



NEWS RELEASE
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Afterschool Alliance Praises National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

Washington, DC -- Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson today commended the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) for calling on lawmakers at every level to “adequately fund” afterschool programs.

A non partisan coalition of 40 major national Hispanic organizations representing more than 25 million Hispanics in the United States, NHLA released its *Hispanic Policy Agenda 2004-2008* last month to advise federal, state and local officials about the Hispanic community’s economic, educational and social needs. The *Agenda* identifies afterschool programs as one of several critical education components worthy of additional support.

“There is a great need for high-quality afterschool programs in Latino as well as other communities throughout the United States,” Samelson said. “In a recent household survey, we found that 22 percent of Latino children in kindergarten to 12th grade – some 1.9 million children – care for themselves in the afternoons. Parents worry about their children from 3 to 6 PM, for good reason. The absence of afterschool programs forces parents to make impossible choices between the jobs they need and the families that need their care.”

America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America gives the most comprehensive and accurate picture yet of what this nation’s youth are doing each day after school. Released in May, it found that although just 15 percent of Latino children are in afterschool programs, demand for programs is high in Latino communities. Forty-four percent of parents of Latino children *not* in afterschool programs say they would enroll their children in quality afterschool programs if they were available. Twenty-three percent of Caucasian and 30 percent of all parents said the same. The survey was conducted with support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund.

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“We welcome NHLA as an ally in the effort to increase the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, help working families and inspire children to learn. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done to ensure that all families have access to these programs,” Samelson added.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* calls for \$2 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers federal afterschool initiative in Fiscal Year 2005, which would give 2.8 million children access to federally funded afterschool programs next year. President Bush and Congress seem likely to provide just half that – \$1 billion – next year.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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