



**NEWS RELEASE**  
June 2004

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## **22 Percent of Latino Children Care for Themselves After the School Day Ends, Study Finds**

### ***Many More Would Join if Afterschool Programs Were Available***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States is failing to give its children safe, supervised activities during the often-dangerous afternoon hours, and Latino families are feeling the crunch. Some 1.9 million kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade Latino children (22 percent) care for themselves in the afternoons, according to a new study.

*America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America* finds that just 15 percent of Latino children are in afterschool programs. Yet 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 programs were available, compared to 23 percent of Caucasian and 30 percent of all parents.

“The absence of afterschool programs in many communities forces parents to make impossible choices,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “Parents worry about their children from 3 to 6 PM, for good reason. Despite our nation’s increased focus on afterschool programs, we aren’t yet doing enough. This study should be a wake-up call to lawmakers and the nation.”

Funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, the study was released in May by the Afterschool Alliance, which is urging lawmakers to increase funding for afterschool programs. The “No Child Left Behind Act” calls for \$2 billion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers afterschool initiative in Fiscal Year 2005, which would give 2.8 million children access to federally funded afterschool programs next year. President Bush has proposed just \$1 billion for the program next year.

“We’ve known for some time that the demand for afterschool far exceeds supply, and now we know by how much,” said JCPenney Afterschool Chair Gary Davis. “The parents of more than 15 million kids say that their children will participate in an afterschool program if one is available in their community. We have a lot of work to do.”

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Add One

*America After 3 PM* finds:

- Demand for afterschool programs is much higher among Latino and African American families than among the overall population. Forty-four percent of Latino parents and 53 percent of African American parents say they would enroll their children in an afterschool program, if one were available. Just 23 percent of Caucasian parents say the same.
- Only eleven percent of the nation's youth are in afterschool programs. Twenty-five percent care for themselves in the afternoons.
- Among children who take care of themselves on weekday afternoons from 3 – 6 PM, Latino and African American youth spend *more time* unsupervised than other children – eight hours per week, compared with an average of seven hours for all children.
- Eighty-eight percent of parents of Latino children in afterschool programs are extremely or somewhat satisfied with their programs.
- The parents of Latino children *not* in afterschool programs are more likely than other parents to say that the cost of arranging for care for their children limits their options. And among Latino parents with children in programs, affordability is the top reason cited for deciding which program to enroll their children (73 percent).
- On average, American families spend \$22 per week for afterschool programs.

Research shows that afterschool programs are a good investment. Youth who participate have been shown to perform better in school and have greater expectations for the future, while children who are unsupervised during the afternoon hours are at greater risk of becoming involved with crime, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

For *America After 3 PM*, more than 1,800 parents of afterschool participants and more than 16,000 parents of non-participants completed follow-up questionnaires. At least 200 parent households were screened in each state. National participation levels have a sampling error of +/- one percent. GE Consumer Finance donated the team of experts who analyzed the data. Rothstein-Tauber, Inc-Directions for Decisions (RTi-DFD) helped with survey design, data collection and data weighting procedures.

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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization contributing financial support to five of America's leading after school advocates – the YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H, Junior Achievement and the Afterschool Alliance. Support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund helps provide safe, fun and educational after school programs and raise awareness of the need for more such programs across the country.

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