



NEWS RELEASE
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New Survey Data: Massachusetts Latchkey Kids from Working Families Vastly Outnumber Those in Afterschool Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than three in ten Massachusetts children of working families are unsupervised in the afternoons, according to data released today by the Afterschool Alliance. The data are from the second wave of detailed analysis of the Alliance’s groundbreaking household survey, *America After 3 PM*, funded by the J.C. Penney Co., Inc. The data focus on working families – those in which both parents or the single parent holds a job.

Massachusetts-specific sampling finds that just 11 percent of children in Massachusetts working families are in afterschool programs, while 31 percent of children in Massachusetts working families are “latchkey children” with no adult supervision in the afternoon.

Nationally, working families face steep challenges when it comes to caring for children in the sometimes perilous afternoon hours. Nationally, according to *America After 3 PM*:

- Two in five middle school children in working families (40 percent) are unsupervised in the afternoons. (The study defines middle school as grades six to eight.)
- Fully 9.7 million children in working families who do not participate in afterschool programs would be likely to participate if a program were available, their parents say.
- Fourteen percent of K-12 children in working families attend afterschool programs, compared to eleven percent of all K-12 children. Nineteen percent of the children of single working mothers participate in afterschool programs.
- Just seven percent of children in rural working families attend afterschool programs. Parents of these children are more likely than parents of urban or suburban families to say the program their child attends is the only one available.
- Thirty-one percent of Caucasian, 25 percent of African American and Hispanic, and 21 percent of Asian Pacific Islander children in working families are in self-care in the afternoons.
- More than 90 percent of working parents say they are satisfied with the afterschool program their child attends.

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“Millions of children in the U.S. are as yet unable to reap the profound, life-changing benefits of quality afterschool programming because of limited access and awareness,” said JCPenney Afterschool Fund Executive Vice President Ed Solczak. “We must continue working together to ensure that all our children are safe and supervised after the school day ends.”

“This data provides further evidence that millions of children are without the afterschool care they need, and children in working families are especially vulnerable to being in self-care or the care of a young sibling in the afternoons,” said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. “That’s exactly why providing afterschool opportunities for all is a central goal of the Afterschool Alliance.”

Earlier this month, the Alliance joined congressional leaders to announce the formation of bipartisan Afterschool Caucuses in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate. The Caucuses will build congressional support and increase resources for quality afterschool care. Nationwide, 1,000 mayors, police chiefs, corporate leaders and national organizations have signed on to *Afterschool for All: Project 2010*, an effort to collect afterschool supporters in one unified voice.

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.

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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.

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.