



STATEMENT OF JEN RINEHART  
Interim Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance  
March 4, 2005

CONTACT: Lisa Lederer  
Gretchen Wright  
202/371-1999

## ***RAND Review of Afterschool Evaluations Offers Welcome Insights but Omits Key Studies from 2004***

“RAND’s new literature review is a useful resource. Policy makers should use it to strengthen and increase resources for afterschool programs, to ensure they do all they can for our nation’s children and families.

In looking at the review, however, it is important to note that RAND reviewed existing literature rather than conducting a new study. It gathered no new data, but instead established its own standards for which existing studies were sufficiently rigorous. RAND’s insights are useful, but because the review did not examine studies after 2003, it excluded a significant portion of the data now available. For example, RAND’s call for broader data collection about demand for afterschool has been significantly addressed by the Afterschool Alliance’s *America After 3 PM* study - the most comprehensive study to date on families and afterschool, based on interviews with some 18,000 parents. *America After 3 PM* found that 14.3 million K – 12<sup>th</sup> graders care for themselves after the school day ends, and the parents of 15.3 million children say their kids would participate in an afterschool program, *if one were available*. The study came too late to be included in RAND’s review.

The literature review is on point in calling for more efforts to collect and disseminate best practices, and for increased and more targeted recruitment and marketing for afterschool programs as a way to increase regular participation by students. Afterschool programs strive to build awareness of their services to recruit more participants, and RAND’s call for increased attention to this challenge is welcome. Similarly, afterschool programs look to learn from successful efforts, and would embrace additional resources on best practices. Several foundations are funding projects that should help afterschool programs in both of these areas.

One of the clearest messages from RAND is that it’s important to design afterschool programs with specific goals in mind. RAND also notes the need to measure programs by the right yardstick – an implicit criticism of the federally funded Mathematica study, which focused largely on academics even though many programs in the study had other priorities. Programs designed to improve academic achievement should be judged on that basis, but programs with different or additional goals should be judged on how well they achieve them. A focus on academics first, last, and always ignores the reality that programs have multiple goals.

The Afterschool Alliance will continue to work with parents, educators, religious and business leaders, and concerned citizens to convince lawmakers to increase funding for afterschool programs – because our children need and deserve them.”

# # # #

*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 the year 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*