



NEWS RELEASE

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Two in Five Los Angeles 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

LOS ANGELES, CA — The summer struggle is daunting for working families in L.A. and L.A. County. Parents want affordable summer programs that keep their child safe, build their confidence, and offer activities that are fun and educational, with staff who are knowledgeable and caring. But there is vast unmet need in both jurisdictions for these programs, which include enrichment or sports programs, summer camps or schools, and jobs or internships.

The parents of 987,808 L.A. County children want summer programs for them, but just 540,897 L.A. County children are enrolled. Similarly, the parents of 368,179 L.A. children want summer programs for them, but just 228,949 L.A. children are enrolled. The barrier that most often prevents enrollment in both jurisdictions is cost, followed by challenges associated with location or transportation.

Those are among the findings in [The Summer Struggle for Los Angeles/Los Angeles County Families](#), a [household survey](#) commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and released today by [ExpandLA](#). Conducted by Edge Research, it is based on survey responses from 30,515 U.S. households, with 320 households with 753 children in L.A., and 623 households with 1,290 children in L.A. County, screened.

While California invests heavily in out-of-school-time programs, known as Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP), the new survey finds that many families still face barriers to accessing them over the summer. But parents whose children are attending a summer program give it high marks. Ninety-six percent of L.A. County parents whose child is enrolled report being satisfied with the program. In L.A., 60% of parents whose child is enrolled report being *extremely* satisfied with it.

Nine in ten parents in both L.A. and L.A. County favor public funding for summer learning opportunities.

“Finding affordable summer programs for their children is a major challenge for too many Los Angeles 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. 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.”

“California’s historic investment in the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program, including summer learning opportunities, reflects a bold commitment to ensuring young people have access to safe, enriching, and engaging environments beyond the traditional school day,” said Lou Calanche, Executive Director of ExpandLA. “This data makes clear that families want these programs, and the programs are delivering real value for children and youth across Los Angeles. The opportunity now is to ensure implementation and capacity fully match the scale of the state’s investment so that more young people, especially those in historically underserved communities, can access the high-quality summer experiences they deserve.”

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 L.A. and L.A. 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.

L.A. and L.A. County *America After 3PM 2025* are made possible with support from ExpandLA. Findings from the new L.A. study are [here](#); from the L.A. County study are [here](#); and the California statewide findings are [here](#). L.A. and L.A. 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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ExpandLA is an intermediary organization that supports, connects, and advocates for expanded learning opportunities that provide equitable access for all children and youth in the LA area. By working collaboratively with school- and community-based organizations, we will build systems, pathways, and processes that strengthen the field to nurture a young person's natural curiosity, empower their self-development, and cultivate the value they bring to making the world a better place.

www.expandla.org

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.