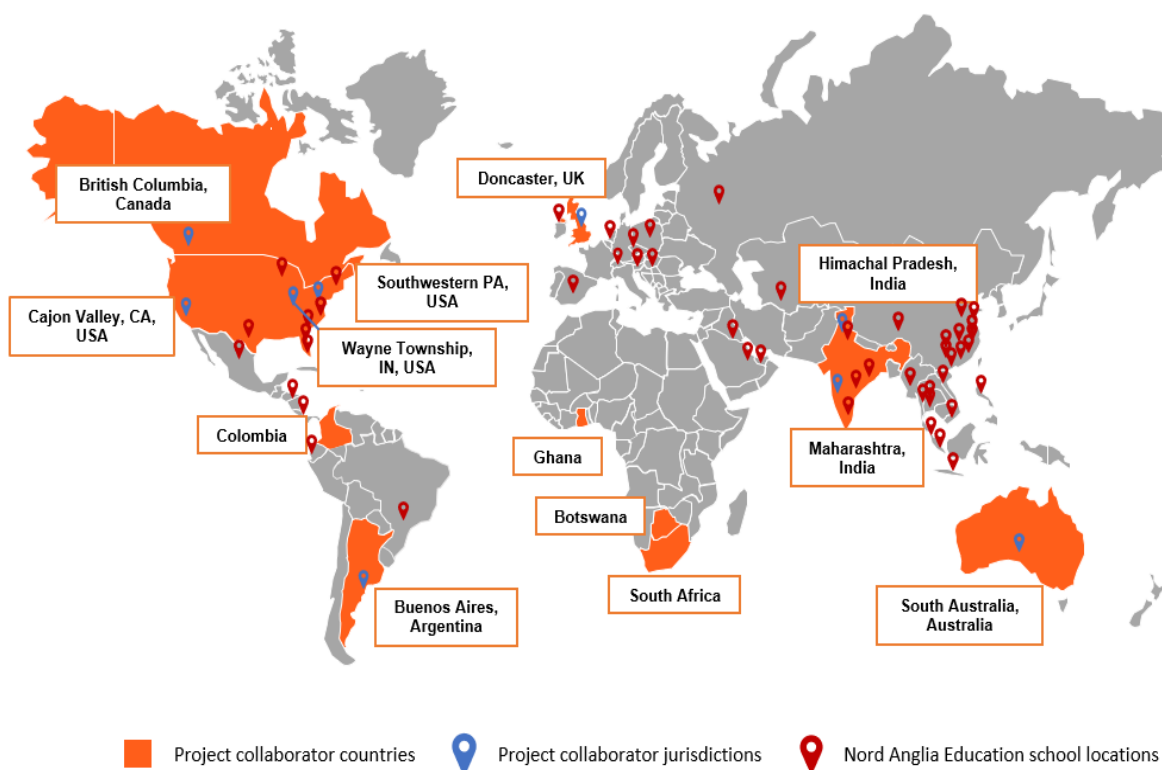# PERSPECTIVES FROM PARENTS IN GHANA

Rebecca Winthrop

Mahsa Ershadi

Rachel Clayton

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION NETWORK

In January 2020, the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at Brookings launched a new project focused on family and parent engagement in education.[1] The project emerged

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[1] The suggested citation for this report is: Winthrop, R., Ershadi, M., & Clayton, R. (2021, March). *Family engagement in education network technical report: Perspectives from parents in Ghana*. Center for Universal Education at Brookings.

out of CUE's work on harnessing [education innovations](#) to address inequality and help all young people, regardless of the community in which they are born, develop the full breadth of competencies and skills they will need to thrive in work, life, and citizenship in the 21st century. In 2019, CUE conducted consultations across 15 countries with over 50 education decisionmakers—from ministers of education to school leaders —that were focused on advancing teaching and learning strategies that supported whole child development, or as some call it, the development of academic plus 21st century skills. A recurring theme from the consultations was a desire of decisionmakers to have more and better strategies for engaging parents and families. Together with 41 project collaborators across 10 countries, members of CUE's [Family Engagement in Education Network,](#) CUE has been exploring what it takes to build strong family-school partnerships, especially in contexts striving to address inequality and deliver a broad suite of skills and competencies for their children.

EDUCATION IN GHANA

The COVID-19 pandemic caused mandatory shutdowns and mass disruption of schooling worldwide. In Ghana, over 10 million students enrolled in pre-school through Senior High School were affected. Educators responded to the crisis by rapidly suspending classes on March 16, 2020, shifting their in-class lessons online so that students could continue to learn remotely. As a result, parents[2] and families have been given a front row seat to how and what their children learn 'in school,' and academic outcomes and student success hinge on parent involvement now more than ever before. The coronavirus-related school closures propelled new and necessary ways of teaching and learning, which included developing and strengthening engagement with the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, the Ghana Library Authority, and the National Digital Literacy Project (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

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[2] We use the term parent throughout to denote a child's parent, guardian, or caregiver.

GHANA

Ghana is located in West Africa. While 98% of the country's population are Black Africans, it is a very multiethnic society (World Atlas, 2018).

Table 1. Demographics of Ghana's general population. Data from 2010.

Ethnicity	% of population
Ashanti-Akan	47.5
Mole-Dagbon	16.6
Ewe	13.9
Ga-Dangme	7.4
Gurma	5.7
Guang	3.7
Grusi	2.5
Mande	1.1
Other Groups	1.4

Ghana is a youthful country with approximately 37% of the country's population under the age of 15. In comparison, 26% of the worldwide population is under the age of 15 (The World Bank, n.d.). There are over 50 indigenous languages spoken throughout the country, however, English is the official language and spoken by nearly half of Ghana's population (World Education Services, 2019). While in the early primary years, educational instruction may occur in one of the 11 local languages, English becomes the norm thereafter.

Ghana's Ministry of Education Vision

The vision statement of Ghana's Ministry of Education (MOE) reads: "To provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them to acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential in order to be productive, promotion of technology culture at all levels of society to facilitate poverty reduction and to promote socio-

economic growth and national development." (Ministry of Education Ghana, n.d.). The Ghana Education Service, one of the 22 agencies under the MOE, aims to increase inclusive and equitable access to education, ensure the provision of life skills training, improve the quality of teaching and learning, and improve education service delivery (Ghana Education Service, n.d.).

Schools

There are over 28,000 schools in Ghana serving students in primary and secondary school: 18,530 primary schools, 8850 junior secondary schools, and 900 senior secondary schools (Education in Ghana. n.d.). Education is compulsory up to junior secondary school. The net enrollment rate for primary schools is 86% and for secondary schools is 57%. The gross enrollment rate for primary schools is 105% and for secondary schools is 75% (The World Bank, n.d.).

SURVEY OF PARENTS

From October 30, 2020 to December 24, 2020, CUE distributed a 30-item live call survey to parents and caregivers of students in Ghana. More than 1800 primary caregivers responded to our survey. To collect data representative of the population in Ghana, we determined our sample sizes before commencing data collection by assuming that the student population in this jurisdiction was equal to the parent population, thus using a conservative approach, which dismissed the possibility of siblings. We set our confidence level at 95% and margin of error at 5% according to guidelines for research activities (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Based on our apriori calculations, we aimed to collect 385 responses from primary caregivers in Ghana. All survey items were optional such that respondents could choose to provide a response to a subsequent question without having responded to a previous question. As a result, the response proportions per survey item options do not always sum to 100%.

SURVEY AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

A selection of survey responses is presented below. The order in which the results are presented here does not reflect the order in which the respondents completed the questions on the survey. CUE will however share the survey instrument upon request. Please send inquiries to: leapfrogging@brookings.edu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our project collaborators at the Ministry of Education, Right to Play, and Lively Minds, without whom we would not have been able to conduct this survey.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Parents' beliefs on the purpose of school and perceived alignment with teachers

Research shows that teacher training has the strongest impact on changes in instruction that students receive. Which one of the following teacher trainings should a principal of a school choose for teachers to attend? (sample size=1800)
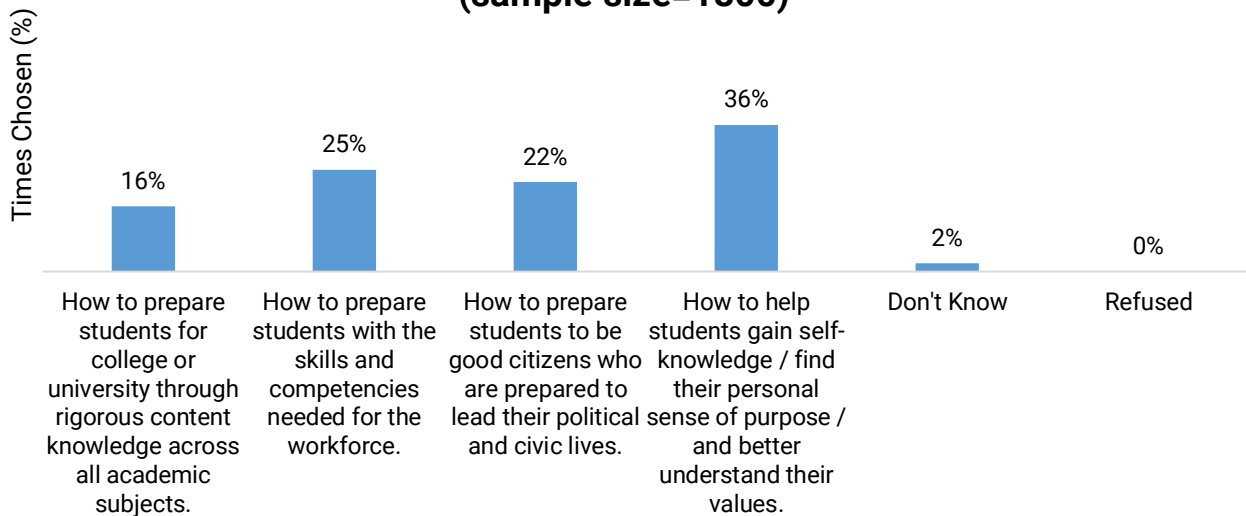
Parents' indicators of quality and perceived alignment with educators

**Would you say you are satisfied the MOST with your
child's education when your child is...
(sample size=1800)**
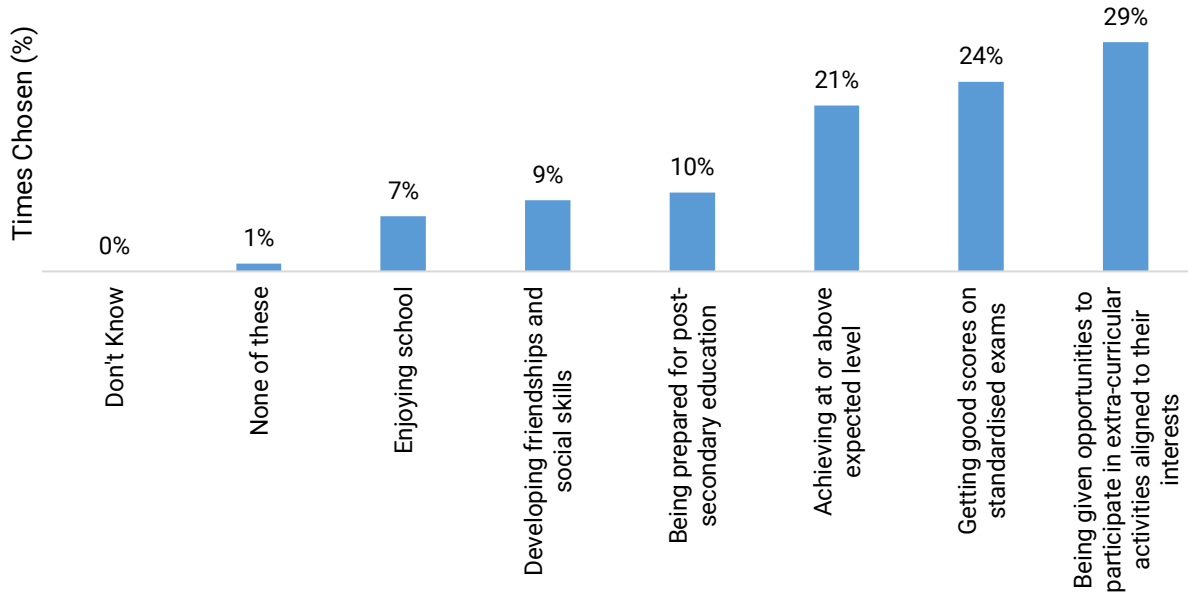
Parents' sources of information

How do you react when something about your child's education bothers or upsets you?
(sample size=1800)

Times Chosen (%)

- You contact your child's teacher to voice your concern. — 77%
- You contact your child's school leader to voice your concern. — 21%
- You contact your child's school governing body. — 11%
- You contact your local government [Metropolitan / Municipal / or District... — 1%
- You discuss your concern with other parents at your child's school. — 7%
- You discuss your concern with your child. — 27%
- You discuss your concern with your spouse / partner / other family members /... — 22%
- You don't do anything about it. — 8%
- Don't Know — 1%
- Refused to answer — 0%

What influences your perspective about what makes for a good quality education for your child?
(sample size=1800)

Times Chosen (%)

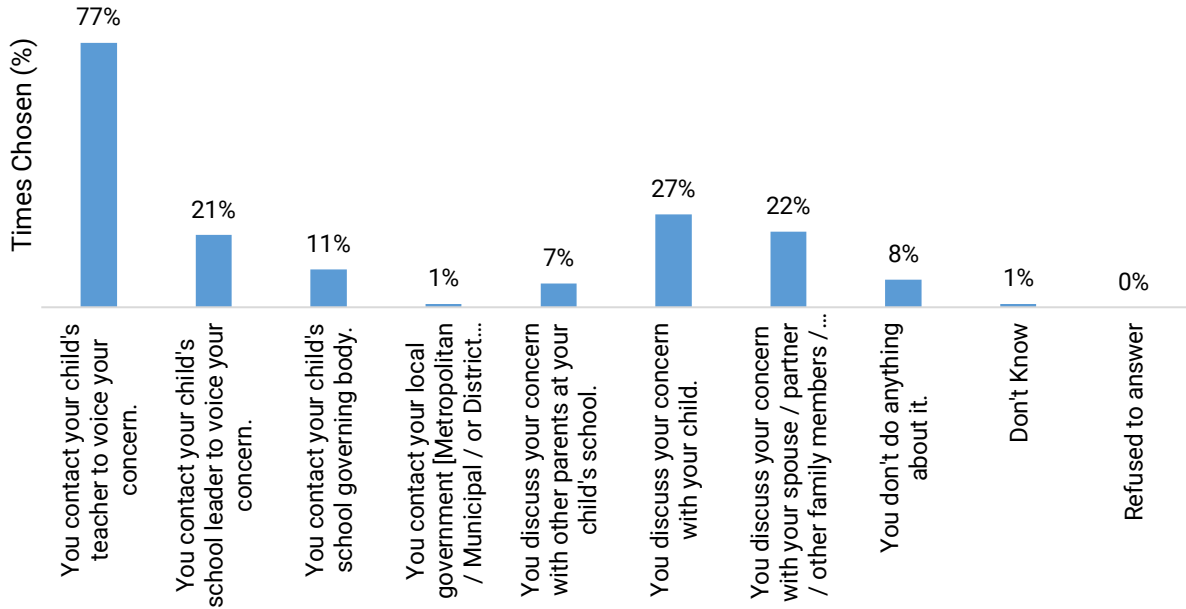- The criteria required for admission into college / university — 23%
- The opinions of other parents — 13%
- The opinions of your child — 35%
- The media — 7%
- Scientific findings from fields such as psychology or the learning sciences — 14%
- The opinions of your elected representatives / assembly members — 6%
- The opinions of your education community leaders — 12%
- The opinions of your child's educators — 35%
- The opinions of your civil society leaders — 8%
- None of these — 4%
- Don't Know — 1%
- Refused to answer — 0%

8

Brookings Institution

Parents' trust of and perceived alignment with teachers

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Your child's teachers share your beliefs about what makes a good education.
(sample size=1800)

Bar chart with y-axis labeled "Times Chosen (%)":
- Strongly disagree: 9%
- Slightly disagree: 8%
- Neutral - neither agree nor disagree: 12%
- Slightly agree: 26%
- Strongly agree: 43%
- Don't Know: 1%
- Refused to answer: 0%
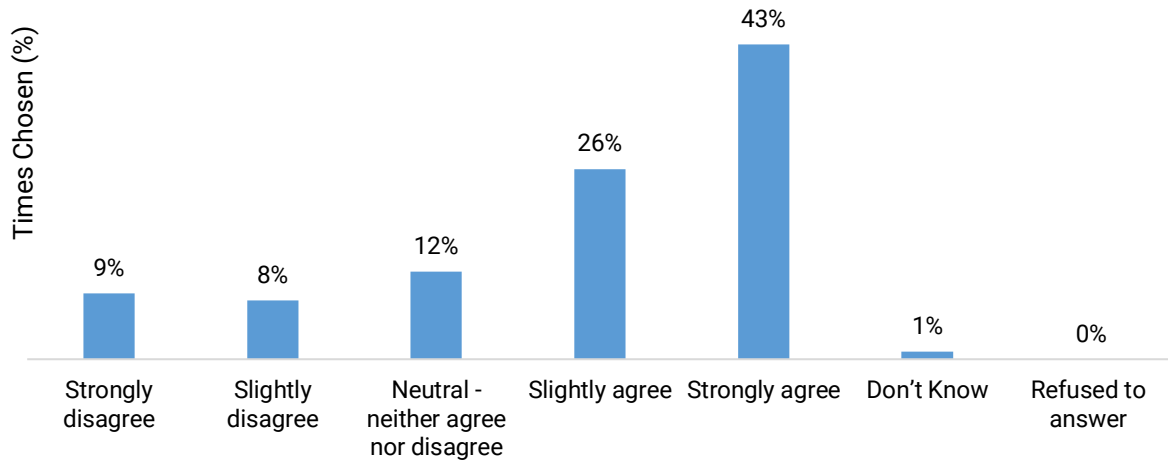
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Your child's teachers are receptive to your input and suggestions.
(sample size=1800)

Bar chart with y-axis labeled "Times Chosen (%)":
- Strongly disagree: 10%
- Slightly disagree: 10%
- Neutral - neither agree nor disagree: 14%
- Slightly agree: 27%
- Strongly agree: 37%
- Don't Know: 2%
- Refused to answer: 0%
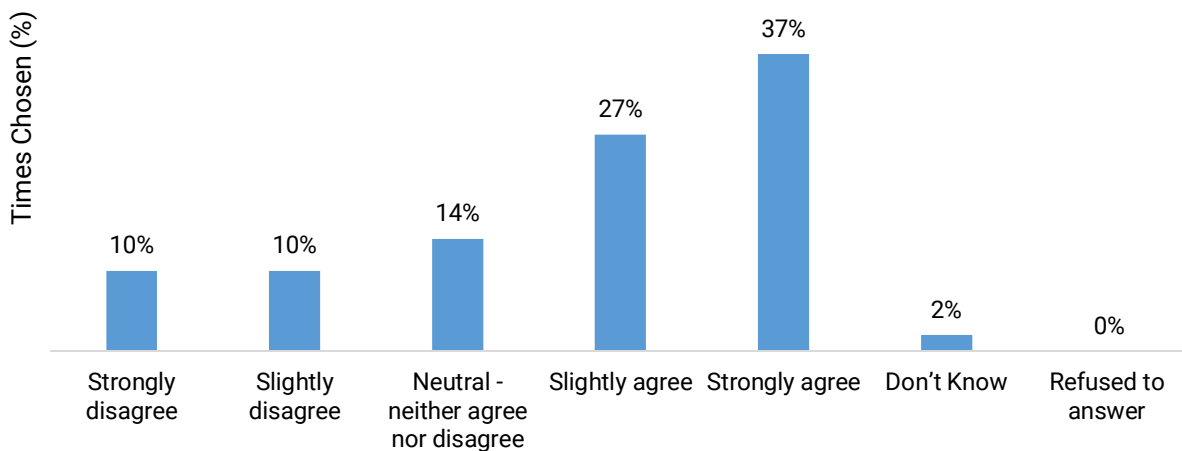
Parents' opinions on pedagogy

Is your child currently distance learning from home?
(sample size=1800)

0% 0%

55%   44%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Don't Know   ■ Refused to answer
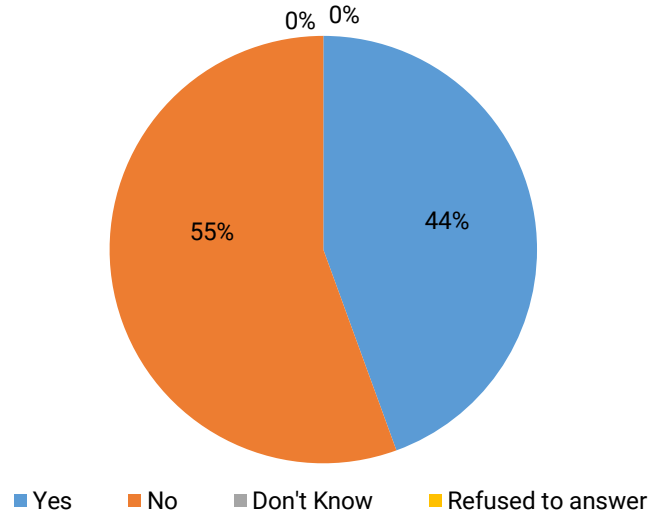
On which of the following activities is your child spending their time the MOST?
(sample size=1768)

Times Chosen (%)

50%

26%

22%

1%

0%

Engaging in teacher-assigned activities | Engaging in self-initiated activities | Engaging in parent-initiated activities | Don't Know | Refused to answer
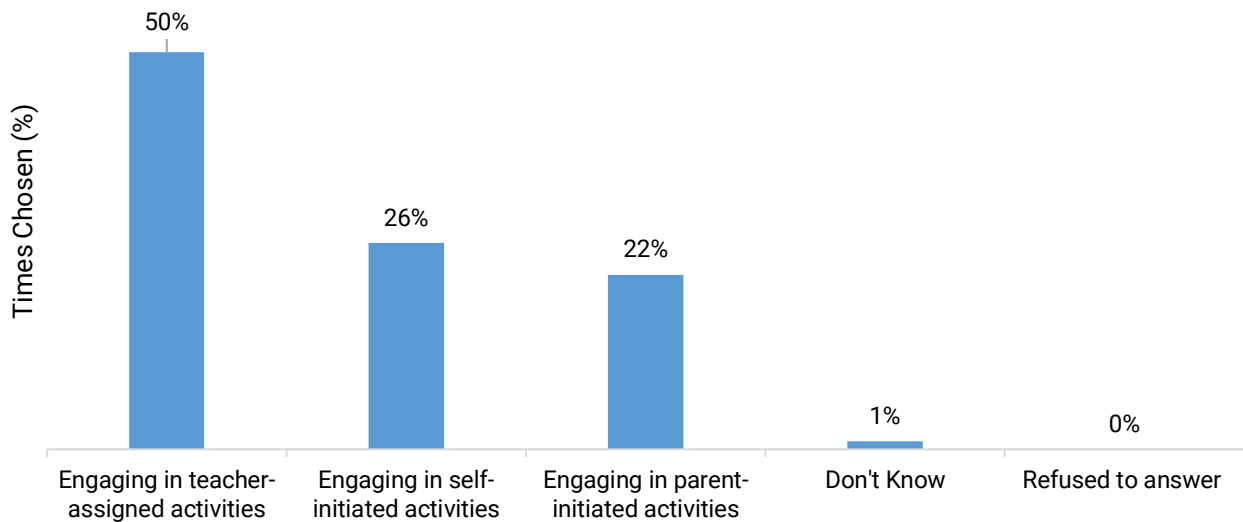
On which of the following activities is your child spending their time the SECOND MOST?
(sample size=1737)

Times Chosen (%)

20%	Engaging in teacher-assigned activities
36%	Engaging in self-initiated activities
42%	Engaging in parent-initiated activities
2%	Don't Know
0%	Refused to answer
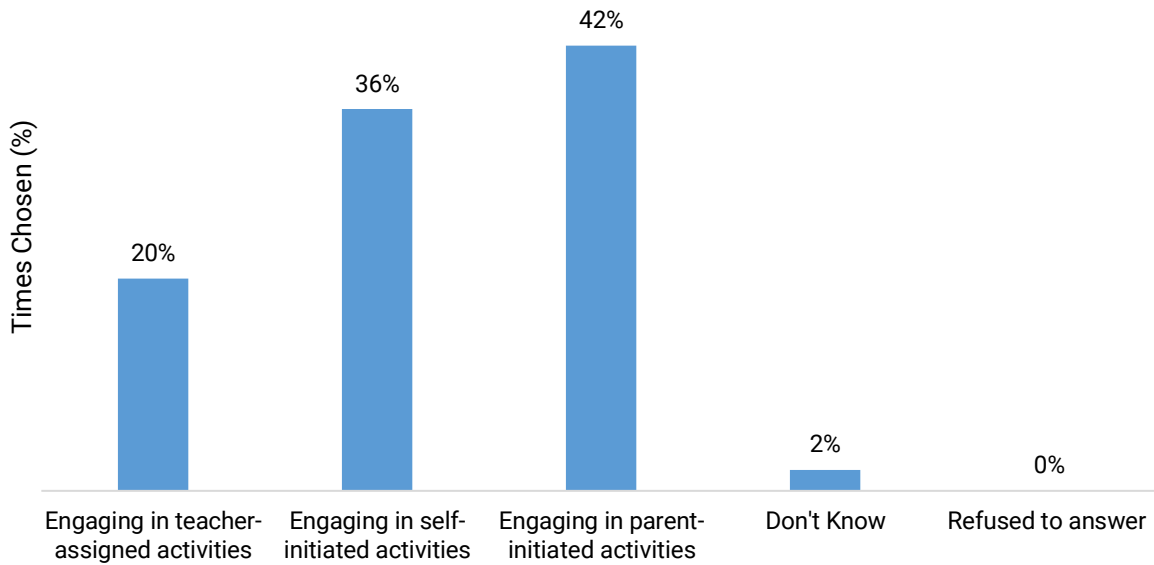
On which of the following activities is your child spending their time the THIRD MOST?
(sample size=1737)

23%	Engaging in teacher-assigned activities
34%	Engaging in self-initiated activities
33%	Engaging in parent-initiated activities
8%	Don't Know
1%	Refused to answer
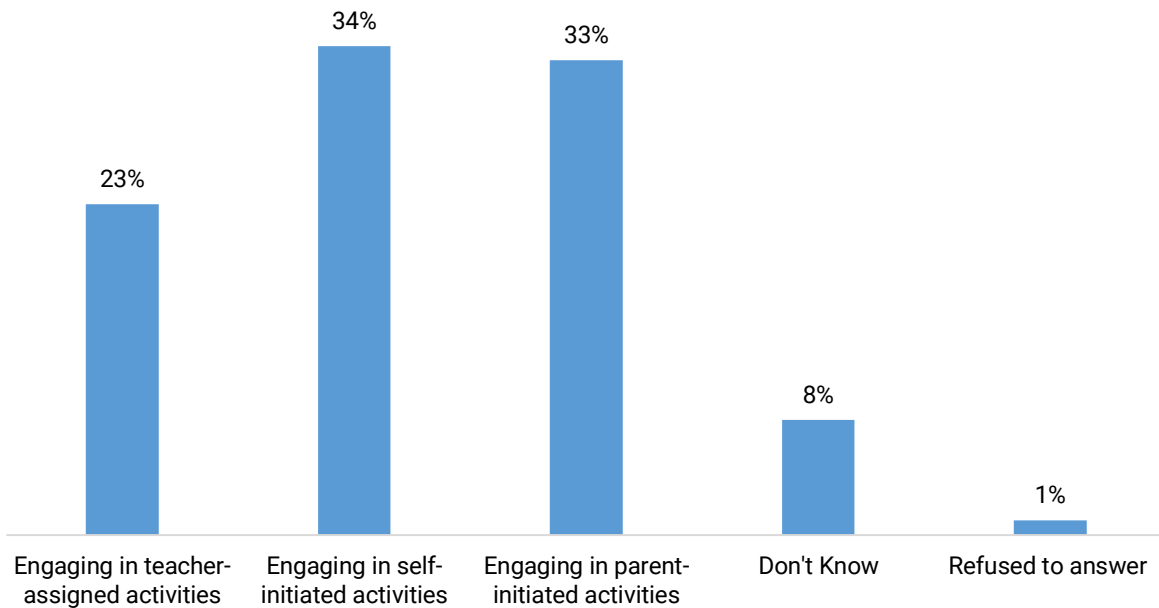
When you think about the different ways in which your child is or was learning during their school closure, which are you satisfied with?
(sample size=1800)

Times Chosen (%)

- Completing homework packets: 19%
- Engaging in virtual classrooms with teachers and classmates in real time: 31%
- Engaging in recorded video or audio lessons from teachers: 9%
- Learning through hands-on activities assigned by teachers: 25%
- Learning through playing: 13%
- Learning by shows on TV or radio: 26%
- Learning from education-focused websites: 9%
- Completing homework packets: 16%
- Engaging in discussions with their parents / siblings / and / or other family members: 22%
- Other: 5%
- Don't Know: 1%

Parents were presented with a scenario of 2 classrooms and asked: "Which would you suggest that your friend chose to send her child to?" (sample size=1800)

<u>First School</u>: Children are sitting in a classroom in rows of desks facing the front of the class and taking notes while listening to the teacher who is standing at the front of the room reviewing course material.

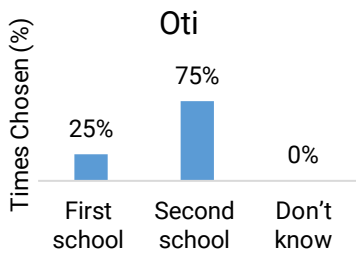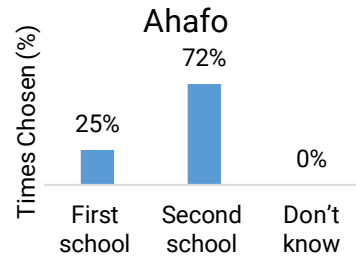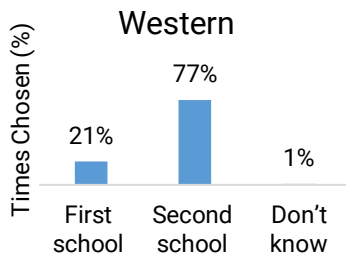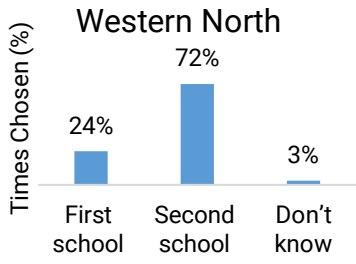<u>Second School</u>: Children are in a classroom sitting in small groups facing each other and working together on a class project. The teacher is walking around the room answering questions the children have.

Brong-Ahafo
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 19%
- Second school: 74%
- Don't know: 6%

Ashanti
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 21%
- Second school: 76%
- Don't know: 2%

Bono East
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 28%
- Second school: 69%
- Don't know: 3%

Central
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 22%
- Second school: 75%
- Don't know: 2%

Eastern
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 15%
- Second school: 81%
- Don't know: 4%

Greater Accra
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 21%
- Second school: 77%
- Don't know: 2%

North East
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 14%
- Second school: 79%
- Don't know: 7%

Northern
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 30%
- Second school: 68%
- Don't know: 1%

Savannah
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 11%
- Second school: 89%
- Don't know: 0%

Upper East
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 19%
- Second school: 80%
- Don't know: 2%

Upper West
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 21%
- Second school: 78%
- Don't know: 0%

Volta
Times Chosen (%)
- First school: 21%
- Second school: 78%
- Don't know: 0%

Western North

Times Chosen (%)

72%

24%

3%

First school | Second school | Don't know

Western

Times Chosen (%)

77%

21%

1%

First school | Second school | Don't know

Ahafo

Times Chosen (%)

72%

25%

0%

First school | Second school | Don't know

Oti

Times Chosen (%)

75%

25%

0%

First school | Second school | Don't know

How engaged is your child with the activities their teacher has assigned?
(sample size=1800)

Bar chart with y-axis labeled "Times Chosen (%)" showing:
- Highly engaged - assigned activities both maintain your child's interest and help them develop further skills: 58%
- Somewhat engaged - your child takes a real interest in some assignments though some are not as stimulating: 34%
- Not engaged - your child finds the assigned work boring or too challenging to stimulate an interest in learning: 4%
- No work assigned: 2%
- Unsure how engaged your child is with their learning exercises: 3%
- Don't Know: 1%
- Refused to answer: 0%

Demographics of survey respondents from Ghana

How old are you?
(sample size=1800)

- ■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35+

42%

49%

10%
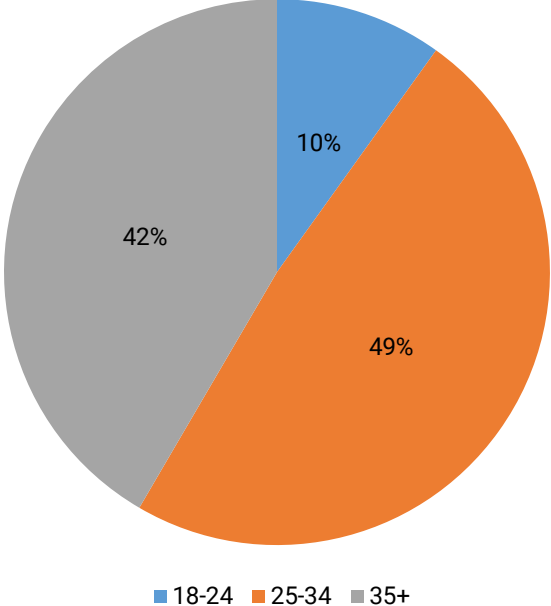
What is your sex?
(sample size=1800)

29%

71%

- ■ Male ■ Female
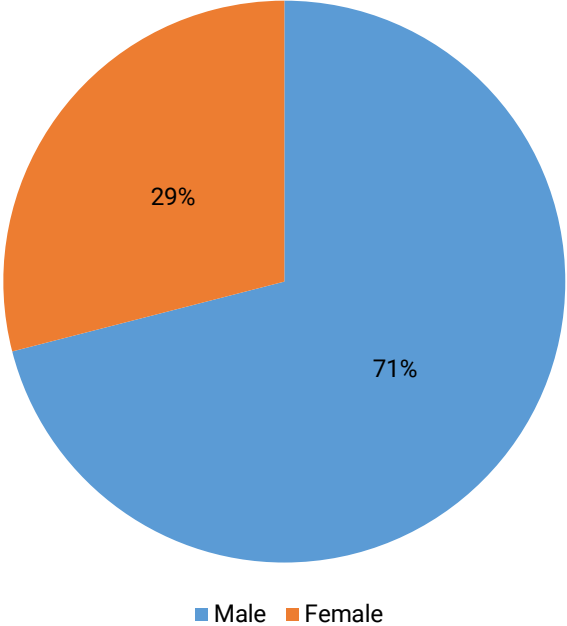
What region do you currently live in?
(survey sample=1802)

Region	Percentage
Oti Region	2%
Ahafo Region	2%
Western	7%
Western North	3%
Volta	6%
Upper West	3%
Upper East	4%
Savannah	2%
Northern	6%
North East	2%
Greater Accra	16%
Eastern	11%
Central	8%
Bono East	4%
Ashanti	19%
Brong-Ahafo	4%
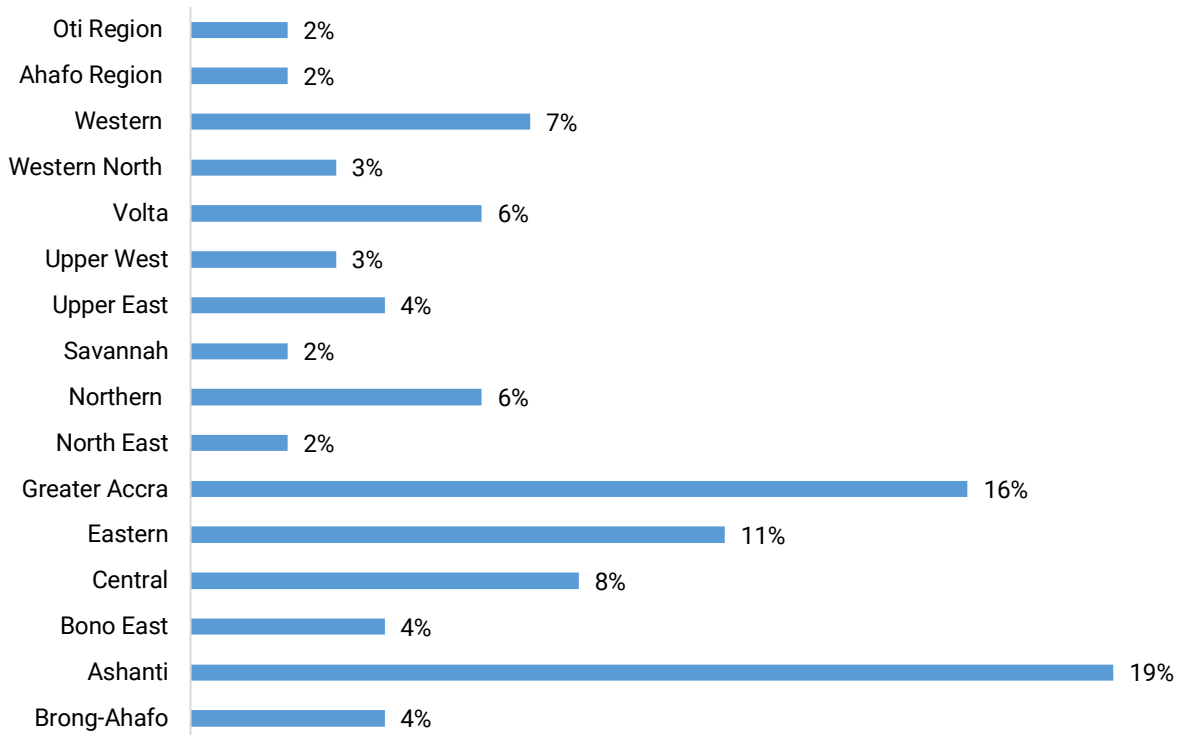
Are you your child's primary caregiver?
(sample size=1800)

	Times Chosen (%)
Yes	100%
No	0%
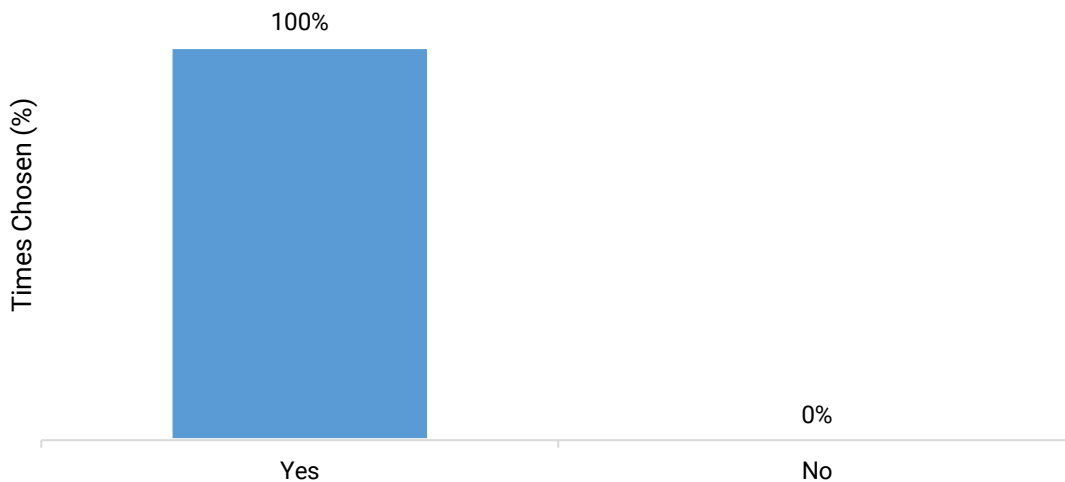
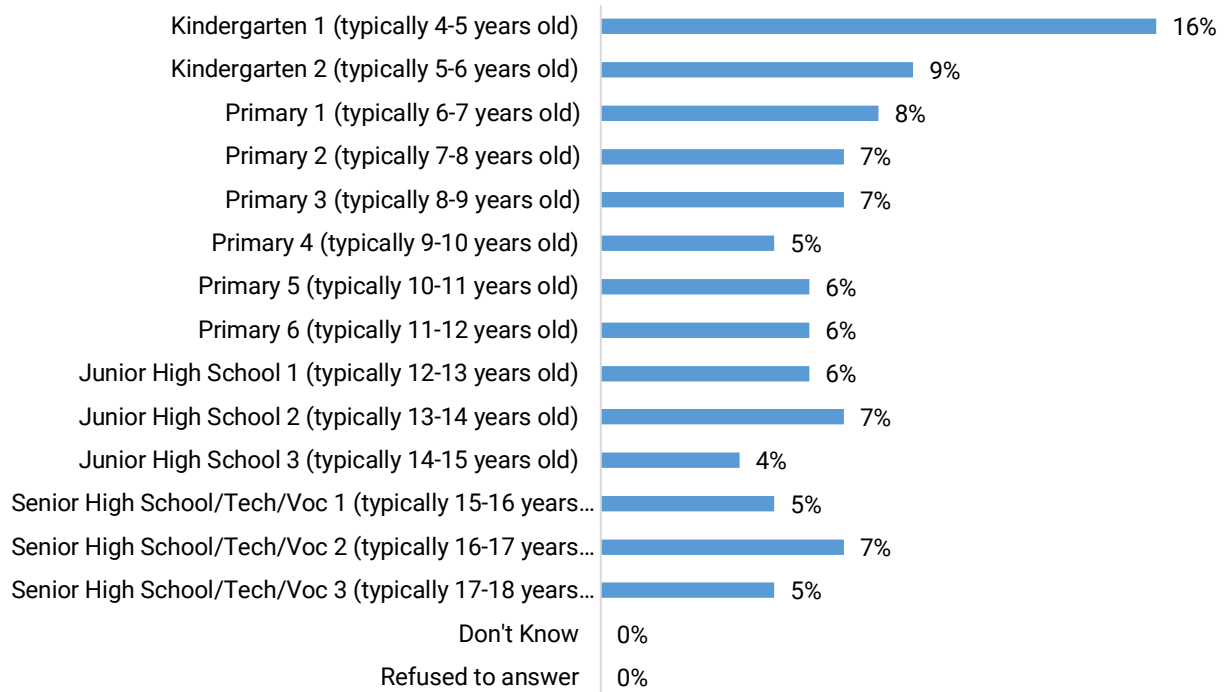## How many children do you have who are currently in kindergarten through senior high school and live at home with you?
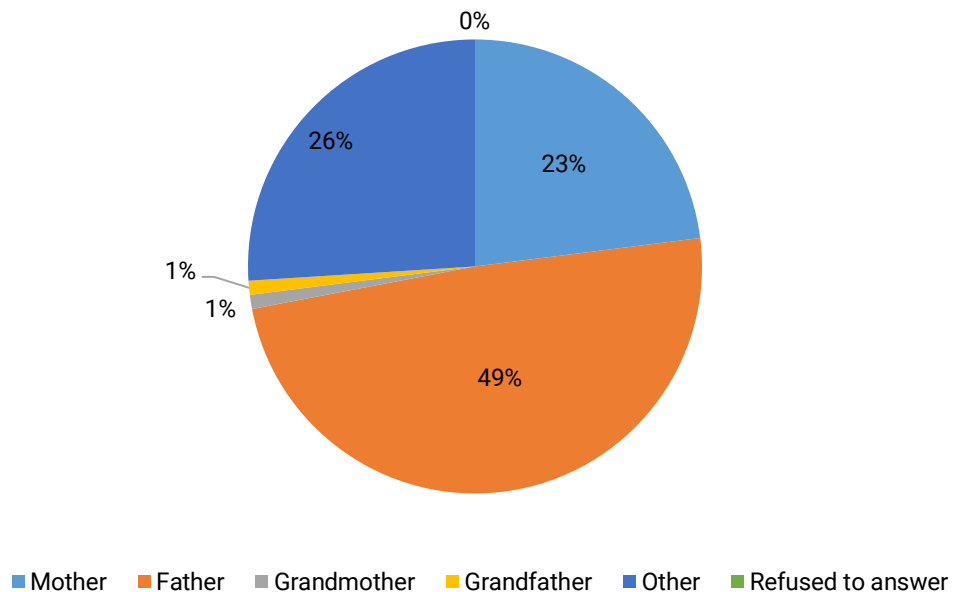## (sample size=1803)

1 2 3 4+
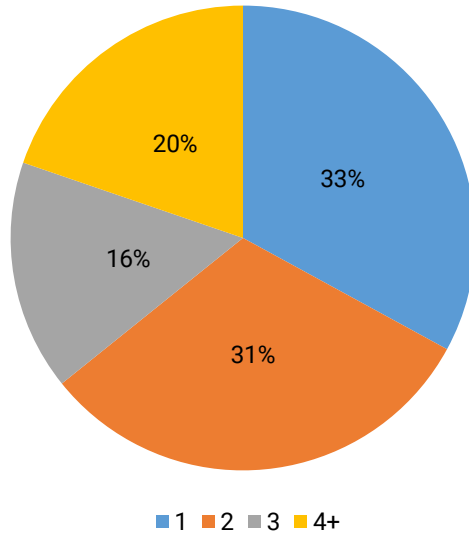
In what type of school is your child enrolled?
(sample size=1801)

■ Traditional public school ■ Traditional private school ■ Religious school
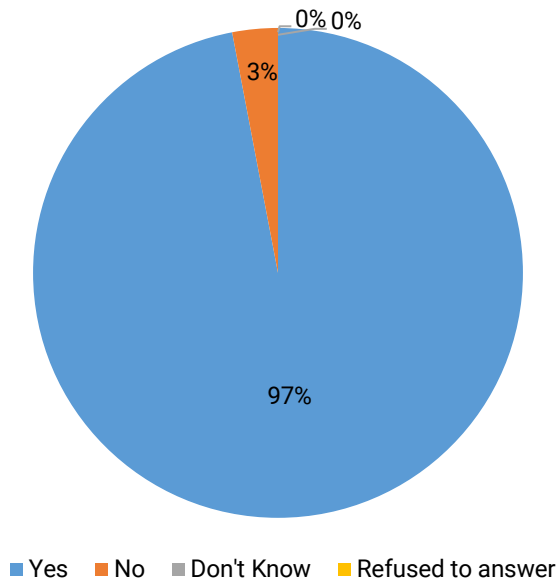■ Other ■ Don't Know ■ Refused to answer
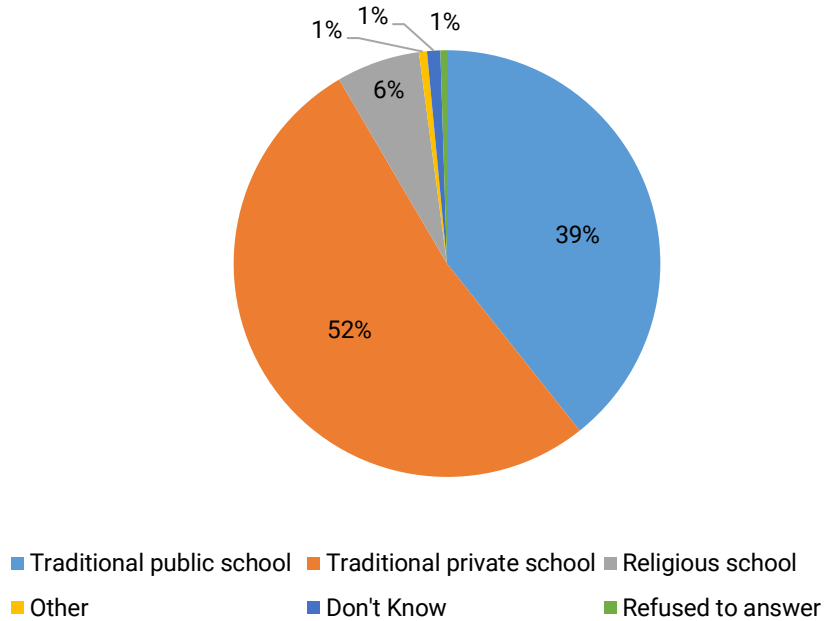
In which year is your oldest child who is enrolled in school (kindergarten to senior high school)? (sample size=1800)

| Year	Percentage
Kindergarten 1 (typically 4-5 years old)	16%
Kindergarten 2 (typically 5-6 years old)	9%
Primary 1 (typically 6-7 years old)	8%
Primary 2 (typically 7-8 years old)	7%
Primary 3 (typically 8-9 years old)	7%
Primary 4 (typically 9-10 years old)	5%
Primary 5 (typically 10-11 years old)	6%
Primary 6 (typically 11-12 years old)	6%
Junior High School 1 (typically 12-13 years old)	6%
Junior High School 2 (typically 13-14 years old)	7%
Junior High School 3 (typically 14-15 years old)	4%
Senior High School/Tech/Voc 1 (typically 15-16 years…	5%
Senior High School/Tech/Voc 2 (typically 16-17 years…	7%
Senior High School/Tech/Voc 3 (typically 17-18 years…	5%
Don't Know	0%
Refused to answer	0%

What is your relationship to your oldest child? (sample size=1800)

Mother 23%, Father 49%, Grandmother 1%, Grandfather 1%, Other 26%, Refused to answer 0%

■ Mother ■ Father ■ Grandmother ■ Grandfather ■ Other ■ Refused to answer

19

Did your child's school close because of COVID-19? (sample size=1801)

0% 0%
3%
97%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know ■ Refused to answer

Did your child's school reopen after closure because of COVID-19? (sample size=1745)
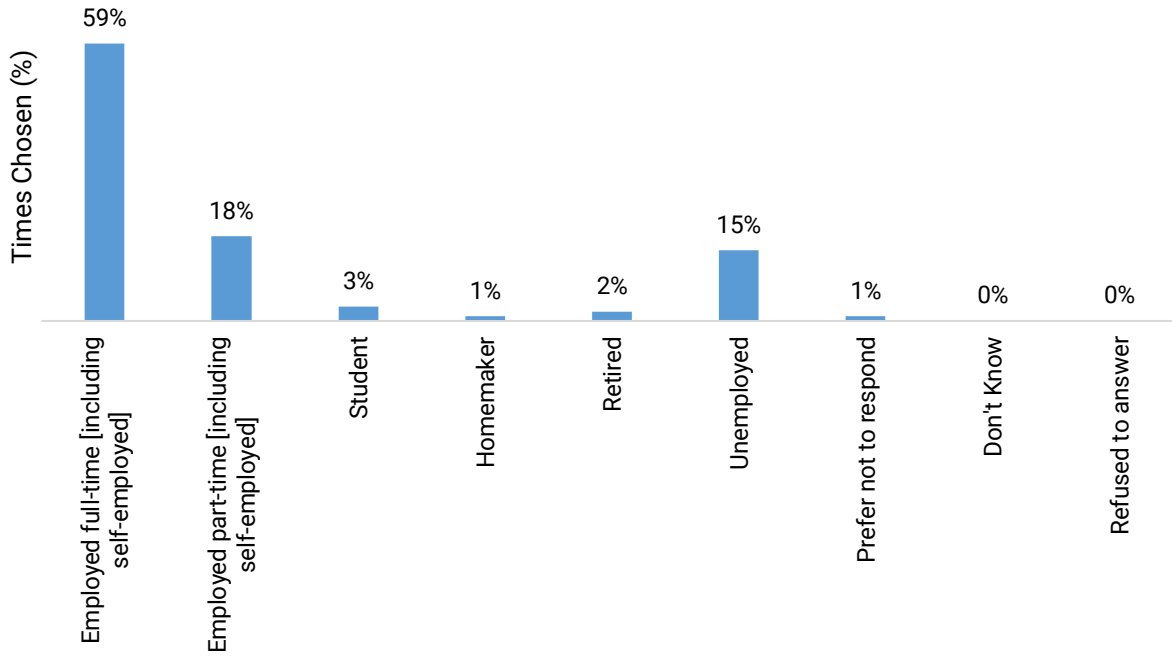

0%
19%
81%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know
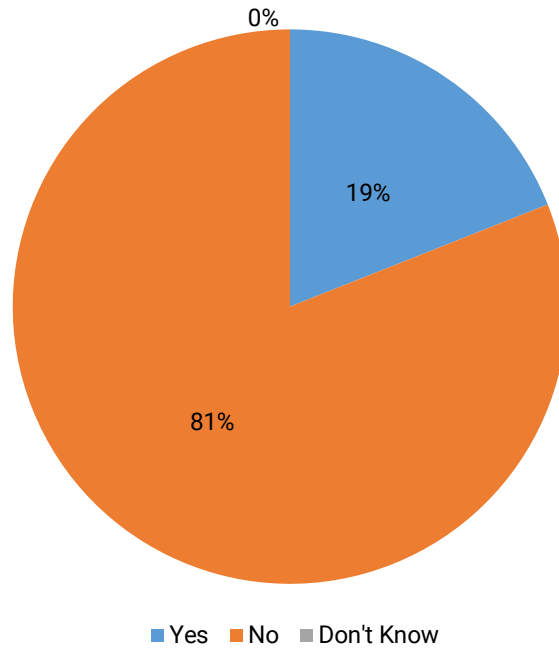
During your child's school closure, are or were you mainly home (whether employed or unemployed) or are or were you mainly working from outside your home?
(sample size=1743)

Times Chosen (%)

45%	You are or were mainly home.
54%	You are or were mainly working from outside of your home.
0%	Don't Know
0%	Refused to answer
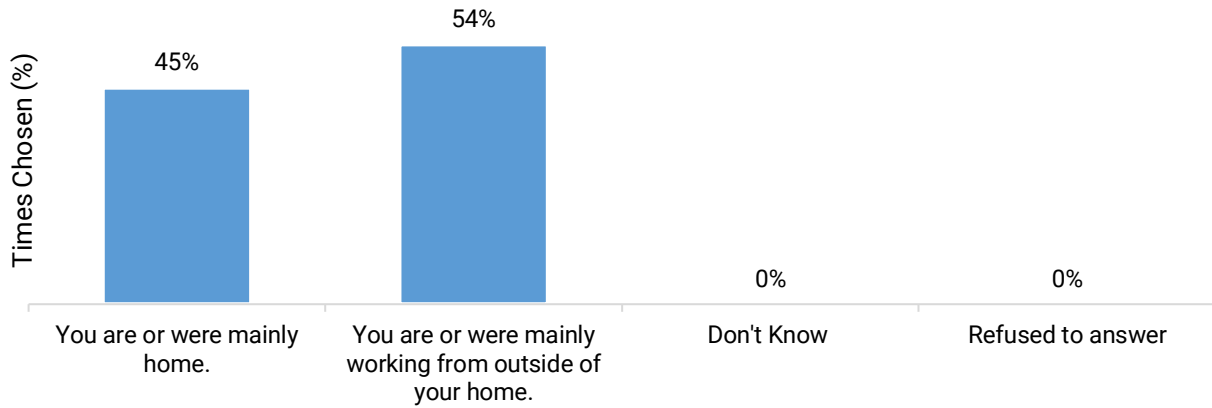
What is your highest level of education attained?
(sample size=1525)

Times Chosen (%)

- 3% Some primary school
- 2% Completed primary school
- 14% Completed junior high school
- 31% Completed senior high school/vocational or technical training
- 10% Completed polytechnic education
- 40% Completed undergraduate/university degree
- 0% Don't Know
- 0% Refused to answer

21
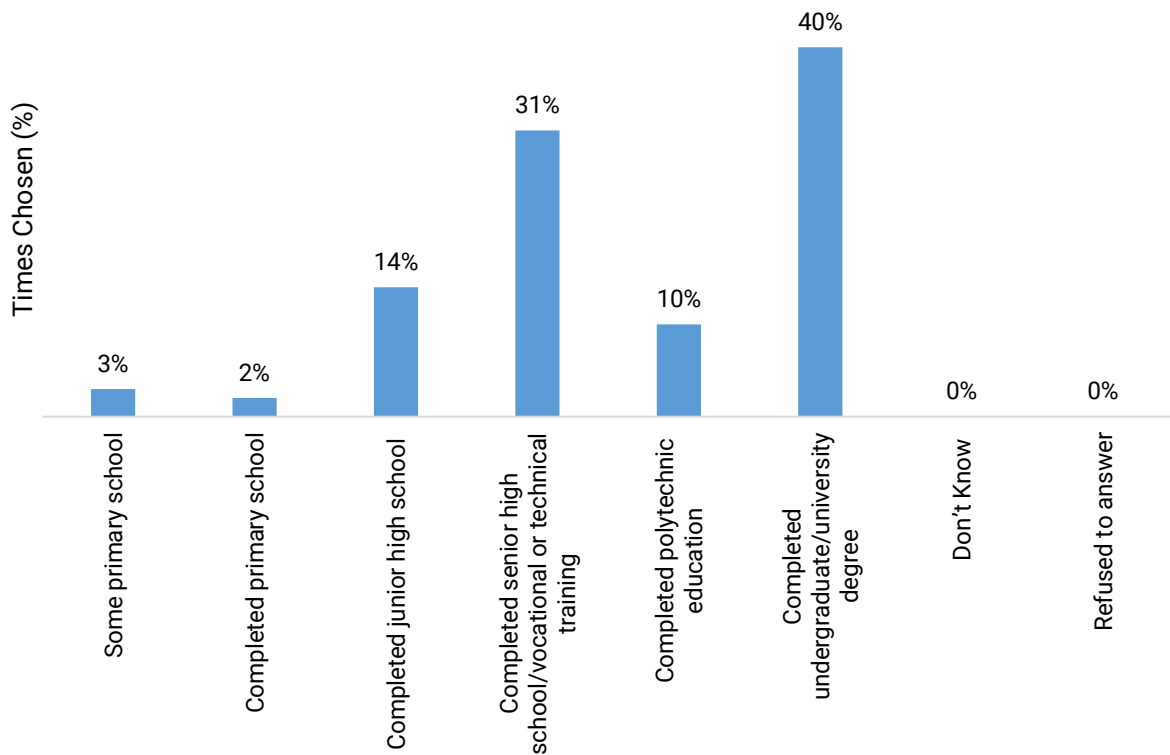
What is your current employment status?
(sample size=1709)

Category	%
Employed full-time [including self-employed]	59%
Employed part-time [including self-employed]	18%
Student	3%
Homemaker	1%
Retired	2%
Unemployed	15%
Prefer not to respond	1%
Don't Know	0%
Refused to answer	0%

Times Chosen (%)

When thinking about social issues, do you consider yourself to be..?
(sample size=1799)

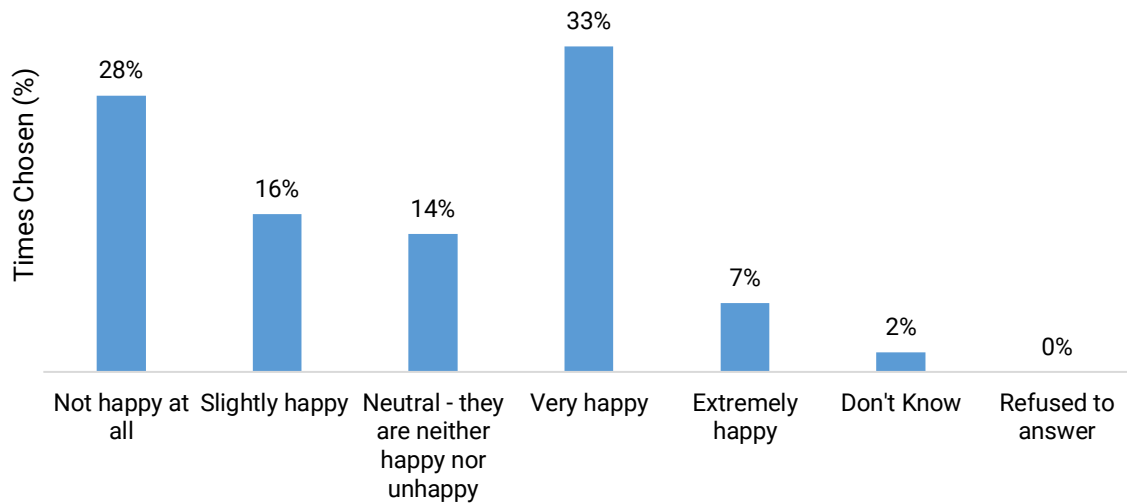| Category	%
Very right wing	25%
Somewhat right wing	10%
Moderate	40%
Somewhat left wing	4%
Very left wing	9%
Prefer not to respond	6%
Other	0%
Don't know	5%
Refused to answer	1%

Times Chosen (%)
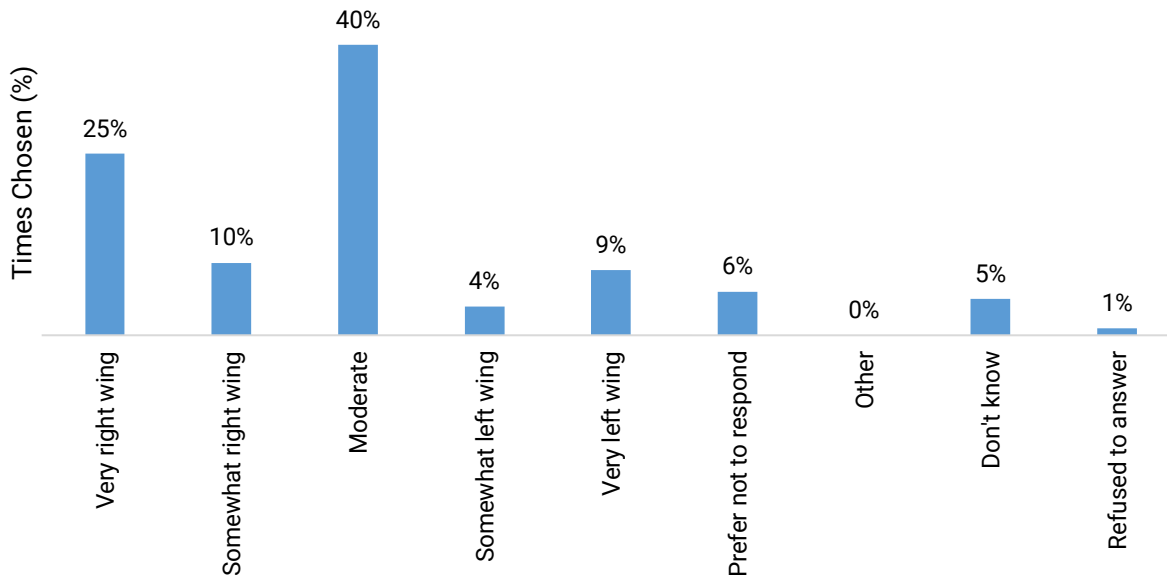
Parents' satisfaction with their children's education

How well do you believe your child is doing academically right now? Would you say...
(sample size=1800)

Times Chosen (%)

- Your child is struggling academically: 15%
- Your child is slightly struggling academically: 15%
- Your child is neutral - they are neither struggling nor excelling academically: 18%
- Your child is doing well academically: 39%
- Your child is excelling academically: 12%
- Don't Know: 1%
- Refused to answer: 0%
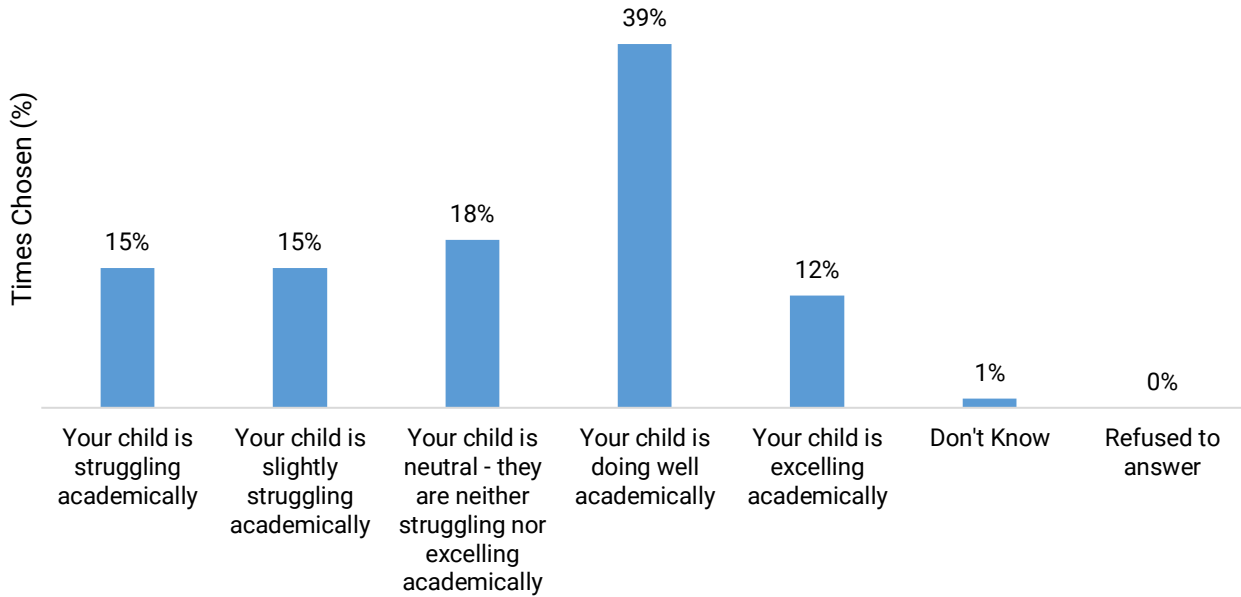
At the time of this survey, how happy is your child with their education? Would you say your child is...
(sample size=1800)

Times Chosen (%)

- Not happy at all: 28%
- Slightly happy: 16%
- Neutral - they are neither happy nor unhappy: 14%
- Very happy: 33%
- Extremely happy: 7%
- Don't Know: 2%
- Refused to answer: 0%

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