



News Release  
August 30, 2016

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202/371-1999

## **Study Finds Massive Unmet Demand for Afterschool Programs Among African-American Children in High-Poverty Communities**

Washington, D.C. – Many of the country’s most vulnerable African-American children and youth are not benefitting from afterschool and summer learning programs, which help students succeed in school and in life, because there are not enough programs to meet the demand in communities of concentrated poverty (CCPs). Released today by the Afterschool Alliance, [America After 3PM Special Report: Afterschool in Communities of Concentrated Poverty](#) finds that 27 percent of African-American children living in CCPs participate in an afterschool program – but 71 percent of those who do not would be enrolled, if a program were available to them, their parents say.

The study is based on responses collected for [America After 3PM](#) from 30,709 U.S. households, including in-depth interviews with more than 13,000 parents and guardians – 1,499 of whom are African-American. CCPs are neighborhoods, or groupings of neighborhoods, in a community where there is a high concentration of families that live below the federal poverty line. The government defines poverty as family income below \$24,300 for a family of four. In 2010, the families of 45 percent of African-American children in this country lived in CCPs.

“The need for afterschool and summer learning programs is especially urgent for children growing up in communities of concentrated poverty, who can benefit academically, socially, emotionally and physically from the services and activities these programs provide,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “More than 20 million children and youth live in communities of concentrated poverty, many of them attending schools with high dropout rates. Quality afterschool programs keep students safe, inspire them to learn and help working families, and they can improve prospects for children and youth growing up in impoverished communities. If we are serious about providing equal opportunity and building a workforce that can compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy, we must ensure that our most vulnerable children do not miss out on the supports and opportunities afterschool programs provide.”

The Afterschool Alliance’s new study identifies accessibility, affordability and perceptions as hurdles to enrollment in afterschool programs in CCPs. Among the findings:

- Overall, 24 percent of African-American students in the United States today participate in an afterschool program. Twenty-seven percent of African-American children living in CCPs, 24 percent of all children living in CCPs, and 18 percent of all children in the United States participate in an afterschool program.
- An overwhelming number of African-American parents living in CCPs whose children are enrolled in afterschool programs (92 percent) say they are satisfied overall with their child’s program.
- Eighty-three percent of African-American parents living in CCPs agree that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs.
- More than seven in ten African-American parents living in CCPs (73 percent) report that finding an enriching environment for their child in the after school hours was a challenge.

- More than half of African-American parents living in CCPs who did not enroll their child in an afterschool program (51 percent) report that cost was a very important factor in that decision.
- Families in CCPs look to afterschool programs as a source of support to help meet every day needs, much more than families living outside these communities.

***America After 3PM Special Report: Afterschool in Communities of Concentrated Poverty*** offers recommendations to give more children from CCPs the ability to participate in quality afterschool programs. They include:

- **Make investment in afterschool programs a priority** by targeting investments in funding streams geared toward afterschool programs. This can help programs serve more children and families in high-poverty communities, provide services at an affordable rate, retain qualified staff, and monitor and refine program quality.
- **Capitalize on opportunities in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** to meet the needs of children and families living in concentrated poverty during the after school hours. State education agencies, the report says, can determine eligibility and competitive priorities that help ensure that CCPs are likely to benefit from ESSA funding. For example, state education agencies can make schools that are at least 40 percent Free and Reduced Price Lunch a category of schools that are eligible for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding.
- **Better integrate afterschool programs in communities of concentrated poverty**, making them hubs or connectors to mentoring, food and nutrition, health care and housing programs through community school initiatives, Promise Neighborhood efforts and in other ways.
- **Raise awareness about the array of supports afterschool programs can provide** in CCPs. While parents of afterschool students in these communities reported positive experiences for their children, the study found negative perceptions of afterschool programs among parents whose children were not enrolled in programs. Thus, raising awareness should help address the disconnect between the positive afterschool experiences of participants and the more negative perceptions of parents without a child in an afterschool program.
- **Increase awareness among afterschool programs providers about resources** at the federal, state and local levels that can strengthen their programs and ensure that the services they provide are high quality and meet the needs of children and families.

For the purposes of *America After 3PM*, CCPs are in a zip code that falls within a tract the Census Bureau has designated as a CCP and a zip code that has a poverty rate of 30 percent or higher. Get more background and learn more about the methodology for ***America After 3PM Special Report: Afterschool in Communities of Concentrated Poverty*** [here](#).

[America After 3PM](#) is funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Noyce Foundation, with additional support from the Heinz Endowments, The Robert Bowne Foundation and the Samueli 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](http://www.AfterschoolAlliance.org).*