



## Promoting Healthy Futures: Afterschool Provides the Supports Parents Want for Children’s Well-Being

Afterschool and summer programs play an important role in supporting the healthy development of young people, and are all the more critical today. Approximately 6 in 10 parents are more worried about their child’s emotional well-being today than they were before the pandemic, and missing out on social connections and friendships is a top concern for parents. Recognizing the serious impact the pandemic has had on young people’s health and well-being, in October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children’s Hospital Association joined together to declare a National State of Emergency in Children’s Mental Health.<sup>1</sup>

As parents increasingly look to afterschool programs to support young people’s overall health and development, but issues of access prevent millions of young people from participating in programs, action is needed to ensure that all young people have the same opportunities to help them forge healthy futures.



### Parents increasingly view afterschool as important to the healthy development of children

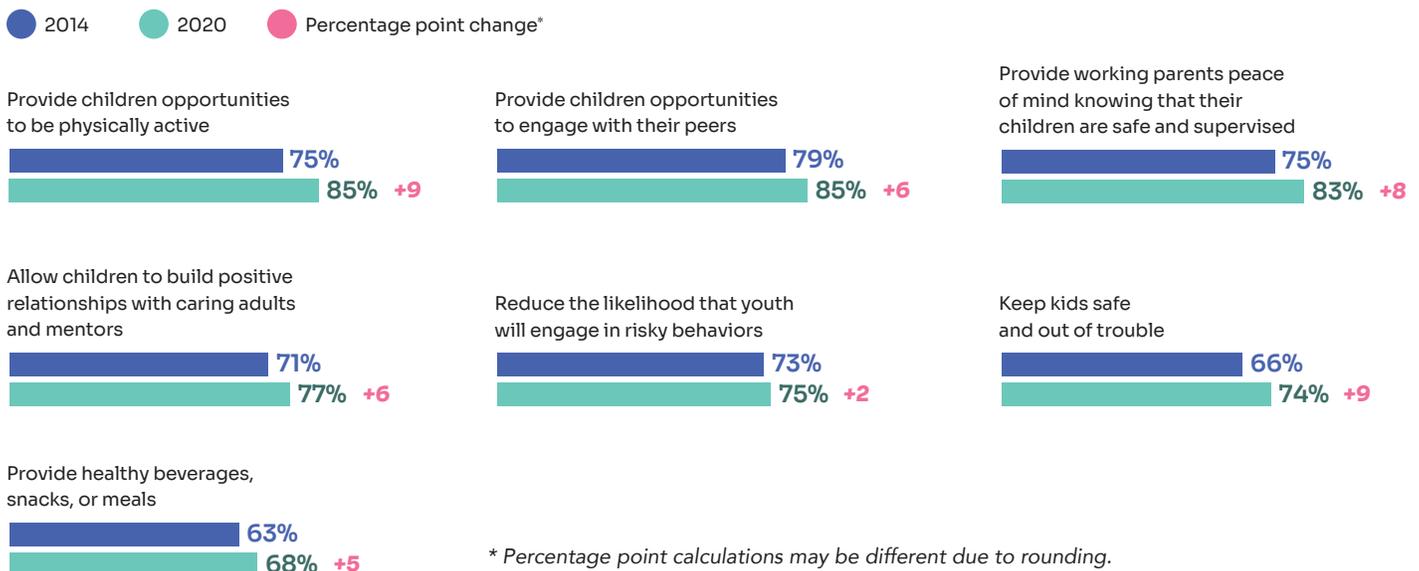
From building social skills and positive relationships with mentors to keeping kids safe in the hours after school, the 2020 America After 3PM study finds that parents overwhelmingly agree that programs are providing a broad set of supports for children that are integral to their healthy development.

### More than ever before, parents believe programs support kids’ needs

Parents are now more likely to agree that programs provide children a wide range of supports than a decade ago. For instance, compared to 2014, parents are more likely to agree that afterschool programs keep kids in their community safe and out of trouble, reduce the likelihood that young people will use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors, and provide working parents peace of mind that their children are safe and supervised.

#### Parents increasingly agree that afterschool programs support children's healthy development

Percentage of parents that agree that afterschool programs provide the following supports and benefits:

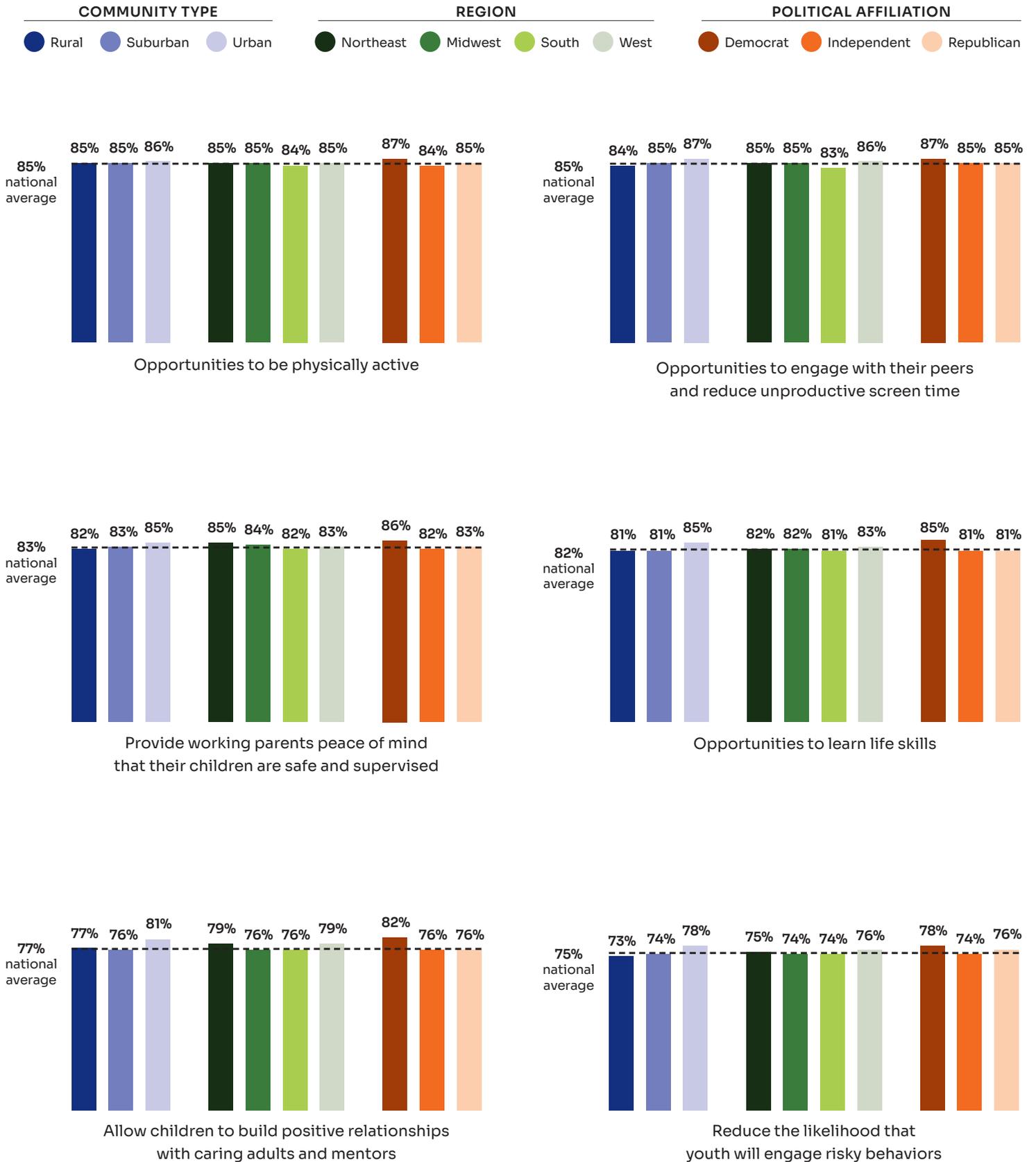


\* Percentage point calculations may be different due to rounding.

## Regardless of community, region, or politics, parents agree on the benefits of afterschool

Across community types, regions of the country, and political affiliations, large majorities of parents agree on the benefits of afterschool programs.

Percentage of parents agreeing that afterschool programs provide children and families the following supports:



## Afterschool programs support healthy development

Focusing on the activities and supports provided by afterschool programs, the three most important aspects parents look for when selecting their child's afterschool program are a safe environment, knowledgeable and caring staff, and the opportunity to build life skills. And, in keeping with parents' priorities, America After 3PM finds that a strong majority of parents are satisfied with the supports they value most for their child.

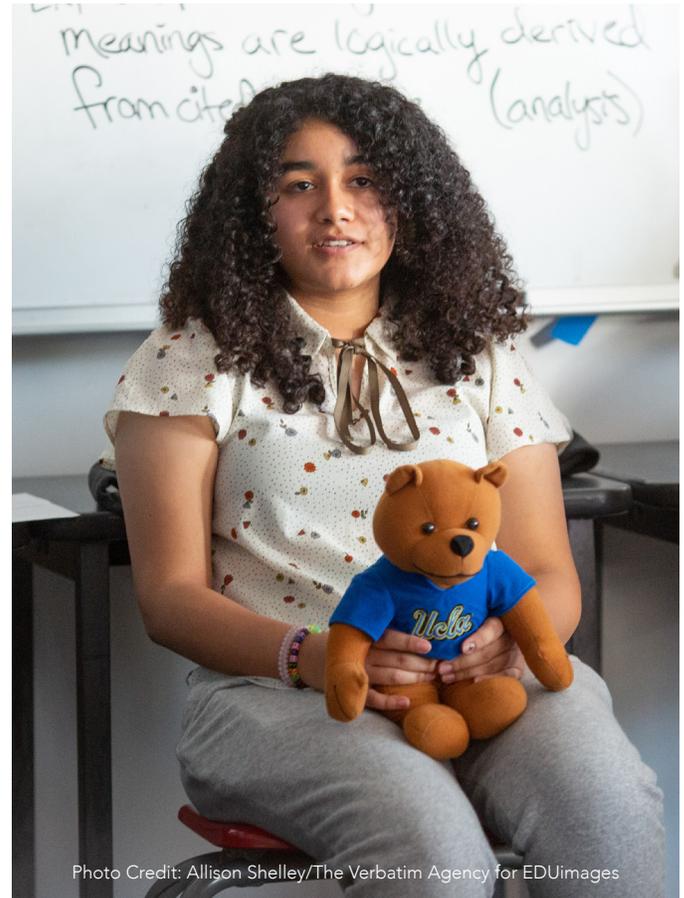
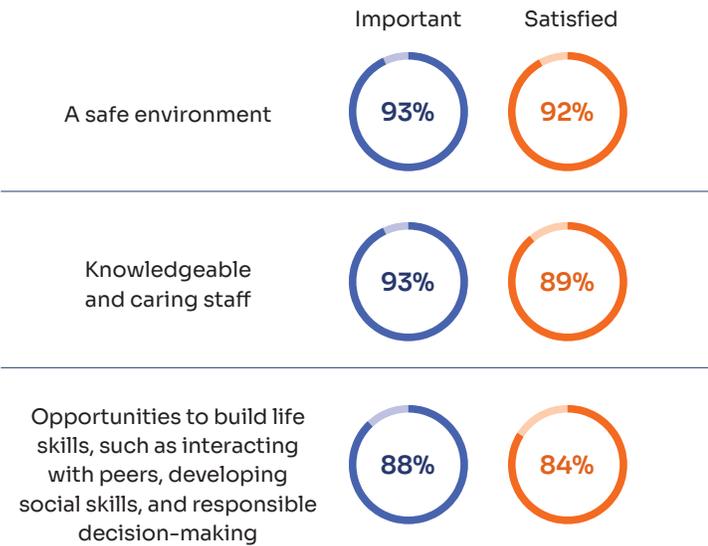


Photo Credit: Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDUimages

## SUPPORTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



During the pandemic, afterschool and summer learning programs further established themselves as integral partners in the network of supports necessary to ensure that all students, in particular those who were struggling and missing out, were provided the care and opportunities that they needed to emerge from the pandemic re-engaged and re-energized.

Afterschool and summer programs reporting that they are providing their students:

● Fall 2021 ● Summer 2021 ● Spring 2021

Time to interact with peers and build social skills



Physical activity



Opportunities to develop life skills



Opportunities to talk with their peers or staff members about their feelings



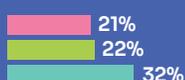
Snacks and/or meals



Family/parent activities



Home visits and/or check-in calls with students and families



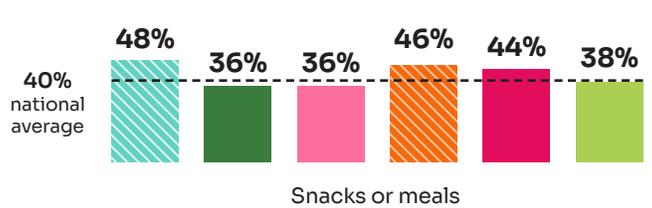
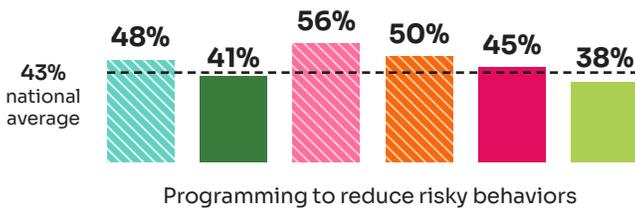
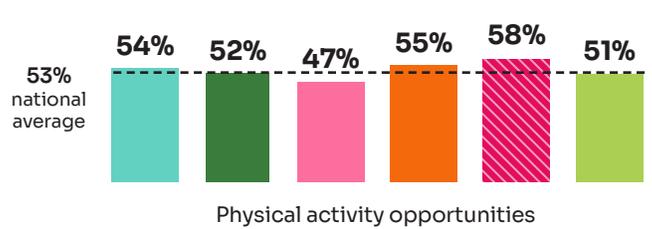
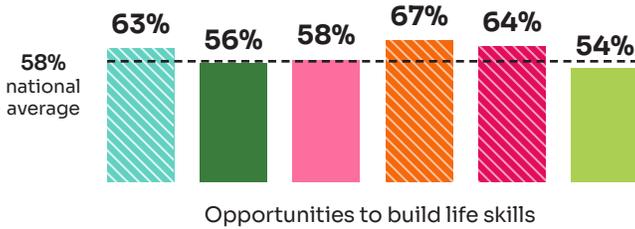
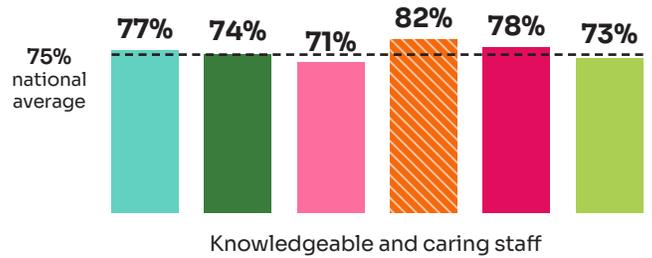
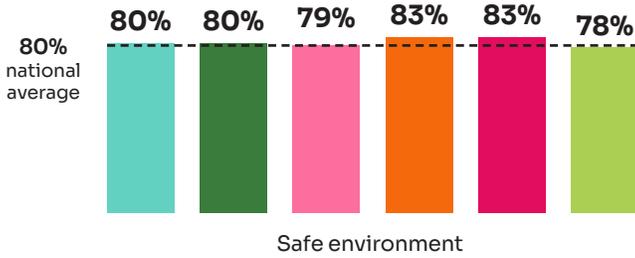
National surveys of afterschool and summer program providers conducted by Edge Research on behalf of the Afterschool Alliance Feb. 19-Mar. 15, Jun.2-28, and Nov.1-Dec. 13, 2021.

## Supports are especially important for parents of color and families with low incomes

All families value a safe environment and knowledgeable and caring staff, while parents of color and families with low incomes particularly value afterschool's role in supporting healthy development.

Parents say these factors are "extremely important":

● Low-income   
 ● Higher-income   
 ● AANHPI\*   
 ● Black   
 ● Latino   
 ● White   
   Statistically higher than the national average



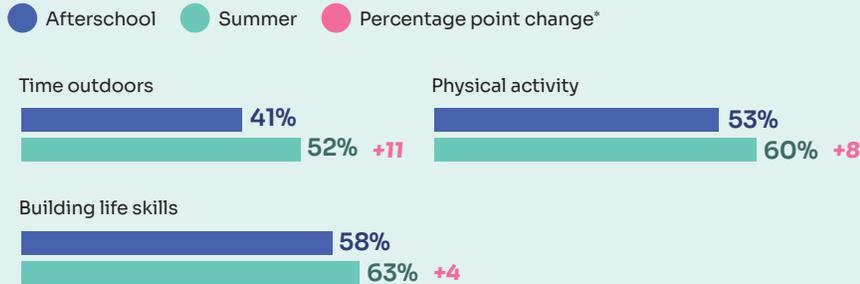
\*Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander parents.



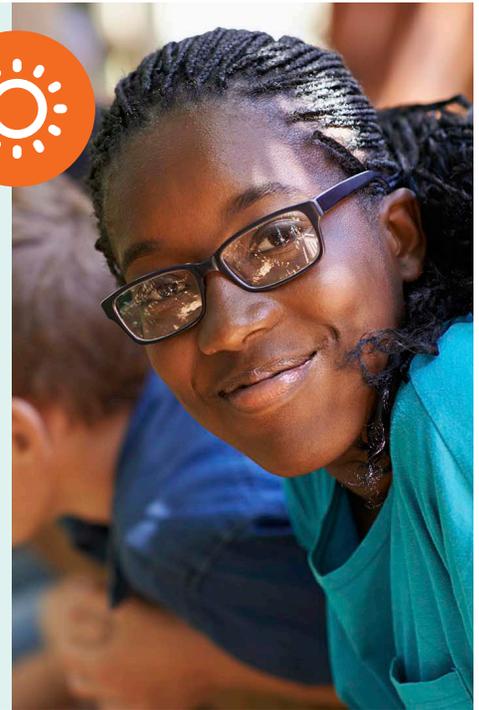
## SUMMERTIME AND HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

During the summer, parents were more likely to report that opportunities such as time to experience the outdoors, physical activity, and building life skills were important in their selection of their child's summertime experience compared to selecting an afterschool program.

Parents reporting the following were extremely important in choosing what their child does over the summer and their afterschool program:



\* Percentage point calculations may be different due to rounding.



## The need to increase access and availability of afterschool programs

Afterschool and summer programs are vital to communities across the nation, providing the supports that young people need now, more than ever. However, from 2014 to 2020, afterschool program participation has decreased as barriers to participation and unmet demand for afterschool programs have grown. As parents increasingly look to afterschool programs to support young people's overall health and development, but issues of access prevent millions of young people from benefitting from the opportunities that programs provide, action is needed at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure access to afterschool programs for every young person who wants to participate.

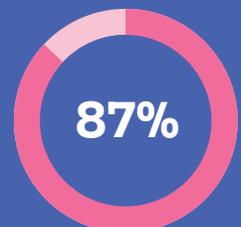
### Barriers and unmet demand go up, while participation goes down.



For every child in afterschool, **3 are waiting** for an available program.



Parents favor public funding for afterschool programs to expand opportunities for kids in underserved communities.



## About the survey

America After 3PM is a national survey of parents or guardians of school-aged children, screening 31,055 households and having 14,393 households completing in-depth interviews via an online survey using a blend of national consumer panels. At least 200 households completed interviews in every state and Washington, D.C., between January 27 and March 17, 2020. Where the minimum could not be met, supplemental telephone interviews were conducted. Data were collected by Edge Research on behalf of the Afterschool Alliance. The percentages and projected numbers in America After 3PM are based on survey responses from parents. Projections for child-level data represent the 57.4 million children and youth in the United States based on numbers from the Census Bureau's October 2018 Current Population Survey.

For additional information about America After 3PM, visit: [afterschoolalliance.org/aa3pm](https://afterschoolalliance.org/aa3pm).

Data from this special report is based on the 2020 America After 3PM survey results, made possible with the support of the New York Life Foundation, Overdeck Family Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Altria Group, the Walton Family Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation..



**Afterschool Alliance**

The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs.

1 Horowitz, J. M. & Igielnik, R. (2020). Most Parents of K-12 Students Learning Online Worry About Them Falling Behind. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/10/29/most-parents-of-k-12-students-learning-online-worry-about-them-falling-behind/>; Learning Heroes. (2021). *Out-of-School Time Programs: Paving the Way for Children to Find Passion, Purpose, & Voice*. Retrieved from [https://bealearninghero.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Finding-Passion-Purpose-Voice\\_research-deck\\_final\\_9.21.pdf](https://bealearninghero.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Finding-Passion-Purpose-Voice_research-deck_final_9.21.pdf); American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, & Children's Hospital Association. (2021). AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>

