

NEWS RELEASE
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Study: Chicago Afterschool Participation Far Exceeds National Average

Afterschool Alliance Releases ‘Chicago After 3PM,’ Offering New Insights from Groundbreaking ‘America After 3PM’ Research

Chicago, IL (Oct. 20, 2010) – While more than one in four Chicago schoolchildren participates in an afterschool program, even more Chicago children are without supervision after the school day ends, according to the newly released report, *Chicago After 3PM*. The report is based on research from *America After 3PM*, the most comprehensive study to explore how America’s children spend their afternoons, released by the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by JCPenney. [*Chicago After 3PM*](#) reveals city-level data on afterschool and summer learning program participation and public support, and compares those figures with the national averages.

According to the Chicago study, 27 percent of Chicago schoolchildren are in afterschool programs (an estimated 122,610 children) compared with 15 percent of schoolchildren who are in afterschool programs nationally. Participation in summer learning programs is also higher than the national average, with 36 percent of Chicago children (163,480) enrolled compared with 25 percent of children nationally. But despite those relatively strong rates of program participation, nearly 30 percent of Chicago children are unsupervised in the afternoons (131,692 kids), compared with a national average of 26 percent.

“Chicago has accomplished a lot in terms of afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant in releasing the study. “But there’s a long way to go. Too many kids are left alone in the afternoons, when they could instead be under the supervision of caring and trained adults, learning about everything from robotics to literature, expanding their horizons, getting exercise, and more. Fortunately, Chicago has made a strong commitment to afterschool and, as a result, the city has the building blocks in place to make further, and much needed, progress.”

The *Chicago After 3PM* report is being released on the eve of *Lights On Afterschool*, a national rally for afterschool on October 21. It is expected to draw 1 million people to 7,500 events across the country and U.S. military bases worldwide this year, including a Chicago event today at Gallery 37 Center for the Arts.

Released last year, *America After 3PM* found that the number of children left alone after the school day ends has risen to more than 15 million children nationwide – an increase of 800,000 children since the 2004 edition of the study. Last week, the Afterschool Alliance released a

special report, *From Big Cities to Small Towns*, examining the differences and similarities between participation in afterschool programs between urban, suburban, and rural communities. The report concludes that just about one in ten rural schoolchildren attends an afterschool program, and while more than half of rural parents struggle with availability of afterschool options, urban and suburban parents cite affordability as their major concern.

Afterschool experts say that the findings in *Chicago After 3PM* result from strong work by After School Matters, and the Chicago Out-of-School Time Project – a partnership of Chicago Public Schools, After School Matters, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services and its more than 200 community-based partners, the Chicago Park District and Chicago Public Library.

The new report highlights significant contributions by the Wallace Foundation, and the ACTNow campaign, chaired by Chicago First Lady Maggie Daley, Chicago's and Illinois' most visible afterschool champion for more than 15 years.

“Young people are the future of our great city and nation and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are given the tools they need to thrive and achieve success in life,” said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. “We offer thousands of opportunities for our youth in the summer and after school here in Chicago. When we keep our young people engaged in positive, constructive programs after school we make an important investment in our community. After School Matters and the Chicago Out-of-School Time Project are national models for after-school programming.”

Chicago After 3PM also cites Chicago Teen Reach, a state-funded afterschool initiative, which provides afterschool programs in the city with \$6.9 million in funding. Those programs now serve more than 5,000 youth in the city.

To rally public support for life-enriching afterschool programs for children in need, JCPenney is hosting “Round-Up” in its stores from Oct. 13-26. During this time, JCPenney customers will be invited to round-up their purchases to the nearest whole dollar and donate the difference to local afterschool programs in their communities.

“Since 1999, JCPenney has distributed more than \$100 million to help increase afterschool opportunities across the country by supporting innovative programming in more communities and making access grants available each year to families experiencing financial hardship,” said Michael Theilmann, group executive vice president for JCPenney and chairman of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. “Data from the *America After 3 PM* study is powerful evidence that we've made progress on the afterschool issue but more resources are needed to help meet the rising demand for afterschool programs across the country.”

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About the Afterschool Alliance:

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

About *Chicago After 3PM* and *From Big Cities to Small Towns*

Chicago After 3PM and *From Big Cities to Small Towns* are available online at www.afterschoolalliance.org. Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on survey responses from approximately 30,000 parents and guardians on afterschool services during the 2008-2009 school year. RTi, a market research firm, conducted the survey and analyzed the data on behalf of the Afterschool Alliance. The entire survey was sponsored by JCPenney through its signature charity, JCPenney Afterschool.

About JCPenney's Commitment to Afterschool:

As a leading corporate advocate for the afterschool issue, JCPenney works with afterschool organizations to increase the accessibility and affordability of afterschool programs across the country. Through its legacy of supporting youth and charitable organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, The Y, National 4-H, United Way and FIRST, JCPenney formalized its commitment to the afterschool issue by establishing the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Over the last year, more than \$100 million has been distributed to afterschool programs across every JCPenney community thereby making it possible for more children to participate in life-enriching programs that inspire them to be smart, strong and socially responsible. For more information, visit www.jcpennyafterschool.org.