



## FACT SHEET: Action for Healthy Kids Survey: Children's Health and Well-Being (Sept. 2019)

### Kids Face Unique Health Challenges Today

- Overall, the majority of consumers strongly agree that nutrition and physical activity are just as important for children's mental and emotional well-being as for their physical health (67%) and that children thrive when they are supported both in body and mind (68%). The majority of consumers also agree children in the U.S.:
  - face more challenges than ever to their physical health and well-being (71%),
  - face more challenges than ever to their mental and/or emotional health and well-being (81%),
  - face many unique challenges as compared to previous generations (80%)
- Respondents cited bullying (44%), mental health issues (41%), and substance use and abuse (36%) as the top three major issues facing youth today.
- Seven in ten agree children thrive when supported both in body and mind.
- These sentiments are equally shared by all parents in the survey (one-third of all respondents), regardless of the age or gender of the parent or the age of their children. However, only 35% of all consumers agree that children are more resilient than previous generations.
  - There is a generational perspective supporting this lack of consensus; 45% of all consumers aged 18-34 agree with this statement, compared to only 11% of those aged 65 and older.

### Parents are the Original Influencers

- Without question, parents are considered the greatest influence on a child's physical and emotional health and have the greatest impact when it comes to addressing the myriad challenges kids face today (76% of respondents).
  - The influence of peers or other children is a distant second (10%), while community members and teachers/educators/school administrators trail behind (5% and 4% respectively).
- However, while 77% of respondents agree that parents have a major impact on addressing the challenges facing the physical and emotional health and well-being of children today, 50% also agree that schools have a major impact.
- Only 3 of 10 respondents who are parents feel very confident in children's decision to make healthy decisions – regardless of the age of their child under 18.

### Top Issues Facing Kids Today

- Irrespective of having children under 18 at home (one-third of all survey respondents), adults cited bullying (44%), mental health issues (41%), and substance use and abuse (36%) as the top three major issues facing children today.
- Respondents ranked the top five issues facing youth today:

Bullying/cyber bullying	44%
Mental health (stress, anxiety, depression, etc.)	41%
Substance use and abuse (drugs, alcohol, vaping etc.)	36%
Social media consumption	32%
Screen time (T.V., computer, phone, etc.)	27%
- Differences across age and gender
  - Young adults 18 to 24 are more likely to see a host of issues as more important than consumers in older cohorts, including mental health, neighborhood violence, obesity, sexual health/safety, sleep deprivation and gun safety.
  - More than two to one, adults 55 and older are less likely to say mental health is a "top three" issue for kids today than those aged 54 and younger (53% versus 24%, respectively).

*\*The Padilla Spotlight Survey, conducted in September 2019 and commissioned by Action for Healthy Kids, surveyed 658 U.S. adults on their views regarding the state of children's health and well-being in the U.S. today. These findings available at [actionforhealthykids.org/survey-2019](http://actionforhealthykids.org/survey-2019).*