



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Half the Southeast Michigan Children – and 2/3 of Those in Detroit – Whose Parents Want Summer Learning Programs for Them Are Missing Out, Most Often Due to Cost**

#### *Parents of Students Who Are Enrolled Give Programs High Marks*

DETROIT, MI — The summer struggle is daunting for working families in Detroit and throughout Southeast Michigan. Parents want affordable summer programs that keep their children safe, build their confidence, and offer activities that are fun and educational, led by staff who are knowledgeable and caring. But there is vast unmet need for these programs, which include enrichment or sports programs, summer camps or schools, and jobs or internships.

The parents of 62,834 children in Detroit want summer programs for them, but 41,405 of those children are missing out. Throughout Southeast Michigan more broadly, including Detroit, the parents of 385,625 children want summer programs for them, but 213,570 are missing out.

The barriers that most often prevent enrollment in both jurisdictions 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 Southeast Michigan Families](#) and [The Summer Struggle for Detroit Families](#), both based on a household survey commissioned by the [Afterschool Alliance](#). They were released today by the [Michigan Afterschool Partnership](#). Conducted by Edge Research, the survey included 30,515 U.S. households, with 1,146 Southeast Michigan households with 2,002 children – including 596 Detroit households with 957 children – screened.

*The Summer Struggle* finds that many families face barriers to accessing summer programs, but parents whose children are attending give them high marks. Ninety-five percent of Southeast Michigan parents whose child is enrolled report being satisfied with the summer program their child attends, and 76% of Detroit parents with a child enrolled are *extremely* satisfied. More than 90% of parents in both jurisdictions (93% in Detroit, 91% in Southeast Michigan) favor public funding for summer learning opportunities, including more than 90% of Democrats, Republicans and Independents in both jurisdictions.

“In Detroit and across Southeast Michigan, too many children are missing out on the summer programs that can help them stay active, engaged, and learning during the months when schools are closed,” said Erin Skene-Pratt, executive director of the Michigan Afterschool Partnership. “It’s clear from this study

that parents appreciate these programs and support public funding for them, but we need to do even more to ensure every family can access the affordable summer programs they need. Children and families, and our state's economy, will be better off when we do."

"Finding affordable summer programs for their children is a major challenge for too many families in Detroit and throughout Southeast Michigan," 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. Throughout Southeast Michigan 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."

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 Detroit and Southeast Michigan 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 programs' 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* studies are 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. Detroit findings [are here](#); Southeast Michigan findings [are here](#); and statewide Michigan findings [are here](#). The 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](http://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.*