

Latino Youth Need Better Access to After-School Programs

Access, cost and transportation are preventing enrollment of Latino youth.

January 29, 2021 By [Alicia Green](#)

A new survey by nonprofit organization Afterschool Alliance reveals that due to barriers, such as access, cost and transportation, many Latino students aren't participating in after-school programs that can help them succeed, according to a recent [press release](#).

In the United States, after-school programs are essential to helping many children meet academic, social, emotional and other needs. But more than 24.6 million eligible children aren't accessing these programs. What's more, the number of Latino youth in after-school programs has declined by 1.5 million over the past seven years.

For the survey, titled America After 3PM, more than 30,000 families, including 4,393 Latino parents, responded to questions about how their children spent their afternoons before COVID-19. Overall, 55% of Latino, 58% of Black and 46% of white parents reported that their kids didn't participate in after-school programs. However, these parents said they would enroll their children in one if they could.

Among Latino parents with children in after-school programs, 94% reported satisfaction with their child's program, the highest level of satisfaction reported in the history of America After 3PM surveys.

Latino parents agreed that these programs kept their kids safe (74%) and provided their youngsters with opportunities to engage with other children and reduced both unnecessary screen time (85%) and risky behaviors (76%). In addition, parents reported that after-school programs helped arouse their children's interest in science, technology engineering and math and in learning related skills (80%).

Parents also felt that these programs helped provide peace of mind by ensuring that their young ones were safe and supervised (84%) and helping working parents keep their jobs (82%).

However, Latino parents were more likely than white parents to feel that safe transportation to and from after-school programs was lacking, that program locations and hours weren't convenient and that there were no available slots in programs they liked.

When it came to cost, 57% of parents felt after-school programs weren't affordable. Compared to 63% of Latino families with the lowest income, 94% of those with higher incomes were more likely to have their child enrolled in an after-school or summer program or activity. Families with higher incomes also spent 7.4 times more money on out-of-school activities.

Overall, 85% of Latino parents believe that all youth should have access to quality after-school and summer programs. A majority of these parents (88%) are also in favor of public funding for such opportunities.

"Quality after-school programs are essential to student success in school and life," said Jodi Grant, executive director of Afterschool Alliance. "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 after-school programs provide."

Among those who need better and equal access are Latino youth, Grant says. Grant is calling for more support on the federal, state and local levels as well as from businesses and philanthropies to help meet the needs of Latino students and their families.

"Every parent should have access to an affordable, quality after-school program that will keep their child safe, supervised and learning," Grant said.

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