



## **Working Families and Afterschool**

### **A Special Report from America After 3 PM:**

A Household Survey on Afterschool in America

American families are very different today than they were a century or even 50 years ago. In 1950, 56 percent of families fit the "traditional" image of one parent at home, caring for children full-time, while the other parent held a job. Today, less than one-fourth of our nation's families fit that image because many more women hold paying jobs.

In addition, both men and women are working more hours. Average work hours per adult increased 7.9% between 1960 and 1998<sup>1</sup>. But while the work day has grown longer, the school day has not. The gap between work and school schedules presents working parents with the challenge of finding someone to care for their children after the school day ends and while they are still at work.

In order to learn how families fill this gap and how children spend the hours after school, the Afterschool Alliance and J.C. Penney Co., Inc. conducted a national household survey on afterschool. The findings were first released in May 2004. The *America After 3 PM* survey provides the most comprehensive and accurate picture to date of what our nation's youth are doing each day after school. *America After 3 PM* revealed that more than 14 million K-12 youth spend some portion of the afterschool hours taking care of themselves, while only 6.5 million K-12 youth participate in afterschool programs. This special report focuses on how children in working families spend their after school hours and examines the demand for afterschool programs from the perspective of working parents.

<b>Percent of Children in Each Grade Level Who Are in Self-Care</b>				
<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Working Parents – Overall (100%)</b>	<b>Both Parents Working (67%)</b>	<b>Single Working Mom (27%)</b>	<b>Single Working Dad (6%)</b>
<b>All Grades</b>	31	31	32	32
<b>K</b>	1	1	0	0
<b>1 to 5</b>	9	9	7	10
<b>6 to 8</b>	40	39	42	43
<b>9 to 12</b>	60	58	66	57
<b>Unreported</b>	12	10	16	11

<sup>1</sup> Bailyn, Lotte; Drago, Robert; Kochan, Thomas; Integrating Work and Family Life: A Holistic Approach, Sloan Work-Family Policy Network, MIT Sloan School of Management, September 14, 2001.

While overall 25% of our nation's K-12 children (14.3 million) care for themselves after school, in households where both parents or the single parent hold jobs, the percentage is even greater. In these households, 31% of K-12 children (11.5 million) take care of themselves in the afternoons.

<b>Percent of Children in Each Grade Level Who Are in Afterschool Programs</b>				
<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Working Parents – Overall (100%)</b>	<b>Both Parents working (67%)</b>	<b>Single Working Mom (27%)</b>	<b>Single Working Dad (6%)</b>
<b>All Grades</b>	14	12	19	13
<b>K</b>	19	17	26	25
<b>1 to 5</b>	20	17	28	29
<b>6 to 8</b>	7	5	12	6
<b>9 to 12</b>	4	4	4	2
<b>Unreported</b>	10	9	13	9

Overall 11% of our nation's K-12 children (6.5 million) participate in afterschool programs. In households where both parents or the single parent hold jobs, 14% of K-12 children (5.2 million) participate in afterschool programs. Nearly one in five (19% of) children in households with single moms participate in afterschool programs – more than in any other family type.

However, children in working families in rural communities are much less likely than other children to participate in afterschool programs. Only 7% of children in working families in rural communities participate in afterschool programs. Parents of rural program participants are also much more likely than parents of urban or suburban participants to say that they chose their afterschool program because no other programs were available.

<b>Working Families by Residential Area</b>		
	<b>Percent of Children in Self-Care</b>	<b>Percent of Children in Afterschool Programs</b>
<b>Rural</b>	31%	7%
<b>Suburban</b>	30%	11%
<b>Urban</b>	27%	13%

In addition, Caucasian children of working families are least likely to participate in afterschool programs and most likely to be in self-care. African American and Asian/Pacific Islander children are most likely to be in afterschool programs.

<b>Working Families by Ethnicity</b>		
	<b>Percent of Children in Self-Care</b>	<b>Percent of Children in Afterschool Programs</b>

<b>Caucasian</b>	31%	9%
<b>African American</b>	25%	18%
<b>Hispanic</b>	25%	15%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	21%	17%
<b>Other</b>	17%	18%

### **Afterschool Participation and Working Families**

The children of working parents who do participate in afterschool programs spend more time in programs than other children in afterschool programs. Children in households where both parents work spend an average of 8.8 hours per week in afterschool programs; children in single working mom households average 10.2 hours; and children in single working dad households average 9.2 hours in afterschool programs. The average number of hours that all children spend in afterschool programs is 8 hours.

The vast majority of working parents are satisfied with their afterschool programs, with parents in dual income households being even more satisfied than parents overall (93% compared to 91% overall satisfaction).

### **Non-Participants and Working Families**

Compared to the national average, children of single working parents who do not participate in afterschool programs spend more time in self-care and sibling care during the afterschool hours. Overall, children not participating in afterschool programs spend 7 hours per week in self-care, while children in single parent households who do not participate in afterschool programs spend 8.4 hours per week unsupervised. Non-participating children of single parents are also more likely to spend time in the care of a sibling under age 13 -- an average of 6.8 hours per week compared to 5 hours per week for all children.

9.7 million children of working families who do not participate in afterschool programs would be likely to participate, if programs were available to them. Demand among single parents, especially working moms, is particularly high. Single working parents are most likely to say that their child would participate in an afterschool program if one were available. Of all non-participating children, 30% would be likely to participate. Of non-participating children of single moms, 42% would be likely to participate and of non-participating children of single dads, 34% would be likely to participate.

<b>Working Families by Type</b>	<b>Percent of Non-Participants Who Want to Participate in Afterschool Programs</b>	<b>Number of Kids</b>
<b>Both parents work (67%)</b>	26%	5.6 million

<b>Single mom works (27%)</b>	42%	3.4 million
<b>Single dad works (6%)</b>	34%	700,000
<b>Total (100%) – All working families</b>	31%	9.7 million

## **Conclusion**

Finding safe, affordable after school care is a major challenge for America's working parents. As a nation, we simply have not provided the support that working parents need to ensure that their children are safe and supervised in the afternoons.

Afterschool programs are a popular solution; an overwhelming percentage of parents of children in afterschool programs are satisfied with those programs. But too many children today have no afterschool programs. Instead, they are in self-care or being cared for by a sibling who may be too young to provide reliable care.

Until we make afterschool programs available to every family that needs them, we will continue to see too many of our children fall victim to crime, gangs, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and other problems that can affect them for a lifetime. Just as importantly, we miss out on valuable opportunities to help children connect with caring adults, develop skills and healthy habits, and benefit from the academic supports that quality afterschool programs provide.

## **Methodology:**

To administer the *America After 3 PM* survey, the Afterschool Alliance worked with research teams at Rothstein-Tauber, Inc-Directions for Decisions (RTi-DFD) and GE Consumer Finance to collect data via mail surveys sent to more than 30,000 households. The findings are nationally representative. In some instances, the findings have been projected to represent the approximately 57 million K-12 youth in the U.S. during the 2002-2003 school year (the timeframe referenced in the data collection). All of the projected estimates are based on data that were weighted to produce unbiased and consistent estimates of national totals.

The *America After 3 PM* survey was conducted in two phases. In the first phase of data collection, pre-screening was done for overall participation in various forms of after school care. A total of 30,791 households were screened to determine overall participation in afterschool programs and other types of after school care. In phase two, detailed questionnaires were mailed to a targeted sample to obtain a proportionate number of afterschool program participants and non-participants. The final sample achieved for the main interviews was 18,181.

*A note of caution about the data: Experts believe parents are hesitant to admit their children are unsupervised, so the numbers reported regarding self-care may be lower than the number of children actually in self-care.*

**Acknowledgements:**

The Afterschool Alliance would like to thank the J.C. Penney Co., Inc. for its generous support of *America After 3 PM*. We would also like to thank GE Consumer Finance and Rothstein-Tauber, Inc-Directions for Decisions (RTi-DFD) for assisting with the survey design, data collection and analysis of the data. Special thanks to our JCPenney Afterschool partners – YMCA of the USA, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Junior Achievement, and 4-H – and to Fight Crime: Invest in Kids for their input during the survey design phase.

Finally, we would like to thank the households who so generously gave of their time by completing the surveys and providing the data for *America After 3 PM*.

\* \* \* \*

*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 the year 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

*JCPenney Afterschool is committed to helping provide children with high quality, affordable afterschool programs to help them reach the “power of their potential.” The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization. JCPenney Afterschool is a national leader in afterschool efforts. JCPenney Afterschool’s support helps provide safe, fun and educational afterschool programs and raises awareness of the need for more programs that introduce a new world of opportunity for every child.*