



## NEWS RELEASE

### **NATIONAL SURVEY SHOWS ARIZONA AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS PLAY KEY ROLE IN IMPROVING HEALTH, WELLNESS OF STATE'S CHILDREN**

*Earlier Survey Showed 37% of Arizona Children 10-17 Were Overweight or Obese in 2012*

PHOENIX, Ariz. (March xx, 2015): An overwhelming majority of parents with children participating in out-of-school time programs in Arizona were satisfied with both the variety of physical activity and the quality of healthy snacks and foods, adding to growing evidence that out-of-school time programs are an effective tool in preventing childhood obesity.

"This is particularly important in Arizona where a recent Kids Count Survey showed that nearly 40 percent of children and teens from 10 to 17 in 2012 were overweight or obese, a 7 percent increase from 2003," said Melanie McClintock, Executive Director, Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence. "The Kids Count Report also showed that nearly 50 percent of children and teens don't exercise regularly."

The special report released this week from a household survey conducted by Shugoll Research for the Afterschool Alliance, [\*Kids on the Move: Afterschool Programs Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity\*](#), explores parents' views about the role afterschool programs play in improving the health and physical fitness of their children. Findings are based on responses collected for *America After 3PM* from 30,000 U.S. households, including 261 in Arizona.

According to the survey, 90 percent of parents completing the household interviews in Arizona were satisfied with the variety of physical activity offered in their child's out-of-school time program. Activities included indoor and outdoor games and skill-building activities.

Eighty-nine percent of parents were satisfied that the snacks and meals at their child's program are healthy. Healthy foods were described as minimally processed foods made with whole grains and heart healthy fats or oils and without added sugar or trans fats; fruits and vegetables, and beverages without added sugar. Nearly 50 percent of the programs offered beverages, snacks and/or meals.

"Out-of-school time programs have a lasting positive impact on children's health by providing nutritious snacks and meals, and opportunities for physical activity," McClintock said. "Every day, they teach students about nutrition and fitness and many will carry those healthy habits with them for the rest of their lives."

One example of the success of these efforts is the Kyrene Elementary School District which has incorporated a nutrition and wellness component created and implemented by nutrition student interns at Arizona State University.

“In Kyrene, we believe strongly in providing programming that promotes physical activity and overall wellness,” said Josh Gilder, Kyrene Elementary School District Assistant Director of Community Education and Outreach Services. “We also have over 500 students participating in our elementary intramural program where students learn about competitive play without losing sight of respecting each other or having fun. By teaching students how to play fairly and competitively, we create an environment where referees are not needed.”

In 2014, 178,554 Arizona children, or 16 percent, participated in out-of-school time programs. Research also shows that an additional 318,223 children would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them. *Arizona After 3PM: Kids on the Move* also showed that 19 percent, or 214,043, of Arizona’s children are alone and unsupervised between 3 and 6 p.m.

Other key national findings from *Kids on the Move*:

- Older youth are less likely than younger children to attend an afterschool program that offers food and less likely to be physically active in their program.
- Providing healthy food during afterschool programs is especially important to low-income, African-American and Hispanic parents.
- Opportunities for physical activity are important to African-American, Hispanic and low-income parents.
- Many parents are unaware that standards for healthy eating and physical activity exist in afterschool programs.

To see survey results as they relate to Arizona, visit [www.afterschool.org](http://www.afterschool.org). For the complete survey, visit [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

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#### **ABOUT THE ARIZONA CENTER FOR AFTERSCHOOL EXCELLENCE**

The Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence is dedicated to improving access to high quality out-of-school learning opportunities for Arizona children and youth through professional development, advocacy and community capacity building. The Arizona Center is one of 47 statewide afterschool networks nationwide supported by the C.S. Mott Foundation. For more information, visit [www.afterschool.org](http://www.afterschool.org).

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