



NEWS RELEASE
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CONTACT: Johanna Diaz
202/371-1999

Four Million African-American Children Need – But Don't Have – Afterschool Programs, According to New 'America After 3PM' Study

***Survey of 30,000 Households, Sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund,
Finds One in Four African-American Children
Lacks Adult Supervision After School Day Ends***

Washington, DC – Despite an increase in the number of children attending afterschool programs over the last five years, today more than a quarter of the nation's schoolchildren are on their own in the afternoons, and the parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs if programs were available. While African-American children are more likely than others to be in afterschool programs, millions are unsupervised each afternoon and the unmet need is tremendous. Those are among the findings from a new survey of nearly 30,000 households across the United States conducted for the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund.

The parents of 4.1 million African-American children – 61 percent of those not already enrolled in a program – say they would enroll their children in an afterschool program *if one were available*. By contrast, the parents of 38 percent of all children (of all races and nationalities) say they would enroll their children in an afterschool program if one were available.

Meanwhile, 28 percent of African-American children, 2.5 million, are responsible for taking care of themselves in the afternoons, with no adult supervision.

“While more African-American children are in afterschool programs than five years ago, the survey tells us that we're not meeting the increasing demand,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “There is massive unmet demand for afterschool programs. Despite our success in increasing the availability of these programs, too many parents today are unable to enroll their kids because programs are not available, transportation is unworkable, or they just can't afford the fees. Our challenge is clear. As a nation, we need to increase our efforts to keep up with the rising demand and make sure that afterschool is available to all children who need it. Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families.”

The overall national results of the study were released at a Department of Education event featuring U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in Washington, DC on October 6, and data specific to each of the 50 states is being released this week.

America After 3PM is the most extensive research on how America's children are spending their afternoons. It found that the number of children in America who are left alone after the school day ends has risen to 15.1 million children (26 percent of school-age children) – an increase of 800,000 children since the 2004 edition of the study. Thirty percent of middle schoolers (3.7 million kids) are on their own, as are four percent of elementary school children (1.1 million children). At the same time, Americans see afterschool programs as a solution: 91 percent of respondents (and 97 percent of African-American respondents) agree that there should be “some type of organized activity or place for children and teens to go after school every day that provides opportunities to learn.”

Other key findings from *America After 3PM*:

- **African-American Americans believe afterschool programs work and support them.** The vast majority – 90 percent – of parents of African-American children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the programs their children attend, and overall public support for afterschool programs is similarly strong.
- **The availability of afterschool programs has improved in the last five years, and African-American families are taking good advantage. But overall availability of afterschool is not keeping pace with rising need and demand.** Twenty-four percent of African-American children are enrolled in an afterschool program – surpassing the rate of enrollment of children in the general population – 15 percent. Importantly, the number and percentage of children participating in afterschool programs has increased significantly in the last five years, with 8.4 million children now participating. That compares with 6.5 million children in 2004 (11 percent). But for African-American families, the percentage of parents who say they would enroll their children in a program if one were available has also gone up – by a lot – from 53 percent in 2004 to 61 percent in 2009.
- **The economic downturn is taking a toll on African-American families' care arrangements for their children.** African-American parents are feeling the impact of the economic downturn more severely than parents in general. Half of African-American parents (49 percent) report that the economy has impacted how they care for their children after school (compared to 41 percent overall) and 51 percent say it has affected their ability to pay for care (compared to 46 percent overall). Four in ten (41 percent) African-American parents say their children are spending less time in the care of someone other than a parent after school this year compared to last, which is somewhat greater than the 31 percent reported by parents overall. The primary reason for less outside care is that the parent is no longer working outside the home.

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund, which sponsored the study, has contributed more than \$80 million to afterschool programs throughout the nation with a focus on supporting diverse communities. Last year, more than 60 percent of its contributions helped increase access to afterschool programs for children in diverse populations. In particular, 35 percent of its funding supported African-American children in need of access to life enriching afterschool programs.

“Access to afterschool programs continues to be a major concern for America’s families, which is especially important to our millions of African-American customers who are seeking high-quality afterschool care for their children,” said Michael Theilmann, chief human resources and administration officer for JCPenney and chairman of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. “We look forward to continuing our strong investment in our African-American communities and need others to join us in helping to provide all children with life-enriching opportunities that foster their academic, physical and social development – preparing them for college, work and life.”

“JCPenney stands out among the nation’s corporations for helping to frame and solve the afterschool issue and increasing access to afterschool programs that provide meaningful activities for children in need,” Grant added.

In conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool* events across the nation, the JCPenney Afterschool Round-Up program will kick off in JCPenney stores throughout the U.S. From Oct. 16 to Oct. 25, customers will have the opportunity to “round-up” their JCPenney purchases to the nearest whole dollar and donate the difference to afterschool programs in their local communities that provide life-enriching programs for children in need.

The *America After 3PM* report and accompanying data are available online at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on 29,754 parent/guardian responses to survey questions about after school child care arrangements during the 2008-2009 school year. RTi, a market research firm, conducted the survey and analyzed the data for the Afterschool Alliance. The entire survey was sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. RTi also conducted the 2004 *America After 3PM* household survey.

On October 22, at more than 7,500 sites across the nation, Americans will rally in support of afterschool programs, as part of the Afterschool Alliance’s tenth annual celebration of *Lights On Afterschool*. For more information or to find a local event, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org, or contact the Afterschool Alliance media office at 202/371-1999.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a charitable organization committed to providing children in need with access to life-enriching afterschool programs that inspire children to be smart, strong and socially responsible. To date, JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund have contributed more than \$80 million to local afterschool programs in every JCPenney community through partnerships with the YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H and FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). For more information, visit www.jcpennyafterschool.org.