



**How San Mateo and Santa Clara County Parents
View Their Preteen Children:**

Selected Results from a Survey of Bay Area Parents

October 2005

Additional information of findings from this survey is available at

www.kidsdata.org



For more information, call (650) 724-5778, or e-mail info@lpfch.org

About the Survey

In August 2005, the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health commissioned a survey of 1,818 parents of children in six counties in the San Francisco Bay Area -- San Mateo, Santa Clara, Marin, San Francisco, Contra Costa, and Alameda.

The intent of the survey was to establish a baseline for what parents consider the most pressing issues affecting their children's health and well being, and to identify areas where action or further study is needed.

The survey queried parents on issues ranging from the quality of their children's health care, dental care, and schools, to whether they spend too much or too little time together as a family, to the effects of media, and whether racial or language issues have caused problems for their children.

Results were tabulated by several demographic factors, including family income, race/ethnicity, age and gender of child and parent, marital status of parent, and county of residence.

Overall, parents report that their children are physically and emotionally healthy by many measures, but stress, children's weight, concerns about media, worries about family conflict, and other emotional and behavioral issues trouble substantial numbers of parents. Parents with low incomes and those who have a child with a disability were less positive in their responses overall.

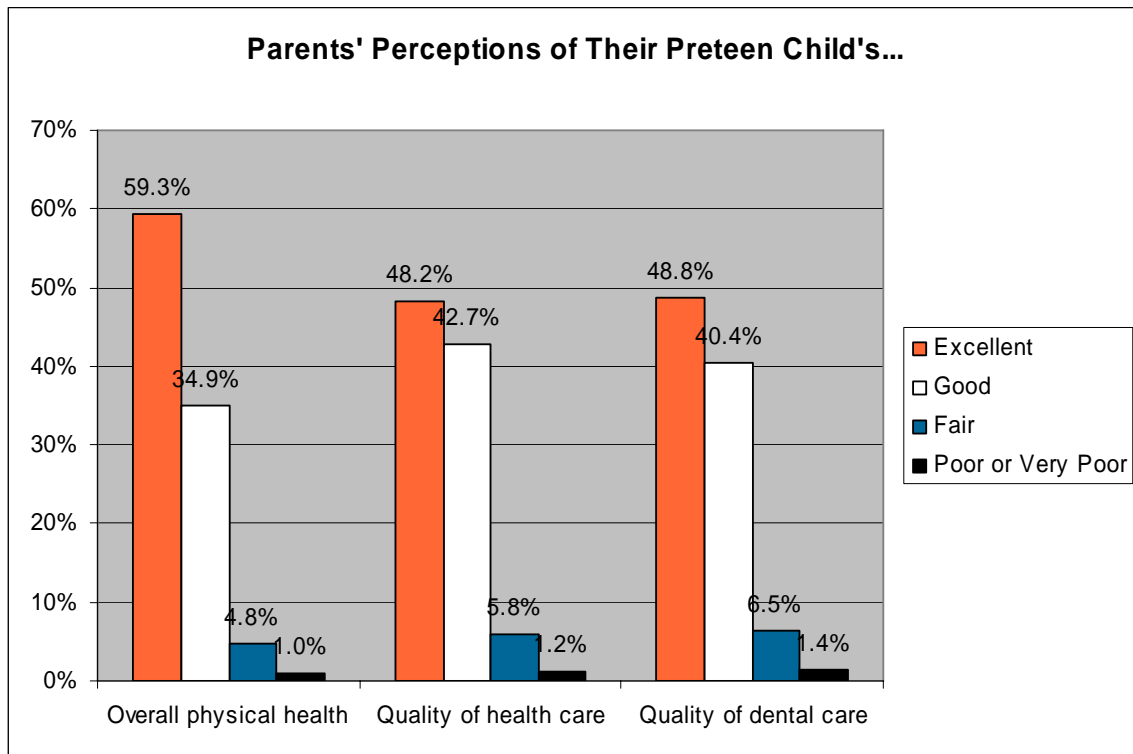
This report focuses on a sample of 308 parents of preteen children (ages 9-13) in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The margin of error for this sample at the 95 percent confidence level is ± 6 percentage points.

For more results from this survey, and to view additional data about preteens and children of other ages, see www.kidsdata.org.

A color version of this report is available at <http://www.preteenalliance.org>

Physical Health

Parents give positive ratings to their preteen children's physical health, with 94.2 percent of parents describing it as "excellent" or "good." Local parents also say they are pleased, though slightly less so, with their preteens' health and dental care, with 90.9 percent rating the quality of their child's health care "excellent" or "good," and 89.2 percent rating the quality of their child's dental care the same.



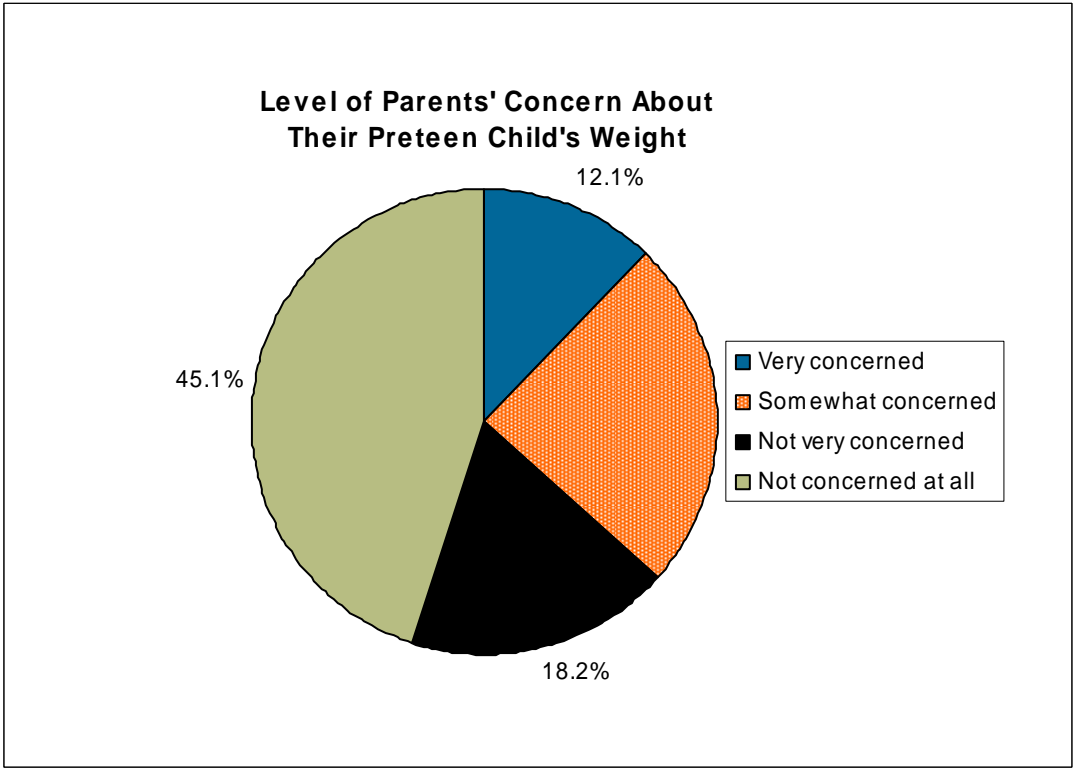
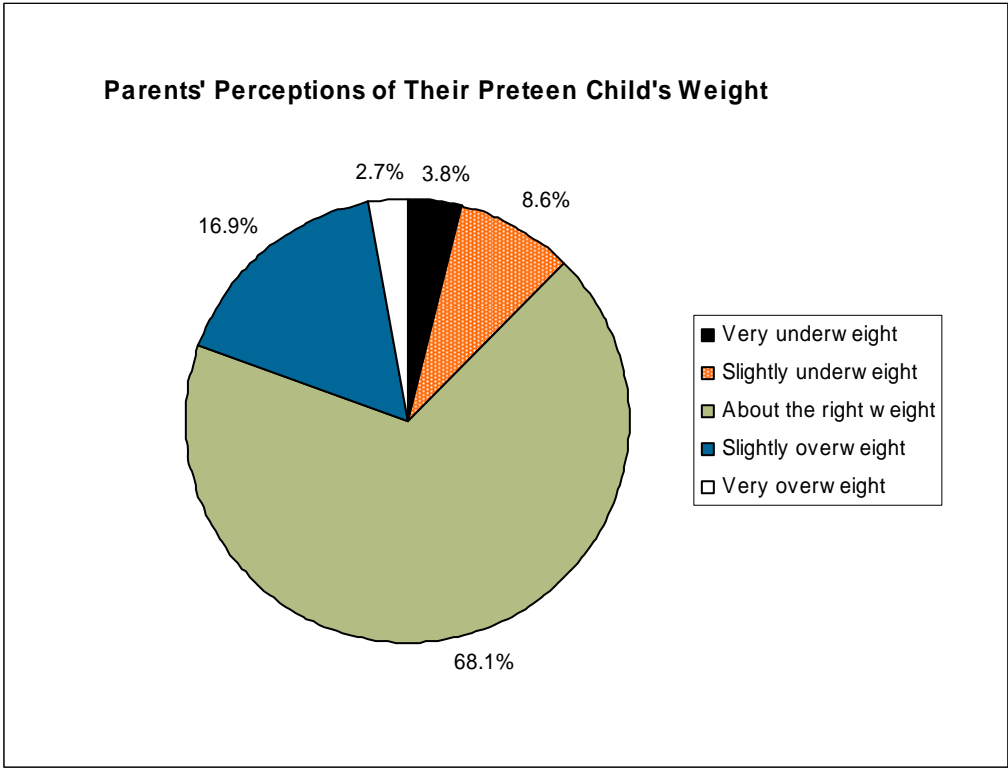
Disabling Conditions

Approximately one in ten parents of preteens (9.5 percent) report that their child has an ongoing physical, behavioral, or mental condition that limits the child from doing usual activities. In another question, 11.8 percent said that their preteen had been diagnosed with a learning disability.

Weight

Parents of preteens are significantly more likely than parents of younger children or adolescents to say they are concerned about their child's weight, and to see their child as overweight. While 68.1 percent of parents of preteens say that their child is "about the right weight," a greater percentage of both parents of children ages 6-8 (77.3 percent) and parents of 14-17-year-olds (72.8 percent), say the same. Nearly one in five parents of preteens (19.6 percent) rates their child as overweight, compared to 8.6 percent of parents of 6-8-year-olds, and 14.6 percent of parents of adolescents. And, in another question,

36.7 percent of parents of preteens say they are "somewhat" or "very concerned" about their child's weight, which is higher than the 23.2 percent of parents of children ages 6-8 and 21.2 percent of parents of adolescents.



Emotional Health

The vast majority of parents of preteens (91.6 percent) rate their child's overall emotional health as "excellent" or "good." However, 25.8 percent report that their child's ability to handle difficult situations is "fair" or "poor." Thirteen percent rate their child's level of self esteem similarly, and 11.6 percent say that their child's ability to see life in a positive way is "fair" or "poor."

Parents' Ratings of Their Preteen Child's...

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor or Very Poor
Overall Emotional Health	41.2%	50.4%	6.0%	0.7%
Level of Self Esteem	30.0%	54.9%	10.4%	2.9%
Ability to Handle Difficult Situations	22.9%	48.5%	20.6%	5.2%
Ability to Get Along with Other Children	53.2%	36.7%	7.0%	2.3%
Ability to See Life in a Positive Way	45.3%	41.2%	9.9%	1.7%

Depression

One in five (21.3 percent) parents of preteens say that they are "somewhat" or "very" concerned that their child may be depressed. Fifteen percent of parents of 6-8-year-olds, and 20 percent of parents of adolescents are similarly concerned.

Are you concerned that your child may be depressed?

Very concerned	6.3%
Somewhat concerned	15.0%
Not very concerned	15.0%
Not concerned at all	62.4%

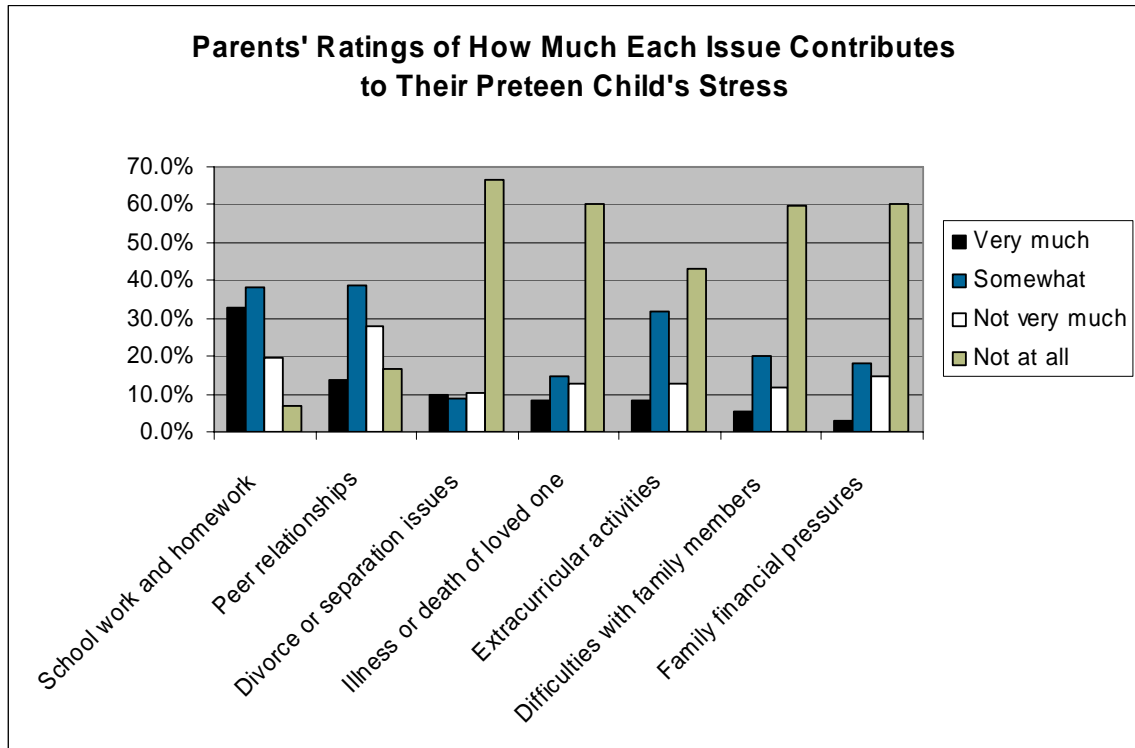
Stress

More than 15 percent of parents of preteens (17.1 percent) say that their child's stress level is "high" or "very high," and 46.9 percent rate it as "moderate." Schoolwork and homework are the leading cause of stress in preteens, according to parents, followed by

peer relationships. Also, parents of preteens are more likely than parents of younger children or adolescents to report that their child worries about family financial pressures.

Parents' Ratings of Their Preteen Child's Level of Stress

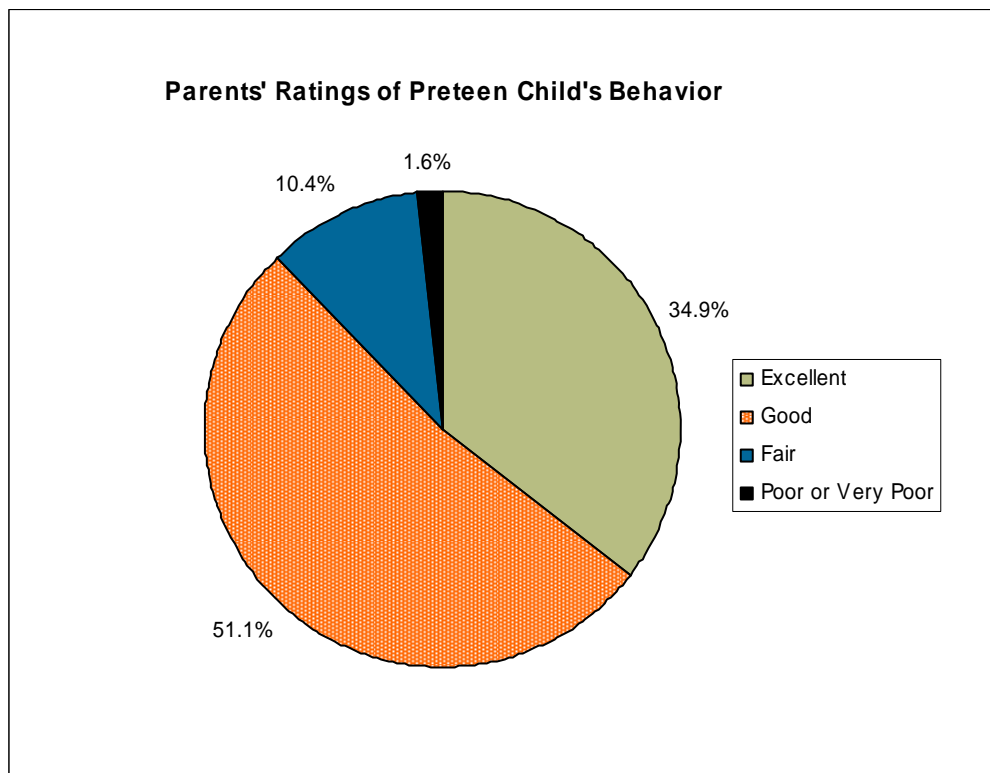
Very high	5.1%
High	12.0%
Moderate	46.9%
Low	21.3%
Very low	11.6%



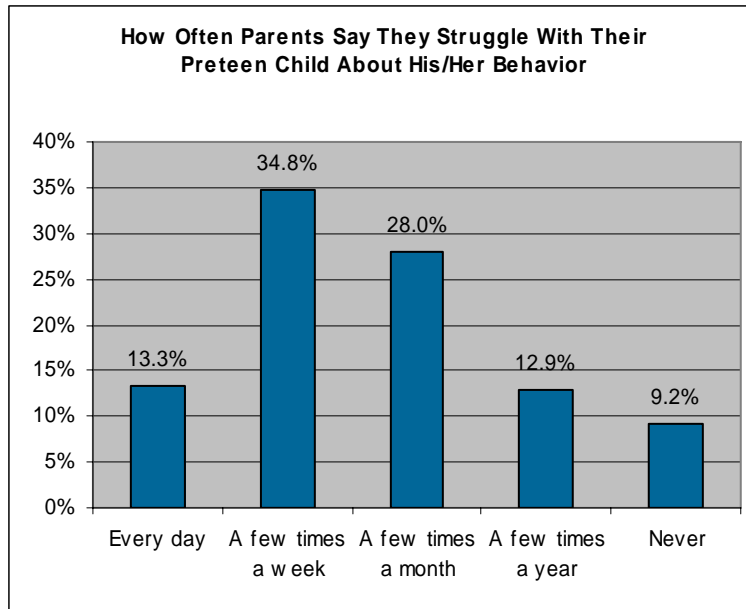
Behavioral Health

Parents rate the behavior of their preteen children very positively, with 86 percent calling it "excellent" or "good." Only 12 percent of parents say their preteen's behavior is "fair," "poor," or "very poor," but 13.3 percent say they have daily struggles with their child about behavior, and 34.8 percent say they have such struggles a few times per week.

Parents of preteens are more likely than parents of younger children or adolescents to rate their child's behavior as "fair," and parents of preteens were least likely to rate their child's behavior as "excellent." In the larger Bay Area sample, * parents of preteen girls are more likely than parents of preteen boys to rate their child's behavior as "excellent" (44.5 percent for girls, compared to 31.7 percent for boys).



* The sample of parents of preteens in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties was not large enough to allow for comparisons among subgroups of preteens. However, the larger Bay Area sample of parents of preteens (381) was big enough to allow for comparison by gender with a margin of error, at the 95 percent confidence level, of ± 7 percentage points for male preteens, and ± 8 points for female preteens.



Risky Behaviors

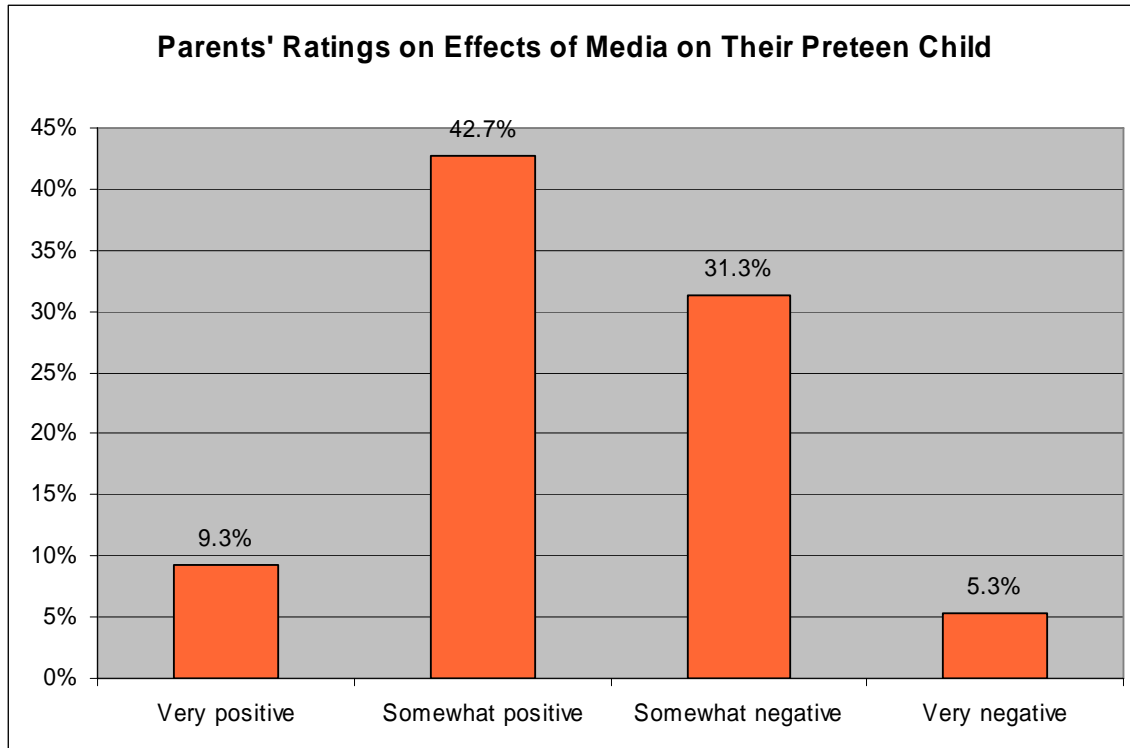
More than 80 percent of parents say they are "not at all" concerned that their child may be engaging in various risky behaviors. Smoking is the top concern, with 6.9 percent "somewhat" or "very" concerned. Belonging to a gang is the behavior about which parents are least concerned.

Parent Concern About Their Preteen Child's Risky Behaviors

	Very Concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not Very Concerned	Not Concerned At All
Smoking Cigarettes	5.0%	1.9%	5.7%	83.5%
Using Marijuana	4.0%	2.4%	4.6%	84.7%
Using Other Drugs	4.0%	2.2%	3.9%	85.3%
Using Alcohol	3.8%	2.3%	4.2%	86.5%
Sexual Activity	3.5%	2.2%	3.2%	86.9%
Belonging to a Gang	2.7%	1.8%	3.9%	87.5%

Media

More parents rate the media's effects on their preteen child as "somewhat" or "very" positive (52.0 percent), than "somewhat" or "very" negative (36.6 percent).



Involvement in Activities

Four in five (80.6 percent) parents report that their preteen child is regularly involved in music, sports, art classes, or other non-school activities. And, in another question, one quarter of parents of preteens (26.7 percent) say that their child is not involved in enough activities outside of school, while 8.1 percent say that their child is involved in too many.

Parent Rating of Their Preteen Child's Involvement in Activities

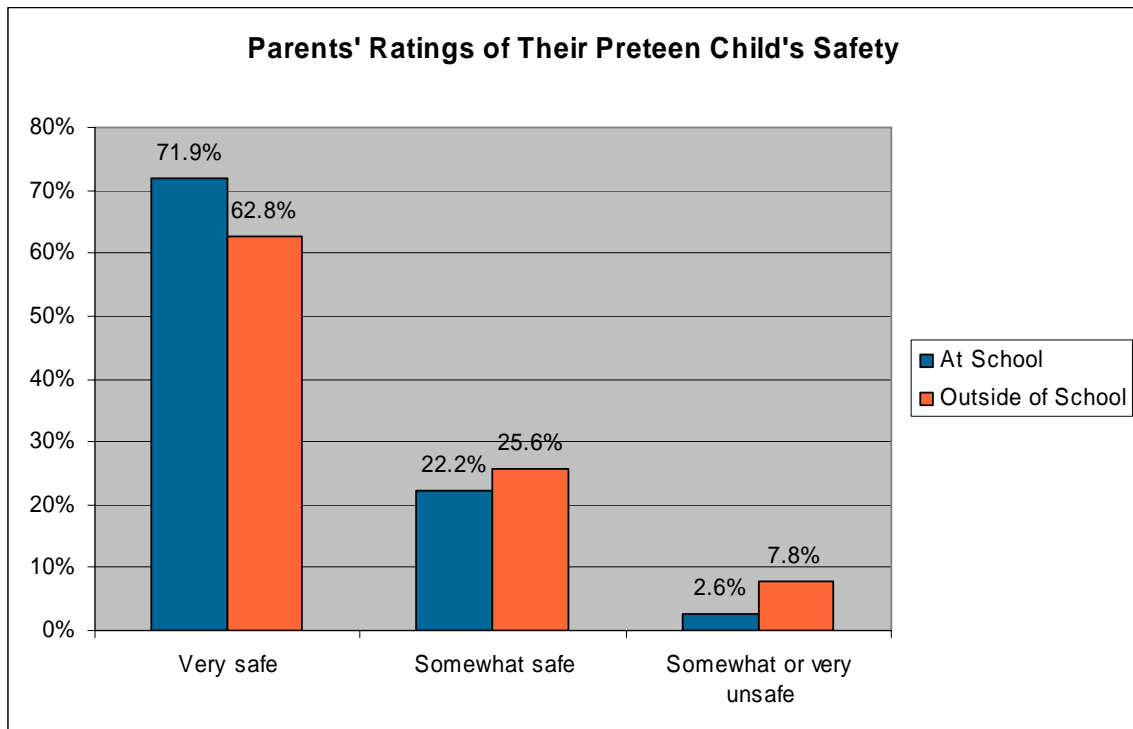
Involvement in too many activities	8.1%
About as many as ought to be	63.3%
Not involved enough in activities	26.7%

Environmental Factors

Safety

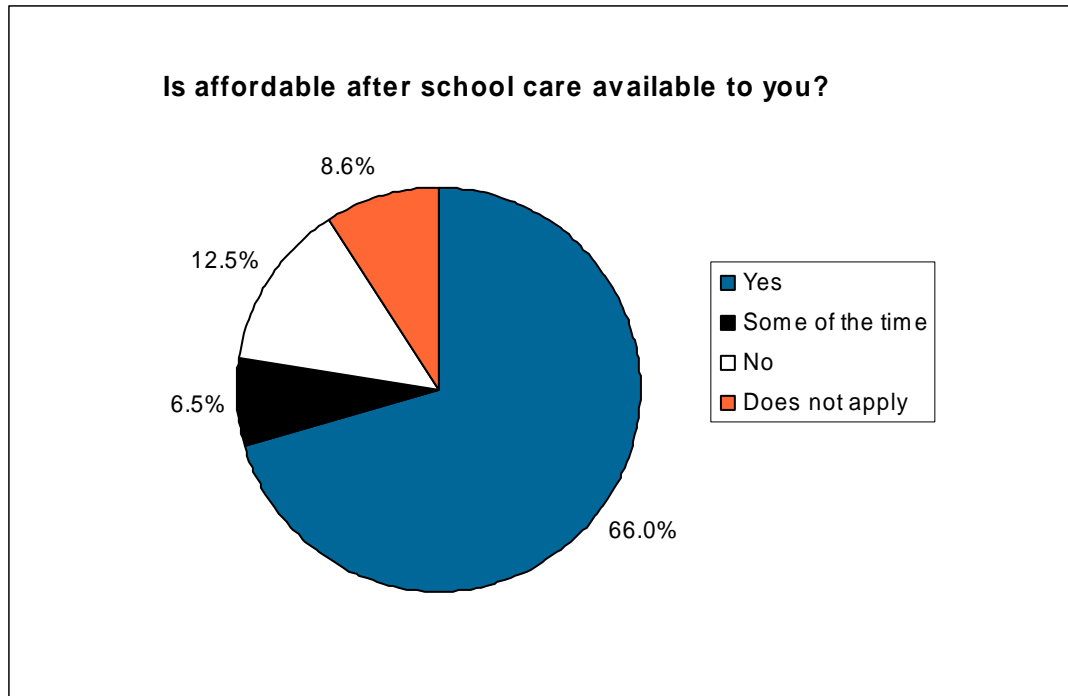
More parents say that their preteen child is "very safe" at school (71.9 percent) than outside of school (62.8 percent). Similarly, only 2.6 percent say that their child is "somewhat" or "very" unsafe at school, compared to 7.8 percent outside of school.

In the larger Bay Area sample, parents of preteen girls are less likely than parents of preteen boys to report that their child is "very safe" at school (62.4 percent versus 72.3 percent).



After School Care

Nearly one in five parents of preteens reports that affordable after-school care is not available "some" (6.5 percent) or "all of the time" (12.5 percent). On a related issue, 6.6 percent of parents say that their preteen is not supervised by an adult after school, and 7.0 percent say that their preteen child is only "sometimes" supervised by an adult after school.



Is your preteen child supervised by an adult after school?

Yes	83.4%
Sometimes	7.0%
No	6.6%

Bullying

Nearly two-thirds of parents (65.6 percent) say that their preteen child has not been physically or verbally bullied in the past year. However, 34.3 percent of parents report that their child has experienced some form of verbal or physical bullying at least once, with 10.4 percent reporting physical bullying, and 9.9 percent reporting verbal bullying either "more than a couple of times" or "a lot."

Parents Reporting How Much Their Preteen Child Has Been Bullied in the Past Year

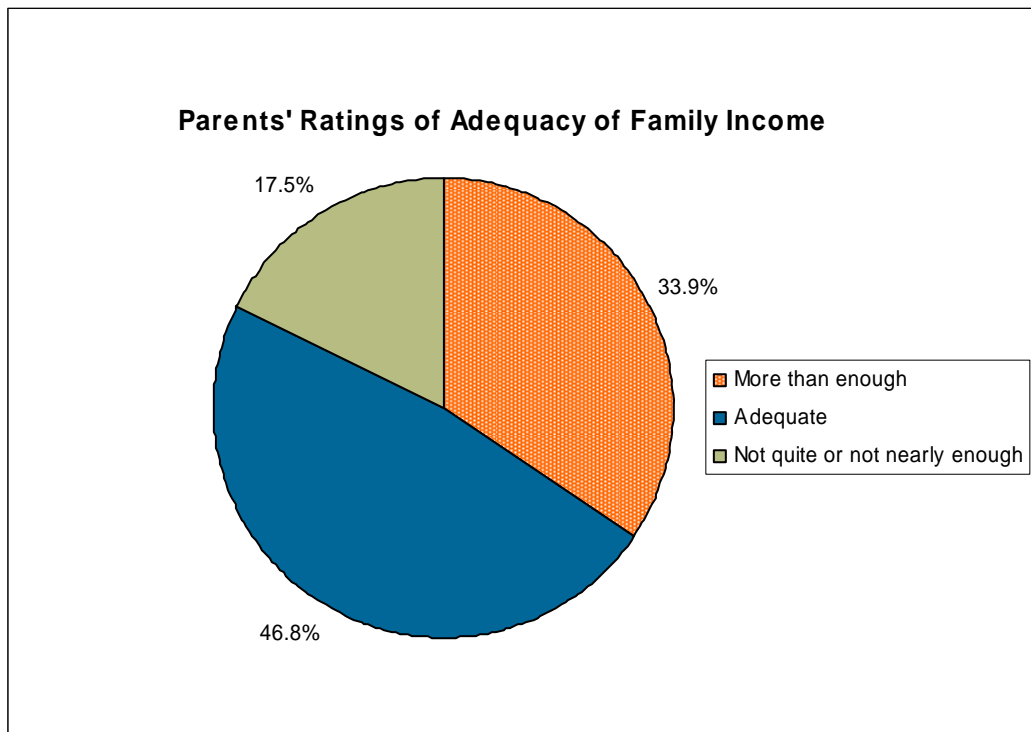
Frequency	Physically Bullied	Verbally Bullied
A lot	2.9%	3.2%
More than a couple of times	7.5%	6.7%
Once or twice	12.8%	14.7%
Not at all	73.9%	71.7%

Family Time

When asked about the time they spend together as a family, two-thirds (66.7 percent) say it is "about the right amount," 24.2 percent say it is "not enough," and 8.2 percent say it is "too much."

Family Income

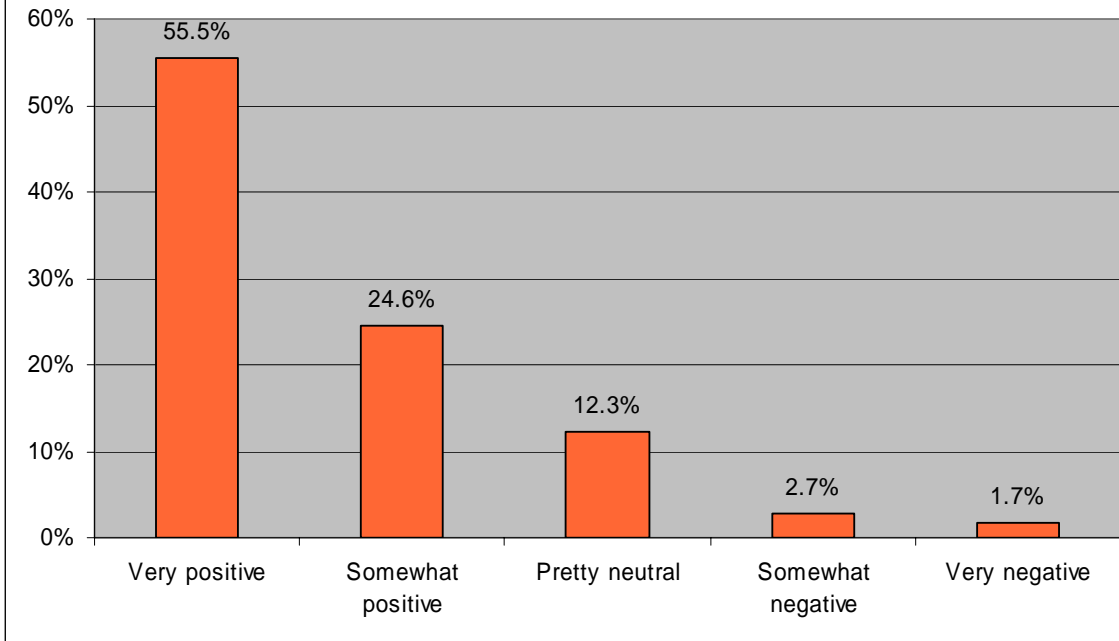
When asked about the adequacy of their family's income to provide for their children's basic needs, one-third of parents of preteens (33.9 percent) say their income is "more than enough" to provide for those needs, but 17.5 percent find it "not quite" or "not nearly enough."



Feelings About School

The majority of parents of preteens say that their preteen children feel positively about school, with 55.5 percent rating their child's feelings as "very positive," and 24.6 percent as "somewhat positive." Only 4.4 percent say that their child's feelings about school are "somewhat" or "very negative."

Parents' Views on Their Preteen Child's Feelings About School



About the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health

The Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health is a public charity whose mission is to “promote, protect and sustain the physical, mental, emotional and behavioral health of children.” For more information about the foundation, call (650) 497-8365 or visit www.lpfch.org.

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