



NEWS RELEASE

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Nearly Half of Greater Richmond 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

RICHMOND, VA — The summer struggle is daunting for working families in the Greater Richmond area (the City of Richmond as well as Henrico and Chesterfield Counties). Parents want affordable summer programs that keep their children safe, have convenient locations and hours, reduce risky behaviors, and are led by staff who are knowledgeable and caring. But there is a vast unmet need in the Greater Richmond area for these programs, which include enrichment or sports programs, summer camps or schools, and jobs or internships.

The parents of 64,459 Greater Richmond children want summer programs for them, but while 33,283 children are enrolled, another 31,176 (nearly half) are being left behind. The barriers that most often prevent enrollment are cost, issues with location or transportation, programs not being available, and difficulty finding information on summer programs.

Those are among the findings in [The Summer Struggle for Greater Richmond Families](#), a household survey commissioned by the [Afterschool Alliance](#) and released today by [NextUp RVA](#). Conducted by Edge Research, it is based on survey responses from 30,515 U.S. households, with 269 households with 441 children in Richmond, Henrico and Chesterfield 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-seven percent of Greater Richmond parents whose child is enrolled report being satisfied with the program their child attends. Ninety-five percent of Greater Richmond parents favor public funding for summer learning opportunities, including more than nine in ten who are Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.

“Finding affordable summer programs for their children is a major challenge for too many Greater Richmond area 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 Greater Richmond, throughout Virginia, 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.”

"This study emphasizes Greater Richmond parents' incredible support for summer programs, but also the fact that we have more work to do in making these essential programs available to all families," said NextUp President & CEO Dr. Traymanesha Lamy. "We must continue closing the gap for year-round out-of-school time programming. I know that by bringing together schools, community-based program providers, local, state and federal government, and philanthropy, we can do that. We will work tirelessly to reach our goal, to make high-quality summer and afterschool programs available to all Greater Richmond families that need them."

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 Greater Richmond findings mirror the national survey findings, which 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 ratings.

- 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 Greater Richmond Families is made possible with support from NextUp RVA. Findings from Greater Richmond [are here](#) and Virginia statewide findings [are here](#). Greater Richmond 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.

NextUp is an out-of-school time (OST) intermediary and nonprofit organization expanding access to quality afterschool and summer programs for Richmond youth ages 11 – 19. We convene a network of [partners](#) building Richmond's expanded learning system of youth development programs, resources, services, and opportunities. More information is available at <https://nextuprva.org/>.