



NEWS RELEASE
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CONTACT: Gretchen Wright
202/371-1999

Massachusetts Making Strides on Afterschool; Named to ‘States on the Move’ List, But Expert Says Massachusetts Has More Work to Do

Afterschool Alliance Survey of Massachusetts Households, Sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, Finds Marked Increase in Afterschool Enrollment Since 2004, But Also Vast Unmet Demand for Afterschool Programs

Washington, DC – A major increase in participation in afterschool programs by Massachusetts youth over the last five years, along with high satisfaction rates among their parents, has landed the state in the Afterschool Alliance’s newly named “Six States on the Move for Afterschool” list. The list is based on data from the landmark *America After 3PM* study, conducted for the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. It is being released today in conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool*, the nationwide rally for afterschool.

America After 3PM found that 18 percent of Massachusetts schoolchildren are enrolled in afterschool programs, up from 11 percent in the 2004. “Massachusetts should be proud that it is making such great progress and is now ahead of the national average of 15 percent of children in afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “But there’s more work to do. Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families. The majority of Massachusetts parents who want their kids in afterschool programs aren’t able to find them, usually because programs aren’t available, they can’t afford the fees, or transportation issues make it impossible. These are all barriers we must overcome.”

Despite the significant increase in the number of Massachusetts children attending afterschool programs over the last five years, today 26 percent of the state’s schoolchildren are on their own in the afternoons – up from 21 percent in 2004. Another 13 percent of the state’s children are in the care of their brothers or sisters after the school days ends. In addition, the parents of 36 percent of children not already in afterschool say they would enroll their kids in a program if one were available.

Ninety-three percent of Massachusetts parents say they are satisfied with the afterschool program their child attends. “We’re proud that Massachusetts is being named one of just six *States on the Move to Afterschool for All*,” said Gwynn Hughes, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership. “We know how critical afterschool programs are for kids’ success and, while we’ve made progress, the data show that we still have a lot of work ahead to ensure that all children and families have access to quality afterschool programs. Especially during this recession, it’s critical that we work together with program, policy and philanthropic leaders in

Massachusetts to stay on course and meet the huge unmet demand for afterschool programs in this state.”

In key respects, the Massachusetts results from the *America After 3PM* study reflect national findings:

- The number and percentage of children participating in afterschool programs in the nation 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).
- But the number of children left alone after the school day ends also has risen, to 15.1 million children (26 percent of school-age children) in 2009. That is an increase of 800,000 children since 2004. Thirty percent of middle schoolers (3.7 million kids) are on their own, as are four percent of elementary school children (1.1 million children).
- The parents of 18.5 million children (38 percent) not currently participating in an afterschool program would enroll their children in a program if one were available to them, a significant increase from the 15.3 million (30 percent) seen in 2004.
- The vast majority of parents of children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the programs their children attend, and overall public support for afterschool programs is similarly strong. Nine in 10 parents (89 percent) are satisfied with the afterschool programs their children attend. Eight in 10 parents support public funding for afterschool programs.

In conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool* events across the nation, the JCPenney Afterschool Round-Up program will kick off in JCPenney stores throughout the U.S. From Oct. 16 to Oct. 25, customers will have the opportunity to “round-up” their JCPenney purchases to the nearest whole dollar and donate the difference to afterschool programs in their local communities that provide life-enriching programs for children in need. Last year, through “Round Up” and other initiatives, JCPenney contributed nearly \$290,000 in Massachusetts to support local afterschool initiatives.

“With more than \$80 million contributed to afterschool programs over the past 10 years, JCPenney stands out among the nation’s corporations for helping to frame and solve the afterschool issue and increasing access to afterschool programs that provide meaningful activities for children in need,” Grant added.

The *America After 3PM* report and accompanying data are available online at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on 29,754 parent/guardian responses to survey questions about 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. The entire survey was sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. RTi also conducted the 2004 *America After 3PM* household survey.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a charitable organization committed to providing children in need with access to life-enriching afterschool programs that inspire children to be smart, strong and socially responsible. To date, JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund have contributed more than \$80 million to local afterschool programs in every JCPenney community through partnerships with the YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H and FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). For more information, visit www.jcpennyafterschool.org.