

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parents say the pandemic has introduced new mental health challenges in their children

June 9, 2021, **OTTAWA** – A new poll shows 62 per cent of parents say the pandemic has worsened the mental health challenges of their children, and 48 per cent say it has even introduced new mental health challenges where none previously existed.

The survey, commissioned by the Inspiring Healthy Futures initiative and conducted by Abacus Data, also shows the majority of parents expect longer-term residual effects of the pandemic on their children's mental health, even after it ends.

"While the numbers are alarming, they are not surprising," said Emily Gruenwolddt, President and CEO of Children's Healthcare Canada and Executive Director of Pediatric Chairs of Canada. "These concerns from parents match what we are seeing in children's hospitals across the country: record numbers of children visiting the hospital with mental health concerns, many of whom did not have any identified symptoms before the pandemic."

According to the poll, only a quarter of parents say they have received enough support from governments during the pandemic, and the vast majority would like to see a variety of policy solutions to address child and youth mental health and broader well-being.

"As the end of Canada's public health crisis lies ahead, what we are going to see left behind it is a children's crisis," said Lisa Wolff, Director of Policy and Research for UNICEF Canada. "Inspiring Healthy Futures presents a roadmap for recovery; for how Canada can address their immediate needs, and make sure children, youth and families are our collective focus for the long haul."

The [Inspiring Healthy Futures report](#) is the result of eight months of consultations, including more than 1,500 voices from across the country. Youth, parents, service providers, youth-serving agencies, educators and researchers co-created inclusive, accessible, and flexible policy solutions to tackle child and youth post-pandemic recovery proactively and sustainably.

You can read the Inspiring Healthy Futures vision [here](#).

About

About the survey

The survey was conducted by Abacus Data with 2,000 Canadians, including 456 parents of children under 18, from May 26 to 28, 2021. A random sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from a set of partner panels based on the Lucid exchange platform. These partners are typically double opt-in survey panels, blended to manage out potential skews in the data from a single source.

The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/-2.17 per cent and 4.58 per cent respectively, 19 times out of 20.

The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

About UNICEF Canada's One Youth

UNICEF Canada's One Youth is working to make Canada the best place in the world to grow up. As the global UN agency for kids, UNICEF has worked to improve conditions for every child around the world for 75 years, and has saved more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization. UNICEF Canada's One Youth brings that work to Canada by measuring child and youth well-being, and advocating for the right to a childhood.

About Children's Healthcare Canada

Children's Healthcare Canada is a national association representing health service delivery organizations serving children and youth across the continuum of care. Through purposeful partnerships, Children's Healthcare Canada accelerates excellence and innovation in health systems caring for children and youth.

About Pediatric Chairs of Canada

Pediatric Chairs of Canada represents the Department Heads (Chairs) of Pediatrics within the 17 Canadian medical schools. Collectively they provide national leadership in research and education to promote the health and healthcare of children and youth in Canada.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Jennifer Madigan
jmadigan@syntaxstrategic.ca