



Statement of Jodi Grant
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**\$35 Million Increase in Federal Support for Afterschool Programs is
'Very Good News for America's Children and Families,' Expert Says,
But Nation Still Has Vast Unmet Need for Afterschool Programs**

“We join parents, educators and afterschool supporters nationwide in applauding Congress for increasing funding for the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool initiative by \$35 million next year. This appropriation is very good news for America's children and families. The \$1.2 billion appropriation in FY 2010 will provide more families with the support they urgently need during these tough times.

We are especially pleased that the Conference Committee recognized that, ‘research shows that when students have a place to go after school where they can study and be supervised by an adult, not only are they less likely to get into trouble, they also get a better education.’

Unfortunately, even with this increase, 21st CCLC funding is still far below the \$2.5 billion authorized several years ago, and millions of children have no place to go after school where they will be safe, supervised, and have opportunities to learn and develop their skills and talents.

A survey of afterschool program leaders conducted this spring by the Afterschool Alliance found that some programs that were struggling before the recession are closing their doors, and many others are being forced to reduce the number of children they serve, cut hours and staff, and provide many fewer activities and supports for students who are in greater need than ever.

A recent survey of nearly 30,000 households, sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund for the Afterschool Alliance, found that 26 percent of America's children (15.1 million kids) are on their own in the afternoons – an increase of 800,000 since 2004. The parents of 18 million kids say they would enroll their children if afterschool programs were available.

We fully recognize that these are difficult budget times, and congratulate Congress for increasing America's investment in afterschool programs. We urge President Obama to include a further increase for afterschool programs in his next budget, so more children will be safe and supervised after the school day ends.”

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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.