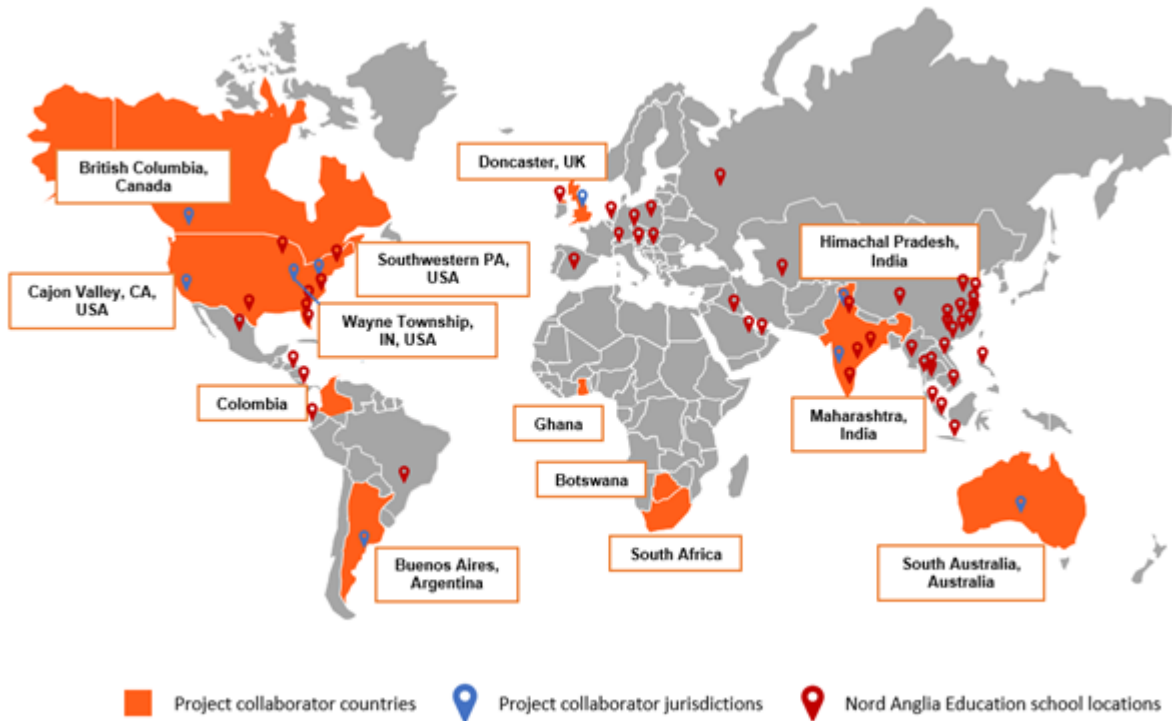# PERSPECTIVES FROM PARENTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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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 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 INDIA

The COVID-19 pandemic caused mandatory shutdowns and mass disruption of schooling worldwide. In India, more than 320 million students were affected (UNESCO, 2020). Educators and administrators responded to the crisis by rapidly shifting in-class lessons to online, radio and SMS instruction so that students could continue to learn remotely; however, with many households lacking access to technology, millions of students have not been able to access schooling over the last year (Parth et al., 2020). In households with access to remote learning, parents[2] and families have been given a front row seat to how and what their children learn "in school", while, in other

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

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

households, the lack of schooling has become top of mind for parents. Across the country, academic outcomes and student success hinge on parent involvement now more than ever before.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Himachal Pradesh is a state in northern India with mountainous terrain and a population of approximately 6.8 million people (Himachal Pradesh Government, n.d.). The urban share of the population is 10%. (World Bank, 2018). Agriculture is the main industry and employs 58% of workers (World Bank, 2018). Himachal Pradesh has one of the lowest poverty rates among states in India, at 8%, and has the highest mobile phone density behind Delhi, India's capital region (Niti Aayog, 2019). State-level per capita income is 183,108 rupees (approximately $2,517 USD) (Reserve Bank of India, 2019).

Education Indicators

Himachal Pradesh serves approximately eight hundred thousand students in more than fifteen thousand primary and secondary schools (Katwal, 2021). Across the state, the adjusted net enrollment rate of students in Class 1 through Class 10 is 93%, and the average dropout rate at the secondary school level is 7% annually (Niti Aayog, 2020). Across Classes 3,5, 8 and 10, 72% of students receive minimum level proficiency on national learning assessments (Niti Aayog, 2020).

Key Education Initiatives

Samagra Shiksha
Samagra Shiksha is a national-level initiative that takes a holistic approach to improving school effectiveness from pre-primary to Class 12. The initiative has several components, including a focus on improving quality education, addressing social and gender gaps in education, and promoting vocational skills development (Ministry of Education Government of India, 2020). At the state level, the Himachal Pradesh government is implementing the initiative through several facets, including the Samarth program. Samarth builds on the state's progress in achieving high levels of access to

education and seeks to strengthen the provision of quality education at a systems level. (HP State Project Office, 2021).

e-Samwad and e-PTM

Recognizing a need to deepen communication between parents and schools, the Himachal Pradesh government has rolled out two new initiatives that engage parents on a broader scale. The e-Samwad mobile app enables teachers to send updates to parents around the following indicators: attendance, homework completion, assessment dates, assessment results, vacation dates, and school management committee meetings (Katwal, 2021). The state government has also launched, e-PTM, electronic parent-teacher meetings, which take place over voice call and, in their first year of operation, received approximately 90% parent participation (Katwal, 2021).

STARS

Himachal Pradesh is one of six states in India to receive funding under the STARS (Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States), a five-year initiative funded by the World Bank (World Bank, 2020).

SURVEY OF PARENTS

From November 7, 2020 to November 24, 2020, CUE, working alongside project collaborators, the Himachal Pradesh government, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, and Samagra, distributed a 26-item live call survey to parents and caregivers of students in Class 1 to Class 12 in Himachal Pradesh. A total of 2,500 primary caregivers responded to our survey. To collect data representative of the population of Himachal Pradesh, 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 384 responses from primary caregivers in

Himachal Pradesh. 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.
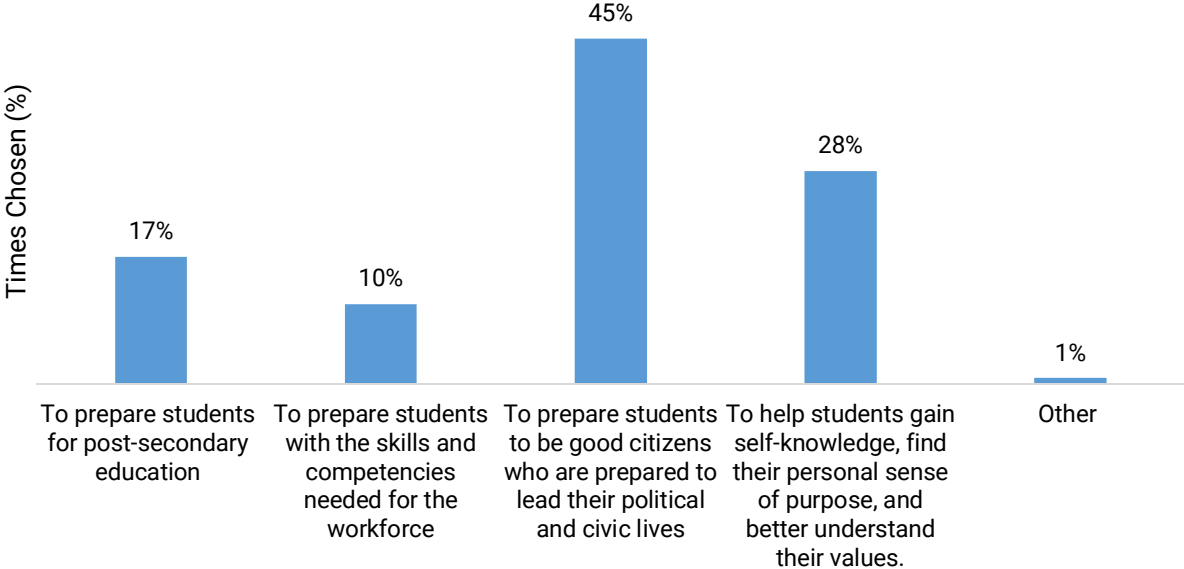
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our project collaborators in the Himachal Pradesh government, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, and Samagra, without whom we would not have been able to conduct this survey.
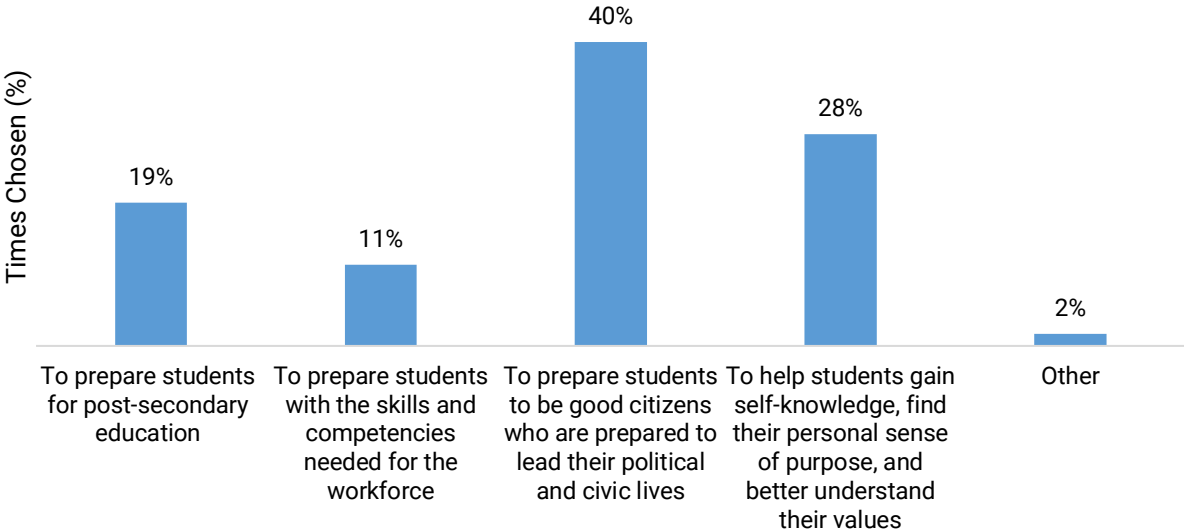
SURVEY FINDINGS

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

I believe that the most important purpose of school is: (sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

- To prepare students for post-secondary education: 17%
- To prepare students with the skills and competencies needed for the workforce: 10%
- To prepare students to be good citizens who are prepared to lead their political and civic lives: 45%
- To help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values.: 28%
- Other: 1%

I believe that my child's educators believe that the most important purpose of school is: (sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

- To prepare students for post-secondary education: 19%
- To prepare students with the skills and competencies needed for the workforce: 11%
- To prepare students to be good citizens who are prepared to lead their political and civic lives: 40%
- To help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values: 28%
- Other: 2%

Parents' indicators of quality and perceived alignment with educators

I am MOST satisfied with my child's education when my child is:
(sample size=2500)
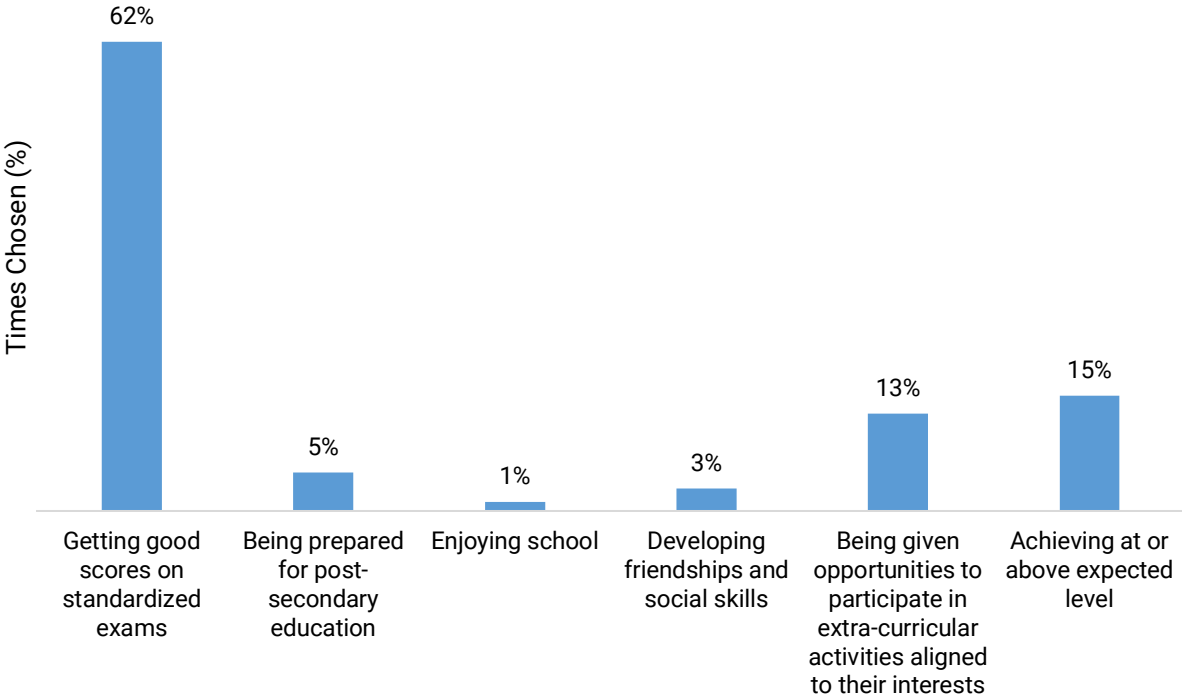
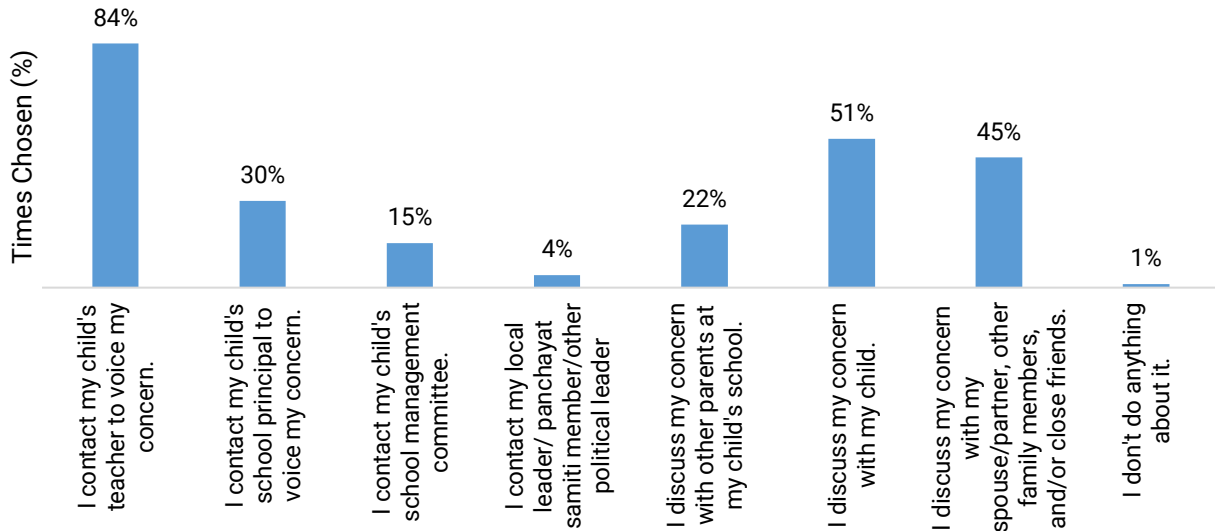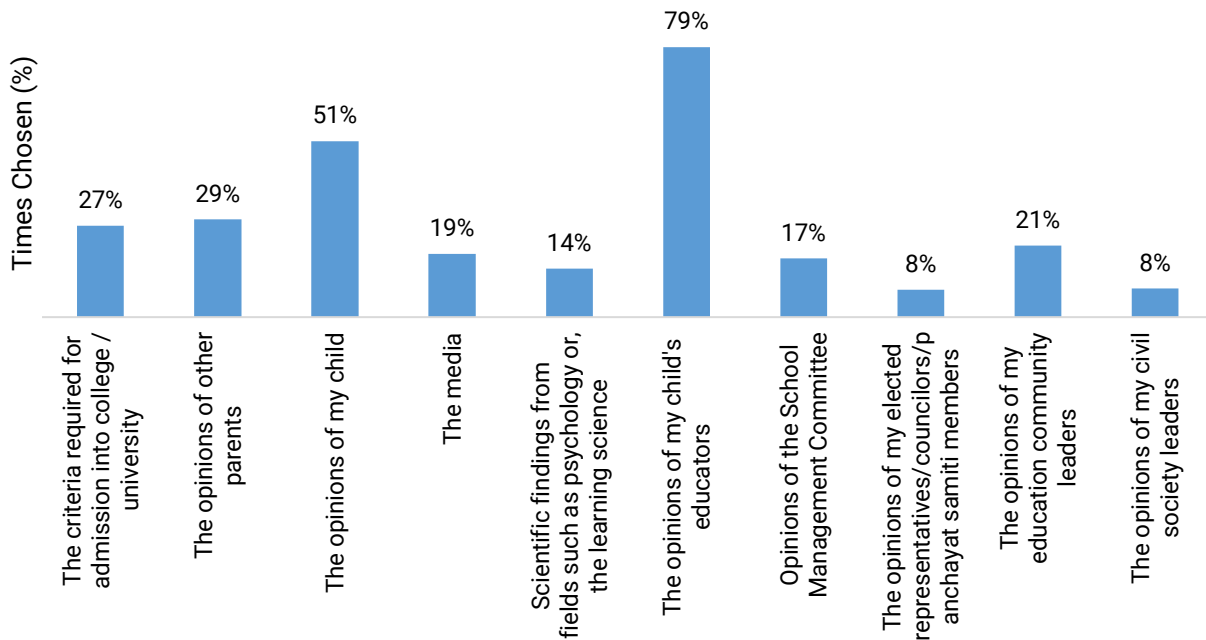## Parents' sources of information

How do you react when something about your child's education bothers or upsets you?
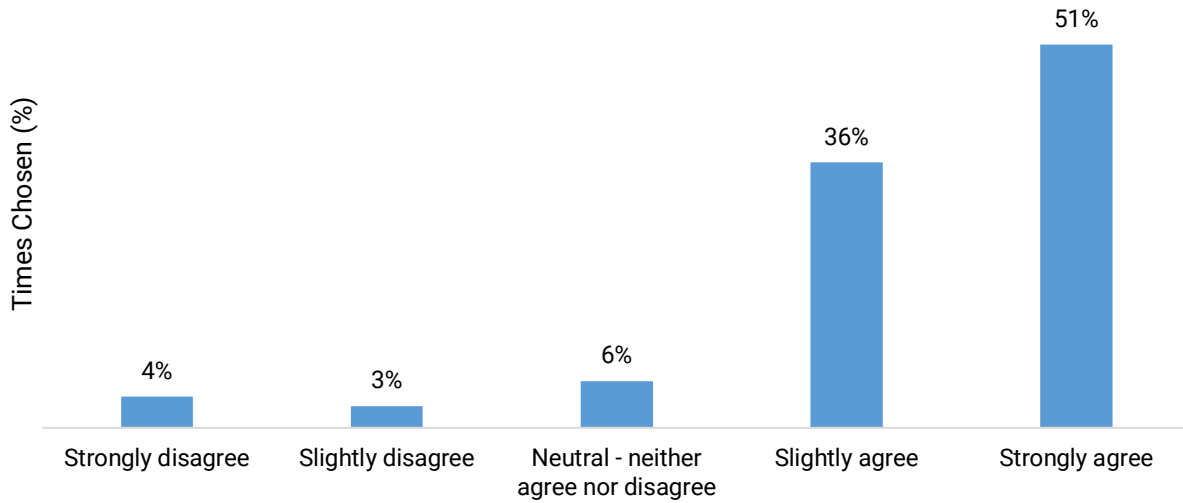### (sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

- I contact my child's teacher to voice my concern. — 84%
- I contact my child's school principal to voice my concern. — 30%
- I contact my child's school management committee. — 15%
- I contact my local leader/ panchayat samiti member/other political leader — 4%
- I discuss my concern with other parents at my child's school. — 22%
- I discuss my concern with my child. — 51%
- I discuss my concern with my spouse/partner, other family members, and/or close friends. — 45%
- I don't do anything about it. — 1%

What influences your perspective about what makes for a good quality education for your child?
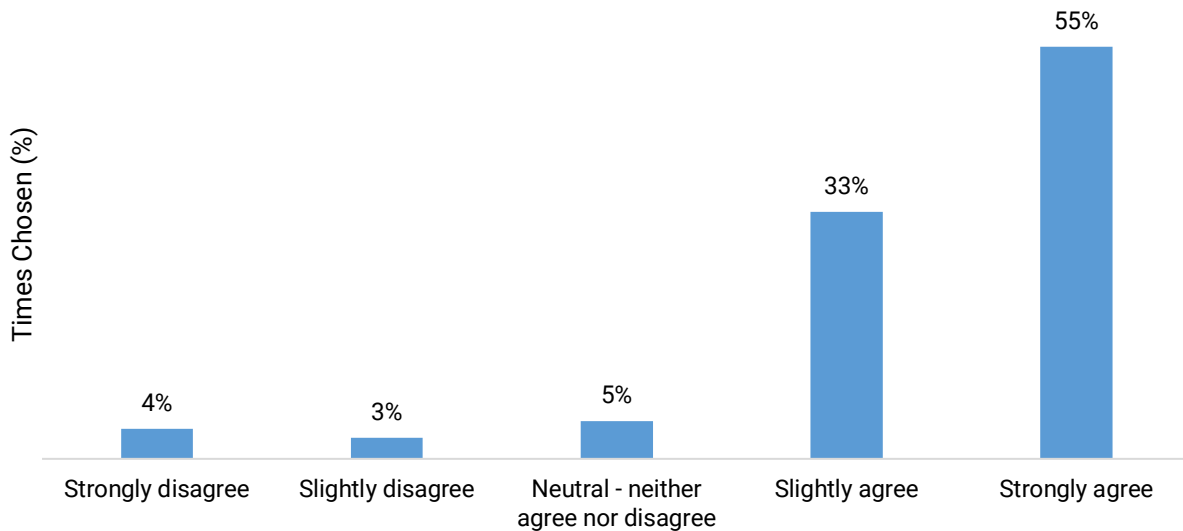### (sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

- The criteria required for admission into college / university — 27%
- The opinions of other parents — 29%
- The opinions of my child — 51%
- The media — 19%
- Scientific findings from fields such as psychology or, the learning science — 14%
- The opinions of my child's educators — 79%
- Opinions of the School Management Committee — 17%
- The opinions of my elected representatives/councilors/panchayat samiti members — 8%
- The opinions of my education community leaders — 21%
- The opinions of my civil society leaders — 8%

My child's teachers share my beliefs about what makes a good education.
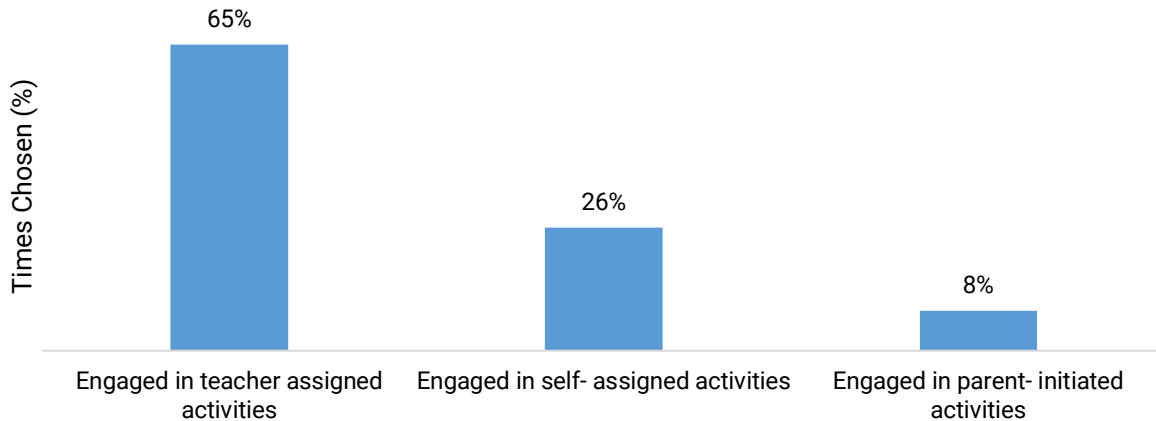### (sample size=2500)

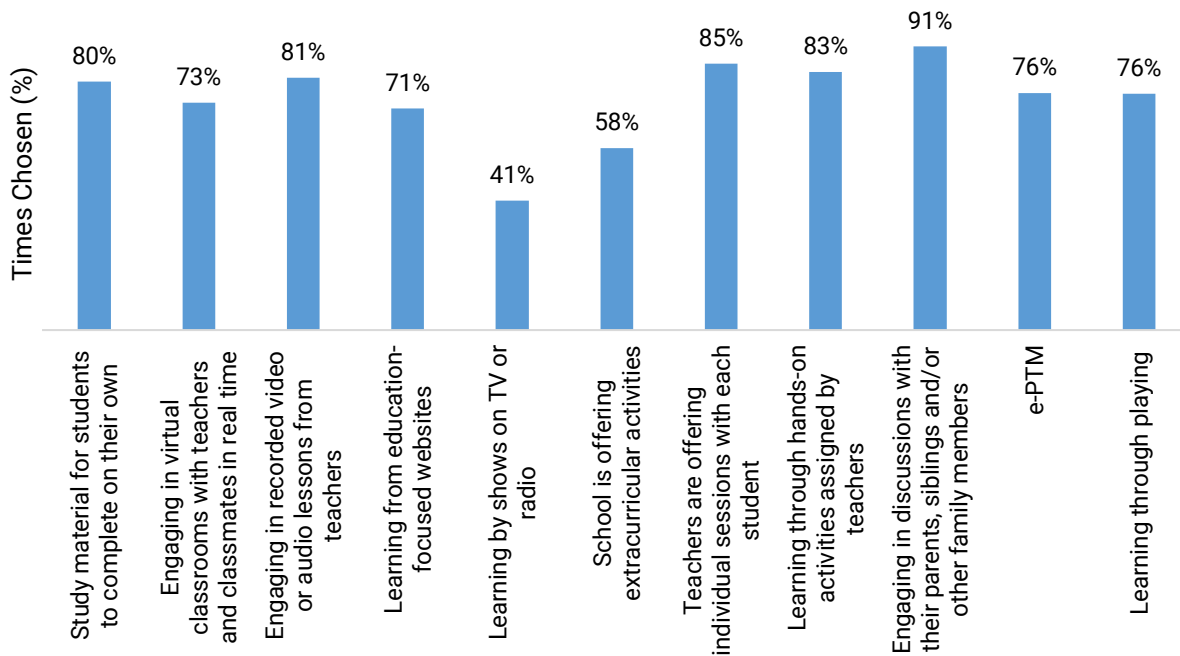## My child's teachers are receptive to my input and suggestions.
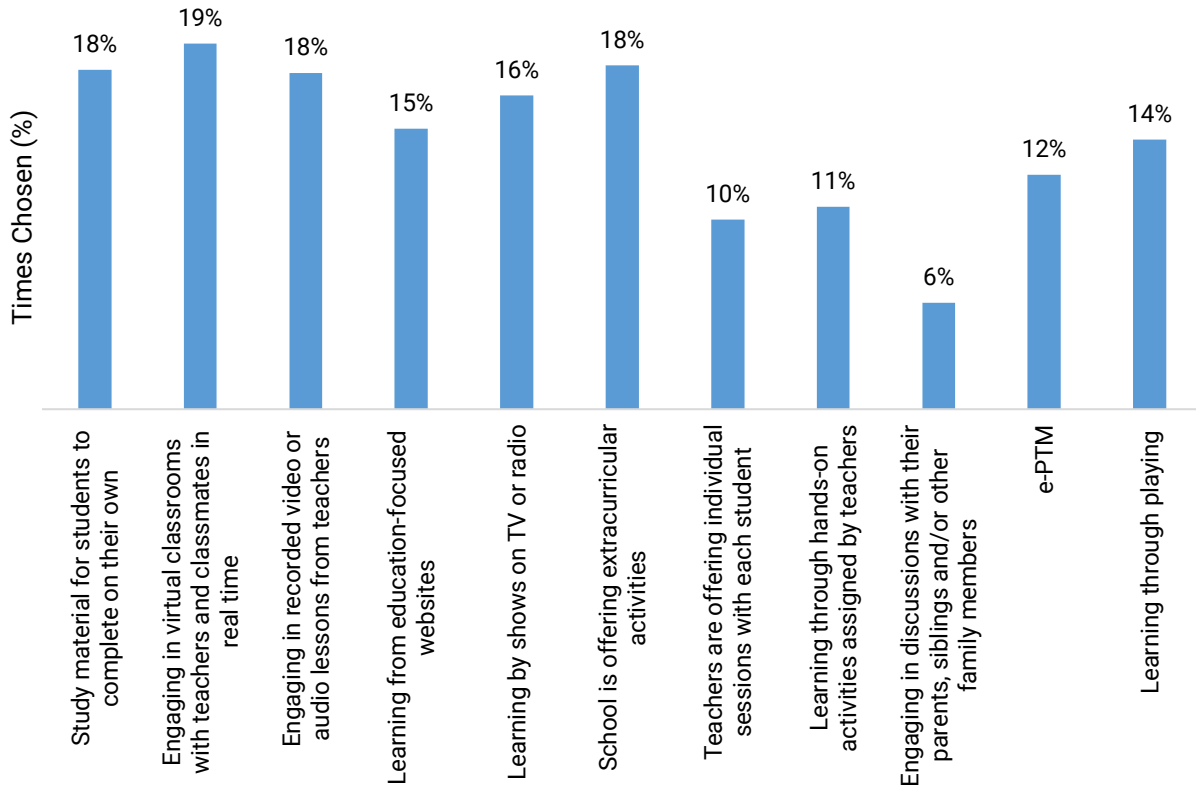### (sample size=2500)

Parents' opinions on pedagogy

How did your child spend majority of the time in the last two weeks?
(sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

- Engaged in teacher assigned activities: 65%
- Engaged in self- assigned activities: 26%
- Engaged in parent- initiated activities: 8%

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=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

- Study material for students to complete on their own: 80%
- Engaging in virtual classrooms with teachers and classmates in real time: 73%
- Engaging in recorded video or audio lessons from teachers: 81%
- Learning from education-focused websites: 71%
- Learning by shows on TV or radio: 41%
- School is offering extracurricular activities: 58%
- Teachers are offering individual sessions with each student: 85%
- Learning through hands-on activities assigned by teachers: 83%
- Engaging in discussions with their parents, siblings and/or other family members: 91%
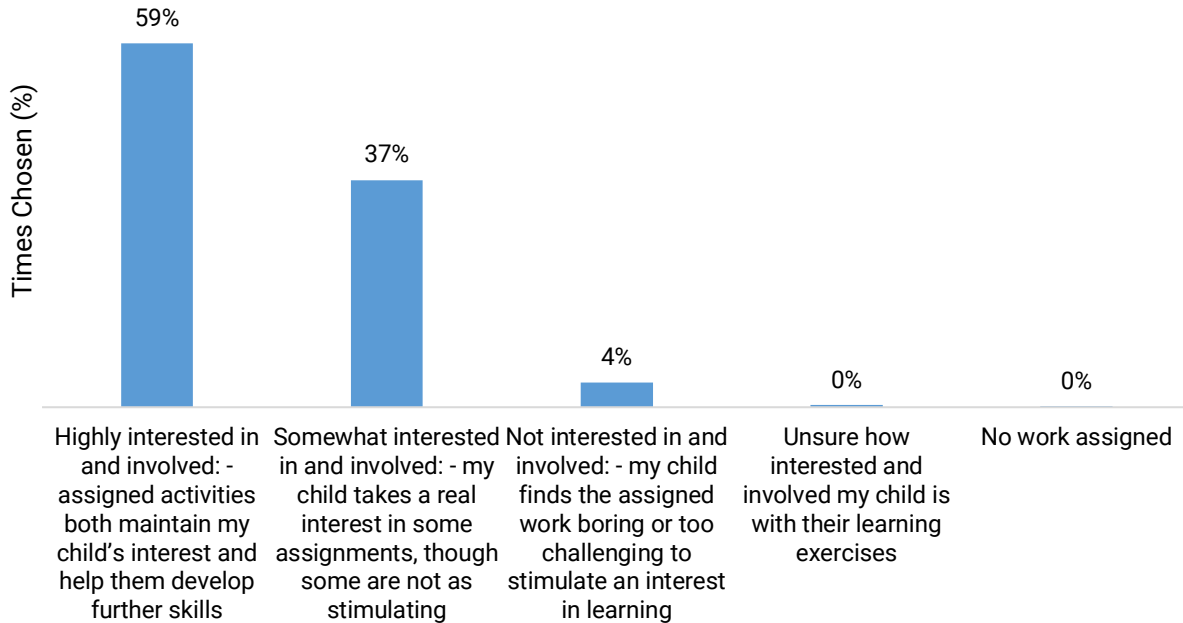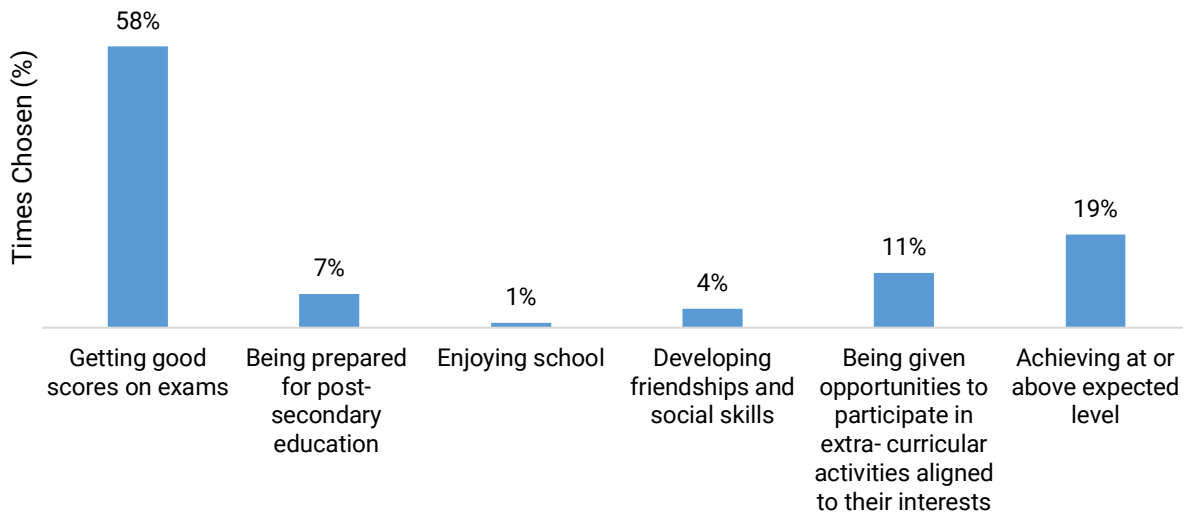- e-PTM: 76%
- Learning through playing: 76%

When you think about the different ways in which your child is or was learning during their school closure, which are not you satisfied with?
(sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

Category	%
Study material for students to complete on their own	18%
Engaging in virtual classrooms with teachers and classmates in real time	19%
Engaging in recorded video or audio lessons from teachers	18%
Learning from education-focused websites	15%
Learning by shows on TV or radio	16%
School is offering extracurricular activities	18%
Teachers are offering individual sessions with each student	10%
Learning through hands-on activities assigned by teachers	11%
Engaging in discussions with their parents, siblings and/or other family members	6%
e-PTM	12%
Learning through playing	14%

How interested in and involved is your child with the activities their teacher has assigned?
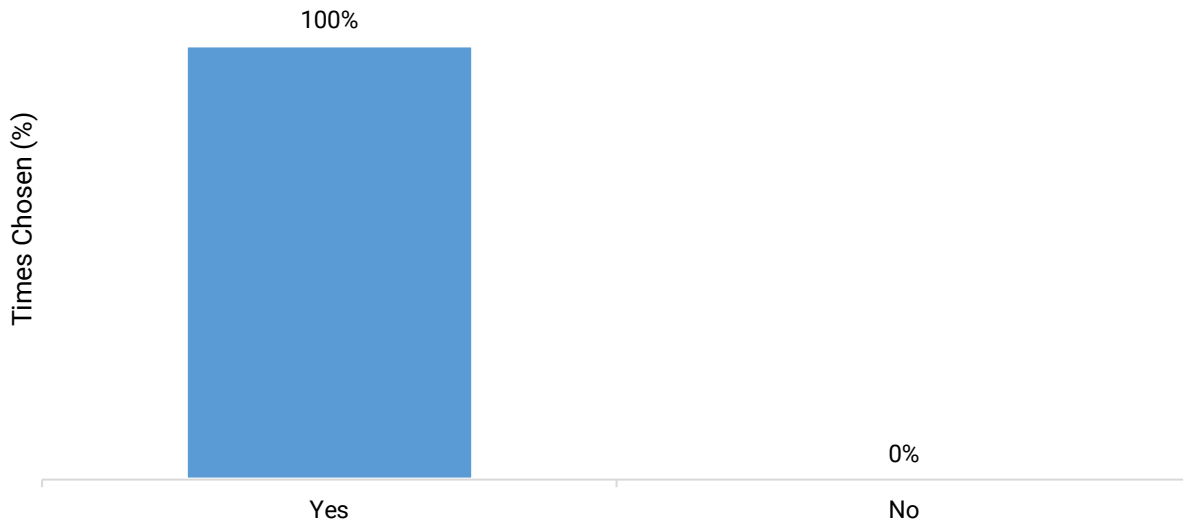## (sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

59%	Highly interested in and involved: - assigned activities both maintain my child's interest and help them develop further skills
37%	Somewhat interested in and involved: - my child takes a real interest in some assignments, though some are not as stimulating
4%	Not interested in and involved: - my child finds the assigned work boring or too challenging to stimulate an interest in learning
0%	Unsure how interested and involved my child is with their learning exercises
0%	No work assigned

I believe that my child's educators are MOST satisfied with their students' education when their students are:
(sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

|	
58%	Getting good scores on exams
7%	Being prepared for post-secondary education
1%	Enjoying school
4%	Developing friendships and social skills
11%	Being given opportunities to participate in extra- curricular activities aligned to their interests
19%	Achieving at or above expected level

Demographics of survey respondents from Himachal Pradesh
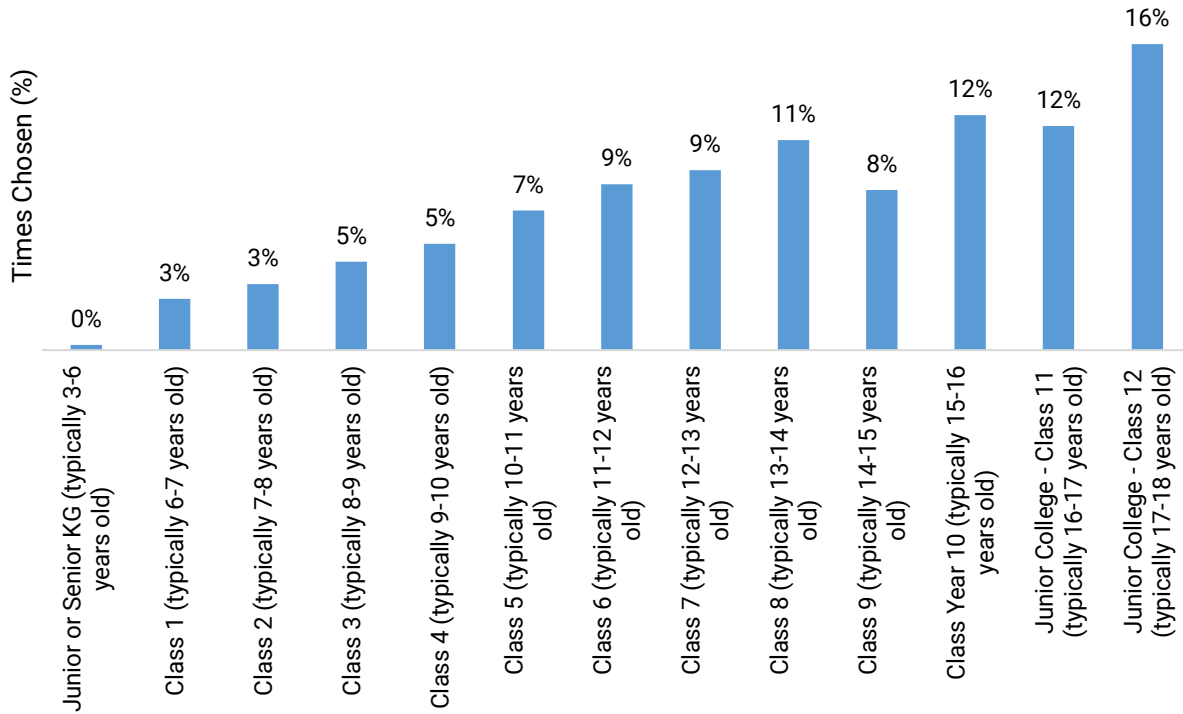
Are you your child's primary caregiver?
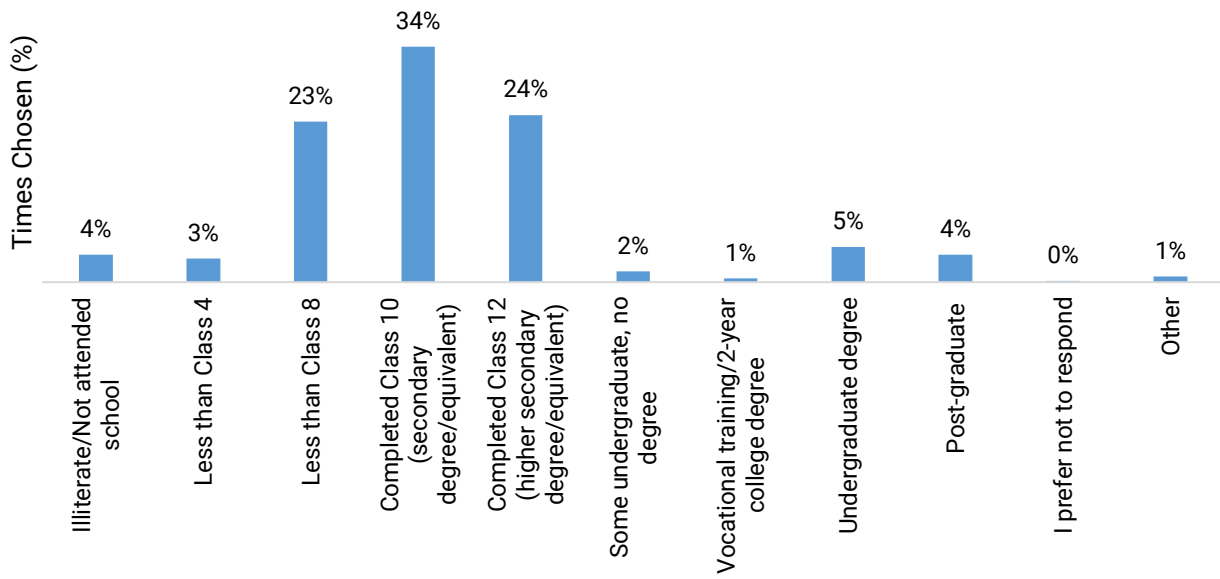### (sample size=2500)

How many children do you have who are currently in junior KG through Class 12 and live at home with you?
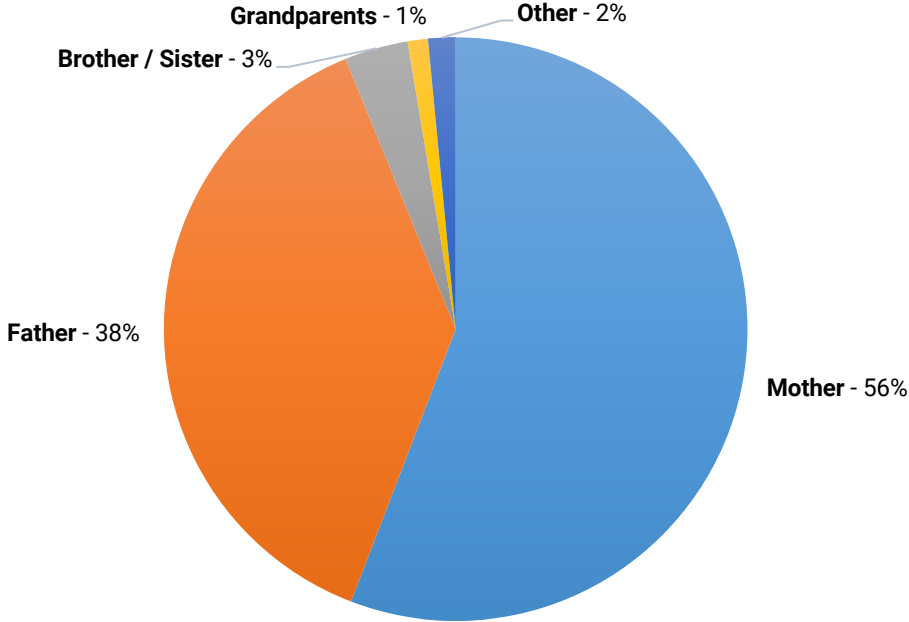### (sample size=2500)
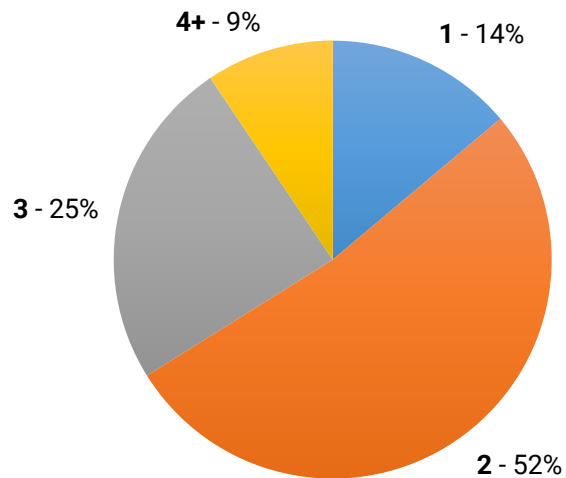
In which year is your oldest child who is enrolled in school?
(sample size=2500)

What is your highest level of education attained?
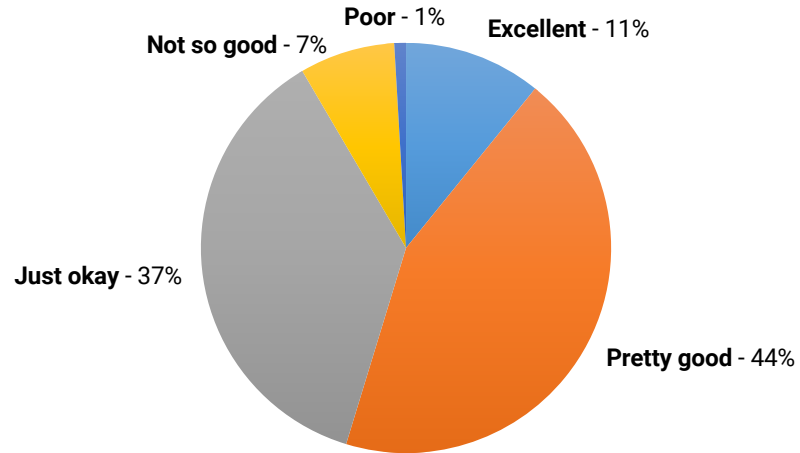## (sample size=2500)

What is your relationship with the child that you answered about in this survey?
(sample size=2500)

Grandparents - 1%

Other - 2%
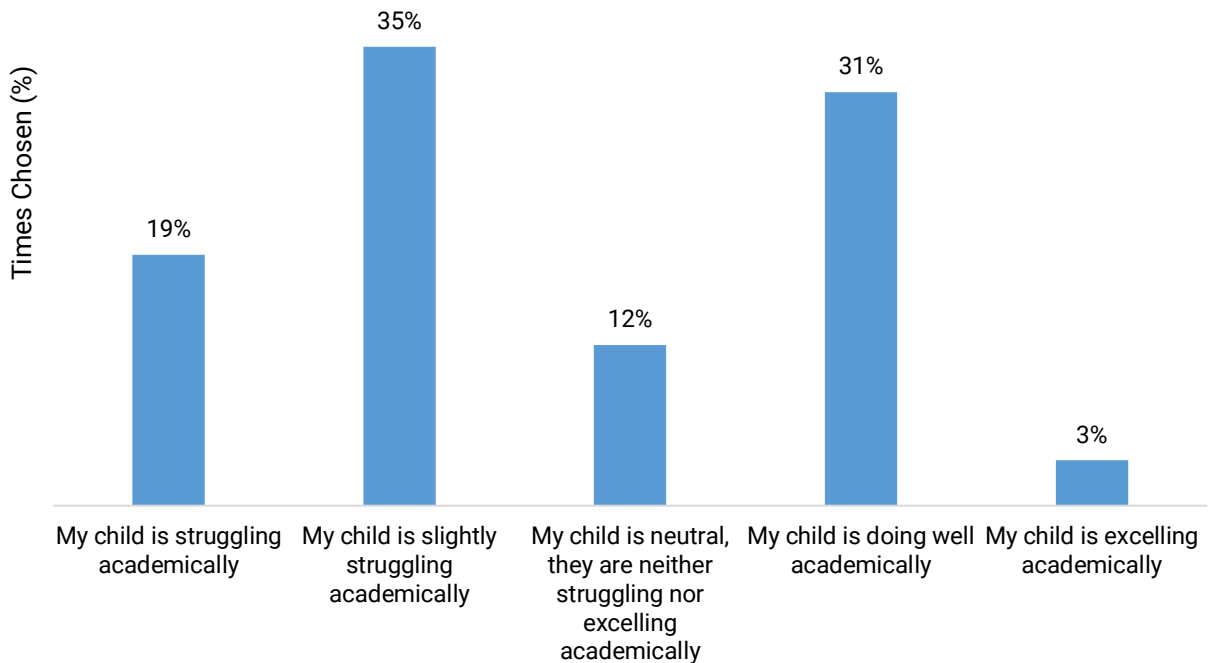
Brother / Sister - 3%

Father - 38%

Mother - 56%

Parents' satisfaction with their children's education

How would you rate the education that your child is getting from their school right now?
(sample size=2500)

- Poor - 1%
- Not so good - 7%
- Excellent - 11%
- Just okay - 37%
- Pretty good - 44%

How well do you believe your child is doing academically right now?
(sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

Response	%
My child is struggling academically	19%
My child is slightly struggling academically	35%
My child is neutral, they are neither struggling nor excelling academically	12%
My child is doing well academically	31%
My child is excelling academically	3%

At the time of this survey, how happy is your child with their education?
(sample size=2500)

Times Chosen (%)

4% — Not happy at all
29% — Slightly happy
13% — My child is neutral - they are neither happy nor unhappy
46% — Very happy
7% — Extremely happy
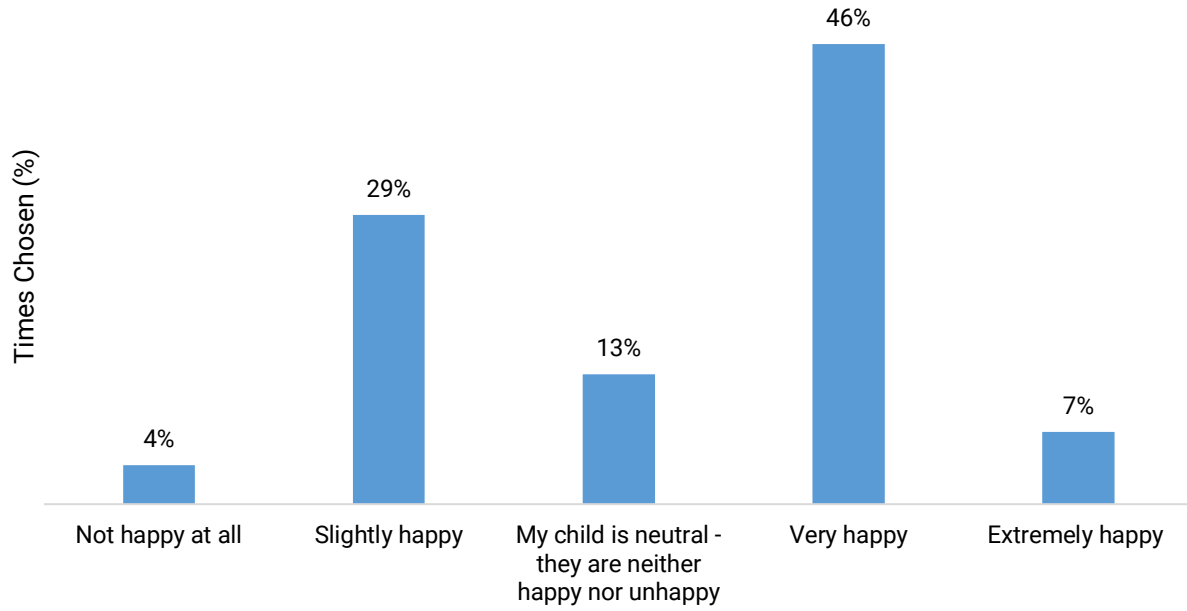
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