

News Release
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New Study Finds Huge Unmet Demand for Afterschool Programs in America's High-Poverty Communities

Washington, D.C. – Many of the country's most vulnerable children and youth are not benefitting from afterschool and summer learning programs, which have a proven track record of success helping students succeed in school and in life, because these programs are in short supply in communities of concentrated poverty (CCPs). [America After 3PM Special Report: Afterschool in Communities of Concentrated Poverty](#), released today by the Afterschool Alliance, finds that 24 percent of children living in CCPs participate in an afterschool program, compared to 18 percent of children overall in the United States. Yet supply is not nearly enough to meet the demand, with parents reporting that 56 percent of children in CCPs who are not in afterschool programs would be enrolled, if programs were available.

The study also finds strong support for afterschool programs among parents in CCPs whose children are enrolled in them. It 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. 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.

"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 21st 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:

- More than nine in ten parents in CCPs (91 percent) report that they are satisfied overall with the experiences and opportunities provided by their child's afterschool program.
- Parents report that 56 percent of children in CCPs who are not in afterschool programs would be enrolled, if programs were available. That compares to 41 percent of children who are not in afterschool programs nationwide, whose parents say they would be enrolled, if programs were available.
- Two in three parents living in CCPs (67 percent) report that finding an enriching environment for their child in the after school hours was a challenge, compared to 46 percent of parents living outside these communities.

- Three in five parents living in CCPs (61 percent) agree that current economic conditions have made it difficult for them to afford to place their child in an afterschool program, compared to 47 percent of parents living outside these communities.
- Unmet demand for afterschool programs is even higher among African-American and Hispanic students than white students in CCPs. Seven in ten Hispanic (75 percent) and African-American (71 percent) children living in these communities who are not in an afterschool program would be enrolled if a program were available to them, their parents say.
- 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.
- Summer learning program participation is high among children living in CCPs. Two in five parents living in a CCP (41 percent) report that their child took part in a summer learning program, compared to 33 percent of children in the United States.
- But demand for summer learning programs also is dramatically higher in CCPs than other communities. Two-thirds of parents in these communities (66 percent) say they would like their child to take part in a summer learning program, compared to 51 percent of parents overall.

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 21st 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](#).

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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.