



America After 3PM **KEY FINDINGS**

Each day in America, millions of kids go home to an empty house after school. In recent years, the growth of quality, affordable afterschool programs—programs that keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families—has begun to offer parents of these children positive alternatives. Over the past five years, afterschool programs have played an increasingly important role in providing valuable after school opportunities for children and families.

In 2009, the Afterschool Alliance conducted a national household survey of nearly 30,000 families to learn how many children are in afterschool programs, how many are unsupervised after school and how these numbers compare to five years ago. Building upon and updating a similar study conducted in 2004, *America After 3PM*, sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, gives the most comprehensive and accurate picture to date of what our nation's youth are doing each day after school.

America After 3PM finds that afterschool programs today are serving significantly more children than they served five years ago, but there also are more children unsupervised each afternoon in the United States, and the demand for programs is higher than ever.

- More than a quarter of America's schoolchildren are on their own after the school day ends, and before parents get home from work. Despite growing awareness that children are at particular risk during these afternoon hours, the number and percentage of children left on their own in the afternoons has actually increased in the last five years.
 - The number of children who are unsupervised in the afternoons has risen from 14.3 million (25 percent) in 2004, to 15.1 million (26 percent) in 2009.
 - Today, 30 percent of middle school students (3,722,219) and four percent of elementary school children (1,133,989) are unsupervised after the school bell rings.
- The availability of afterschool programming for kids has improved in the last five years and families are taking good advantage. But there are not enough programs to keep pace with rising need.
 - The number and percentage of children participating in afterschool programs has increased significantly in the last five years, with 8.4 million children (15 percent) now participating. That compares with 6.5 million children in 2004 (11 percent).
 - Parents of the 18.5 million children (38 percent) not currently participating in afterschool programs say they would enroll their children if a program were available to them. That is a significant increase from 15.3 million (30 percent) in 2004.
- While ethnic minority children are more likely than others to be in afterschool programs, millions are unsupervised each afternoon and the unmet need is huge.
 - Twenty-five percent of Asian, 24 percent of African-American, 21 percent of Hispanic and 16 percent of Native American children attend afterschool programs, compared to the national average of 15 percent.
 - Yet 28 percent of African-American, 21 percent of Hispanic and 24 percent of both Asian and Native American children have no adult supervision after the school day ends.
 - While two in five parents overall (38 percent) would enroll their children if afterschool programs were available, more than half of African American (61 percent) and Native





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American (51 percent) parents, and nearly half of Hispanic and Asian parents (47 percent), say they would.

- The economy is taking a toll on participation in afterschool programs.
 - Parents cite a number of barriers to enrolling their children in afterschool programs with more than half of parents (52 percent) citing cost and more than one in four reporting hours of operation (26 percent) and availability (27 percent) as reasons for non-participation.
 - On average, parents who pay for afterschool programs pay \$67 per week, up from an average of \$44 per child per week five years ago.
 - Nearly one in three households (31 percent) report that their children are spending more time in the care of a parent after school now than a year ago. Reasons include changes in work status and availability/affordability of programs.
 - While overall satisfaction with afterschool programs remains consistent since 2004, mean satisfaction is down on several factors, including cost, location and number of days/hours per day a child can attend a program.
- Americans see afterschool programs as an answer. The vast majority of parents of children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the programs their children attend, and public support for afterschool programs is unusually strong.
 - Nine in ten parents (89 percent) are satisfied with the afterschool programs their children attend.
 - Nine in ten parents surveyed (91 percent) agree that there should be “some type of organized activity or place for children and teens to go after school every day that provides opportunities to learn.”
 - Eight in ten parents (83 percent) support public funding for afterschool programs.
 - Parents recognize that afterschool is more than just a safe place for kids. According to parents of children in afterschool, the top benefits of participation include helping with social skills, keeping kids safe, providing opportunities to be physically active and helping their child succeed in school.

America After 3PM provides powerful evidence that we must do more to support afterschool programs in the United States. That includes increased support from all levels of government and the philanthropic and business communities.

According to U. S. Census data from 2007, the total school-age population is 57.3 million, which is the foundation for the national projections in *America After 3PM*.

America After 3PM was sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. Between March and May 2009, 29,754 parents/guardians responded to survey questions about their after school child care arrangements during the 2008-2009 school year. RTi, a market research firm, conducted the survey and analyzed the data for the Afterschool Alliance. Additional information from *America After 3PM* is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

