

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS



After-School Programs

The last 30 years have shown a substantial increase in labor force participation by women with children. 77.3 percent of school-age children's mothers are in the labor force.¹ For many families, there is a gap between the time school-age children are released from the classroom and when parents come home from work. After-school programs offer a safe and enriching alternative to leaving children home alone.

After-school programs ensure that children are in supervised care while their parents are at work.

- 15.1 million children in the United States take care of themselves between the time they get home from school and the time their parents get home from work.² Self-care is associated with more accidents and injuries, behavior problems and lower academic achievement.³
- In households where both parents work or the single parent works, 31 percent of children in grades K-12 are unsupervised after school. According to polling, 26 percent of these families would be likely to use after-school programs if they were available.⁴

For certain groups of children, access to after-school programs is limited.

¹ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). *Employment Characteristics of Families Summary* (2009). Retrieved February 25, 2011, from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.nr0.htm>.

² Afterschool Alliance and JCPenny Afterschool. *America after 3PM*. (2009). Retrieved February 25, 2011, from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3_Full_Report.pdf.

³ The Urban Institute. *Unsupervised Time: Family and Child Factors Associated with Self-Care*. November 2003, 1.

⁴ Afterschool Alliance. *Working Families and Afterschool: A Special Report from America After 3pm, A Household Survey on Afterschool America*. (http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/Working_Families_Rpt.pdf).

- 30 percent of American middle school children are completely unsupervised in the afternoons.⁵ The percentage of middle school children spending time in self-care increases with age. 23 percent of 10-year-olds spend some time caring for themselves compared to 44 percent of 12-year-olds.⁶
- Demand for after-school programs in African American and Hispanic communities is very high. 61 percent of African American parents and 47 percent of Hispanic parents would enroll their children in after-school programs if they were available.⁷

After-school programs promote school achievement and build life skills.

- Children who spend time in enrichment activities have better grades, better work habits and more positive relationships with their peers.⁸ After-school programs give children the opportunity to develop creative thinking, problem-solving, communication and self-direction skills that are linked with success in the workplace.⁹
- After-school programs also benefit the community. On school days, the peak hours for juvenile crime are between 3 PM

⁵ Afterschool Alliance. (2009) *Working Families and Afterschool: A Special Report from America After 3pm, A Household Survey on Afterschool America*. Retrieved February 25, 2011, from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3_Full_Report.pdf.

⁶ Nellie Mae Education Foundation. *Critical Hours: Afterschool Programs and Educational Success*. May 2003. (http://www.nmeafd.org/uimages/documents/Critical_Hours.pdf), 33.

⁷ Afterschool Alliance. "A Snapshot of the African American Community after 3PM." 2009. (http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM_African-American_2009.pdf)

⁸ Nellie Mae Education Foundation. *Critical Hours: Afterschool Programs and Educational Success*. May 2003. (http://www.nmeafd.org/uimages/documents/Critical_Hours.pdf), 43.

⁹ Corporate Voices for Working Families. *After School for All: A Call to Action from the Business Community*. (<http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org/system/files/afterschoolforall.pdf> pg 4).

and 6 PM.¹⁰ A survey of California 12-17 year-olds reported that kids left unattended for three or more days a week were twice as likely to hang out with gangs and more than three times more likely to use illegal drugs.¹¹

The public recognizes the importance and value of after-school programs to ensure that children are supervised while parents work.

- Parents especially recognize the need for supervised care after school. 67 percent of parents believe that there are not enough after-school programs to meet the needs of their communities.¹²
- More than nine out of 10 voters agree that children need organized activities or someplace to go after school every day,¹³ and 52 percent of voters said they would be willing to increase their own state taxes by \$100 annually to pay for every child to attend an after-school program.¹⁴

¹⁰ National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College. *Making the Case: A Fact Sheet on children and Youth in Out-of-School Time*. 2008.

(<http://www.niost.org/pdf/factsheet2009.pdf>).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Afterschool Alliance. "Across Demographic and Party Lines, Americans Clamor for Safe, Enriching Afterschool Programs." January 2004.

(http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/poll_jan_2004.pdf), 2.

¹³ Afterschool Alliance. "Summary of Findings from the 2008 National Voters Poll."

(http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Fact%20Sheet_Public%20Support%20for%20Afterschool_FINAL.pdf).

¹⁴ Afterschool Alliance. "Across Demographic and Party Lines, Americans Clamor for Safe, Enriching Afterschool Programs." January 2004.

(http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/poll_jan_2004.pdf), 2.