



NEWS RELEASE
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New Study: More Black Students Participating in Summer Learning Programs than Ever Before, But 2.3 Million Are Without the Programs Their Parents Want for Them

Large Majority of Black Parents Satisfied with the Summer Learning Program their Child Attends

WASHINGTON, DC – As students try to recover from the isolation, trauma, and learning loss the pandemic caused, learning opportunities this summer will be vitally important. A new study that looks in-depth at summer learning in 2019 and 2020 finds that program participation among Black students is higher than ever before, with fully half of Black families with children reporting that their child was involved in a summer learning program in 2019. That is higher than the national average and an increase from 42% in 2013 and 35% in 2008. But while nearly 1.9 million Black children took part in a structured summer experience in 2019, 2.3 million more would have been enrolled if a program were available to them, their parents said.

Those are among the findings from [*Summertime in America for Black Families and Communities*](#), a household survey released today. Commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research, it finds that nearly seven in ten Black families without a child in a summer program report that they would enroll their child if a program were available. Cost is the reason Black parents cite most often as to why they did not enroll their child in a summer learning program in 2019.

Then in 2020, participation in summer programs dropped further, as the pandemic upended education and work and family life. Just 38% of Black families report that their child participated in a structured summer experience last year. A structured summer experience is defined in the study to include a summer learning program, sports program, summer camp, summer school, or summer job or internship, but is different from child care.

“More than ever, our kids need academic help, social/emotional support, and opportunities to engage with peers and caring adults, be physically active, and have fun this summer,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The incremental improvement in participation by Black students is good, but we must do even better this year. Cost should not remain a barrier to participation for any child. Lawmakers recognized that by including significant one-time funding for afterschool and summer learning programs in the American Rescue Plan. Now we are looking to states to ensure those funds are well-used. This summer, we have a responsibility to meet the needs of Black youth, as we work to meet the needs of all our children and youth.”

In both 2019 and 2020, more than nine in ten Black parents expressed satisfaction with the structured summer learning program their child attended. Large majorities also said they support public funding for these programs.

Summertime in America for Black Families and Communities is based on responses from more than 29,500 U.S. families, including more than 3,500 Black families, and builds on household surveys

conducted in 2004, 2009 and 2014. It includes national-level findings from smaller surveys of parents and program providers conducted in 2020 and 2021. Core findings from the new study:

- **Black parents give their child’s summer programs high marks.** In 2019, an extraordinary 95% of Black parents were satisfied with the structured summer experience their child attended and 68% were extremely satisfied. Nine in ten Black parents reported they were satisfied with their child’s summer program during the pandemic last year.
- **A safe environment, knowledgeable and caring staff, convenient hours, opportunities to build life skills, and a variety of activities** are extremely important in selecting summer learning opportunities for their children, Black parents say. There are some stark differences between what Black and White parents say is extremely important in choosing their child’s summer activity, with 67% of Black parents and 39% of White parents choosing academics; 62% of Black parents and 39% of White parents choosing snacks and meals; 58% of Black parents and 38% of White parents choosing reducing risky behaviors; and 57% of Black parents and 35% of White parents selecting STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics or computer science) learning opportunities.
- **Cost, transportation, and lack on information on programs are barriers to participation for Black families.** More than one in three Black parents who did not have a child in a structured summer experience in 2019 (36%) did not enroll their child because programs were too expensive. Twenty-three percent cited issues with location or transportation; 20% did not know what programs were available; and 19% said there was no program, no space in a program, or no program that matched their child’s needs or interests.
- **Nine in ten Black parents (89%) favor public funding for summer learning opportunities for young people in underserved communities.** Support is broad-based and bipartisan.

Findings from *Summertime in America for Black Families and Communities* are based on a nationally representative survey of randomly selected adults who live in the United States and are the parent or guardian of a school-age child who lives in their household. A total of 29,595 households, including 53,287 children and 3,554 Black households, were surveyed in English or Spanish and answered questions regarding the summer of 2019. The overall margin of error for child-level and household-level data is +/- < 1 percent. The survey included at least 200 interviews in every state and the District of Columbia. Data was collected between January 27 and March 17, 2020, by Edge Research.

Edge Research also conducted two nationally representative online surveys, one fielded August 4-18, 2020 of 1,071 parents of school-aged children and the other October 12-29, 2020 of 1,202 parents of school-aged children; and three online program provider surveys: one survey of 1,047 afterschool and summer learning program providers, conducted July 20-August 31, 2020; another survey of 1,445 program providers, conducted from September 28-October 27, 2020; and a survey of 1,235 program providers, conducted February 19-March 15, 2021.

Data from this America After 3PM special report, *Summertime in America for Black Families and Communities*, is based on research commissioned and funded by The Wallace Foundation as part of its mission to foster equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people, and in the arts for everyone by supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices. It is also made possible with support from the New York Life Foundation, Overdeck Family Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Altria Group, and the Walton Family Foundation, as well as the Charles Stewart Mott 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.