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Early connections last a lifetime

Tuning In: Parents of Young Children Speak Up about What They Think, Know and Need

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Zero to Three Mission Statement



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Our mission
is to ensure
that all babies and toddlers
have a strong start in life

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Learning Objectives

- Articulate what millennial parents' greatest child-rearing challenges are and what aspect(s) of parenting they would like to improve.
- Offer suggestions for designing parenting messages and/or programming for millennial parents, based on survey findings.
- Identify 2 ways they might integrate key positive parenting messages from the survey into their own work/professional practice with families.





Get There

Why parenting is even more daunting for millennials than it was for their parents – or their grandparents

FAMILY | Compiled by Mandy Morgan

Millennial parents more likely to say their children are their best friends

Sunday, July 26, 2015



MEDICAL EXAMINER

HEALTH AND MEDICINE EXPLAINED.

DEC. 2 2013 1:58 PM

Why Millennials Can't Grow Up

Helicopter parenting has caused my psychotherapy clients to crash land.

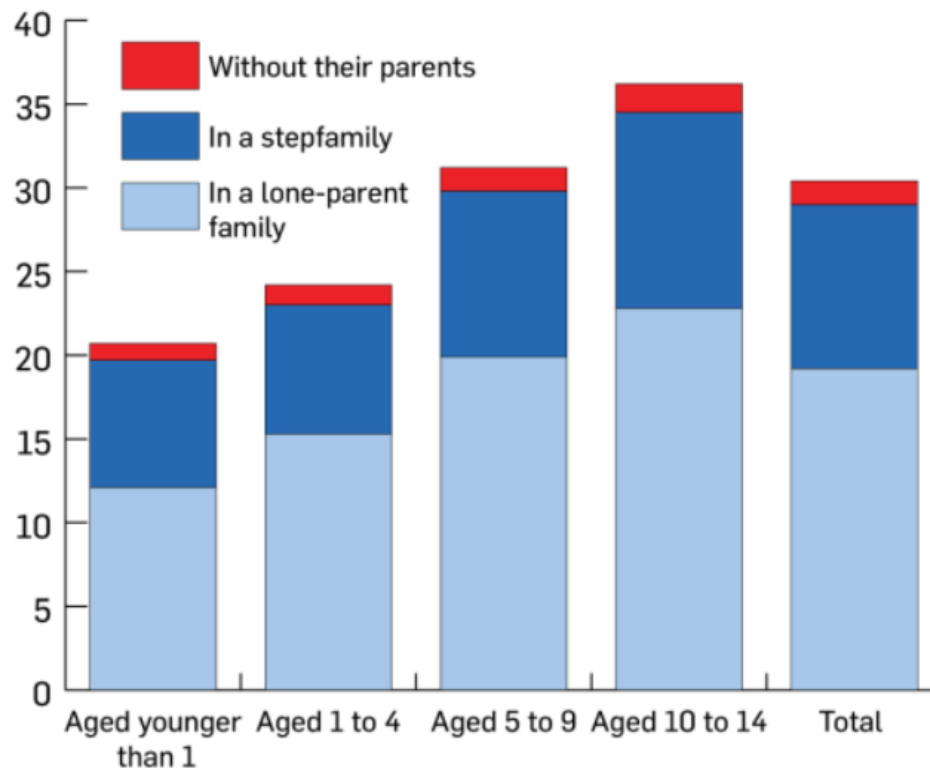
By Brooke Donatone

Growth in Single Parent-Headed Households



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Proportion of children aged 1 to 14 living in a lone-parent family, a stepfamily, or without their parents, by age group, Canada, 2016



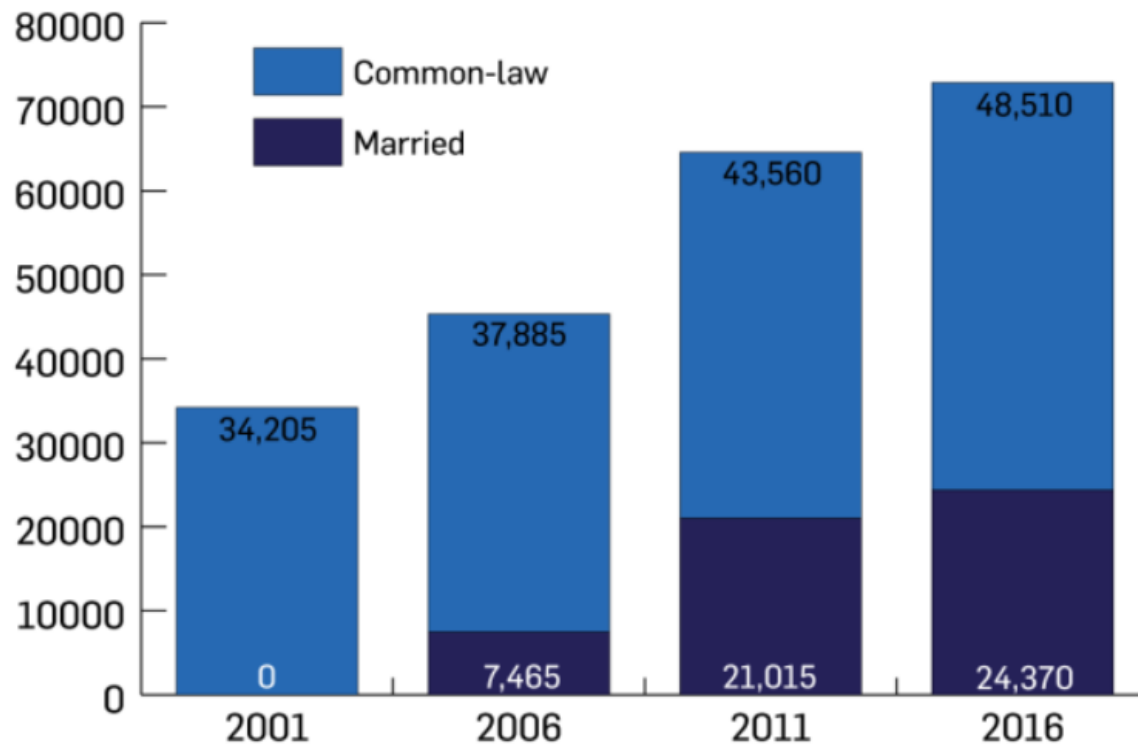
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016

LGBT Trends



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Same-sex couples, by conjugal status, Canada, 2011 to 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/features/highlights-from-census-2016-numbers-on-families-households-languages-1.3529748>

Age of First-Time Mothers Rising



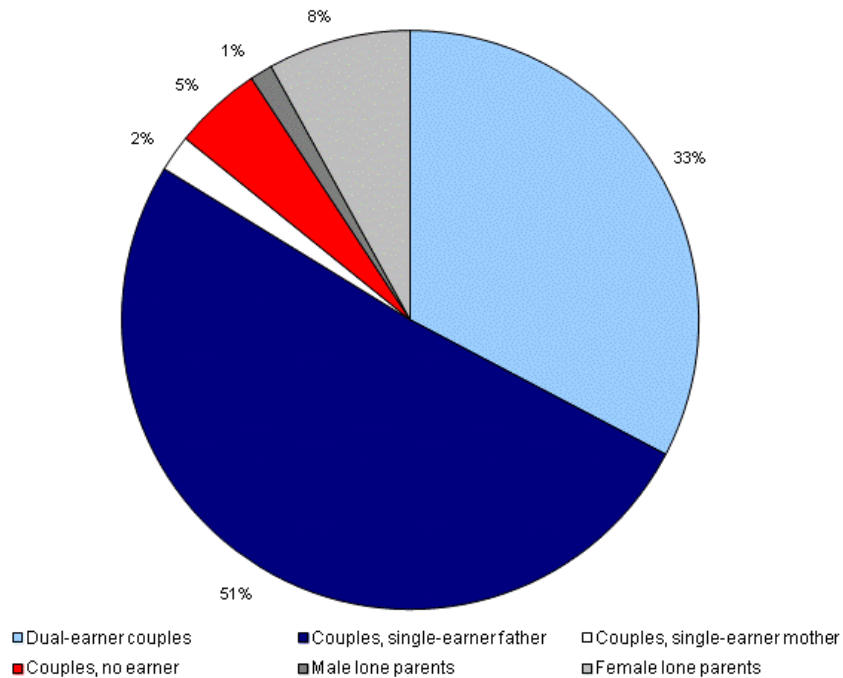
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In 2011, the average first-time Canadian mother was:
28.5 years old.



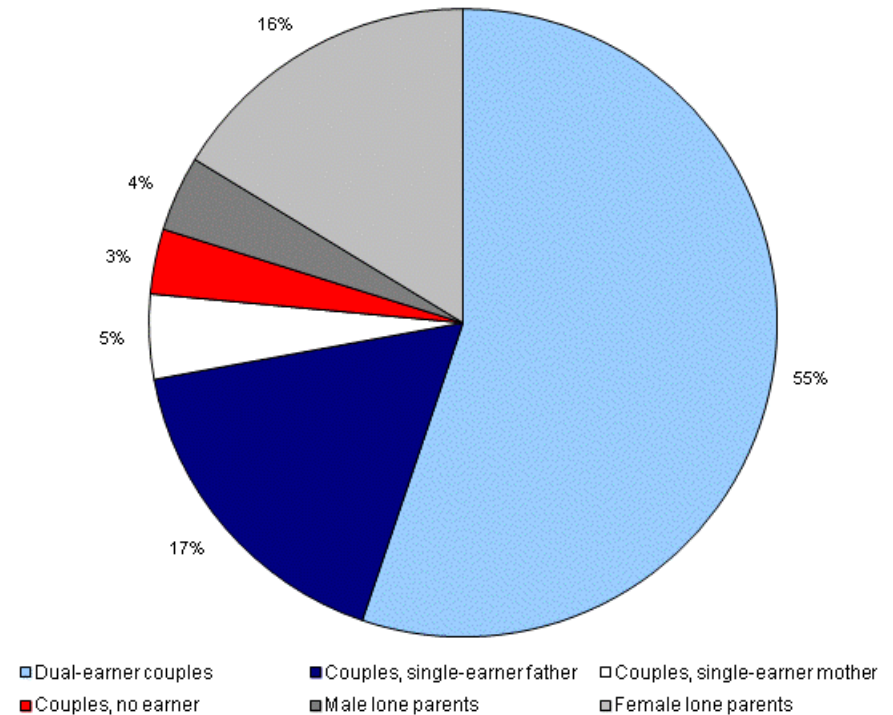
Labor Force Shifts From 1976-2014

Chart 1.1
Distribution of families with at least one child under 16, by employment status, 1976



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1976.

Chart 1.2
Distribution of families with at least one child under 16, by employment status, 2014



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2014.

Mothers Increasingly in the Workforce



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- In 1997, the labour force participation rates (LFPRs) of women aged 25 to 54 in Canada was 76%.
- In 2015, the LFPR of women aged 25 to 54 was 81% in Canada.
- In 2014, 69% of couple families in Canada with at least one child under 16 were dual-earner families, up from 36% in 1976.

Media Messaging Project



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New initiative to integrate positive parenting messages into popular media.

Focus on Millennials



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Key audience for media content creators

Goals of the Project



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To Learn:

- If the messages we developed related to positive parenting resonate with Millennial parents
- What kind of information and support they need to parent most positively
- How they want content and support delivered



- Identified target audience:
 - Millennial parents - account for 80% of the 4 million U.S. births per year
 - African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian mothers and fathers
- Criteria for participation:
 - Not receiving any formal parenting support
 - Income range was \$50,000 to \$125,000 for a family of four



Methodology

Phase One: Qualitative

- 10 in-home discussions with a diverse group of moms and dads in Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles
- Informed development of survey instrument

Phase Two Quantitative:

- National Parent Survey of 2200 parents
- Oversampling of:
 - ✓ Hispanic parents
 - ✓ African-American parents
 - ✓ Low-income parents



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Key Insights



1) There is more that unites than divides parents.



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Parents of various backgrounds and circumstances show strikingly similar levels of passion for their roles as parents and an even more common desire to do keep doing better.

This chart shows the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with these statements:

	My greatest joy	My biggest challenge	Feel as if my life started	Feel I'm really good parent	Work hard to be more effective
Moms	92%	70%	67%	79%	88%
Dads	90%	76%	73%	84%	86%
White	92%	74%	71%	80%	88%
African-American	89%	66%	67%	83%	87%
Hispanic	89%	76%	73%	84%	87%
Asian	87%	65%	71%	77%	82%
35K or Less	91%	70%	71%	79%	88%
75K or Less	90%	75%	71%	83%	86%
High School Education or Less	92%	73%	79%	83%	87%
Some College or Associate's Degree	92%	70%	69%	81%	87%
Bachelor's Degree	92%	74%	66%	81%	89%
Graduate/ Post-Grad Degree	86%	77%	69%	80%	84%



In Their Own Words

“I just worry that I’m making the right choice for my kids in all things; their schooling, what they play with, what I don’t allow them to play with, just everything. I think that is the biggest challenge for me is always wondering, am I doing this right?” (Carrie)

“I feel like my daughter gives me a greater purpose...deeper than my life itself. So I feel like she’s given me a purpose to get up and actually keep pushing no matter what.” (William)

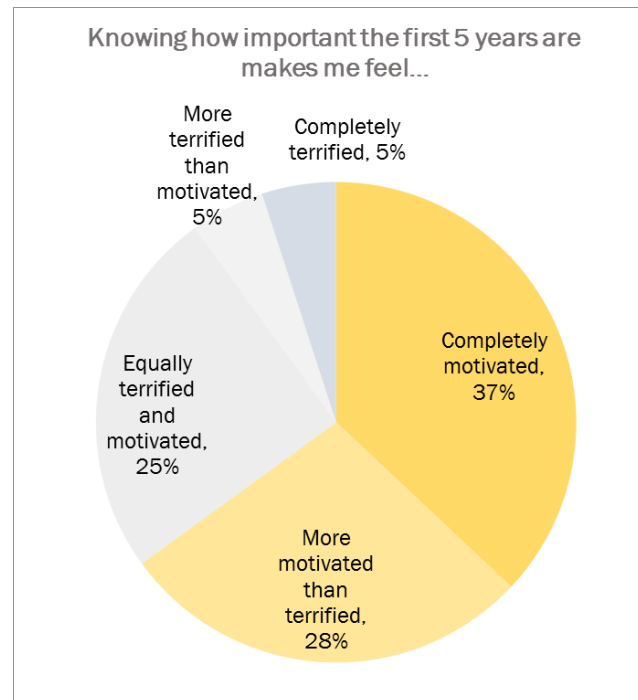
2) Parents believe parenting *can* be learned.



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- Fully 8 in 10 parents (83% of all parents) agree or strongly agree that “good parenting can be learned” across gender, race/ethnicity, income and education.
- 69% of parents say that if they knew more positive parenting strategies, they would use them.
- 54% of parents wish they had more information about how to be a better parent.

But the importance of the early years is both motivating and terrifying to parents.





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In Their Own Words

Am I being too hard on him? Is he going to remember this 10 years from now? It's hard, as a parent. You're responsible for a human being. I question myself every day—if I'm doing the right thing." (Candi)

"I sit back and think, my gosh, how much damage could I have done?" (Victor)

"They're always watching. Even when you think they're not watching, they're watching, they're listening, they could quote your conversations on the phone. I mean it's kind of scary, but then it's like, wow. It makes you look at yourself. I'm always evaluating myself; I'm always apologizing... It's like every day you're trying to do something different." (Jasmine)

3) Dads are more than babysitters. They love being involved fathers, and want—and deserve—more credit.



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The vast majority of dads across all demographic segments are passionate about the positive role that fatherhood plays in their lives:

- 90% of dads say being a parent is their greatest joy.
- 85% of dads say that being a father is the best job in the world.
- 73% say their lives began when they became a dad.

“I feel like my daughter gives me a greater purpose... deeper than my life itself. So I feel like she’s given me a purpose to get up and actually keep pushing no matter what.” (William)

“Honestly, being a dad helped me change a lot of things that I used to do. I really didn’t care. Just being carefree, you really didn’t care. It made me start thinking about more people than just myself. I tell people all the time if it wasn’t for my kids, I don’t know where I’d be at. I don’t know where I’d be. I don’t know what I’d be doing.” (Damien)

Dads are doing it differently...



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Today's dads say they do the following more than their own parents did when they were a child:

- Show more affection (52%)
- Participate more in playtime and other quality time (47%)
- Read more to their child (46%)
- Say "I love you" more (54%)

*My dad was always so strict. It's like 'dude, why are you so damn mean?' I'd say about five years ago he finally gave me a hug and I was blown away. I said, 'wow, I don't want to be that.' I hug Destiny and kiss Destiny every day I see her."
(Bobby)*



Dads Feel Denied

- Moms (64%) and dads (63%) agree that “dads don’t get enough credit for their involvement in raising and caring for young children,” and more than 8 in 10 parents (86%) believe that children are better off when both parents are involved.
- However, many dads report feeling frustrated and shut out.
 - 4 in 10 (40%) say: “I’d like to be more involved in raising my child but my parenting partner interferes with my involvement.”
 - 43% of dads say: “My parenting partner often takes too much control of parenting,”

“The biggest thing I hate, [when people say] ‘Oh, you’re babysitting your kids?’ They’re my kids. I can’t babysit my kids... How do you babysit what you brought into this world?” (Damien)

“I’m a dad. Call me a baby daddy, I won’t acknowledge you. I’ll walk away from you...To me... a baby daddy is somebody who’s not in the picture at all. And then you have a dad, someone who’s there, someone who helps teach this child something, who’s helping molding them into who they’re going to be as an adult. That’s what a dad is. To me [Baby Daddy] is just a stupid term... It’s an ignorant term. It shows disrespect.” (Damian)



Developmental Dilemmas

- What developmental milestones do you see parents most confused or unsure about?
- How does this lack of information or confidence translate to their parenting choices?



4) There's a "Missing" First Year

- 34% of parents identified 3 to 5 years as the time of most rapid brain growth
- Half of all parents (50%) said the quality of a parent's care has a long-term impact on a child's development starting at 6 months or older, when in fact it starts at birth; 57% of parents say this begins at 3 months or older.
- 59% of parents say children can begin to feel sad or fearful starting at one year or older when this happens as early as 3-5 months.
- 47% say children can sense and be affected by their mood (such as angry or sad) starting at 1 year or older when this begins at 3 months.
- 47% say children witnessing repeated violence has effect on brain development at 1 year or older when this happens at 6 months.

“Missing” First Year: Also Missing Out on Learning Experiences



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Parents underestimate when children can benefit from some very important experiences that are proven to build a whole range of important skills:

- 45% of parents identified the age when reading aloud to a child builds future language skills as 2 years or older, when this **starts at 6 months**.
- 63% of parents identified the age when talking to a child can support growing language skills as 3 months or older (and 34% said 1 year or older) when it **begins at birth**.

5) There is an Expectation Gap.



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Approximate age when children develop this skill	Average Age	Parents' Response
Can share and take turns with other children	3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20% said birth 6 months or younger• 23% said 1 year• 28 % 2 years• 29% said 3 or older
Can resist desire to do something parents have forbidden	3.5 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18% said 6 months or younger• 18% 1 year• 20% 2 years• 44% said 3 or older
Can control his/her emotions, such as not having a tantrum when frustrated	3.5 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24% said 1 year or younger• 18% said 2 years• 58% said 3 or older

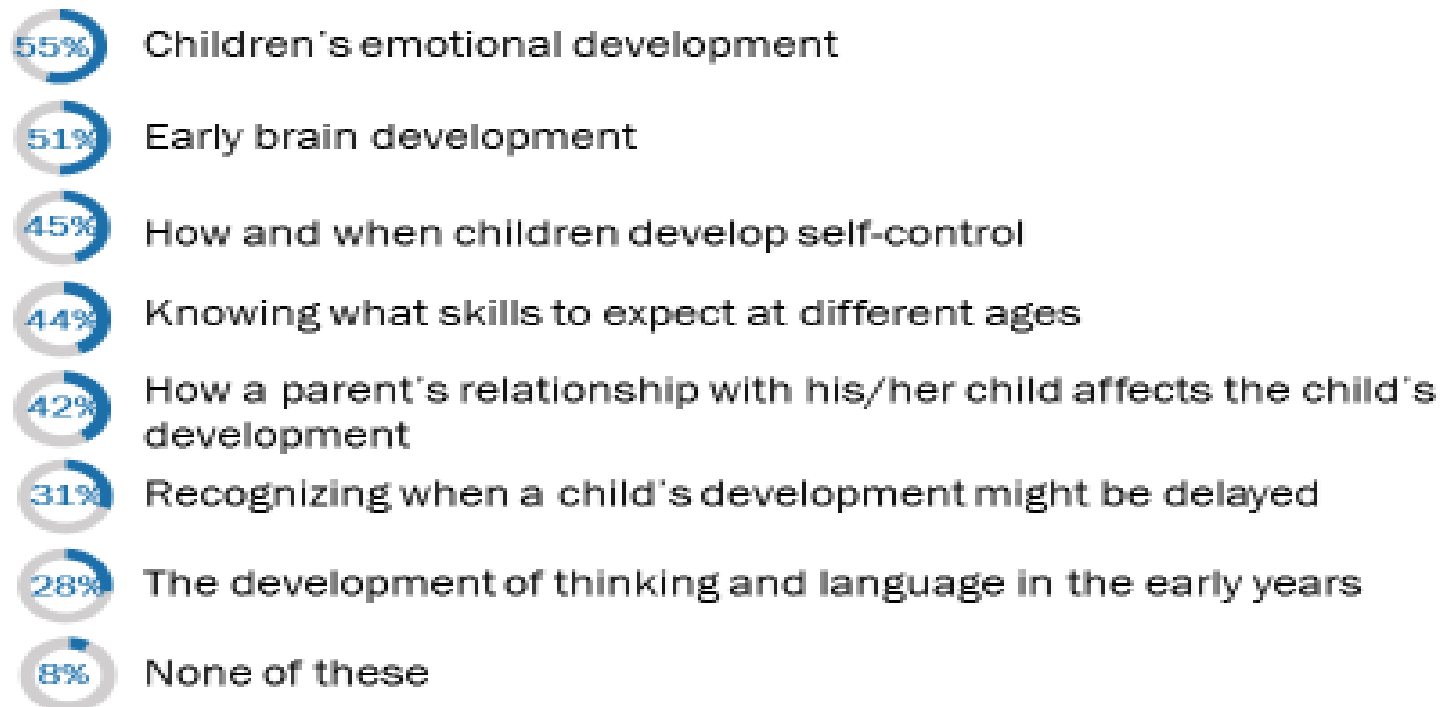
Parents want to close the Gap.



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KNOWLEDGE OF EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Parents are most interested in learning more about children's emotional development and early brain development



1040] Which of the following topics are you interested in learning more about?

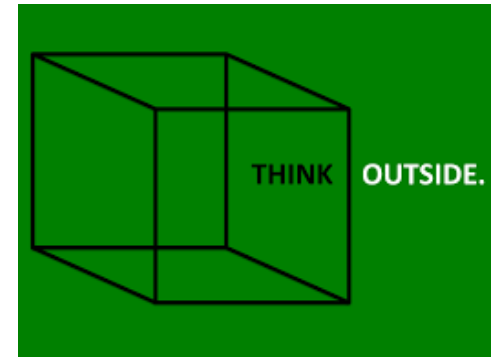
Activity

MIND THE GAP



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- What information gaps do you think parents in your program struggle with most?
- Why do you think this gap exists? Why are parents not getting this information?
- Think outside the box. What is one innovative way you could imagine that would help parents give parents the anticipatory guidance or developmental information they need?



6) Parents Face a Discipline Dilemma



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While parents use a range of discipline strategies, many are not seen as the “most effective” approach.

- 68% of parents say that they use discipline to nurture; and 68% of parents say discipline is to stop bad behavior (68%).
- More than half of parents across all economic, gender and racial/ethnic segments say that “figuring out the most effective way to discipline” and “managing my child when he/she misbehaves” are one of their biggest challenges when it comes to being the parent of a young child.

“I was never disciplined, and I want my daughter to know there are consequences...I wish I would have gotten discipline...I want to be the main person in my daughter’s life to discipline her and to know that there are consequences to everything she does.”

(Windy)

“I feel like you’re cheating them if you don’t [discipline] because I feel like you could go out here in the world and do anything and expect no repercussions.”

(William)

Parent Don't Want to Use Harsh Strategies



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- Almost a third (30%) of all parents say: “I spank even though I don’t feel okay about it.”
- 69% of all parents recognize that “shaming (verbally putting a child down or calling him/her names) can be as harmful as physical abuse.”
- Of those parents who say they spank their children frequently—several times a week or more—fully 77% do not count it as “one of the most effective methods of discipline.”

“I’ve spanked my daughter before. It hurts. Every time I whoop her I cry; I go to the bathroom and cry, it just kills me.” (Roshawndra)



Parents Find Harsh Discipline Strategies Ineffective

Discipline method	% of all parents who use this method a few times a week or more	% of those who use these methods a few times a week or more who think it is one of the most effective discipline strategies
Yell	38%	12%
Discipline by calling child names or putting child down	19%	22%
Say “Because I Said So”	34%	15%
Pop or Swat	26%	20%
Spank	21%	22%
Hit with an object (belt, ruler, wooden spoon, etc.)	17%	15%
Intentionally Embarrass	16%	15%

Parents want to learn a different way to discipline.



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69% of parents

say that if they knew
more positive parenting
strategies, they would
use them

Parents want to learn effective discipline methods.



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“If your kids are afraid of you, they’re not going to come and tell you stuff...I know my son, he’ll be scared that...mom’s going to beat me up... I don’t want them to have that kind of fear. I do want them to respect me. (Jasmine)

Survey revealed:

- 58% wish they knew more effective ways to discipline their child.
- 60% want to have more patience
- 47% want to do better at controlling their own emotions and reactions

“If I could learn [something] besides the no’s, and timeouts don’t work...if there is another way they can listen to me without a spanking, I would prefer not to spank them.” (Sandy)



Parents Want Help Managing Their Own Emotions

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Parents' understand that managing their own emotions and reactions is as important as managing their kids...

% mentioning as one of the top 3 changes or improvements they'd like to make to their disciplinary approach...

- 60% Having enough patience
- 47% Controlling my own emotions and reactions
- 47% Finding a discipline method that works for my child
- 42% Not yelling or raising my voice as quickly
- 35% Not losing my own temper so fast
- 23% Figuring out how to reconnect after conflict
- 20% Deciding if or when to use physical punishment
- 10% Not calling my child names when I get angry

[Q32] Thinking about guiding and disciplining your [INSERT AGE OF QUALIFYING CHILD] year old, is there anything you wish you could do a better job of? Please read the list below and rank order the top 3 things you wish you could do better.



Our Own Histories

- Turn to a partner – and reflect on:
 - One aspect of caregiving by your parent(s)/guardian(s) that you liked and appreciated
 - One aspect of caregiving by your parent(s)/guardian(s) that did not work for you/that you would not repeat with your children



7) Parents are Drawing a New Roadmap



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- The overwhelming majority of parents – 9 in 10 (91%) – say that the way they were raised is a key influence on their own parenting
- 6 out of 10 say that what they learned from their parents is useful.
- But they are doing things differently. Parents say they do the following more than their own parents did with them:
 - ✓ Say “I love you” more (57%)
 - ✓ Show more affection (53%)
 - ✓ Spend more time listening and talking with their children (49%)
 - ✓ Participate more in play (49%)
 - ✓ Read to their children more (47%);
 - ✓ Have more fun together as a family (48%)



In Their Own Words

“When my dad was around... I can only remember him saying “I love you” one time before he passed – one time. And I do make sure that my kids know I love them. I tell all my kids I love them, give them hugs.” (Damien)

“I think if you were raised to yell and scream, because that’s what you’re accustomed to, then it may be easier for you to do that to your child – to yell and scream. If you were raised not to do that because it didn’t happen to you, it’s a little easier to not do that.” (Victor)

“You kind of take on some of the things that you learned from your mom and your dad, from your friends and family, but it’s still really difficult to prepare because these children, these kids, they have different personalities. You don’t know what you’re getting into.” (Jose)

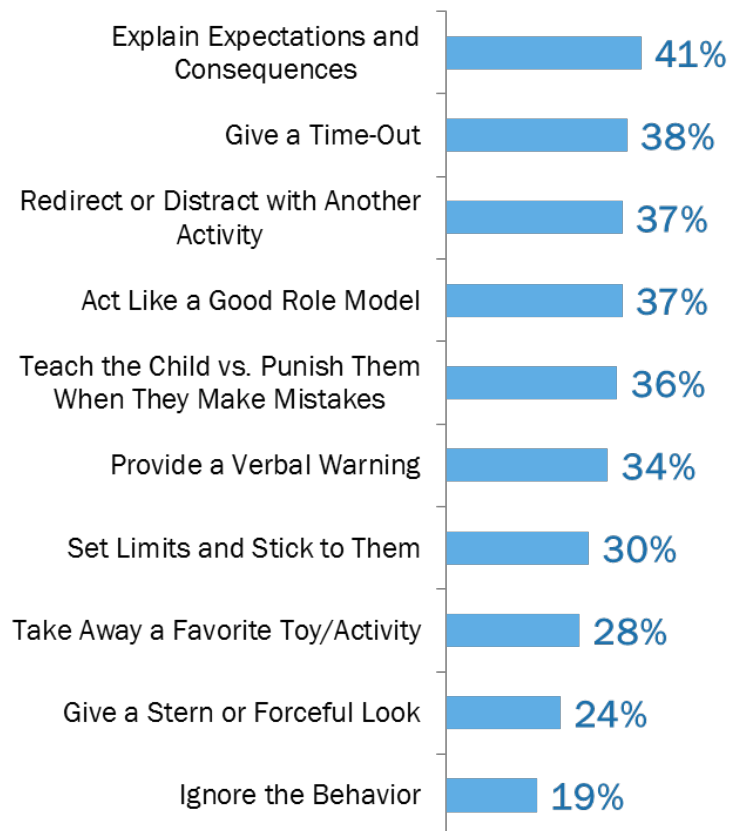
“I love on my kids more than I got loved on... I never questioned that my folks loved me, but I can pretty much count on my two hands the times my mother has actually said it. I just don’t want that for my children.” (Carrie)

Today's Parents Are More Likely to Use Positive Discipline Strategies and Less Likely to Use Harsh Methods

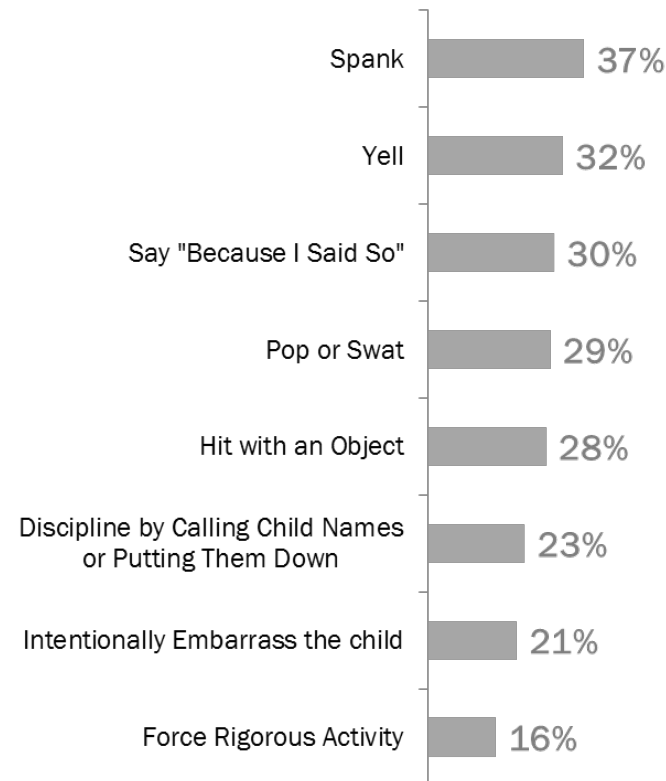


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I Do This More Than My Parents Did



I Do This Less Than My Parents Did



"[My dad's] way of telling us 'no' was to spank both of us. It's not with the hand. I'm talking about with the belt... My dad wasn't one to talk to us or anything like that... So that's why my way is talking to them. I talk to the kids a lot. [They know] once you calm down you can come and talk to me." (Stephanie, Dallas)



8) There is a Trust Gap

Parents want advice, but are overwhelmed by sources of help and underwhelmed by the quality of what they're getting:

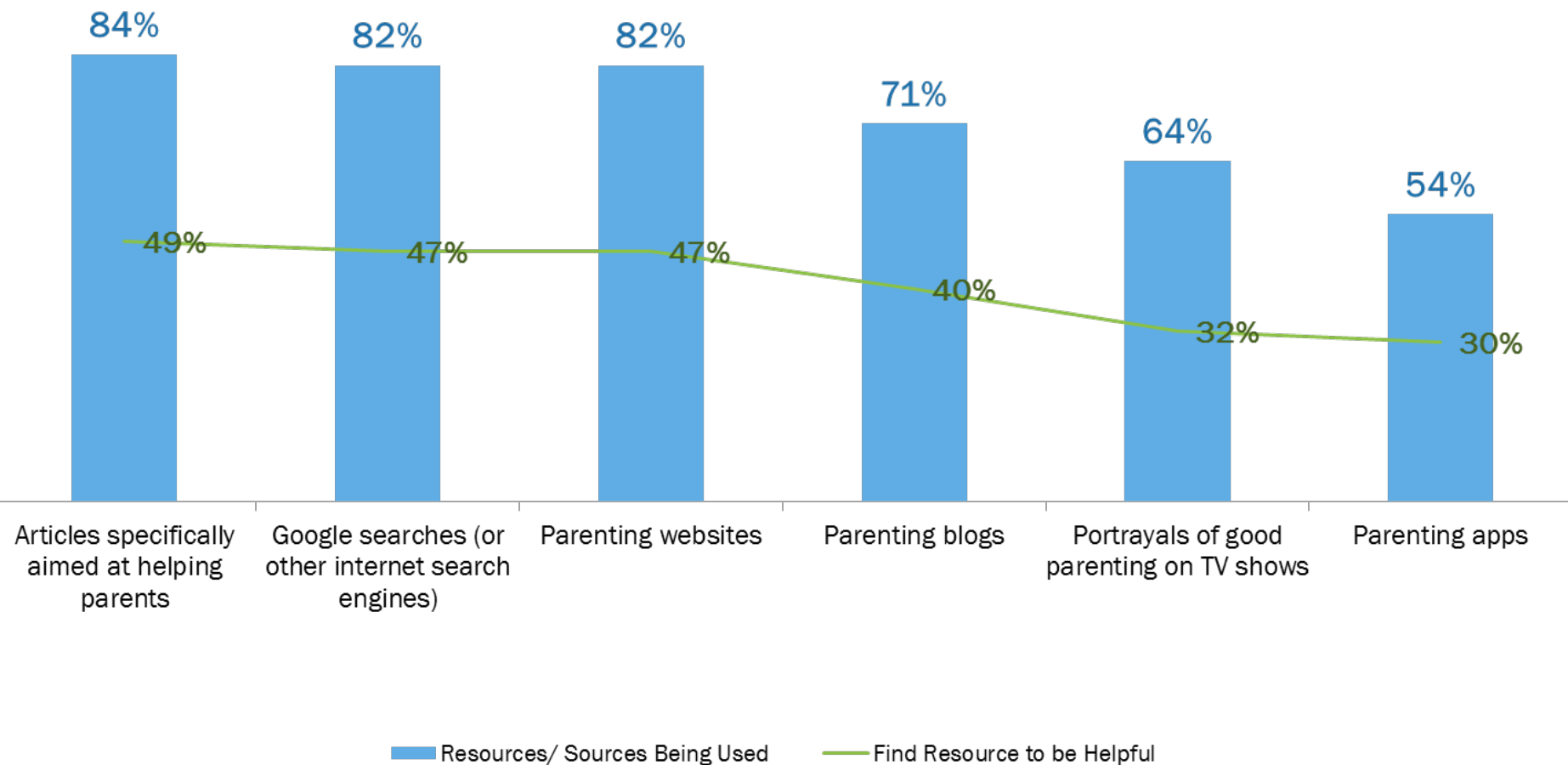
- Over half of all parents (54%) say they would like to information from a “special website or blog from child development experts.”
- However, a majority of moms and dads (58%) say there is so much parenting information available that it's hard to know whom to trust.
- 63% of parents say they are “skeptical of people who give parenting advice and recommendations if they don't know my child and my situation specifically.”

“The very first thing... is we go online and we Google. I don't think that's a good thing; it's convenient... I don't think there's anything out there that can give you a definitive answer as to what your child's going to do, what your child's going to grow up to be or how to raise him.” (Emilio)



Where to Turn? Use vs. Helpfulness

Use vs. Helpfulness of Resources





What Does This Mean For Your Work?

Take a few moments to talk with others about:

- How would you design or change parenting messages and/or programming for millennial parents in your program, based on survey findings?
- How you might integrate key positive parenting messages from the survey into your own work/professional practice with families?



9) Almost all parents feel judged, almost all the time



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- Nearly 9 in 10 parents across the board (87%) feel judged (90% moms and 85% dads).
- Almost half say they feel judged all the time or nearly all the time (46% moms; 45% dads)

Who do parents feel judged by?

- Strangers in the community rank at the top of the list. Moms are significantly more likely (48%) than dads (24%) to report this.
- Moms also say they feel judged by other parents (33%) more than fathers (19%), and by other family members (30% vs 20%) and in-laws (35% vs. 20%).
- The only time dads say they feel more judged for their parenting than moms do is when the judgment comes from their child's other parent: (22% of dads say their spouse or co-parent judges them vs 17% of moms).



In Their Own Words

“I go to restaurants and sometimes I have my kids screaming and that’s when you get looked at – people who just don’t understand or maybe forgot how it was.”

(Sandra)

“If you discipline your kids, another parent might think that you’re being abusive. If you don’t discipline your kids then they’ll think you don’t care about your child. Like the police, if you spank your children, you’re beating them and you can go to jail. If you don’t discipline your child then they’re caught doing something and they go to jail and the police assume, oh, they come from a bad background.”

(Mosetta)



10) Half of parents aren't getting the support they need.

- Almost half (46-48%) of all parents don't feel they are getting the support they need when they feel stressed.
- Moms are more likely (57%) to say they have inadequate support than dads are (39%).
- Over half of single parents (54%) who have no other co-parent involved in their child's care don't get the help they need.
- 8% of parents overall say they get no support at all.

*"I'm a single mom so for me it's stressful when you don't have a father figure for your daughter...it's kind of hard when he's not there and doing his responsibilities."
(Candace)*

*"It's easier when you have somebody else to help you than being by yourself the whole time because there are times you want to give up. What am I not doing right? What else can I do? You can only do so much by yourself."
(Evelyn)*



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To Download Resources and Learn More


Please visit:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1424-national-parent-survey-overview-and-key-insights>



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