NEWS RELEASE
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New Study: Parents Report Vast Majority of Afterschool Students In Both Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Are Engaging in STEM Learning in Their Afterschool Programs, But More Than One Million Children Shut Out

LOS ANGELES, CA — Afterschool programs are leading the way in educating the next generation in the STEM subjects the jobs of the future will require. Ninety-seven percent of parents of Los Angeles afterschool students, and 96% of parents of Los Angeles County afterschool students, now say their child's afterschool program offers STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning. Sixty-two percent of parents in both communities whose child's program offers STEM report their child engages in STEM learning after school at least twice per week. But 920,887 Los Angeles County children and 345,472 Los Angeles children whose parents want afterschool programs for them are not enrolled.

Those are among the findings in *Afterschool STEM Takes Off In Los Angeles* and *Afterschool STEM Takes Off in Los Angeles County*, released today by ExpandLA. Both are based on a household survey commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. Conducted by Edge Research, the survey included 30,515 U.S. households, with 320 Los Angeles households with 753 children – plus 623 Los Angeles County households with 1,290 children – screened.

Afterschool programs in both Los Angeles and Los Angeles County are educating students on a range of STEM topics, according to parents. In Los Angeles, 97% of parents say their child's afterschool program offers engagement in math, 96% technology, 95% engineering, and 93% both science and computer science. In Los Angeles County, 95% of parents say their child's afterschool program offers math, 94% engineering, 93% technology, 92% science, and 89% computer science. Nine in ten Los Angeles parents, and five in six Los Angeles County parents, say afterschool programs help children gain skills and interest in STEM.

"In Los Angeles and across the country, parents value and prioritize STEM learning in afterschool, and afterschool programs have stepped up to provide it," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Afterschool is an ideal place for STEM education. It offers students the chance to explore their interests, engage with peers in hands-on, team-based learning, and see up close how STEM can help solve problems facing our communities and our country. We're thrilled with the near-universal afterschool STEM learning in Los Angeles City and County, and nationwide. We need to continue the trajectory and, most of all, make afterschool programs available to many more students. As long as millions of children whose parents want afterschool programs for them are missing out, we have more work to do."

“Los Angeles is proving what’s possible when young people have access to high-quality expanded learning,” said Lou Calanche, Executive Director of ExpandLA. “In neighborhoods across our city and county, afterschool programs are giving young people opportunities to build, experiment, solve problems and see themselves as creators of what comes next. But the real story in these numbers is that far too many families are still waiting for that opportunity. In a region as innovative and diverse as Los Angeles, a child’s ZIP code or family income should never determine whether they have access to STEM, mentors and the experiences that can shape their future. Our job now is to make sure the opportunity we know works reaches every young person who wants it.”

Nationally, the Afterschool Alliance study found that 92% of parents of afterschool students now say their child’s program offers STEM learning – up from 69% in 2014. But there are disparities in afterschool access to STEM, with low-income families lagging behind.

In most respects, the Los Angeles and Los Angeles County findings mirror the national survey findings, which also include:

- Increases in STEM in afterschool from 2014 to 2025 were seen in every state. The biggest increases were in Arizona, Hawaii, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Washington State, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

- Children in families with low incomes are less likely to have multiple exposures to STEM in afterschool each week than those whose families have higher incomes. Less than half of parents with low incomes (48%) say their child engages in STEM in afterschool multiple times per week, compared to 56% of parents with middle incomes and 60% of parents with high incomes.

- Rural parents report fewer computer science and technology opportunities in afterschool. Just 70% of rural parents with a child in an afterschool program report that the program offers computer science, compared to 88% of urban parents. Similarly, just 66% of rural parents with a child in an afterschool program report that the program offers technology education, compared to 86% of urban parents.

- Two in three parents with children in afterschool programs (65%) value STEM extremely or somewhat when selecting a program – but there are differences by race. Native American parents (73%), Black and Hispanic parents (70%), and Asian American parents (68%) place greater importance on STEM in afterschool than White families (62%).

- Parents of boys and girls report similar levels of access to STEM in their child’s afterschool program, but parents of girls prioritize computer science, technology, and engineering less than parents of boys. Parents today report that 93% of male children and 91% of females have STEM opportunities in afterschool. But there are differences in how much parents of boys and girls prioritize different STEM subjects, with 63% of boy parents placing greater importance on computer science, technology, and engineering, compared to just 53%, 56%, and 58% respectively, of girl parents.

- Parents prioritize STEM, and specifically computer science, more as their children age. Just over half of parents of elementary schoolers (53%) say computer science offerings are important when they choose an afterschool program for their child, compared to 68% of parents of high schoolers.

Findings from Los Angeles are here and from Los Angeles County here. California statewide findings are here. The data for both were collected between January 31 and June 18, 2025.

The America After 3PM 2025 study is based on a survey of 30,515 U.S. parents or guardians with a school-aged child living in their household. It was conducted in English and Spanish using a mixed-mode methodology to reach as many households as possible. The margin of error for the national study is +/- <1%. Previous America After 3PM surveys were conducted in 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2020. It is based on research funded by Overdeck Family Foundation.

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ExpandLA is an intermediary organization that supports, connects, and advocates for expanded learning opportunities that provide equitable access for all children and youth in the LA area. By working collaboratively with school- and community-based organizations, we will build systems, pathways, and processes that strengthen the field to nurture a young person's natural curiosity, empower their self-development, and cultivate the value they bring to making the world a better place.
www.expandla.org

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.