



News Release
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Contact: [Luci Manning](#)
[Gretchen Wright](#)
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Unmet Demand for Afterschool Programs Grows to Nearly 20 Million Children

Household Survey Finds Parents Strongly Support Afterschool Programs, Participation Grows to 10 Million U.S. Children

Washington, DC — Despite a dramatic increase in participation over the last decade, a new household survey commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance finds a significant gap between the demand and supply of afterschool programs. The 2014 edition of [America After 3PM](#), which includes responses from 30,000 U.S. families, finds that for every child enrolled in a program, there are two more who are not and whose parents would enroll their child, if a program were available.

According to the survey, 10.2 million children participate in afterschool programs, up from 6.5 million in 2004. But the unmet demand for afterschool — parents who would enroll their child in a program, if one were available — increased to 19.4 million children in 2014. Demand is especially high among low-income, African American and Hispanic families.

The survey found that 89 percent of parents with a child in an afterschool programs say they are satisfied with the program.

“Due to the fact that most students come from homes where both parents are working, we have a duty to provide safe havens for our children during the crucial hours from 3 to 6 pm,” said former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, founder of After-School All-Stars. “Afterschool programs do remarkable things for our children, families and communities. Reams of data show it, and I’ve seen it in my own work. These programs help kids with homework, teach them teamwork, engage them in community service, pair them with mentors, help them to be physically fit, involve them in activities like rocketry and robotics, and much more.”

“Afterschool is a wise investment but, unfortunately, we’re not investing nearly enough,” Schwarzenegger added. “*America After 3PM* shows that we are meeting only about one-third of the demand for afterschool programs. We need federal, state and local governments, philanthropies and businesses to step up and provide the resources that will put us on the path to making afterschool available to all.”

“Our country is nowhere close to meeting the demand for afterschool,” agreed Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Across the country, more than 800,000 elementary school children spend time without adult supervision during the after school hours. One reason is that federal funding for afterschool programs has been stalled for years. Eighty-nine percent of parents say they are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program and support crosses party and

demographic lines. We need to increase federal funding for the quality afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, help working families and promote healthy habits.”

Other findings from the 2014 survey:

- **Despite increased participation in afterschool, the number of children unsupervised in the hours after school remains high.** Across the nation, more than 800,000 elementary students and 2.2 million middle school students spend time alone and unsupervised during the after school hours. In all, 11.3 million school age children — one in five — are unsupervised in the afternoons.
- **Parents value programs for many reasons,** including safety, opportunities for physical activity, academic support and more. More than five in six parents of children in afterschool programs (84 percent) agree that programs “keep kids safe and out of trouble” – a seven-point increase from 2009. Sixty-eight percent of parents cite opportunities for physical activity as very important, and 62 percent think it is very important for afterschool programs to offer learning activities that are unavailable during the regular school day.
- **Afterschool programs offer a range of opportunities.** Four in five parents (80 percent) say their child’s afterschool program offers opportunities for physical activity, 72 percent say their child has opportunities for reading or writing, and 69 percent say their afterschool program offers a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) learning opportunity.
- **Afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs.** More than eight in ten parents of children in afterschool programs (83 percent) agree that afterschool programs help working parents keep working. Overall, three in four parents agree that afterschool programs help give working parents peace of mind about their children when they are at work, and among parents with children in afterschool, agreement jumps to 85 percent.
- **Support for public funding of afterschool programs remains strong.** More than four in five parents (84 percent) report that they favor public funding for afterschool opportunities in communities that have few opportunities for children and youth. Ninety-one percent of parents who identify as Democrats, 86 percent who identify as Independents and 80 percent who identify as Republicans favor public funding for afterschool programs. Support crosses all geographic lines.
- **Participation in afterschool programs spans income levels, ethnicity and gender.** The data show that 49 percent of afterschool participants are girls and 51 percent are boys; 71 percent are white, 15 percent are African American, 11 percent are Hispanic, 8 percent are Asian American, 2 percent are Native American. Forty-five percent of afterschool participants are from low-income families. Twenty percent of households that qualify for the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program have a child in an afterschool program.
- **Demand is greatest among African American, Hispanic and low-income families.** Participation in afterschool and unmet demand for afterschool are much higher among children from low-income households compared to higher-income households, and higher

among African American and Hispanic children than white children. The parents of 60 percent of the nation's African American children would enroll their child in a program if one were available, as would the parents of 57 percent of Latino children. The same is true of 35 percent of white children.

America After 3PM details afterschool program participation rates by race, ethnicity, gender and income, describes the types of activities afterschool programs offer, examines barriers to participation, reports on parental views of program quality, and more. It provides in-depth information on children who are unsupervised after school, as well as those who would be enrolled if an afterschool program were available to them. In addition to the national data, *America After 3PM* offers state-level data as well as a snapshot of national participation and demand for summer learning programs. Summer and state-by-state results are available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

On October 23, more than 1 million people in communities across the nation and at U.S. military installations worldwide will join the only national rally for afterschool programs. Sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance and now in its 15th year, *Lights On Afterschool* brings communities together for science fairs, fun runs, community service events, music and dance performances, open houses and other events at schools, community centers, malls, parks and recreation centers, science museums, state capitols, and other settings. Find a local *Lights On Afterschool* event at www.afterschoolalliance.org/LOA.cfm.

Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on in-depth interviews with 13,709 households with children, completed by way of an online survey using a blend of national consumer panels. Shugoll Research collected and analyzed the data for *America After 3PM*. The goal of at least 200 completed interviews was reached in every state and the District of Columbia. In states where this goal could not be reached using online panels, random-digit dialing was used to complete supplementary telephone interviews. In order to participate, respondents had to live in the United States and be the guardians of a school-age child living in their household. The online interview took approximately 15 minutes to complete. All interviews were completed between February 28 and April 17, 2014.

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