



NEWS RELEASE

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Two in Five Allegheny County Children Whose Parents Want Structured Summer Learning Programs for Them Are Missing Out, Most Often Due to Cost

Parents of Students Who Are Enrolled Give Programs High Marks

PITTSBURGH, PA — The summer struggle is daunting for working families in Allegheny County. Parents want affordable summer programs that keep their children safe, build their confidence, and offer activities that are fun and educational, with staff who are knowledgeable and caring. But there is a vast unmet need in Allegheny County for these programs, which include enrichment or sports programs, summer camps or schools, and jobs or internships.

The parents of 101,533 Allegheny County children want summer programs for them, but while 60,529 County students are enrolled, another 41,004 children are being left behind. The barriers that most often prevent enrollment are cost, issues with location or transportation, difficulty finding information on summer programs, and programs not being available in their communities.

Those are among the findings in [The Summer Struggle for Allegheny County Families](#), a [household survey](#) commissioned by the [Afterschool Alliance](#) and released today by [Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time \(APOST\)](#). Conducted by Edge Research, it is based on survey responses from 30,515 U.S. households, with 456 households with 683 children in Allegheny County screened.

The Summer Struggle finds that many families face barriers to accessing summer programs, but parents with children in attendance give the summer programs high marks. Ninety-six percent of Allegheny County parents whose child is enrolled report being satisfied with the program their child attends. Nine in ten Allegheny County parents (91%) favor public funding for summer learning opportunities.

“Finding affordable summer programs for their children is a major challenge for too many Allegheny County families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Parents need to stay in their jobs to provide for their families, but when they can’t find affordable summer programs, their children may be unsupervised, on screens, at risk, and in some cases without healthy food during the summer months. In Allegheny County, throughout Pennsylvania, and nationwide, we can and must do better by investing more in the summer programs that keep kids safe, engaged, and learning while giving working families peace of mind.”

Support in Pennsylvania has increased through the Building Opportunity through Out-of-School Time ([BOOST](#)) program. In 2024, Pennsylvania invested \$11.5 million in out-of-school time (OST) programs to

46 providers across the state, with 10 of those located in Allegheny County. This investment proved to be a positive step in meeting demand for both afterschool and summer programs and was renewed at \$11.5 million in the 2025-26 budget. The state legislature is considering the budget for next year right now.

On the local level, Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato is continuing to demonstrate investment in the out-of-school time sector with the recently launched [Forward with Families Initiative](#). This initiative will support working families by creating opportunities to expand access and capacity in childcare and out-of-school time programs.

“We are fortunate that our elected officials and private foundations are investing in safe, enriching summer activities for children and youth in our communities,” said APOST Executive Director Karen Dreyer. “Summers can offer creative enrichment opportunities for young people to grow and learn, while engaging constructively with peers and caring adults. Allegheny County spends about \$16 million a year on out-of-school time programs. But this new study shows that, despite these investments, too many children and families are missing out. *The Summer Struggle for Allegheny County Families* is a call to action for all of us to do more to ensure that all our community’s young people can access summer programs.”

Nationally, just 13% of children in low-income families; 26% of children in middle income-families; and 45% of children in high-income families attend a summer program. In most respects, the Allegheny County findings mirror the national survey findings, which also include:

Affordability is the most common barrier faced by families unable to enroll their child.

- 38% of these families cite cost as a factor contributing to their inability to enroll their child in a summer program.
- 18% cite program’s location or transportation as a reason.
- 13% report having difficulty finding a program, say summer programs are not available in their community, or the program’s hours do not meet their needs.
- 10% say programs had no open slots.

Parents with a child enrolled give summer programs high marks.

- 96% of these parents report being satisfied with the summer program their child attends, with 63% reporting extreme satisfaction.
- Half of parents with a child in a summer program (50%) say they are extremely confident their child will be well prepared for the coming school year, compared to 43% of parents whose child is not in a summer program.

Parents’ support for public funding for summer programs is strong and growing.

- Nine in ten parents (89%) favor public funding for summer learning opportunities, up from 83% in 2009, 85% in 2014, and 88% in 2020.
- In the current study, 94% of Democrats, 89% of Independents, and 87% of Republican parents support public funding.
- 93% of parents in urban communities, 89% of those in suburban communities, and 87% of parents in rural communities support public funding.

Across demographic lines, parents want summer opportunities for all children.

- 87% of parents agree that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs.
- 92% of parents who are Democrats and 85% of those who are Independents or Republicans agree.
- 88% of parents in suburban and urban communities, and 85% of those in rural communities agree. Support is overwhelming in every region of the country.
- At least 86% of parents of every race/ethnicity agree.

The Summer Struggle for Allegheny County Families is made possible with support from Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time. Findings from Allegheny County [are here](#) and Pennsylvania statewide findings [are here](#). Allegheny County data were collected between January 31 and June 18, 2025.

The *America After 3PM 2025* study is based on a survey of 30,515 U.S. parents or guardians with a school-aged child living in their household. It was conducted in English and Spanish using a mixed-mode methodology to reach as many households as possible. The margin of error for the national study is +/- <1%. Previous *America After 3PM* surveys were conducted in 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2020. It is based on research funded by The Wallace Foundation.

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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.

Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST) is a convener, connector, and collaborator with Out-of-School Time (OST) providers focusing on school-aged youth in Allegheny County. APOST's vision is that every youth in Allegheny County has access to high-quality OST learning opportunities that strengthen their development, empower communities, and are recognized as essential to educational and workforce development systems. More information can be found at www.afterschoolpgh.org.