

PARENTS Releases Findings of Back-to-School Survey 2021, Revealing That Parents' Top Concerns for Their Children Are Centered More on Social Skills, Friendships, and Mental Health Than on Academics

Close to Half of Parents (45%) Are Less Stressed and Anxious About the Upcoming School Year, But Nearly All Parents (92%) Believe Their Children Will Require Additional Support

64% of Parents Say They Will Vaccinate Their Child Once a Shot Is Approved for Their Age Group

NEW YORK, Aug. 2, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- **Meredith Corporation's** (NYSE: MDP) **PARENTS**, the leading source for busy, millennial moms, today announced the results of this year's **Back-to-School Survey**, revealing that parents' top concerns for their children as they head into the 2021–2022 year are their kids' social skills and friendships (45%), along with their attention spans and ability to stay engaged (45%), followed by mental health (43%) and motivation to do well (41%). Although 95% of parents (95%) reported facing challenges during the 2020–2021 school year, 3 in 4 were ultimately satisfied with how schools handled the COVID-19 pandemic. The September issue of PARENTS includes findings and analysis of this study, providing insights on learning amid a pandemic and excitement for the coming back-to-school season.

"As we embark on a live, in-person school year, the relief is palpable, and yet, the pressure for our kids to make up for a 'lost year' is also immense," says Julia Edelstein, Editor in Chief of PARENTS. "Our Back-to-School Survey reveals that despite academic challenges last year, the top priority for American parents' is supporting their kids' social-emotional health. At PARENTS, we crafted the September issue to respond to these concerns, and help parents send their kids off to school with confidence—knowing they have done all they can at home to support this big transition."

According to the study, 42% of kids had at-home remote learning for most of 2020–2021, and half of the parents (55%) feel their children are in the same place academically as they would have been if 2020–2021 were a "normal" school year. However, parents felt the top challenges faced by their kids included missing time with friends and classmates, as well as staying engaged with schoolwork.

Challenges Faced by Kids in the 2020–2021 School Year:

- Missing time with friends and classmates: 44%
- Staying engaged and focusing attention on schoolwork: 42%
- Dealing with their own worries about when the pandemic will end: 40%
- Wearing a mask when in school: 39%
- Needing one-on-one attention from their teacher: 29%
- Having to read e-books instead of hard-copy books: 27%
- Having to be more sedentary: 25%
- Having technology or wi-fi problems: 22%

It's clear that parents also struggled during the past school year when it came to their children's well-being, with half needing to help their children stay focused on remote learning (52%). Nearly all parents are concerned about their kids' increased screen time, with 87% of parents saying that their children's screen time increased during 2020–2021. Parents cited some ways in which they hope to help manage or balance the greater amount of screen time, such as spending time outdoors, reading printed material, taking part in educational activities, and taking breaks and setting limits.

Parents' Additional Concerns for Their Kids:

- Social skills and friendships: 45%
- Attention span or staying engaged: 45%
- Mental health: 43%
- Motivation to do well: 41%
- Physical health: 38%
- Time management: 37%
- Overall grade-level expectations: 36%
- Physical fitness and activity: 35%

As we approach the 2021–2022 school year, only 23% of parents report feeling anxious, which is drastically below last year, when about half reported feeling extremely or very anxious (48%). This year, 43% of parents prefer that their children have in-person classes only, but nearly all of parents (92%) believe their kids will need additional support, primarily for emotional and mental health.

Type of Additional Support Needed for the Coming Year:

- Emotional and mental health support: 58%
- Academic assessment of each child before returning to school: 53%
- Additional resources for kids in special education or with an Individualized Education Program: 45%
- Targeted tutoring inside or outside of school time: 44%

Going back to school means back-to-school shopping, which 1 in 3 parents are more excited about than in past years. Regardless of the grade of their children, clothes (80%), shoes (79%), hand sanitizer (75%), masks (71%), and backpacks (69%) will be the most often purchased items this season.

In the new school year, parents most look forward to getting their kids back into social settings and returning the household to a normal daily schedule.

Things Parents Look Forward to in the New School Year:

- Getting my child(ren) back into more social settings: 90%
- Returning our household to a normal daily schedule: 88%
- Being more involved with my child(ren)'s school than in past years: 82%
- Celebrating the start of the new school year: 80%
- Having more time to focus on myself: 80%
- Getting my child(ren) back into extracurricular activities: 80%
- Getting my child(ren) back into sports: 79%
- Worrying less about my child(ren) falling behind academically: 74%
- Worrying less about my child(ren) getting sick: 69%

Almost two-thirds (64%) of parents plan to have their children vaccinated once a vaccine is approved for children, and 67% believe it is important that all teachers be vaccinated before the school year.

PARENTS offers insights on learning right now, including an article on what teachers want parents to know, as well as advice and ideas for moms and dads to help set their families up for a great back-to-school season. The PARENTS September special back-to-school issue is available on newsstands August 6. Visit [Parents.com/BTS](https://www.parents.com/BTS) for more.

Survey Methodology: An online survey was fielded April 7–28, 2021, to 1,200 parents aged 21-55 with kids in kindergarten through 7th grade to understand parents' take on learning amid a pandemic and their excitement for the back-to-school season.


About PARENTS

PARENTS, the leading source for busy, millennial moms, reaches 8.3 million readers monthly through an award-winning magazine and over 19 million readers on its digital and social platforms. With an

understanding that raising good people is the most important job, PARENTS serves up trusted advice that empowers moms and dads to care for their kids with confidence and find ways to enjoy the ride. PARENTS is produced by Meredith Corporation (NYSE: MDP).

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