



America After 3PM for Native American Families

Introduction

Native Americans are not a monolith, representing more than 570 tribes, 3.7 million people, and 644,000 students across the country.¹ Recognizing the struggles and trauma that Native Americans have experienced and the historical mistreatment of Native communities, as well as understanding Native communities' cultures, values, and traditions is fundamental to the fabric of the United States.²

For the first time, an analysis of America After 3PM data provides an in-depth look at the afterschool experiences of Native American children and youth, including the availability of afterschool programs, qualities Native American parents care most about in afterschool programs, and potential areas of growth for the afterschool field to reach more Native American young people.³

America After 3PM reveals that afterschool programs play an important role in Native American communities, providing comprehensive supports for Native American children that include academic support and enrichment activities, time to build relationships with peers and adults, health and wellness programming, and connecting students with their culture. Native American parents—with and without a child in an afterschool program—recognize these benefits as well, and view afterschool programs as a positive place for youth to learn, grow, and thrive. Afterschool programs also serve as a lifeline for working families, with more than 8 in 10 Native American parents agreeing that their child's afterschool program helps them keep their job.



All photos in this brief are courtesy of Bristol Bay 4-H

Unmet demand for afterschool in Native American communities

In 2020, among Native American children who were not enrolled in an afterschool program, 45 percent would have been enrolled if a program were available. While higher than unmet demand nationally in 2014 (41 percent), the current unmet demand among Native American children is lower than unmet demand among Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) (62 percent); Black (58 percent); Latinx (55 percent); and White children (46 percent).



Access, convenience, and cost are greater barriers to afterschool participation in Native American communities

Although Native American parents have high regard for afterschool programs, their children are not participating at the same rate as other racial or ethnic groups. Fourteen percent of Native American children across the country participate in an afterschool program. While on par with the national average (14 percent) and higher than White children (12 percent), it is lower than other communities of color, including Black children (18 percent), AANHPI children (18 percent), and Latinx children (16 percent) (Figure 1).

This lower participation comes as Native American parents are increasingly reporting barriers to enrolling their children in a program. The percentage of Native American parents sharing that afterschool program locations are not convenient increased by 16 percentage points and those parents reporting cost as a barrier increased by 9 percentage points from 2014 to 2020 (Figure 2).

While 34 percent of Native American parents said that program availability was a barrier to participation, it was the lowest of any group across race and/or ethnicity. However, at the same time, they were also the least likely to say that information on afterschool programs was readily available in their communities, with 1 in 5 Native American parents (21 percent) disagreeing that information was available.

More than 4 in 10 Native American parents (41 percent) reported that their children’s afterschool program does not include cultural programming.

However, programming aligned with family values is something that Native American parents and families shared was essential. Sixty-nine percent of respondents said it was either extremely or somewhat important for their child’s afterschool program to share their family’s values.

Figure 1: The percentage of Native American children in afterschool programs is lower than other communities of color

Percent of children who are participating in an afterschool program:

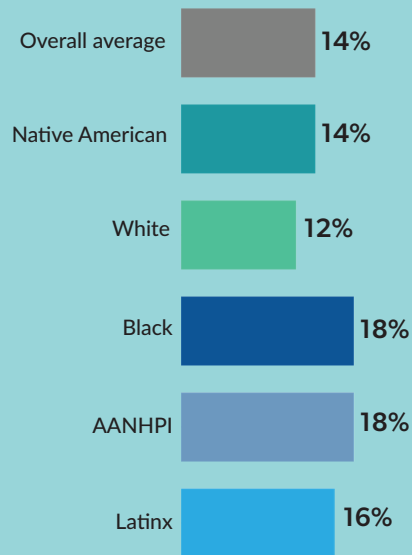
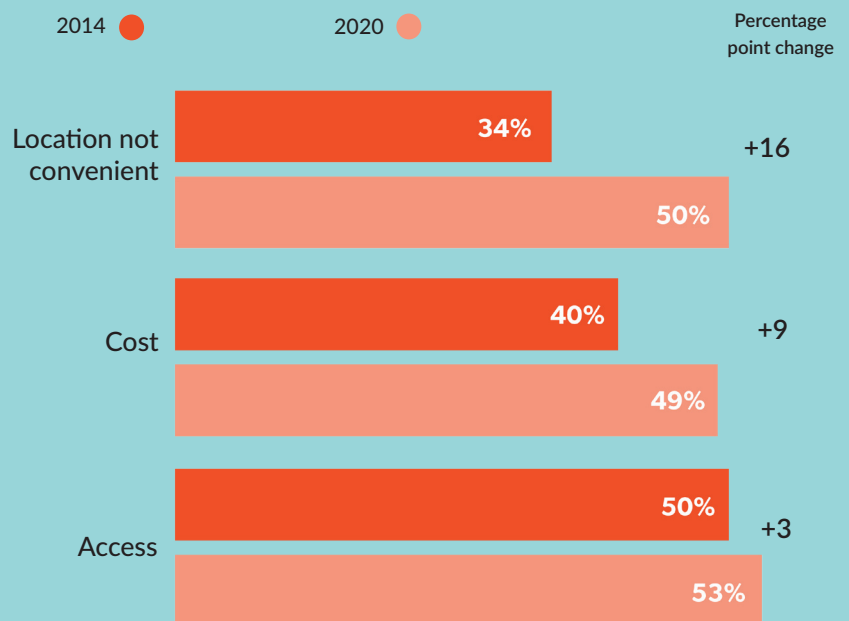


Figure 2: More Native American parents say that location, cost, and access are barriers to afterschool participation

Percentage of Native American parents reporting barriers to afterschool participation in 2014 vs. 2020:



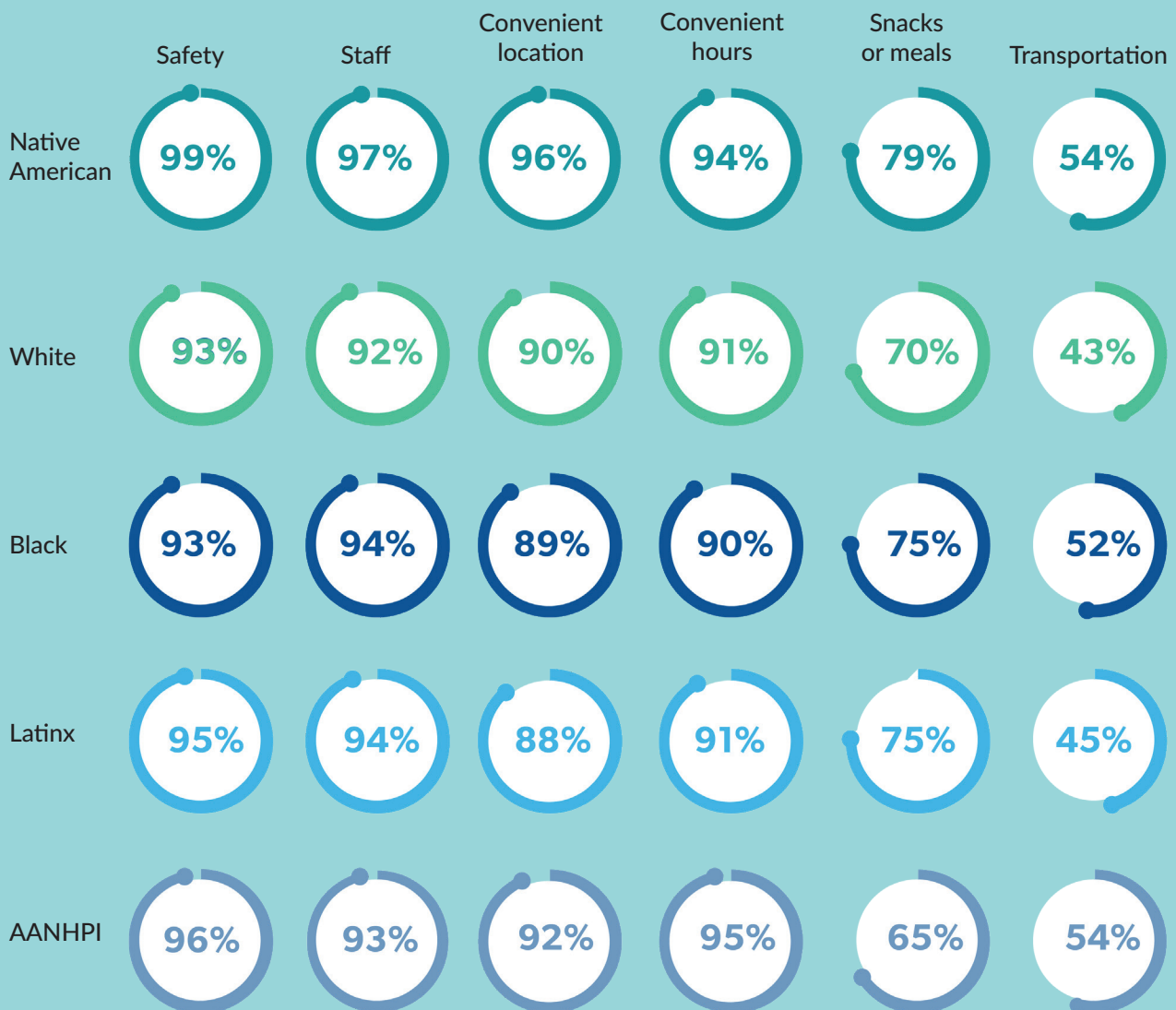
*Totals may not add up due to rounding

Native American parents have high expectations and satisfaction around their children's afterschool programs

Like other racial and ethnic groups, Native American parents are looking for a safe environment (99 percent), knowledgeable and caring staff (97 percent), and both a convenient location (96 percent) and hours (94 percent) when choosing their child's afterschool program. However, compared to other groups, Native American parents are more likely to say that services such as offering snacks and meals (79 percent) and transportation (54 percent) are important in their selection (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Native American parents are more likely to say location, hours, and transportation are important when selecting their child's afterschool program

Percentage of parents who agree the following elements are important when selecting an afterschool program:



Additionally, Native American parents are most likely to prioritize academics and building their child's life skills compared to other racial and ethnic groups. For example, Native American parents are most likely to say that exciting their child about learning (74 percent), opportunities to build life skills (72 percent), homework and academic help (67 percent), and reading and writing opportunities (62 percent) are extremely important when choosing an afterschool program. Sharing family values (50 percent) and opportunities to experience the outdoors (47 percent) are also extremely important to Native American parents (Figure 4).



Native American families and parents are most satisfied with safety (93 percent), hours meeting parents' needs (92 percent), staff (91 percent), opportunities for reading and writing (86 percent), and opportunities to build life skills (85 percent). Overall, 93 percent of Native American parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program, with 67 percent sharing they are extremely satisfied, the highest of any other racial and ethnic group.

Figure 4: Native American parents strongly agree that sharing family values, homework/academic help, and exciting their children about learning are crucial for afterschool programs

Percentage of parents who agree that the following are extremely important in afterschool programs:



Benefits are significant in Native American communities, and Native American parents recognize this more so than other racial and ethnic groups

Afterschool programs serve an important role in Native American communities and support both youth and their families. In afterschool programs, Native American youth are more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to receive homework and academic help (83 percent), take part in physical activity (91 percent), engage in STEM learning opportunities (83 percent), have opportunities to build life skills (83 percent), participate in cultural programming (41 percent), and receive healthy snacks and meals (84 percent) (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Native American students are getting physical activity, building their life skills, learning about STEM, and more in afterschool

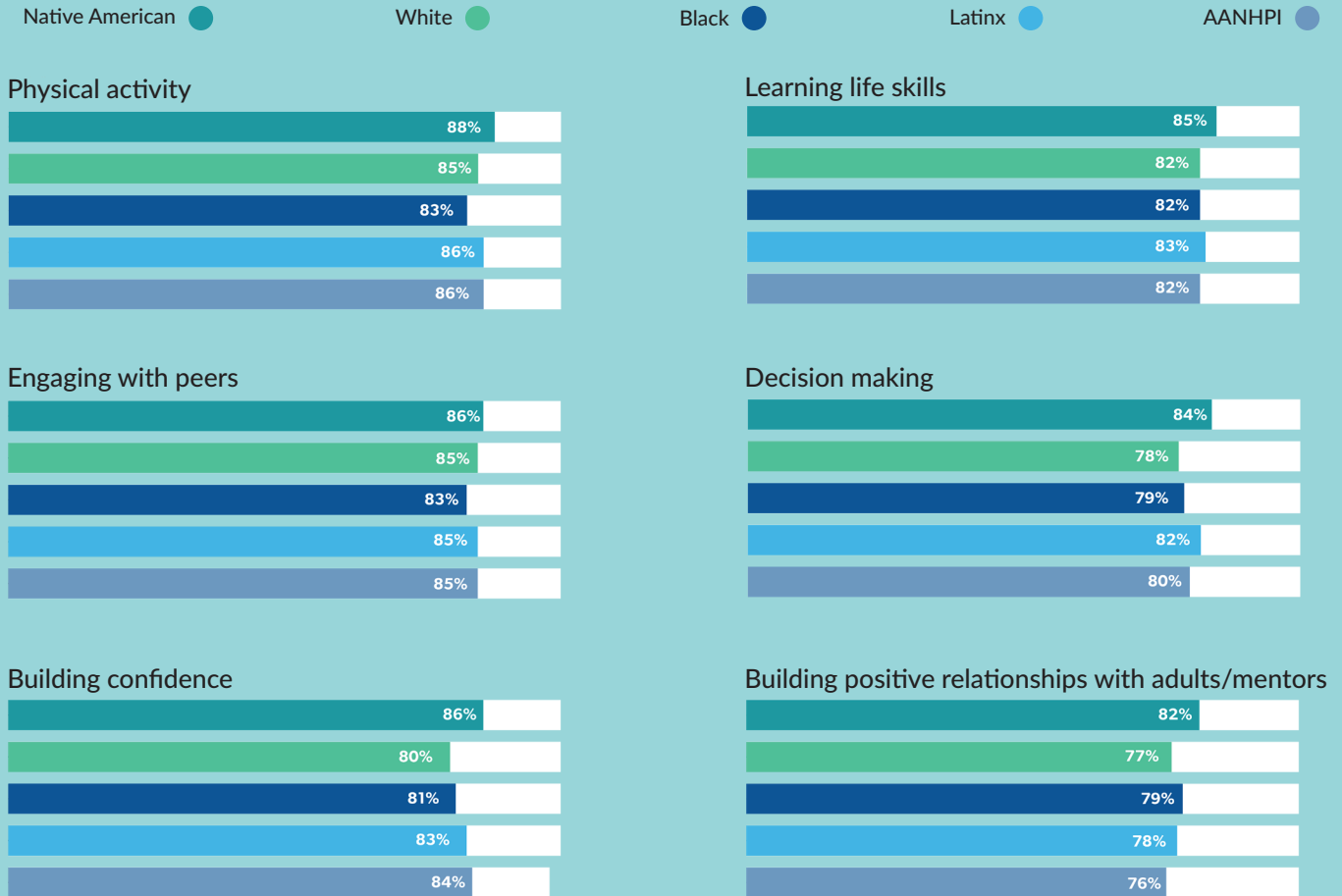
Percentage of parents who report that their child's afterschool program is offering the following:



Native American parents overall recognize that the benefits of afterschool programs extend beyond academic support. In these communities, where mental health challenges are often more prevalent, parents view afterschool as a place where kids can socialize with peers, improve their overall wellness, and gain important life skills.⁴ More than 8 in 10 Native American parents agree that afterschool programs provide opportunities for youth to be physically active (88 percent), engage with peers (86 percent), build confidence (86 percent), learn life skills like the ability to communicate and work in teams (85 percent), learn responsible decision making (84 percent), and build relationships with caring adults and mentors (82 percent), higher than all other racial and ethnic groups (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Native American families recognize the benefits of afterschool

Percentage of parents agreeing that afterschool provides kids with the following opportunities:



Native American parents also see afterschool programs as a place to excite students about learning and spark an interest in school (79 percent), and they recognize that afterschool programs help keep kids safe in their communities (75 percent).

Native American parents shared the positive impact afterschool has had on their personal and professional lives. For instance, more than 8 in 10 Native American parents with a child in an afterschool program agree that afterschool programs help them keep their job or work more hours (82 percent) and 68 percent agree that programs connect them with community resources, such as dental clinics, financial planning, and mental health services.

Native American parents want their children to participate in a variety of summer activities, but availability is low

Native American parents want a diverse range of activities and experiences for their children during the summer months. Knowledgeable and caring staff (94 percent) along with safety (93 percent) top the list of summer program priorities, but convenience is less important than it is during the school year, and instead, parents want opportunities for their child to build life skills (92 percent) and have a variety of activities (91 percent) and opportunities to experience the outdoors (89 percent).

Demand for summer programs is high in Native American communities. More than 2 in 5 children (41 percent) not in a summer program, would be enrolled if a program were available. Compared to other racial and ethnic groups, Native Americans have the highest demand for summer programs, and have bigger barriers to participation. Native American parents are the most likely of any group to say that they did not enroll their child in a summer program because of the lack of availability of programs (16 percent).



MAPS Media Institute | Hamilton, Montana



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The MAPS (Media Arts in Public School) Media Institute has worked with young people across Montana since 2004 and combines media arts (including film, podcasts, music, graphic design, music production, and other new technologies) and service-learning to prepare students for future success.

MAPS has several statewide programs, including the Native-led MAPS Media Lab, which brings professional artists to rural and Native communities to facilitate media art projects with middle and high schoolers outside of the school day. Young people learn how to use professional equipment and software within a collaborative, creative process to produce media arts projects that are rooted in community and have real-world implications. Several student films have been recognized on local, state, and national levels, including a quarterly series broadcast on Montana PBS. The documentary "Looking Forward from Yesterday", which explores life on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, was screened at several film festivals and

was selected as a finalist for the National Student Production Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS). Amilia Blackcrow, student director of the film, says, "I see the film as telling a story about our community now and its connection to history. We want our voices to be heard, our story to be told. We are a strong people. We don't need to be saved; we need to be heard."

In order to best serve youth and their unique communities, MAPS has co-designed practices with cultural leaders to guide the evolution of the program, including contracting with indigenous artists. The MAPS Media Lab director convenes an advisory group comprised of tribal leaders and cultural educators and receives support through relationships with tribal councils, tribal colleges, and organizations like the National Native Children's Trauma Center and the Tribal Relations and Resiliency Unit of the state's Office of Public Instruction.

Conclusion

Native American families highly value afterschool and summer experiences for their children, with 87 percent agreeing that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. They also have a high level of support for public funding for afterschool (90 percent) and summer learning opportunities (89 percent). However, Native American families face barriers like cost, program availability, and convenient locations to send their children to programming. For those whose children attend, Native American parents have a deep understanding of the holistic benefits of afterschool and summer programs for their children and greater communities.



Resources

Below is a selection of resources from programs and organizations across the country that are creating inclusive, high-quality programming for Native American youth.

- **Tribal Youth Resource Center** from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The Resource Center offers technical assistance and training for all OJJDP Tribal grantees, as well as webinar recordings, fact sheets, blogs, newsletters, and podcasts which are available to the public. <https://www.tribalyouth.org/resources/resource-library/>
- **National Indian Child Welfare Association** works to eliminate child abuse and neglect by strengthening their families, tribes, and the laws that protect them. The association provides resources for tribal leaders, families, and afterschool providers, including a [Tribal Best Practices for Family Engagement Toolkit](http://www.nicwa.org/). <http://www.nicwa.org/>
- **National Indian Education Association** was created by Native educators to advocate and advance comprehensive, culture-based educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Their website includes information about the variety of programs, advocacy work at the local, state, and federal level, and resources (including a language and culture resource repository, Native education research, Native Education Guides, and more). <https://www.niea.org/>
- **National Native Children's Trauma Center** is a Category II Treatment and Service Adaptation Center within the National Child Traumatic Stress Network that offers webinars and technical assistance around trauma-informed care and tribal community development, as well as trauma and resilience resources. <https://www.nnctc.org/>
- **Healthy Native Youth** is a part of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board with the goal of raising healthy Native youth through culturally relevant health education. Their website is targeted toward teachers, parents, and tribal health educators. Resources include a monthly community of practice call, an online inventory of health-focused curricula/stand-alone lessons, an implementation toolbox, and more. <https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/>

¹ USA.gov. (n.d.). Federally Recognized Indian Tribes and Resources for Native Americans. Retrieved on December 1st, 2022, from <https://www.usa.gov/tribes#:~:text=for%20Native%20Americans,-Federally%20Recognized%20Indian%20Tribes,contracts%2C%20grants%2C%20or%20compacts>; National Museum of the American Indian. (n.d.). Teaching & Learning about Native Americans. Retrieved on December 1st, 2022, from <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/faq/did-you-know>; National Indian Education Association. (n.d.). Retrieved on December 1st, 2022, from <https://www.niea.org/>.

² National Museum of the American Indian. (n.d.). Framework for Essential Understandings about American Indians. Retrieved on January 11, 2023, from <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pdf/NMAI-Essential-Understandings.pdf>.

³ Parents, caregivers, and/or guardians selected Native American when asked to describe themselves.

⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2015). Racial/Ethnic Differences in Mental Health Service Use among Adults. Retrieved on December 1st, 2022 from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/MHServicesUseAmongAdults/MHServicesUseAmongAdults.pdf>; Ersan, O. & Rodriguez, M. C. (2021). A Positive Youth Development Perspective on Mental Distress Among American Indian/Alaska Native Youth. American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research, Vol. 28(2). Colorado School of Public Health, University of Colorado. Retrieved on January 11, 2022 from: https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider205/journal_files/vol28/28_2_2021_1_ersan.pdf.