



A Snapshot of Afterschool and the African American Community

Every weekday in the United States during the school year, millions of children leave school without adult-supervised activities awaiting them. In recent years, the growth of afterschool programs has begun to offer parents alternatives – safe and educational programs, where children are under the watchful eye of caring adults. These afterschool programs play an increasingly important role in the African American community. To learn how many children are in programs and how many are unsupervised after school, in 2003 with support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, the Afterschool Alliance conducted a household survey of 30,000 families. The *America After 3 PM* survey gives the most comprehensive and accurate picture yet of what this nation's youth are doing each day after school. It finds:

- African American children are significantly more likely to be in afterschool programs than other children. Twenty percent of African American children are in afterschool programs – at schools, community centers, churches or elsewhere. By comparison, eleven percent of all children are in afterschool programs.
- Twenty-five percent of African American children have no adult supervision after school, and care for themselves during the afternoon hours.
- The parents of African American children who are not enrolled in afterschool programs are more likely than other parents to say that finding afterschool care is a challenge.
- African American children are more likely than other children to attend afterschool programs run by religious organizations. Forty percent of African American children enrolled in afterschool programs attend programs provided by religious organizations.
- The top three reasons that African American parents cite for deciding which program to enroll their children in are: whether children enjoy the program (78 percent); convenient location (72 percent); and affordability (71 percent cite).
- Overall, the parents of African American children in afterschool are satisfied with their children's afterschool programs. Ninety-two percent report being either "extremely" or "somewhat satisfied."
- Parents of African American children who are *not* in afterschool programs are less likely than parents of other children to say their children have "no need for afterschool care," and most likely to say that afterschool programs are not available to their children.
- Demand for afterschool programs is great in the African American community. The parents of African American children *not* in afterschool programs are much more likely than parents of other children *not* in afterschool programs to say they would enroll their children in quality afterschool programs, if programs were available. Fifty-three percent of African American parents say they would enroll their children, versus 30 percent of parents in general. Seventy-one percent of rural African American parents, and 66 percent of low-income African American parents, say they would enroll their children in an afterschool program, if one were available.