TheChildren'sAgenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

FAMILY VOICES:

HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE

Results of a countywide survey of 400 Monroe County parents about issues their children and families are facing and solutions they support

KEY FINDINGS



The balance between caring for children and work is a *crisis* or *major problem* for 7 out of 10 Monroe County families and 5 out of 10 parents say their stress is high as a result of the pandemic. The stress parents are experiencing has three branches.

- Families are concerned with **affording and accessing resources** needed to care for their children**.** Challenges include losses in family income and costs of child care and health care.

- **Pandemic disruptions in schools** have also been a source of stress with 5 out of 10 parents saying at least one of their children has fallen behind academically as a result of the pandemic.

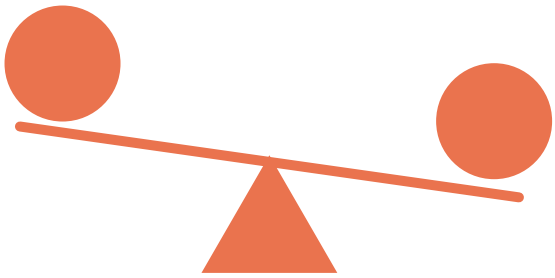
- Parents are also concerned about **mental health impacts of the pandemic** on their children with 5 out of 10 saying at least one of their children has struggled with mental health issues.

Parents are looking for systemic supports that will help them ensure their children thrive as our community recovers.

Even though all Monroe County schools are back to in-person learning, most parents still describe high levels of stress as a result of the pandemic.

71%

of all parents say the challenges of balancing work and caring for children during the pandemic is a CRISIS or MAJOR PROBLEM



66%

of all parents say the pandemic has significantly disrupted their home and family life

55%

of all parents say their stress is HIGH as a result of the pandemic

AFFORDING AND ACCESSING RESOURCES

MORE THAN HALF

of parents across the county said affordability issues are among the most important issues for families like theirs

Specific issues include

38%

increasing family income



34%

among parents in Rochester

39%

among parents in the suburbs

26%

access to affordable health care



11%

among parents in Rochester

29%

among parents in the suburbs

22%

making child care more affordable



17%

among parents in Rochester

23%

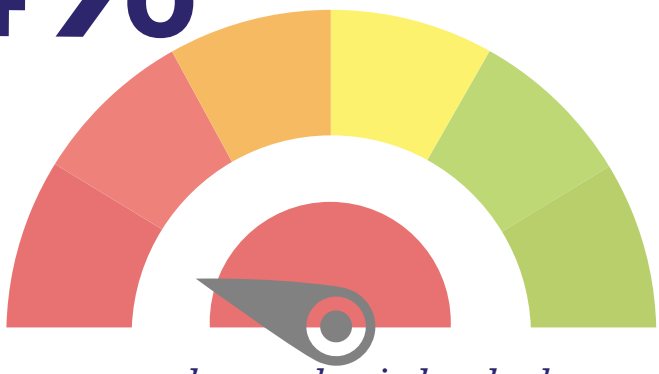
among parents in the suburbs

32%

among parents of infants and toddlers

The economic impacts of the pandemic have been widespread throughout the county.

44%



of parents say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their family's income

54%
among parents in Rochester

41%
among parents in the suburbs

Loss of income has struck more families who saw the greatest economic disparities before the pandemic.

Parents without a college degree and women are more likely to say they have lost income than their college-educated and male counterparts.

A significant cost for families with children ages 0 - 12 years is child care, with all forms of care being seen as expensive.

EXPENSIVE

71%
Family-based or center-based child care program

54%
Nanny, babysitter, family member, friend or neighbor

49%
After-school or extended-day program







The cost burdens of child care are felt similarly across all parent groups with no notable differences based on where they live, level of parent's education, race/ethnicity, or gender.

Coordinating child care has also been made more complicated by the pandemic.

HALF

of all parents with children ages 0 - 12 years say the pandemic has made it difficult to coordinate child care

56%
among parents in Rochester

48%
among parents in the suburbs

Parents of infants and toddlers are the most likely to say it's been difficult.

Parents are clear about the kinds of supports that would be helpful to their families.

Solutions

90%

of parents think child tax credits are helpful

Providing tax credits to families with young children is strongly and widely supported

89%

of parents say more after-school programs are helpful

More after-school programs for school-aged children would be helpful

87%

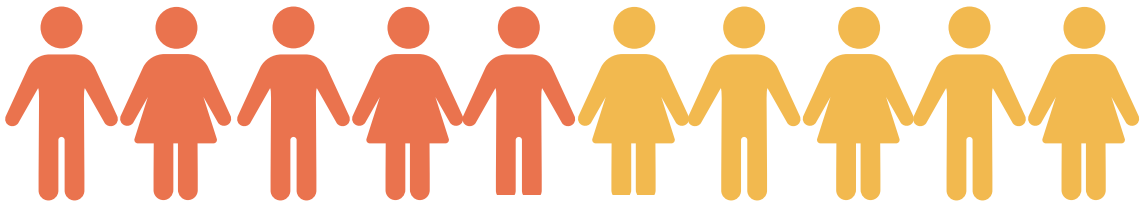
of parents think support for basic needs is helpful

Connecting parents to resources that can help with food, housing, employment, health, and other essential needs would be helpful

EDUCATIONAL RECOVERY

Schools have seen tremendous disruption over the past two years due to the pandemic. Schools and families worked hard to shield children from academic, social and emotional losses. However, necessary pandemic safeguards have impacted every aspect of children's learning and social activities.

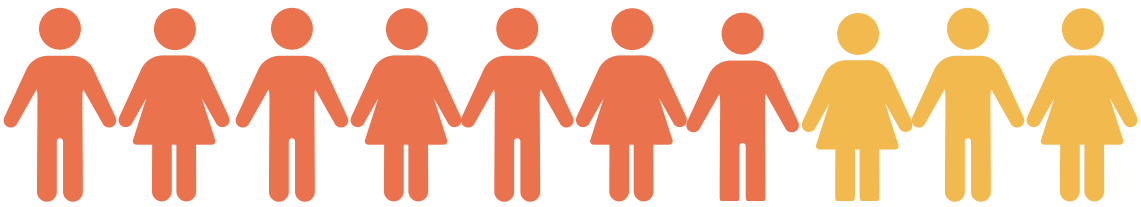
5 out of 10 parents with school-aged children across the county say at least one of their children has fallen behind academically as a result of the pandemic



56%
among parents in Rochester

52%
among parents in the suburbs

Among parents of school-aged children with developmental delays or disabilities, it is 7 out of 10



Solutions

There is near universal agreement among parents that it would be helpful if schools...



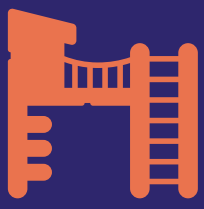
Involved more parents in planning for school-sponsored activities and programming



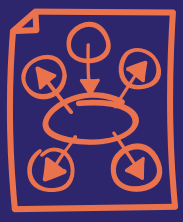
Provided regular contact with or access to their child's teacher



Provided regular contact with or access to a school counselor



Provided more after-school programs



Provided materials and resources to support children with delays and disabilities

Solutions

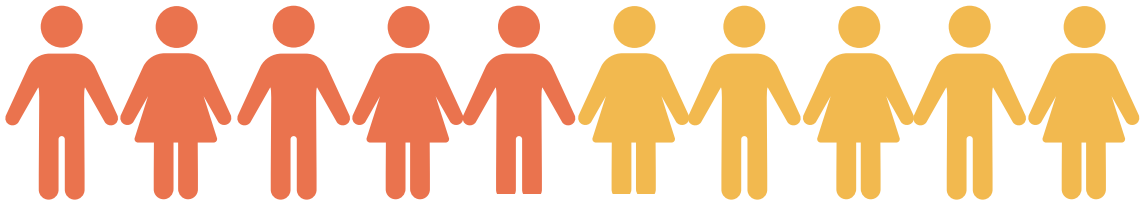
A majority of parents support increasing school diversity and reducing suspensions

Rochester	*Suburbs*
88%	**68%**
Think it is important their child's school increase student diversity	
88%	**65%**
Think it is important their child's school increase teacher and staff diversity	
73%	**58%**
Support eliminating or reducing suspensions in Kindergarten - Third Grade	

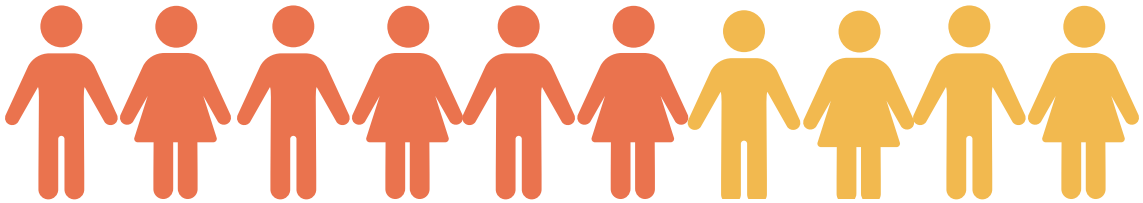
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Parents are concerned with how their children's mental health has been impacted during the pandemic.

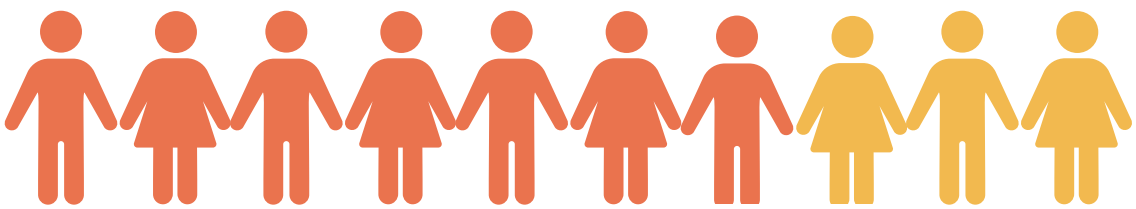
5 out of 10 parents across the county say at least one of their children has struggled with mental health issues during the pandemic



Among parents of teenagers and Rochester parents, it is **6 out of 10**



Among parents of children with developmental delays or disabilities it is **7 out of 10**



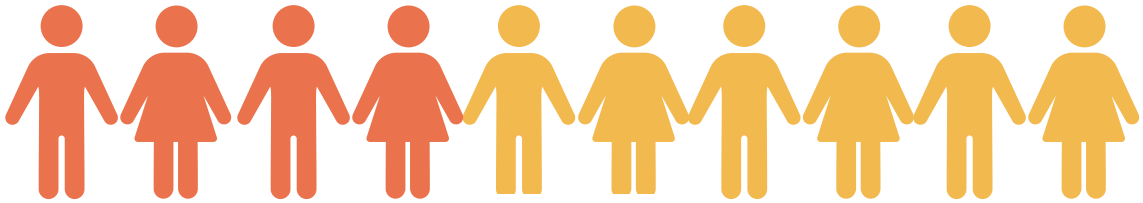
Solutions

Parents say their children need more mental health supports in school

1 *Nearly* **out of** **3** parents of school-aged children say their child's school does not have enough social service and health resources to support their child

Rochester parents have the added stress of being concerned about neighborhood safety.

4 out of 10 Rochester parents say improving the safety of their neighborhood is one of the most important issues to address, along with improving academics in local schools



PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

What families have told us calls for bold action that provides for the needs of the whole child and the whole family. Our funding and regulatory systems may distinguish between "child care" and "after-school care" -- but parents don't. Parents need safe, quality, affordable places for their children, no matter their age. Similarly, while our systems are siloed between health, education and social services, families have needs that cut across those systems. **Families' needs can only be fully met in an integrated way.** The supports parents are asking for can be provided by **changes in public policy and smart use of public funds**. Based on what parents have said, these policy changes are needed:

1. **Expanding child tax credits at both the state and federal levels**
2. **Dedicating $5 billion to move New York toward a system of universal, affordable, quality child care that compensates providers at a rate that reflects the actual cost of care**
3. **Restoring and increasing funding of quality after-school programs**
4. **Reducing wait times for children who need developmental services by increasing reimbursement rates for providers for Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education**
5. **Increasing mental health supports in RCSD by investing $30 million in restorative practices, $5 million in Help Zones, and $5 million in additional mental health supports**

You can support these efforts by joining The Children's Agenda's **Action Network** at www.thechildrensagenda.org. Rochester parents and families are invited to join either of our two **family advocacy groups** by calling (585) 256-2620.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This survey of **400 Monroe County parents** was conducted by Global Strategy Group on behalf of The Children's Agenda from **February 9 to 22, 2022**.

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is **+/- 4.9%**. The margin of error for sub-groups is greater.

Parents were contacted by **phone call or text**, and respondents had the option of taking the survey in either **English or Spanish**.

Weighted targets were generated by using data from the 2015-2019 **American Community Survey-Education Tabulation** (ACS-ED), a collaboration between the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

The ACS-ED includes data on characteristics of the parents of school-age children. Data were aggregated for **every school district** entirely or mostly within the geographic lines of Monroe County.

Special care was taken to ensure the **sample matched the target population** as closely as possible across demographic variables including age, education status, gender, geography, gender, party registration, and race/ethnicity.

	Survey Sample 400
Parent Race	
Black/African-American	15%
White	68%
Hispanic/Latino	9%
Asian-American	4%
Native American	1%
Other	2%
Women	58%
Men	42%
Parent Age	
18 -29 years	7%
30 - 44 years	61%
45-4 years	28%
55-64 years	5%
Did not complete high school	3%
Graduated high school	9%
Some college or technical school	23%
Graduated Associate's degree	17%
Graduated Bachelor's degree	26%
Graduated advanced degree	22%
Party Registration	
Democrat	40%
Independent	32%
Republican	28%
Have a child with a developmental delay or disability	19%
City	17%
Suburbs	83%