



Special Report on Summer: Key Findings

For many children in America, summer vacation means camp, trips to new or familiar destinations, visits to museums, parks and libraries, and a variety of enriching activities – either with families or as part of a summer learning program. But for millions of others, when schools close for the summer, safe and enriching learning environments are out of reach, replaced by boredom, lost opportunities and risk.

America After 3PM Special Report on Summer, sponsored by The Wallace Foundation, finds that summer learning programs—safe, structured programs that provide a variety of activities designed to encourage learning and development in the summer months—are serving a significant portion of our nation’s children, but even more children are not reaping the benefits of these valuable programs each summer. The demand for programs is very high, especially among those who need them most.

- Three quarters of America’s schoolchildren are not participating in summer learning programs. Despite a growing awareness that summer learning loss is a major contributor to the achievement gap between low-income and high-income youth, the number and percentage of children participating in summer enrichment programs is startlingly low.
 - Twenty-five percent of children (an estimated 14.3 million) participate in summer learning programs. Forty-three percent of summer participants qualify for free/reduced price lunch.
 - Children who participate in afterschool programs participate in summer learning programs at much higher levels than children who do not attend afterschool programs during the regular school year. Fifty-five percent of afterschool participants were in a summer learning program in 2008, compared to 21 percent of students who did not participate in afterschool programs.
- There are many quality summer learning programs around the country, but not nearly enough to keep pace with demand.
 - Fifty-six percent of non-participating children (an estimated 24 million) would be likely to participate in a summer learning program, based on parent interest.
 - What’s more, nearly half the children (46 percent) who are likely to participate in a summer learning program are eligible for free/ reduced price lunch.
- While ethnic minority and low-income children are more likely than others to be in summer learning programs, the unmet demand is great.
 - Thirty-five percent of African-American, 29 percent of Hispanic and 27 percent of low-income children attended summer learning programs in 2008, compared to the national average of 25 percent.
 - Yet more than three in four African-American kids (77 percent) and at least two in three Hispanic (70 percent) and low-income (67 percent) kids would likely enroll in a summer learning program, based on parent interest.
- Parents overwhelmingly support summer learning programs, and there is even greater support among parents of minority and low-income students.
 - Eight in ten parents (83 percent) support public funding for summer learning programs.
 - Fully 95 percent of African-American, 91 percent of Hispanic and 90 percent of low-income parents support public funding for summer learning programs.

America After 3PM Special Report on Summer is sponsored by The Wallace Foundation. All data cited in this report are from the 2009 *America After 3PM* research, which was sponsored by JCPenney Afterschool.