

2021

Parent Confidence Report Fact Sheet

Before the pandemic lockdown in early 2020, we asked over 2,260 U.S. parents with children ages 12 and under about their confidence in their parenting, work-life balance, and employer support through an online survey conducted by The Harris Poll. Last fall, we explored the impact of the pandemic by returning to survey parents of children 12 and under about their experiences.

Below are six key takeaways:

1. 'Pandemic Parenting' is the most stressful time of parents' lives.

- More than half of parents (58 percent) agree that “pandemic parenting” is relentless and isolating as their regular support systems have disappeared.
- Nearly six out of 10 working mothers (59 percent) and over half of parents (55 percent) agree that parenting during the pandemic has been the most stressful time of their lives.
- Half of parents (56 percent) say they haven't been able to rely on relatives or friends as much for child care due to the pandemic.
- Six out of 10 parents (62 percent) are looking to the government to offset the cost of child care.
- Two-thirds of parents (66 percent) with young children say the burden placed on them today doesn't get as much attention as it deserves.

2. Work-life balance is disappearing as family time blends with work.

- Parent-child time continues to be interrupted by work. Almost half of working parents (46 percent) and more than half of working dads (51 percent) say they rarely have quality time with their child that is uninterrupted by work.
- Pre-pandemic, parents estimated their children interrupted roughly 9.5 hours of their workweek. By November 2020, that increased to 13 hours, or nearly two working days.
- One in five working mothers (23 percent) are unsatisfied with their work-life balance, compared to roughly one in eight working dads (12 percent).

3. Working parents expect more from employers.

- Six out of 10 parents (62 percent) agree that employers should offset the cost of child care.
- Half of parents (47 percent) say their employer doesn't understand the needs of parents.
- Half of parents (46 percent) feel that their career growth is on hold as they navigate pandemic-related child care needs.
- One in five working mothers (22 percent) are worried that they will have to quit their jobs in the next six months to take care of their children.

- Nearly half of working mothers (47 percent) grade their employer's child care policies as a C or lower, compared to almost a third of working fathers (29 percent).
- Half of working dads (47 percent) and 43 percent of parents believe they will be overlooked for promotions in the future because they have a child at home while they work.
- Nearly 6 in 10 working dads (59 percent) and 62 percent of parents say they would take a pay cut to work for an organization that provided quality child care.
- Three out of four parents (76 percent) say "being confident in my child care allows me to excel at work."

4. Solo parenting is so much more challenging in times of change.

- Nearly a quarter of single parents are dissatisfied with their work-life balance (compared to 15 percent of non-single parents).
- A staggering 60 percent of single parents agree that "they've never felt so isolated as a parent as I have during this pandemic."
- Six out of 10 single working parents (61 percent) would grade their employer's child-care policies as a C or lower.
- Four out of 10 single parents (41 percent) say their employers do not offer child care or they are not aware of their employer's child care policies or benefits.
- A third of working parents (34 percent) have taken on a less-demanding role or job to spend more time with their child.

5. Overall, parents just want to know that their kids will be all right.

- Seven out of 10 parents (71 percent) with school-age children (ages 6–12) are worried about learning loss and the long-term educational impact of the pandemic.
- Two out of three parents (67 percent) worry that the pandemic will have a long-term impact on their child's mental health.
- Six out of 10 parents (61 percent) feel they are constantly choosing between isolating their child for the sake of their physical health or risking illness in order to encourage their child's social-emotional development.

6. Despite all the challenges, parents do see silver linings.

- More than half of parents (56 percent) have found silver linings in their ability to appreciate the smaller things in life, develop stronger relationships with their children, and become closer as a family.
- Nearly two-thirds of parents (63 percent) feel they are able to be more involved in their child's life because of a more flexible work schedule.
- Nearly 6 out of 10 parents (57 percent) say they've learned to appreciate the smaller things in life.