



Key Findings

From Big Cities to Small Towns takes a fresh look at the *America After 3PM* data from the perspective of community type and examines how kids’ afterschool experiences differ from one community to another. The nearly 30,000 household data set from *America After 3PM* was divided into three community types—rural, urban and suburban—and analyzed for differences in afterschool participation, access, barriers, satisfaction and more.

America After 3PM: From Big Cites to Small Towns finds that the nation has a long way to go to meet the needs of kids and families from urban, suburban and rural communities when schools are not in session. The demand for afterschool and summer programs is very high in all community types, especially among low-income students who need them most. Parents across the board are struggling to provide after school care for their children in the weakened economy. They see afterschool programs as an answer. The vast majority of parents whose children are in afterschool programs are satisfied with the programs their children attend, and public support for afterschool programs is strong in urban, suburban and rural communities.

How Kids From Big Cities to Small Towns Spend Their After School Hours							
	National %	Rural %	Number of Rural Kids	Suburban %	Number of Suburban Kids	Urban %	Number of Urban Kids
Percentage of Kids in Afterschool Programs	15	11	1,171,600	13	3,933,230	18	3,347,430
Percentage of Kids in Self Care	26	26	2,713,481	26	7,838,946	26	4,522,469
Percentage of Kids Who Would Participate if an Afterschool Program were Available	38	39	4,059,948	33	8,304,440	46	6,089,922

- Participation in self care is affected little by geography. More than a quarter (26 percent) of America’s rural, urban and suburban schoolchildren are on their own after the school day ends, and before parents get home from work.
- Children in urban areas are benefitting from afterschool programs at the highest rate. But there are not enough programs to keep pace with the need in any geographical setting.
 - More than 3.3 million kids in urban areas (18 percent) participate in afterschool programs, compared to 3.9 million kids in suburban areas (13 percent) and 1.2 million kids in rural areas (11 percent).
 - Parents of six million urban children (46 percent), 8.3 million suburban children (33 percent) and 4.1 million rural children (39 percent) who are not currently participating in afterschool programs say they would enroll their children if a program were available to them.



- Participation in summer programs is appreciably higher among urban children when compared to rural and suburban children, and while demand for summer programs is high among all populations, urban parents show slightly more interest in getting their child involved in summer programs.
- The rural-urban difference in afterschool participation is greater among low-income populations, though demand and concerns with cost are high among all low-income families.
- Each community type has its own distinct barriers to access to after school care. While rural parents seeking care struggle with availability and information about afterschool options, urban parents cite convenience of location and safety issues as major concerns.
 - Transportation and cost are barriers to afterschool participation in all community types.
- As might be expected, rural, urban and suburban children participate in different types of afterschool programs and report different reasons for selecting their afterschool programs.
 - Urban participants were more likely to choose an afterschool program based on whether it provided music, art and culture, while rural participants were more likely to choose an afterschool program because it was the only program available to them.
- Americans see afterschool programs as an answer, regardless of geographical differences. The vast majority of parents of children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the programs their children attend, and public support for afterschool programs is unusually strong across urban, suburban and rural populations.

America After 3PM: From Big Cities to Small Towns provides clear evidence that there is an urgent and unmet need for greater support for afterschool programs in all types of communities across the United States.

While there are some distinctions regarding availability and access to afterschool among the three community types, they all share clear similarities: Children and families in all community types need more afterschool programs. Parents are satisfied with the programs that children are attending, but there are not nearly enough programs to meet the need in any type of community.

Regardless of whether a child lives in a rural, urban or suburban community, every child deserves access to a quality afterschool program. The benefits of participating in quality afterschool are clear, as is the public demand for programs. What's needed is increased support from all levels of government, and the philanthropic and business communities, to help ensure that every child, regardless of community type, can benefit from a safe, enriching, quality afterschool program.

According to U. S. Census data from 2007, the total school-age population is 57.3 million, which is the foundation for the national projections in *America After 3PM*.

America After 3PM was sponsored by JCPenney Afterschool. Between March and May 2009, 29,754 parents/guardians responded to survey questions about their after school child care arrangements during the 2008-2009 school year. RTi, a market research firm, conducted the survey and analyzed the data for the Afterschool Alliance. Additional information from *America After 3PM* is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

