

News Release
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Participation in Allegheny County Summer Learning Programs Strong, But Unmet Demand Remains

Washington, DC — Participation in summer learning programs in Allegheny County is at a high level, but much unmet demand remains, according to data from the [America After 3PM](#) study. It found that 40 percent of families in the county report that at least one of their children participated in a summer learning program in 2013. Nationally, 33 percent of families have at least one child in a summer learning program, up from 25 percent in 2008. Despite progress at the state and national levels, the demand for summer programs far exceeds the rate of participation.

America After 3PM is a household survey commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. It includes responses from more than 30,000 U.S. families, including 127 in Allegheny County. It was conducted in 2014, with parents reporting on their children's 2013 participation in summer learning programs.

“The numbers are clear. Demand far outstrips the supply of summer programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “That’s also the case with the afterschool programs from which many summer learning programs spring. We’re not reaching nearly as many children as we could, and some of them will be at a disadvantage in the classroom next fall as a result.”

Research shows that summer learning loss is a [significant contributor to the achievement gap](#); [students from low-income families](#) typically lose two to three months in reading achievement and two months of math skills during the summer months.

America After 3PM, available online, includes national findings as well as state-by-state breakouts of data regarding how children and youth spend their time after school and during the summer. Key findings related to summer learning programs in Allegheny County include:

- **Unmet demand.** The demand for these programs far exceeds supply. While 51 percent of Allegheny County parents report that they would like their child to participate in a summer learning program, just 40 percent of parents report having at least one child in a program. Nationally, 51 percent of parents say they would like their child to participate.
- **Strong public support for funding for summer learning programs.** 84 percent of Allegheny County parents support public funding for summer learning programs. Nationally, 85 percent support public funding, and support is at or above 75 percent in every state.
- **Costs vary widely from state to state.** The average weekly cost to parents for a summer learning program in Allegheny County is \$278, compared with a national average of

\$288 per week and a Pennsylvania average of \$223. State-to-state variance is enormous, with average per-week costs to families ranging from \$115 (Idaho) to \$639 per week (Nevada). Variations may be due to program intensity and length, local staffing and facilities costs, transportation, and other factors.

- **How many hours per day for how many weeks?** Nationally, children participate in summer learning programs an average of five hours per day for five weeks. In Allegheny County, children participate an average of 5 hours per day for 5 weeks. Across the states, average summer learning program participation rates range from three to six hours per day for between four and six weeks.

“By failing to create, fund and sustain summer programs, we’re not only forfeiting the chance to prevent summer learning loss, we’re deepening the achievement gap that makes it difficult for some children to learn what they need to succeed in school and in life,” Grant added. “These programs also give students valuable opportunities to be physically active; learn to garden, cook healthy meals and explore new interests; and support their communities through service projects.”

In October 2014, the Afterschool Alliance released findings from [America After 3PM](#) related to children’s participation in afterschool programs. That data revealed a dramatic increase in participation over the past decade, from 6.5 million to 10.2 million children. The survey also documented a vast and growing unmet demand for afterschool programs, with the parents of 19.4 million children reporting that they would enroll their child in a program, *if one were available*. National and state-by-state results from that report and from this special release are available at www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/.

Nonprofits, school districts, mayors and libraries are expected to host some 700 events for Summer Learning Day, on June 19. For more information, visit the website of the National Summer Learning Association, <http://www.summerlearning.org/>.

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*. 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. 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.