



FOR RELEASE

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**AMERICA'S LEADING BUSINESSES CALL FOR MORE HIGH-QUALITY
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

*Corporate Voices' Report Finds That Despite Increased After School Funding, Nearly
44 Percent of Working Families Struggle to Fill the Gap Between Children's School Week and
Parent's Work Week*

Washington, DC— Corporate Voices for Working Families today unveiled the framework for building quality after school systems in the United States that all young people have access to. Corporate Voices is calling on local, state and federal government entities, as well as private and non-profit sectors, to assess existing after school programs, consider philanthropic priorities, review policy proposals on 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and other programs, and formulate policy positions that provide more after school care to working families.

The seven principles laid out in Corporate Voices' "After School for All" report define a successful after school system as having the following elements: 1.) Learning as the central mission; 2.) Provides links between parents, schools and programs, and provides high-quality program options to parents who enroll their children in programs; 3.) Recruits, trains and compensates a professional staff that has the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to support young people; 4.) Depends upon the creation and support of infrastructure built on public/private collaborations at the local, state and national level; 5.) Articulates outcomes for children's learning and program quality that are appropriate to the after school setting; 6.) Embraces accountability for measurable results; and 7.) Builds crosscutting partnerships to govern, finance, sustain, and improve the system.

"The principles outlined in our statement reflect our recommendations for policy initiatives that will contribute to the creation of quality after school systems as a key component of a world-class system of quality education," stated Donna Klein, President and CEO of Corporate Voices for Working Families. "Much progress has been made on after school

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initiatives and American businesses are responding; but more needs to be done. Corporate Voices is committed to working with all stakeholders to build a quality after school system for today's and tomorrow's children and young people.”

According to the “After School for All” report, since the mid 1990s, there has been unprecedented growth in funding for after school programs through federal, private corporate and other philanthropic investment programs. Despite the increase in resources since the 1990s, demand still far exceeds supply in virtually every community across the nation.

A recent household survey revealed that during the 2002-2003 school year, 14.3 million youth were in self-care, spending an average of seven hours per week unsupervised in the hours after school (The After School Alliance, *America After 3PM: A Household Survey on After School in America*).

Young people spend roughly 20 percent of their time in school; how they spend the remaining 80 percent of their time has a significant impact on overall development. Corporate Voices believes that while parents are their children's primary teachers, high quality after school programs can play a critical role in improving young people's chances of success both in school and in life.

Successful after school programs provide a unique environment in which young people can develop the range of skills needed to enter the 21st Century. Corporate Voices points out in the report that these programs also support the needs of working families by occupying the non-school hours in the day and summer. The gap between a child's school week and the parent's work week may be as many as 25 hours, which presents working parents with the challenge of finding someone to care for their children while they are at work. Nationwide, between two and six million children under the age of thirteen regularly care for themselves, and 44 percent of families do not have regular after school care for their children.

In addition to the impact on working families, after school programs impact the national economy in numerous ways, such as providing increased opportunities for young people to

succeed academically, lowering the rate of crime involvement by young people, and finally by increasing productivity and decreasing absenteeism in the workplace (ultimately lowering the cost to business).

“Considering the various economic benefits of having young people in quality after school programs, it is clear that creating high quality after school programs is a good investment today and for the future of our society,” commented Klein.

In addition to the set of principles presented, Corporate Voices is calling on further public and private review of after school programs with the following recommendations:

- A commitment to identify additional resources to support the creation of quality after school systems; possibly from re-allocation of public funding
- The creation of policies that support increased coordination of public and private resources
- An investment in the creation of an infrastructure needed to support after school systems in multiple ways
- Additional policies that encourage cooperation, joint use of space, overlap in staff and other similar innovations to provide a wide range of learning opportunities
- Engage in a dialogue on how to create an education system that supports and cultivates the changing needs and demands of children, families and the economy in the 21st Century

Full copies of the “After School for All” report are available online at www.cvworkingfamilies.org.

Corporate Voices is a non-partisan, non-profit partnership organization created to bring the private sector voice into the public dialogue and to improve corporate practice on issues affecting working families. Started in 2001, Corporate Voices represents 47 member corporations with 4 million employees, operations in all 50 states and \$800 billion in revenues- 75% of whom are Fortune 500 companies.