly to learn about balancing mental health.”

# COMMUNICATION

Gen Z and Gen Alpha engage with technology constantly, and how they communicate is ever-changing. To reach teens, we must know how and where. The Pew Research Center findings show that teens rely highly on digital platforms. One-third of teens use at least one social media platform constantly, with YouTube and TikTok being the most used, 93% and 63%, respectively (Gottfried, 2023).

## VOX TRACKING THE TREND

As a news outlet organization, we want to ensure we can reach teens where they spend the most time. **79% of teens stated that they receive their news from social media, with 72% using Instagram often or always.** Despite the high app usage of Instagram, teens prefer communicating with each other through text as opposed to using a direct message feature, 47% to 18%.


### TEEN RESPONSE

“Understanding my needs and requirements and trying their best to help accommodate them or even just listen to what I have to say and give honest, helpful, constructive criticism in return.”

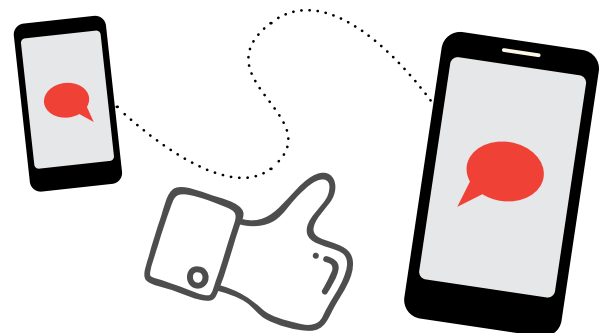
WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON WAY YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PEERS?	
Texting	47%
Social media DMs	18%
In Person	15%
Messaging platforms like GroupMe or WhatsApp	5%
Social media posts and comments	5%
Video calls / Facetime	4%
Phone calls	3%
Other	2%

WHERE DO YOU GET THE MAJORITY OF YOUR NEWS?	
Social Media	79%
Family (parent/guardian) - People in my household	63%
Digital News Websites	60%
Friends	51%
News channels (CNN, ABC, NBC or FOX News)	50%
School	47%
Radio (like NPR)	25%
Print newspaper or magazine	16%
Podcast	13%
Other	1%

### WHICH APPS DO YOU USE THE MOST?

 Instagram	 Tik Tok	 YouTube
72%	66%	64%

WHAT TOPICS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU TODAY?	
Arts & Culture	77%
Life After High School	68%
Mental Health & Wellness	58%
Education	53%
Discrimination	45%
Physical Health & Wellness	42%
Environment	41%
My Community / My Neighborhood	40%
Social Justice	40%
Social Media and/or Games	40%
Politics	31%
School Sports	28%
Faith/Religion	27%
Sex & Sexuality	25%
Drug & Alcohol	18%
Other	1%



I FEEL VALUED WHEN:	PERCENT
I can help others	70%
Adults in my life ask for my ideas or opinions	69%
I feel like I can make a difference in regards to a problem or social issue I care about	67%
I can earn my own money or work at an internship	64%
My peers ask for my ideas or opinions	64%
Something I make or perform gets shown to others	62%
I spend time with people I care about	62%
I am in a leadership position in an organization or group	53%
Other	1%

#### TEEN RESPONSE

“They can support me by letting me be independent and be there when I ask for help”

#### WHICH LIFE SKILLS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU, BUT NOT ADEQUATELY TAUGHT IN SCHOOL?



**Career Exploration**



**Earning and saving money (budgeting)**



**Nutrition** (could include meal planning)

#### TEEN RESPONSE

“I think they can best support you by showing you that you have a safe comfortable environment and then doing things like checking up on you and helping you in order to do things you want to achieve.”

#### HOW MENTORS AND ADULTS BEST SUPPORT TEENS

- 1. Listening and Valuing Opinions:** Many teens express a desire for mentors to truly listen, consider their ideas, and respect their perspectives.
- 2. Providing Guidance and Resources:** Teens mention the importance of mentors sharing networks, resources, and advice to help them progress in their goals.
- 3. Offering Consistent Support:** They want dependable mentors who are available to provide foundational support as needed.
- 4. Encouragement and Motivation:** Some responses highlight a desire for mentors who push them to improve and stay on track with their goals.
- 5. Checking In and Building Relationships:** Regular, meaningful check-ins beyond routine topics show mentors genuinely care.

#### TEEN RESPONSE

“Mentors/adults can best support me by leveraging the network they’ve probably had twice my lifetime to cultivate. I think that by cultivating my ideas and helping me create a game plan for it would be cool.”

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# REFERENCES

America After 3PM. Promoting Healthy Futures: Afterschool Provides the Supports Parents Want for Children's Well-Being. 2022.

Brener, Nancy D., et al. "Overview and Methods for the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System – United States, 2023." MMWR Supplements, vol. 73, 2024. www.cdc.gov, <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7304a1>.

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