The State of Kids and Families in America
The State of Kids and Families in America 2024
Summary

1. Likely voters, parents, teens, and kids alike do not think things are going very positively for American families. There is a gender gap here, with women feeling even more negative. Across party identification, voters express these feelings of economic concern and pessimism.

2. These feelings translate into intense agreement across party lines that "being a parent today is financially harder than ever before."

3. Though it has long been a central tenet of the American dream that the next generation will be more successful than the last, many respondents do not think this is the case any longer. Likely voters who aren't parents are feeling the most bleak, with just 22% saying "children today will be better off in adulthood than you are." The gender difference is stark, with more than half of nonparent women (54%) saying children today will be worse off. However, parents of kids and teens modestly think their kids will be better off in adulthood (44%), though 25% say they will be worse off, and 25% say their kids will be about the same as they are.

4. These diverse audiences see a crisis for young people struggling with mental health issues. They also connect the dots clearly to schools and the need to expand access to mental health care within school settings. The negative effects of social media on young people's mental health is a top concern, including across party identification.

5. When asked what would most improve the lives of children in the U.S., voters, parents, teens, and kids coalesce around education as the answer, volunteering terms like "better education," "improve the education system," and "affordable college education." This pattern is true for voters across party identification.

6. Likely voters see an array of issues as problems for public schools. Their biggest concerns are students not reading at grade level, the teacher shortage, bullying, and mental health struggles among students.

For kids and teens, mental health struggles are by far (53%) the top "major problem" they see in schools, particularly for girls and 15- to 17-year-olds.

For parents of children age 0 to 18, the biggest problems are the teacher shortage due to burnout (54% a major problem) and low pay and salaries (51%), mental health struggles among students (53%), and bullying (52%). For nonparents, the teacher shortage due to burnout is their top "major problem" (53%).

7. In terms of addressing students' needs, voters rate most highly the ideas of individualized learning plans, increased teacher pay, additional mental health support, and smaller class sizes as having the biggest impacts.

At the other end, "more testing" and "setting higher standards for students to meet" are seen as having much less of an impact. More testing rates low across party identification.

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1 Split sample question.
2 Weak Republicans are defined as independents who lean Republican.
8. Broadly speaking, voters, including parents and non-parents, think schools should provide a range of services. The top service categories are food and meals, which have strong support across party identification, as well as access to mental health care, job preparation classes, and free after-school care.

9. Most (55%) likely voters think the cost of child care is too high. Parents with children are much more likely (69%) to say costs are too high. Majorities across party say costs are too high, with “weak” Republicans even more likely (64%) to say so.

10. A solid majority of likely voters think the federal government spends too little on children and young people. This holds true whether the spending is defined as “programs” (62%) or “investments” (67%). They clearly feel politicians should do more, giving politicians and elected officials low marks for “reflecting the needs, desires, and experiences of younger people in this country.” Interestingly, there are no strong partisan differences here, although independents and Republicans do feel even more intensely negative (48% “not well at all” for both groups, compared to 37% of Democrats).

11. There is solid support for a variety of solutions to address child poverty. The most popular ideas among likely voters include increasing access to programs that help children facing hunger, increasing pay and benefits, increasing access to affordable housing for families with children, and reducing drug and alcohol misuse and addiction.

12. There is also broad support for a range of options to improve mental health outcomes, with the strongest support behind requiring health insurance companies to cover mental health care in the same way that they cover other types of health care. Of likely voters, 61% say it would have a big impact, including 60% of Republican women.

13. Likely voters support 12 weeks of paid family leave for all workers through a national fund (49% strongly; 75% total favor). Independents and Republicans are less strongly supportive of this comparatively, but are still solidly in favor (69% and 64% total favor, respectively, compared to 87% of Democrats).
The Current Landscape – Concerns for Families, Kids, and Young People

When considering how things are going for families across the country, likely voters do not feel strongly positive. Just 41% say "excellent" (11%) or "good" (30%), while 58% say "just fair" (39%) or "poor" (19%). As we see throughout the data, there is a gender gap, with women feeling even more negative: 61% of them say "just fair" or "poor" compared to 54% of men. Kids and teens are likewise not feeling positive about how things are going for them: Just 31% say "excellent" or "good." This is particularly apparent with 15- to 17-year-olds (24% say "excellent" or "good"; 71% "just fair" or "poor").

There is a partisan effect here, with Republicans feeling more negative (64% "just fair" or "poor") compared to 51% of Democrats feeling that way. Still, throughout this data, feelings of concern and pessimism are shared across these groups.

Black voters and Asian American and Pacific Islander voters stand out for feeling more positive than voters overall (54% and 60% "excellent" or "good," respectively), while Latino voters are more negative (56%) than positive (43%).

Many parents of children and teens (68%) say it is difficult to afford the things they need for them. A majority (57%) of these parents see it getting worse compared to last year, with 63% of moms feeling this way.

The assessments of those with adult children and nonparents are more stark: 84% think it is difficult for parents to afford the things they need to buy for their children, and 63% think it is getting worse.

Most voters are concerned about children's future economic opportunities (46% are "very concerned"); 81% "concerned"). This level of concern is shared across party identification. Black voters are even more intensely concerned (55% "very concerned"), as are moms of children of all ages.

Across a range of barriers to economic security, likely voters see these factors as most closely connected:

- Their income not meeting expenses and bills (34% rate this factor as the first or second biggest barrier when it comes to children today being able to achieve economic security when they grow up)
- The cost of housing (30%)
- Not being able to get the education to get a good-paying job (24%)

These rankings are similar across party identification, gender, and race.

There is intense agreement that "being a parent today is financially harder than ever before" (51% strongly agree; 84% agree), and this intense agreement is shared across party identification.

There is less agreement for the proposition that families need "more economic assistance to get by in the early years of a child's life" (36% strongly agree) or when their "children are teens and young adults" (34% strongly agree). However, parents of children younger than 18 do feel more intensely about needing more economic assistance during a child's early years (46% strongly agree).
How concerned are you about children's future economic opportunities? by Gender and Parental Status

Moms of children 0-18
Very concerned: 54% Somewhat concerned: 86%

Moms of children 19-24
Very concerned: 56% Somewhat concerned: 89%

Moms of children 25+
Very concerned: 51% Somewhat concerned: 84%

Non-parent women
Very concerned: 49% Somewhat concerned: 80%

Dads of children 0-18
Very concerned: 41% Somewhat concerned: 78%

Dads of children 19-24
Very concerned: 51% Somewhat concerned: 78%

Dads of children 25+
Very concerned: 41% Somewhat concerned: 79%

Non-parent men
Very concerned: 39% Somewhat concerned: 75%

How concerned are you about children's future economic opportunities? by Race

White likely voters
Very concerned: 45% Somewhat concerned: 81%

Black likely voters
Very concerned: 55% Somewhat concerned: 79%

Latino/a likely voters
Very concerned: 50% Somewhat concerned: 81%

Asian American Pacific Islander likely voters
Very concerned: 44% Somewhat concerned: 78%
Looking Forward

Nonparents in particular believe that a core component of the American dream is no longer applicable to today’s children. Likely voters who aren’t parents are feeling the most bleak, with just 22% saying “children today will be better off in adulthood than you were” (48% “worse off”; 22% “the same”). The gender difference is stark, with more than half (54%) of women saying “worse,” compared to 42% of men.

Parents of young children and teens are more hopeful about the future of their own children (44% say their children will be better off), though 25% say their kids will be worse off, and 25% say they will be about the same as they are.

Among parents of adult children, 39% think that their adult children are better off than they are, though 35% believe they are about the same, and 24% say their adult children are worse off.

Parents of color stand out for feeling more positive about the future of their children: 60% of Black parents, 62% of Asian American and Pacific Islander parents, and 52% of Latino parents say “better off,” compared to 36% of White parents.

One-third (33%) of young adults (age 18 to 24) think they will be worse off than their parents when they are older, and 41% think they will be better off than their parents. Kids and teens are more hopeful: 40% say better off, 14% say worse off, and 30% say about the same. Black kids and teens are even more hopeful (53% say they will be better off).

When asked to name “the most important thing that you would recommend doing to improve the lives of America’s children,” education is clearly top of mind: 53% of voters noted it in their top two recommendations, volunteering terms like “better education,” “improve the education system,” and “affordable college education.” This pattern is true across party identification.

Kids and teens also tend to volunteer terms related to improving the education system at the top of their lists of things that would improve the lives of children in the U.S.

[Among Parents 0-24/25+] In adulthood, do you think your children will be/are better off, worse off, or about the same as you are? [Among Non-parents] Do you think children today will be better off, worse off, or about the same in adulthood as you are?

by Gender and Parental Status

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better off</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worse off</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>About the Same</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Mental Health Is a Basic Need and in Crisis

Views among voters are fairly split when asked to rate the mental health of children in their community (42% say “excellent” or “good,” while 48% say “just fair” or “poor”). Younger women (under age 50) are much more likely to rate the mental health of children in their community negatively (62% say “just fair” or “poor”).

Parents of young adults stand out for rating the mental health of children in their community lower (64% “just fair” or “poor”) than parents of children and teens (52% “just fair” or “poor”), parents of adult children (40% “just fair” or “poor”), and voters who are not parents (50% “just fair” or “poor”).

Kids and teens give similarly low ratings, with 65% saying “just fair” or “poor,” particularly 15- to 17-year-olds (70% “just fair” or “poor”).

For the most part, voters tend to say “no” or “not sure” when asked whether various age groups of children have adequate access to mental health care, and voters are split when it comes to parents having adequate access to mental health care for themselves.

Voters tend to see the causes of today’s mental health crisis in multiple ways. The most volunteered causes relate to:

- Social media/technology/screen time (19% volunteer this as a main cause of today’s mental health crisis)
- Poverty/current economy/lack of access to necessities (14%)
- Lack of parental support or involvement (11%)

Do you think that the following groups have adequate access to mental health care? (among voters)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Have adequate access</th>
<th>Do not have adequate access</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children ages 0-4</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children ages 5-11</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children ages 12-14</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children ages 15-17</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</table>
The negative impact of social media on mental health is a top concern across party identification, with 19% of Democrats, 19% of independents, and 18% of Republicans volunteering social media/technology/screen time as a main cause of today’s mental health crisis.

For kids and teens, social media is also top of mind as a main cause of today’s mental health crisis. They also volunteer terms related to bullying and discrimination as one of their top two causes.

- Negative impact of social media and the internet (20%)
- Bullying and discrimination (18%)

For girls, social media (19%) and bullying and discrimination (20%) are tied as the top causes of today’s mental health crisis. Boys are more likely to attribute the crisis to social media (21%) than bullying and discrimination (15%).

Asian American and Pacific Islander kids and teens are more likely than their peers to attribute the mental health crisis to social media (27% compared to 21% among White kids/teens, 16% among Black kids/teens, and 21% among Latino kids/teens). White (19%) and Latino (19%) kids and teens are slightly more likely than Black (14%) and Asian American and Pacific Islander (11%) kids and teens to say that bullying and discrimination is a main cause of the mental health crisis.

When likely voters are asked to choose the issues most important to them when it comes to the health and well-being of children, the concerns that rise to the top are:

- Gun violence (20% of likely voters select this as one of their two top concerns)
- Social media negatively impacting children's well-being (18%)
- Child poverty (18%)
- Children struggling with mental health (16%)

Mental health is even more top of mind for voters of color (24% among Asian American and Pacific Islander voters, 23% among Black voters, 20% among Latino voters, and 14% among White voters).

There is some partisan variation in these rankings: For Democrats, gun violence is even more of a top concern (31%), while independents feel this way about mental health (20%) and child poverty (18%). The top concerns for Republicans are the effects of social media (22%), parents not having a right to influence their children's classroom curriculum (18%), and the use of fentanyl and other illegal drugs (17%).

From the kids’ and teens’ perspectives, the issues that concern them most are:

- Youth mental health challenges (30%), even more so for girls (35%) and White kids and teens (34%)
- Gun violence (21%), even more so for Black kids and teens (28%)
- The effect of social media on kids (20%)
- Addiction and drug abuse (19%)
Education Is Critical, But Public Schools Are Perceived to Need Work

Just 8% of likely voters give “excellent” job ratings to public education, while 29% say “good,” 35% “just fair,” and 24% “poor.” Parents of kids and teens are somewhat more likely to give schools positive marks (45% say “excellent” or “good”), compared to 35% of parents of young adults, 31% of parents of adult children, and 38% of voters who are not parents. Black voters are also more positive (49% “excellent” or “good”) compared to White (34% “excellent” or “good”), Latino (43% “excellent” or “good”), and Asian American and Pacific Islander voters (39% “excellent” or “good”).

Kids and teens give similar ratings to public schools as voters overall, with 8% of kids and teens giving public education “excellent” job ratings, 28% “good,” 38% “just fair,” and 19% “poor.”

Overall, likely voters tend to agree that teachers are being asked to do too much work (51%) outside of teaching, rather than too little (15%), or about the right amount (25%). There is a partisan difference here, with Democrats more likely to say teachers are asked to do too much (62%), compared to independents (48%) and Republicans (40%). There is less of a difference by parental status, with different groups agreeing that teachers are being asked to do too much outside of teaching, including parents of kids and teens (53% “too much”), parents of young adults (56%), parents of adult children (51%), and nonparent likely voters (50%).

Thinking about public schools in your community, how much are a problem are... (% a major problem) by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students not reading at grade level</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The teacher shortage due to teachers leaving the profession because they are burned out and tired</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullying, including cyberbullying</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher shortage due to pay and salaries that are too low</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health struggles among students</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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</table>
Likely voters see an array of issues as major problems for public schools. The most common concerns are:

- Students not reading at grade level (50% major problem)
- Teacher shortage due to teachers leaving the profession because they are burned out and tired (50%)\(^3\)
- Bullying, including cyberbullying (49%)
- Teacher shortage due to pay and salaries that are too low (48%)
- Mental health struggles among students (47%)

All of these problems are more likely to be rated as major problems among women compared to men. Overall, there is a similar level of concern about the teacher shortage due to burnout as a major problem (50%) as the shortage due to low pay (48%). Mental health struggles as a major problem stand out for younger women (61%).

### Thinking about public schools in your community, how much are a problem are... (% a major problem) by Party ID

**Students not reading at grade level**

- Democrats: 48%
- Independents: 47%
- Republicans: 53%

**The teacher shortage due to teachers leaving the profession because they are burned out and tired**

- Democrats: 54%
- Independents: 51%
- Republicans: 46%

**Bullying, including cyberbullying**

- Democrats: 52%
- Independents: 54%
- Republicans: 45%

**The teacher shortage due to pay and salaries that are too low**

- Democrats: 59%
- Independents: 49%
- Republicans: 37%

**Mental health struggles among students**

- Democrats: 54%
- Independents: 46%
- Republicans: 41%

\(^3\) Split sample question.

\(^4\) Split sample question.
Parents’ views about major problems in schools are similar to those of likely voters. Parents are more likely to see mental health struggles as a major problem, particularly parents of 19- to 24-year-olds; it is their top-ranked issue (56% say this is a major problem).

For kids and teens, mental health struggles are by far the biggest problem they see in schools (53%), again particularly among girls (57%), and among 15- to 17-year-olds (58%).

In terms of addressing students’ needs, voters rate the following as having the biggest impact:

- Individualized learning plans based on each students’ needs (49% say this would have a big impact, including 47% of Republicans)
- Increasing teacher pay (49%), which is top rated for Democrats (62%)
- Additional counseling or social, emotional, and mental health support (49%)
- Smaller class sizes (49%)

All of these solutions are rated as more impactful among women compared to men. Smaller class sizes as a solution with a big impact stands out for Republican women (56%).

At the bottom of the list of possible solutions that could have a big impact, “more testing” and “setting higher standards for students to meet” are seen as having much less of an impact (20% and 33%, respectively). More testing as a big impact is rated low across party identification (19% among Democrats; 22% among independents; 21% among Republicans).

Broadly speaking, voters think schools should provide an array of services. The top categories are:

- Food, like school breakfast and lunch, as well as access to a food pantry (76%, including 78% of Republican women)
- Access to mental health care (68%)
- Access to job preparation classes (64%)
- Free after-school care and programming (63%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How big of an impact do you think the following would have on addressing student needs? (% a big impact)</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualized learning plans based on each students’ needs</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing teacher pay</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional counseling or social, emotional, and mental health support</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller class size</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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Knowledge of and Perceptions Toward AI Programs

Voters do not have strong knowledge of or personal experience with AI programs. Most rarely or never use them. They lean toward thinking AI will have a positive impact (48%) on their children’s learning, although 35% believe it will have a negative impact.

There is strong variation in views on the possible effect of AI on equality in education: 27% of voters think it will increase inequality, and 21% think it will decrease inequality. Additionally, 28% say it will not have much impact, and 24% are unsure.

There is broad agreement among likely voters that schools should have rules in place about the use of AI (52% strongly agree). Voters respond to many concerns raised about AI, and most intensely that it could give incorrect\(^5\) (43% “very concerned”) or biased\(^6\) (43% “very concerned”) information to children. At this point, likely voters are relatively less concerned that those without access to AI will fall behind those who do (25% “very concerned”).

Parents of children under age 18 are more familiar with AI compared to voters overall. They are more likely than voters overall to see a positive impact for their children with this technology (63%), but are also more likely to see it as increasing inequality (36%). There is a similar pattern among Black voters: 63% see a positive impact, and 38% believe the use of AI programs in school will increase inequality in education.

Kids and teens are more familiar with AI than voters overall, and more so boys (66% familiar) compared to girls (53% familiar). Boys (59%) are more likely to see a positive impact for AI than girls (49%). Kids and teens are not as intensely concerned about AI’s impact compared to voters overall, and their top concerns are that AI could be used to cheat on a test or assignment (35% “very concerned”) or that AI could hurt skill development (34% “very concerned”).

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\(^5\) Split sample question.
\(^6\) Split sample question.
Caregiving Supports Are Not Meeting the Moment for Families

When it comes to beliefs about child care and caregiving, a majority (51%) of likely voters strongly agree that “too many parents and caregivers cannot afford to take time away from work to meet their family caregiving responsibilities.” Similarly, many strongly agree that “too many parents and caregivers are struggling to meet both their family caregiving responsibilities and work obligations (51%),” as well as that “parents do not earn enough to pay for child care” (47%). Fewer voters say that “child care professionals’ wages are too low” (37%) or that “today there are too few child care providers and too few staff” (37%).

When it comes to family leave, most employed likely voters believe they would get their usual pay or at least some pay if they needed to take extended medical leave (59%), leave to care for a new child (56%), or leave to care for a sick family member (48%). This is similar for women and men who are employed likely voters. This means that one-third (34%) of likely voters would get no pay or lose their job if they needed parental leave, 42% if they needed family leave, and 32% if they needed medical leave. Voters who would get no pay or lose their job tend to be disproportionately non-college-educated women, older non-college-educated voters, independent-registered men, voters in the Mountain region, Midwest women, voters in smaller cities, rural women, divorced voters, voters who are employed part-time, and voters with an annual income less than $50,000.

Most likely voters (55%) think that the cost of child care is too high where they live, or they aren’t sure (26%). Parents with children are much more likely to say too high (69%). Among parents, the ages of their children do not drastically impact this belief—71% of parents with a child age 4 or younger say the cost of child care is too high where they live, as do 71% of parents with a 5- to 11-year-old, 65% of parents with a 12- to 14-year-old, 67% of parents with a 15- to 18-year-old, and 69% of parents with a child age 19 or older.

Majorities across the political parties say the cost of child care is too high: 57% of Democrats, 56% of independents, and 53% of Republicans, with weak Republicans even more likely to say so (64% too high).

7 Split sample question.
8 Split sample question.
Voters Solidly Favor a Broad Range of Solutions

A solid majority of likely voters think the federal government spends “too little” on children and young people, whether the expense is called “programs” (62%) or “investments” (67%). Parents of children under 25 feel this even more strongly (71% “programs” and 72% “investments”). Younger women (age 50 or younger) are even more likely to say “too little” compared to older women (73% “too little” among younger women vs. 61% “too little” among older women for “programs”).

Looking across party identification, few voters think the government is spending too much on children and young people. Republicans are the most affected by “programs” (52% “too little”) versus “investments” (62% “too little”).

There is broad belief in supporting and investing in families. Voters agree with more intensity that “for a secure future for us all, we really need to invest in kids and families” (68% strongly agree), as compared to the phrasing “when we think about our government and its policy programs, we should put families first” (58% strongly agree).

With either phrasing, voters across party identifications strongly agree in similar numbers: 69% of Democrats, 66% of independents, and 67% of Republicans strongly agree that “for a secure future for us all, we really need to invest in kids and families.” Meanwhile, 58% of Democrats, 58% of independents, and 58% of Republicans strongly agree that “when we think about our government and its policy programs, we should put families first.”

Similarly, 69% of parents of kids and teens, 71% of parents of young adults, 76% of parents of adult children, and 61% of nonparents strongly agree that “for a secure future for us all, we really need to invest in kids and families.” And 64% of parents of kids and teens, 59% of parents of young adults, 65% of parents of adult children, and 51% of nonparents strongly agree that “when we think about our government and its policy programs, we should put families first.”

Do you think the federal government spends too much, too little, or about the right amount on programs/investments that benefit children and youth?
by Gender and Parental Status

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<tr>
<td>% too little on programs</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% too little on investments</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<td>62%</td>
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<td>% too little on programs</td>
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* Split sampled
** Note the small sample size (between 50 and 75 respondents)
When it comes to politicians and elected officials, the vast majority of voters give them low marks for "reflecting the needs, desires, and experiences of younger people in this country" (43% say "not well at all"). Voters of color are somewhat less negative about elected officials, particularly Black voters (31% "not well at all"), Latino voters as well as Asian American and Pacific Islander voters (37% "not well at all"), and White voters (47% "not well at all"). Interestingly, there are no strong partisan differences here, though independents and Republicans do feel more intensely negative (48% "not well at all" for both groups, compared to 37% of Democrats).

Though kids and teens are also net negative, with 60% who say politicians do not reflect the needs, desires, and experience of young people in this country well, they're not as intensely negative about politicians compared to voters overall (23% say "not well at all"), and particularly with girls (18% "not well at all") compared to boys (25% "not well at all").

There is solid support for various solutions to address child poverty. Among likely voters, popular ideas that would help "a lot" include:

- Increase access to programs that help children facing hunger (56%)
- Increase pay and benefits (54%)
- Increase access to affordable housing for families with children (53%)
- Reduce drug and alcohol misuse and addiction (53%)

At the other end, solutions that likely voters feel are less helpful include "encourage parents to work more" (48% say this would not help) and "encourage parents to get better-paying jobs" (43%).

In terms of the specific policy of the Child Tax Credit, there is broad support for increasing it (47% strongly favor; 84% favor) as well as reinstating it (50% strongly favor; 85% favor). Parents of children under 18 stand out for even more significant support (59% strongly favor and 91% favor, respectively). Republicans are less intensively supportive but are still net favorable by a wide margin (37% strongly favor; 78% favor).

There is broad support for expanding access to child care assistance (51% strongly favor; 82% favor), whether likely voters respond to the federal government or their state government doing so. Younger women are even more supportive (63% strongly favor the U.S. government and their state government combined). There is a similar level of support for improving the pay, benefits, and training for child care workers at either level of government. Younger women are more supportive, particularly for the federal option (65% strongly).

Parents of kids and teens are even more intensely supportive of all these options.11

- The U.S. government expanding access to child care assistance so more families with middle and lower income qualify (64% of parents of kids and teens strongly favor)
- My state government expanding access to child care assistance so more families with middle and lower income qualify (60% strongly favor)
- The U.S. government improving the pay, benefits, and training for people who work in child care to increase the quality of care (58% strongly favor)
- My state government improving the pay, benefits, and training for people who work in child care to increase the quality of care (55% strongly favor)

Republicans are less supportive across the board, although a solid majority favor all of these, and a majority (53%) say the cost of child care is too high.

- The U.S. government expanding access to child care assistance so more families with middle and lower income qualify (38% of Republicans strongly favor; 70% favor)
- My state government expanding access to child care assistance so more families with middle and lower income qualify (35% strongly favor; 76% favor)
- The U.S. government improving the pay, benefits, and training for people who work in child care to increase the quality of care (39% strongly favor; 73% favor)
- My state government improving the pay, benefits, and training for people who work in child care to increase the quality of care (34% strongly favor; 75% favor)

Likely voters support 12 weeks of paid family leave for all workers through a national fund (49% strongly; 75% total favor). Here there is a gender gap, with women more in favor (55% strongly; 82% total favor) than men (40% strongly; 67% strongly). 10

10 The Child Tax Credit is described as “an expanded and improved tax credit that refunds middle-class families and families with lower incomes more money for each child under age 18, creates a new tax credit for families with children under age 6, and makes the credit fully refundable for all families with lower incomes.”

11 Split sample question.
total favor), and parents of kids and teens are also even more strongly in favor (63% strongly) than voters who are parents of adult children (39% strongly) or nonparents (47% strongly). Younger women are even more supportive (69% strongly), along with Democrats (61% strongly). Independents and Republicans are less strongly supportive of this comparatively, but solid majorities are still in favor (69% and 64% total favor, respectively).

There is broad support for a range of options to improve mental health outcomes, with the most support behind “requiring health insurance companies to cover mental health care in the same way that they cover other types of health care” (61% say it would have a big impact), including 60% of Republican women. Overall, there is a more intense belief that increasing access will have more of an impact than increasing the number of mental health providers (57% say this would have a big impact vs. 50%, respectively).

How big of an impact do you think the following would have on addressing student needs? (% a big impact)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party ID</th>
<th>Total Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% too little on programs that benefit children and youth**
% too little on investments that benefit children and youth**

* Split sampled
Conclusion

Voters, whether they are parents or not, believe children and families are facing significant challenges today. Voters agree that it’s harder to afford a family today, and they’re concerned about children’s economic opportunities. Voters, as well as kids and teens, believe that improving or reforming education is important to bettering the lives of American children, and that children’s mental health challenges are a serious concern. Both Democrats and Republicans, as well as parents and non-parents, favor a range of solutions to economic challenges and the mental health crisis, and they believe public K–12 schools can better address students’ needs and provide a range of services to students.
Methodology

Likely Voter Survey
Lake Research Partners and Echelon Insights designed and administered this online survey, which was conducted from November 15 to December 3, 2023. The survey reached a total of 2,000 likely 2024 voters nationwide, which includes a base sample of 1,000 likely 2024 voters, with oversamples of 200 parents of children age 18 and under, 100 parents with children age 19–24, 100 Black voters, 100 Latino voters, 100 Asian American and Pacific Islander voters, 100 voters age 18–24, 100 Black voters age 18–24, 100 Latino voters age 18–24, and 100 Asian American and Pacific Islander voters age 18–24. The oversamples were weighed down into the base sample to their proper proportion of the universe for a total sample size of 1,000.

Survey respondents were drawn from an online panel and screened to be likely 2024 voters. The data is statistically weighted to ensure that the sample’s demographic and political composition reflect that of all likely 2024 voters nationally.

Voters who are not parents include a mix of voters who plan on having children in the future (28%), voters who do not plan on having children (59%), and voters who are not sure if they plan on having children (13%).

Kid and Teen Survey
Lake Research Partners and Echelon Insights designed and administered this online survey, which was conducted from November 15 to 29, 2023. The survey reached a total of 1,227 children and teenagers age 12–17 nationwide, which includes a base sample of 884 children and teenagers, with oversamples of 114 Black children and teenagers, 114 Latino children and teenagers, and 115 Asian American and Pacific Islander children and teenagers. The oversamples were weighed down into the base sample to their proper proportion of the universe for a total sample size of 884.

Survey respondents were drawn from an online panel and screened to be children and teenagers age 12–17. The data is statistically weighted to ensure that the sample’s demographic and political composition reflect that of all children and teenagers age 12–17 nationally.

In both surveys, numbers sometimes do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Sampling Error in the Surveys
Because the samples are based on those who initially self-selected for participation in the panel, rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to, sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error.

If the kid and teen survey were conducted among a probability sample, then the margin of error would be +/- 2.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval; if the voter survey were conducted among a probability sample, then the margin of error would be +/- 2.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval.
Credits

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About Lake Research Partners

Lake Research Partners is a nationally recognized qualitative and quantitative research firm with over 25 years of experience in all phases of public opinion research for public entities and private enterprises. LRP’s principals are leading strategists with experience serving as tacticians and senior advisors to a wide range of government agencies, advocacy groups, universities, labor unions, nonprofits, and foundations across the United States. LRP is a Woman-Owned Small-Business (WOSB) and is certified through the U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce.

About Echelon Insights

Echelon Insights is an opinion research and analytical intelligence firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, known for providing strategic guidance to brands, political organizations, advocacy groups, and nonprofits. Founded in 2014, Echelon Insights has stayed on the cutting edge of polling and data analysis, and in 2022 was ranked as one of the most accurate pollsters in the 2022 election cycle by FiveThirtyEight’s analysis.

About Common Sense

Common Sense is the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of all kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in the 21st century. Our independent research is designed to provide parents and caregivers, educators, health organizations, and policymakers with reliable, independent data on children's use of media and technology and the impact it has on their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development. For more information, visit commonsense.org/research.

Please visit wwwcommonsense.org/kids-and-families-in-america.

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