



National Parents Union: Coronavirus Impact Survey Findings Week #2: May 4–5, 2020

Consistent with last week's survey, concerns about general wellbeing and education outrank economic concerns for parents of public school K-12 students.

- Six in 10 parents say they worry a lot or some about their children missing important social interactions, and nearly as many worry about someone in their family getting the coronavirus (59%) and making sure their children stay on track so they are ready for the next grade (59%). Fifty-six percent express concern that school closures will have a negative impact on their children's education.
 - Parents with household incomes of less than \$50,000 per year are more concerned than those with incomes of \$75,000 or more about someone in their family getting the coronavirus (66% vs. 54%), and parents of color express more concern about this than do white parents (64% vs. 54%).
- Fifty percent of parents worry about how the situation is affecting their children's mental health and emotional wellbeing, and 44% worry about how it is affecting their own.
 - Younger parents (under age 40) express more concern about the effects on their children's (56%) and their own (50%) mental health and emotional wellbeing than do parents age 40 or older (45% and 38%).
- When asked about the one or two greatest hardships they have faced due to the spread of the coronavirus, being unable to see friends and family (24%) and feeling down or anxious (22%) top the list of the most commonly mentioned greatest hardships, followed by 18% who cite difficulty helping their children with schoolwork and learning.
- Forty-four percent of parents say they worry a lot or some about making ends meet, and 15% say that losing a job or income is one of the greatest hardships they have faced due to the coronavirus outbreak.
 - One in five (20%) parents with a high school diploma or less formal education say losing their job or income is one of the greatest hardships they have faced, and the same share (20%) identify difficulty getting food or other essentials as one their greatest hardships.

Parents of elementary school students continue to express more concern about what to do with their children during the day and have to spend more time providing educational support than parents of older children.

- While figuring out what to do with their children during the day is not a top concern for parents overall (37% worry a lot or some), it is more of an issue for parents of elementary school students (44%) than for junior high parents (37%) or high school parents (31%).
- Elementary school parents in particular face more education-related demands on their time due to school closures, with 62% spending more time walking children through lessons, compared to 53% of middle school parents and 50% of high school parents. Elementary parents are also more likely to say

they are spending more time helping with homework assignments and creating lessons outside of what they get from school.

Parents' top needs and the ways they are using their financial relief payments remain mostly the same.

- The top thing parents say would be most helpful to them right now is help keeping their children engaged in good activities (46%), followed by more information about how to support their children's learning (31%) and high speed internet access (29%).
- The most common ways parents say they have used the coronavirus relief payment are to pay for utilities, phone bills, or internet service (32%), buy groceries and basic household supplies (31%), or put it into savings (24%). Thirteen percent say they are eligible for a coronavirus payment but have not received it yet.

Parents continue to express confidence in schools and in their own ability to support their children's continued education, while at the same time feeling that their children are learning less than they normally would.

- More than seven in 10 (72%) parents whose child's school is closed rate the job their school is doing in providing resources and support positively, with 31% say their school is doing an excellent job. More than eight in 10 (82%) feel confident about being able to help their child continue learning.
 - Parents with lower incomes are somewhat less likely to rate their school positively than those with higher incomes. Sixty-seven percent of parents with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 per year say their child's school is doing an excellent or good job, compared to 76% of those with incomes of \$75,000 or more.
 - Parents of a child in junior high are somewhat less positive in rating their school, with 65% saying their child's school is doing an excellent or good job, compared to 74% of elementary school parents and 73% of high school parents who give their school a positive rating.
- Despite broadly positive feelings among parents about their child's school and their own ability to help their child continue learning, 45% of parents feel their child is learning less during this time than they normally would.
- Of the 20% of parents surveyed who say their child has a disability for which they normally receive specialized instruction or therapy, 54% say their child is still receiving instruction or therapy, while 43% say they are not receiving any of that support. However, three-quarters (75%) of parents of a child with a disability say they are satisfied with what their child's school is currently doing to address their child's needs.
 - When asked how much they worry their child's specialized instruction or therapy might be unavailable or reduced because of budget cuts when their school reopens, 58% of parents say they worry a lot or some.

Parents prioritize safety over sending students back to school, and broadly support changes to protect students' and teachers' health and meet new educational challenges.

- Parents clearly prioritize their children's safety over getting them back to school. More than two-thirds (67%) say schools should remain closed until they are certain there is no health risk, even if it means students fall farther behind.
- Similarly, when asked about whether economically disadvantaged and (separately) students with disabilities should return to school before other students because they may be more at risk of falling

behind, pluralities say that would put those students at greater risk of catching the coronavirus and schools should find other ways to provide support.

- When asked about proposed safety measures for when schools reopen, strong majorities support all measures, though support for staggering schedules (75%) and requiring facemasks (70%) is somewhat lower than support for some other proposals.
- Eighty-four percent of parents support allowing students or teachers who are particularly vulnerable because of health issues to continue to learn or teach from home. Somewhat fewer (77%) say ANY student or teacher who feels uncomfortable returning to school should be allowed to continue to learn or teach from home.
- When presented with ways schools might address academic needs when they reopen, more than eight in 10 (84%) parents say they would support schools providing all students with laptops or tablets to use for online learning in case they become ill or schools close again.
- More parents would support extending the school year to provide more time for students to catch up academically (63%) than would support extending the school day (53%).
- Parents are more supportive of having the option to have their children repeat a grade level (63%) than they are of requiring students to repeat a grade level who have fallen behind academically (54%).
- Overall, when asked to choose between two visions of education post-coronavirus, most (61%) parents say “Schools should be focused on rethinking how we educate students, coming up with new ways to teach children moving forward as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.” Thirty-two percent say “Schools should be focused on trying to get back to the way things were before the COVID-19 crisis as soon as it is safe to do so.”