



News Release
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African-American Parents Value and Are Satisfied with Healthy Options Offered by Afterschool Programs

Afterschool Programs Emerging as Effective Tool in Efforts to Prevent Childhood Obesity

Washington, DC — Some 2.4 million African-American children participate in afterschool programs, and 77 percent of African-American parents with a child in an afterschool program report being satisfied with the healthy food their child’s program offers. Similarly, 81 percent of African-American parents with children in afterschool programs say they are satisfied with the amount and variety of physical activity offered. These findings are from a national household survey conducted by Shugoll Research for the Afterschool Alliance. It found vast unmet need for afterschool programs among African-American families, with the parents of 4.5 million African-American children saying they would enroll their child, if an afterschool program were available.

The special report, [*Kids on the Move: Afterschool Programs Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*](#), reveals parents’ views about the role afterschool programs play in improving kids’ health and physical fitness. Findings are based on responses collected for *America After 3PM* from 30,000 U.S. households, including in-depth interviews with more than 13,000 families, 1,499 of whom are African-American.

“Afterschool programs are a proven, but sometimes underappreciated, tool in the effort to prevent childhood obesity and physical inactivity,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We’ve known for a long time that quality afterschool, before-school and summer programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working parents. These data make clear that they also do a tremendous amount to help keep kids healthy, now and for the future. With some one-third of African-American children either overweight or obese, according to government reports, the healthy habits afterschool programs help instill are especially important in the African-American community.”

The new survey finds that many parents are unaware that standards for healthy eating and physical activity exist for afterschool programs. Nearly four in ten African-American parents are unaware of the recommended standards for healthy eating (33 percent are unaware) and physical activity (38 percent are unaware). The Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards recommend best practices related to food and activity, including at 30 minutes of morning or afterschool program time for physical activity (60 minutes for a full day program). The report recommends doing more to ensure that afterschool providers, as well as parents, are aware of the HEPA Standards. Many parents who report that their children have 30 minutes of physical activity each day in their program are satisfied with that, suggesting that parents believe

afterschool programs play a key role in helping children meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity.

According to *Kids on the Move*:

- More than three in four African-American parents (77 percent) agree that afterschool programs should provide healthy food and beverage options for children, compared with 72 percent of white parents and 69 percent of Hispanic parents.
- Two in three African-American parents (67 percent) and Hispanic parents (66 percent) of children in afterschool programs say that providing healthy food was an important factor in selecting an afterschool program, compared with 55 percent of white parents.
- White and African-American parents were more likely than Hispanic parents to say that their child's afterschool program serves snacks that include healthy foods (75 percent and 72 percent versus 63 percent)
- More than eight in 10 African-American parents (82 percent) and Hispanic parents (82 percent) agree that afterschool programs should help children be physically active.
- When asked about opportunities for physical activity, 71 percent of African-American parents and 71 percent of Hispanic parents report that it was very important when selecting their child's afterschool program.
- An overwhelming majority of African-American parents (82 percent) and Hispanic parents (84 percent) report that their child's afterschool program does provide opportunities for physical activity.

“The afterschool community is committed to doing even more to stop childhood obesity,” Grant said. “Quality afterschool programs are a vital part of the fabric of our communities, providing a rich array of services children and families need. We must increase support for these programs from government at all levels, philanthropies, businesses and others if we are to help the next generation lead long, healthy lives and prepare children and youth to succeed in school and life.”

In October 2014, the Afterschool Alliance released findings from [America After 3PM](#) related to children's participation in afterschool. That data revealed a dramatic increase in participation in afterschool over the past decade, from 6.5 million to 10.2 million children. The survey also documented a vast and growing unmet demand for afterschool, with the parents of 19.4 million children reporting that they would enroll their child in a program, if one were available. National and state-by-state results from that report and from this special report are available at www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/.

Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on in-depth interviews with 13,709 households with children, completed by way of an online survey using a blend of national consumer panels. Shugoll Research collected and analyzed the data for *America After 3PM*. In order to participate,

respondents had to live in the United States and be the guardians of a school-age child living in their household. All interviews were completed between February 28 and April 17, 2014.

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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.