



CONTACT: Aylissa Kiely Tyndale
717-763-1661 x117

NEWS RELEASE

October 20, 2009

More than Half a Million Pennsylvania Children Need – But Don’t Have – Afterschool Programs, According to “America After 3PM” Study

87 percent of Pennsylvania adults surveyed believe that there should be some type of organized activity for young people

Harrisburg, PA – A new study finds that more than a quarter of Pennsylvania’s schoolchildren are on their own in the afternoons, and another 15 percent are in the care of their siblings. There has been no progress in participation in afterschool programs by Pennsylvania youth over the last five years, even as statewide demand for afterschool programs has increased. The rate of participation in afterschool held steady at just nine percent, trailing the national average of 15 percent. The data come from the landmark *America After 3PM* study, conducted for the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund.

“Despite hard work by the afterschool community, we’re losing ground when compared to other states in the effort to provide afterschool for all Pennsylvania kids and families,” said Kacy Conley, Director of the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network. “So we’ve clearly got our work cut out for us.”

The survey also finds that the parents of 32 percent of children not already in afterschool say they would enroll their kids in a program if one were available. The vast majority of parents (84 percent) of children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the programs their children attend. Overall public support for afterschool programs is very strong; 83 percent of Pennsylvania adults surveyed support public funding for afterschool programs.

A study released in July by the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee that looked at afterschool in Pennsylvania recommends the creation of a statewide Afterschool Coordinating Council to look at issues such as funding, quality standards, transportation and regional databases to help parents find appropriate programs. The report can be found at <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/>.

-- more --

“Too many children who need afterschool programs don’t have them, and families are carrying a heavier burden as a result,” Conley added. “That’s particularly difficult during these hard economic times. For afterschool programs to meet the huge unmet demand from families, they’re going to need more support from all sectors – from the business and philanthropic communities, as well as from the government at all levels.”

The *America After 3PM* study was released this month in conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool*, a nationwide rally for afterschool set for October 22. More than 260 Pennsylvania programs will celebrate the event. The report and accompanying data are available online at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

###

The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) promotes sustainable, high-quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families. PSAYDN believes all children and youth deserve access to programs that encourage positive youth development and support the successful transition to adulthood. More information is available at www.psaydn.org.