



NEWS RELEASE

September 16, 2026

Contacts:

[Lisa Lederer](#), Afterschool Alliance

[Stephanie Van Koevering](#), Michigan Afterschool Partnership

New Study: Parents Report STEM Learning Widely Available in Afterschool Programs In Detroit and Across Southeast Michigan, But Hundreds of Thousands of Children Are Missing Out

DETROIT, MI — Afterschool programs are leading the way in educating the next generation in the STEM subjects the jobs of the future will require. Ninety-five percent of parents of Detroit afterschool students, and 83% of those in Southeast Michigan, now say their child's afterschool program offers STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning.

Three in five Detroit parents (62%) and two in five Southeast Michigan parents (43%) whose child's program offers STEM report their child engages in STEM learning after school at least twice per week. But tens of thousands of children whose parents want afterschool programs for them – 81,091 children in Detroit alone and 404,445 across Southeast Michigan – are not enrolled.

Those are among the findings in [Afterschool STEM Takes Off In Detroit](#) and [Afterschool STEM Takes Off In Southeast Michigan](#), household surveys commissioned by the [Afterschool Alliance](#) and released today by the [Michigan Afterschool Partnership](#). Conducted by Edge Research, they are based on survey responses from 30,515 U.S. households, with 596 Detroit households with 957 children, and 1,146 Southeast Michigan households with 2,002 children, screened.

Afterschool programs in Detroit are educating students on a range of STEM topics, according to parents, with 85% saying their child's afterschool program offers engagement in science, 83% engineering, 83% math, 82% tech, and 77% computer science. More than five in six Detroit parents say afterschool programs help children gain skills and interest in STEM.

Across Southeast Michigan, parents report that 71% of programs are offering engagement in math, 64% science, 64% engineering, 63% computer science, and 58% tech. Approximately four in five Southeast Michigan parents say afterschool programs help children gain skills and interest in STEM.

"In Detroit and throughout Southeast Michigan, and across the country, parents value and prioritize STEM learning in afterschool and afterschool programs have stepped up to provide it," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Afterschool is an ideal place for STEM education. It offers students the chance to explore their interests, engage with peers in hands-on, team-based learning, and see up close how STEM can help solve problems facing our communities and our country. We're thrilled with the tremendous uptick in afterschool STEM learning in Detroit, Southeast Michigan, statewide, and throughout the country. We need to continue the trajectory and, most of all, make afterschool

programs available to many more students. As long as millions of children whose parents want afterschool programs for them are missing out, we have more work to do.”

“Detroit and Southeast Michigan afterschool programs are doing vitally important work to educate the next generation about STEM and helping students apply what they learn in real-life settings,” said Erin Skene-Pratt, executive director of the Michigan Afterschool Partnership. “That, in turn, can help them imagine themselves in STEM-related careers. But every child in these communities deserves an afterschool program that provides STEM. The new \$135 million appropriation in our state’s FY27 budget will help, but we need to continue increasing support until we have enough programs to ensure that no child is missing out.”

Nationally, the Afterschool Alliance study found that 92% of parents of afterschool students now say their child’s program offers STEM learning – up from 69% in 2014. But there are disparities in afterschool access to STEM, with children in rural communities and low-income families lagging behind.

In most respects, the Detroit and Southeast Michigan findings mirror the national survey findings, which also include:

- **Increases in STEM in afterschool from 2014 to 2025 were seen in every state.** The biggest increases were in Arizona, Hawaii, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Washington State, Wisconsin and Wyoming.
- **Children in families with low incomes are less likely to have multiple exposures to STEM in afterschool each week than those whose families have higher incomes.** Less than half of parents with low incomes (48%) say their child engages in STEM in afterschool multiple times per week, compared to 56% of parents with middle incomes and 60% of parents with high incomes.
- **Rural parents report fewer computer science and technology opportunities in afterschool.** Just 70% of rural parents with a child in an afterschool program report that the program offers computer science, compared to 88% of urban parents. Similarly, just 66% of rural parents with a child in an afterschool program report that the program offers technology education, compared to 86% of urban parents.
- **Two in three parents with children in afterschool programs (65%) value STEM extremely or somewhat when selecting a program – but there are differences by race.** Native American parents (73%), Black and Hispanic parents (70%), and Asian American parents (68%) place greater importance on STEM in afterschool than White families (62%).
- **Parents of boys and girls report similar levels of access to STEM in their child’s afterschool program, but parents of girls prioritize computer science, technology, and engineering less than parents of boys.** Parents today report that 93% of male children and 91% of females have STEM opportunities in afterschool. But there are differences in how much parents of boys and girls prioritize different STEM subjects, with 63% of boy parents placing greater importance on computer science, technology, and engineering, compared to just 53%, 56%, and 58% respectively, of girl parents.

- **Parents prioritize STEM, and specifically computer science, more as their children age.** Just over half of parents of elementary schoolers (53%) say computer science offerings are important when they choose an afterschool program for their child, compared to 68% of parents of high schoolers.

Afterschool STEM Takes Off in Detroit is made possible with support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and The Skillman Foundation. *Afterschool STEM Takes Off in Southeast Michigan* is made possible with support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, The Skillman Foundation, the Jamie and Denise Jacob Family Foundation, and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. Findings from the Detroit study are [here](#) and from the Southeast Michigan study are [here](#). Michigan statewide findings are [here](#). Data for these studies 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 Overdeck Family Foundation.

#

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.

The Michigan Afterschool Partnership champions statewide access to quality and equitable Out-of-School Time programs to ensure that all children and youth succeed.