

# 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.



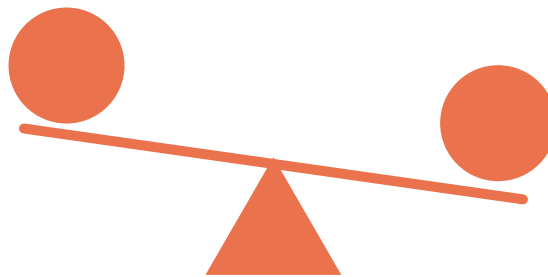
Parents are also concerned about **mental health impacts of the pandemic** on their children with 5 out of 10 saying at least one of their children has struggled with mental health issues.

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%**

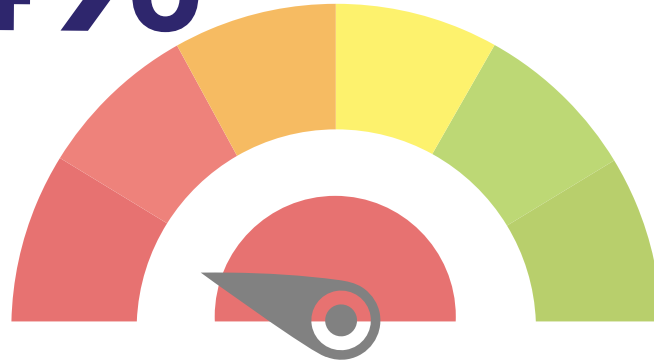
*among parents in the suburbs*

**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**

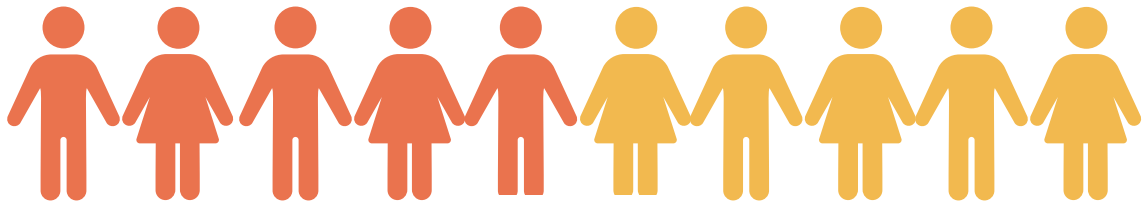


# EDUCATIONAL RECOVERY

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%**

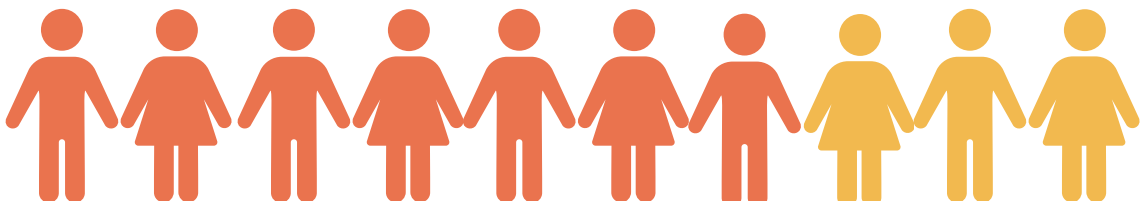
*among parents in Rochester*

**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*



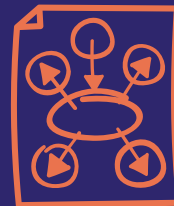
*Provided regular contact with or access to their child's teacher*



*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

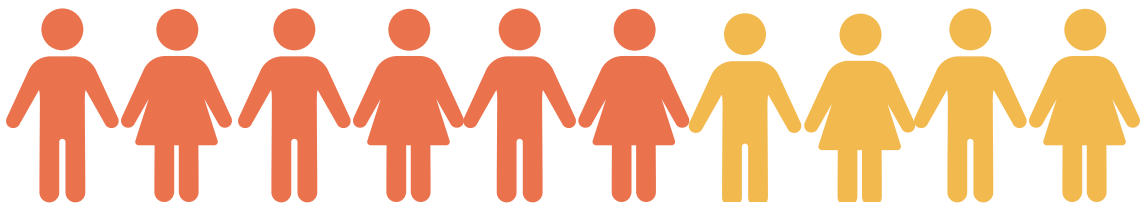
Parents are concerned with how their children's mental health has been impacted during the pandemic.

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



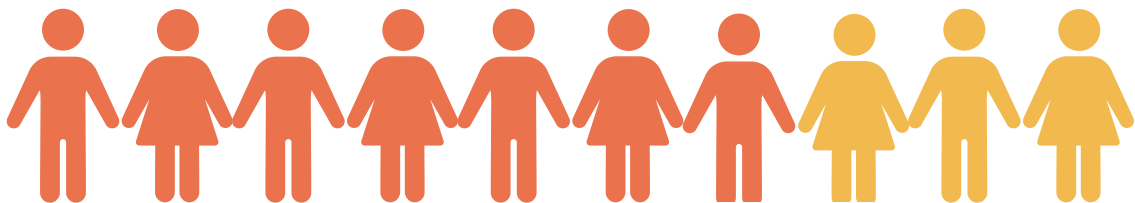
Among parents of **teenagers** and **Rochester** parents, it is

**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](http://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%
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City	17%
Suburbs	83%