



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Unmet Need for Afterschool Programs Skyrockets in the Black Community, With Four Million Black Children Without the Access to Afterschool Their Parents Want**

WASHINGTON, DC – Satisfaction with afterschool programs has reached a new high among African American parents, but unmanageable costs and limited access are preventing many Black students from participating. The result is tremendous unmet demand for afterschool in the Black community. In fact, for every Black child in an afterschool program today, three more are waiting to get in.

That is a key finding from [America After 3PM](#), a new household survey commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research. It finds that the families of 24.6 million children in the United States — more than ever before — are unable to access an afterschool program and many report that cost is a barrier. *America After 3PM* exposes significant inequities, with the parents of 58% of Black, 55% of Latinx, and 46% of white children not currently in an afterschool program saying they would enroll their child if they could.

The new study finds that, due to barriers including cost, access and transportation, [the number of Black children in afterschool programs](#) has declined from 2.4 million in 2014 to just 1.5 million today. The decline means more Black students lack essential supports that can help them succeed. It also signals that, while publicly funded afterschool programs have helped millions of students, public dollars are not nearly sufficient to keep up with demand today.

The study is based on responses from more than 30,000 U.S. families, including 3,774 African American families. Building on household surveys conducted in 2004, 2009 and 2014, it offers a pre-pandemic snapshot of how children and youth spend their afternoons and has significant implications for our post-pandemic world. It also includes a separate survey of parents conducted this fall; in it, nearly half of Black parents (47%) report stress due to providing learning support while their child's school is operating virtually, and concerns about their ability to juggle work with monitoring their child's distance learning (46%).

“Black parents say afterschool programs are doing stellar work in helping meet many of their children's academic, social/emotional and other needs. But investments in afterschool have not kept up with demand, and that puts millions of children and youth at risk. The pandemic, which is taking an especially high toll on communities of color, is exacerbating the harm,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Quality afterschool programs are essential to student success in school and life. If we want to emerge from this pandemic strong, we need to provide all our children and youth access to the enrichment opportunities and resources afterschool programs provide. We're not doing that now, and Black families are among those who are struggling even more as a result.”

Other findings from *America After 3PM*:

- **Satisfaction with afterschool programs is strong.** More than nine in ten Black parents (93%) report satisfaction with their child’s afterschool program. That is the highest level of satisfaction reported in the history of *America After 3PM* surveys. Large majorities of Black parents agree that programs keep kids safe (74%), provide opportunities for children to engage with their peers and reduce unproductive screen time (83%), help children gain interest and skills related to science, technology, engineering, and math (78%), and reduce the likelihood that young people will engage in risky behaviors, such as drug use (73%).
- **Black parents say afterschool programs address family needs.** More than four in five Black parents agree that afterschool programs provide working parents the peace of mind that comes with knowing that their child is safe and supervised (83%). Nearly four in five say that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs (79%).
- **Barriers to afterschool participation are growing and inequities persist.** Access to programs is a greater barrier for communities of color than other communities, and especially so for those with low incomes. Black parents are more likely than white parents to report there is not a safe way for their child to get to and come home from an afterschool program, that program locations and hours of operation are not convenient, and that there are no spaces available in the afterschool program they prefer. Black parents reporting that programs are too expensive increased from 40% in 2014 to 58% now; and reporting that their child does not have a safe way to get to and from programs increased from 48% to 58% over the same time frame.
- **Higher-income families fare better.** Nearly nine in ten Black families in the highest income bracket (88%) report that their child participated in an afterschool program, a summer program, or an activity after school, compared to just three in five Black families in the lowest income bracket (63%). Black families in the highest income bracket report spending 3.5 times more on out-of-school time activities than families in the lowest income bracket (\$3,519 vs. \$999).
- **Support for afterschool programs is strong.** Eighty-six percent of Black parents agree that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Eighty-eight percent favor public funding for afterschool opportunities.

“Every parent should have access to an affordable, quality afterschool program that will keep their child safe, supervised and learning,” Grant added. “This study paints a picture of unmet need, with the heaviest burdens falling on Black, Latinx and low-income families. We must do better. Publicly funded afterschool programs have been a lifeline for children. We need to bring more federal, state, local, business and philanthropic support to meeting the needs of students and their families after school.”

A fact sheet on the *America After 3PM* findings from African American respondents is [here](#).

Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on a nationally representative survey of randomly selected adults who live in the United States and are the parent or guardian of a school-age child

who lives in their household. A total of 31,055 households were surveyed in English or Spanish, and a subset of households (14,391 respondents) answered follow-up questions. Data from interviews are weighted on race and income within states and by state population. Projections for African American child-level data are based on the 9.9 million African American youth ages 5 to 19 in the United States from the 2018 U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey. Data were collected between January 27 and March 17, 2020, by Edge Research.

The October 2020 survey of parents was conducted by Edge Research and is a nationally representative online survey fielded October 12-29, 2020, of 1,202 parents of school-aged children.

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