



Afterschool Alliance

NEWS RELEASE
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15 Million Youth Need Afterschool Programs, Demand High for Middle School Students, New Study Finds

Powerful New Initiative Will Help Make Afterschool a National Priority

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Our nation is failing to give its children safe, supervised activities during the often-dangerous afternoon hours. The most in-depth study ever to explore how America's children spend their afternoons finds that 14.3 million kindergarten through 12th graders take care of themselves after the school day ends, including almost four million middle school students in grades six to eight.

America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America finds that just 6.5 million children are in afterschool programs – but the parents of another 15.3 million children say their children would participate if an afterschool program were available. Need is especially high for middle school children. Just six percent of middle schoolers are in afterschool programs; another 34 percent of America's middle schoolers are unsupervised in the afternoons.

“The absence of afterschool programs in many communities forces parents to make impossible choices,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “Parents worry about their children from 3 to 6 PM, for good reason. Despite our nation's increased focus on afterschool programs, we aren't yet doing enough. Unless we increase support for afterschool, we risk more juvenile crime, more young crime victims, more teen pregnancy, more academic struggles, and more poverty because childcare responsibilities prevent parents from getting or keeping jobs. This study should be a wake-up call.”

Funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, the study was released at a news conference here today – the eve of the Afterschool Alliance's annual “Afterschool for All Challenge,” which this year brings nearly 400 educators, parents, students and others to D.C. to talk to congressional leaders about the benefits of afterschool programs and the need to increase funding. The “No Child Left Behind Act” calls for \$2 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool initiative in Fiscal Year 2005, which would give 2.8 million children access to federally funded afterschool programs next year.

“We've known for some time that the demand for afterschool far exceeds supply, and now we know by how much,” said JCPenney Afterschool Chair Gary Davis. “The parents of more than 15 million kids say that their children will participate in an afterschool program if one is available in their community. We have a lot of work to do.”

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In response, the Afterschool Alliance unveiled “Afterschool for All: Project 2010,” a new united national voice in support of afterschool programs. Supported in part by the Open Society Institute, this unprecedented initiative already has brought together almost 250 powerful groups and national leaders representing more than 20 million Americans who believe that all children and youth should have access to high-quality, safe and enriching afterschool programs by the year 2010. Partners of “Project 2010” include educators, youth, youth advocates, policy makers, faith-based leaders, parents, business leaders, law enforcement and judicial experts, and others. More information is available on the project’s web site, www.afterschool2010.org

Samelson and Davis were joined in announcing “Project 2010” and releasing *America After 3 PM* by YMCA of the USA Executive Director Ken Gladish; Providence, Rhode Island Mayor David N. Cicilline; Kenneth Montague, Secretary of Juvenile Services for the State of Maryland; Gary W. Reynolds, Chief of Police of Winchester, Virginia; and Ashley Adeloje, a 12-year-old middle school student in Las Vegas who attends an afterschool program.

America After 3 PM, which includes a first look at state data, found:

- Only 11 percent of the nation’s youth are in afterschool programs. Twenty-five percent care for themselves in the afternoons.
- African American and Hispanic youth spend more time unsupervised than other children.
- Demand for afterschool programs is much higher for African American and Hispanic families. Fifty-three percent of African American parents and 44 percent of Hispanic parents say they would enroll their children in an afterschool program, if a program were available. Twenty-three percent of Caucasian parents say the same.
- Ninety-one percent of parents of children in afterschool programs are extremely or somewhat satisfied with those programs.
- Public schools are the largest provider of afterschool programs. YMCAs, religious groups, Boys & Girls Clubs and private schools round out the top five providers.
- On average, families spend \$22 per week for afterschool programs.

Research shows that afterschool programs are a good investment. Youth who participate have been shown to perform better in school and have greater expectations for the future, while children who are unsupervised during the afternoon hours are at greater risk of becoming involved with crime, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

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For *America After 3 PM*, 30,791 screening interviews were conducted from July to October of 2003 to determine overall participation in afterschool programs. More than 1,800 parents of afterschool participants and more than 16,000 parents of non-participants completed follow-up questionnaires. At least 200 parent households were screened in each state. National participation levels have a sampling error of +/- one percent. GE Consumer Finance donated the team of experts who analyzed the data. Rothstein-Tauber-Directions for Decisions (RTi-DFD) helped with survey design, data collection and data weighting procedures.

About the Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org

About JCPenney Afterschool

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization contributing financial support to five of America's leading after school advocates – the YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H, Junior Achievement and the Afterschool Alliance. Support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund helps provide safe, fun and educational after school programs and raise awareness of the need for more such programs across the country.

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