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April 28, 2006

Editor's note: This research was conducted by Field Research Corporation, but it is not part of The Field Poll.

Survey: Schools, Well Being of Children Are Top Bay Area Concerns

Poll to Track Children's Issues Over Time

PALO ALTO -- Even as Bay Area residents debate the war in Iraq, illegal immigration and the health care system, another topic dominates their list of concerns: children.

A survey commissioned by the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health finds that:

- The well being of children and education and the schools outrank 11 other issues as chief concerns for local residents, regardless of their parental status, gender, income level or political affiliation. More than seven in 10 Bay Area respondents (71 percent) report being "extremely concerned" about the well being of children. An equal number are extremely concerned about education and the schools. *(See Graph 1)*
- The region's growing Latino population expresses stronger concern than other groups about children's issues overall, and is significantly more concerned about specific topics, such as drug and alcohol use, youth gangs and poverty. *(See Graph 2)*
- From a list of 23 children's issues, the three that overall respondents cited most frequently as "big problems" were obesity and unhealthy eating habits, the influence of media and the Internet, and the quality of education. *(See Graph 3)*
- Respondents "strongly support" using tax dollars to address problems of children and youth, with quality after-school programs and more nutritious food in schools leading a list of specific program areas where the public would direct additional monies. *(See Graph 4)*

"Our polling continues to show that parents and non-parents alike place a very high priority on the well being of children, compared to other issues," said Mark DiCamillo, senior vice president of Field Research Corporation, which conducted the research.

The survey was completed by telephone in English and Spanish from Dec. 7, 2005, to Jan. 15, 2006, among a random sample of 1,198 Bay Area adults. Overall results have a sampling error of +/-2.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Latino results have a sampling error of +/-6.9 percent. The sampling error is +/-3.6 percent for White non-Hispanics. Surveys were conducted throughout the nine-county Bay Area region.

The Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health commissioned the survey to establish a baseline of attitudes of Bay Area residents toward children's issues. The foundation plans to repeat the survey periodically, said Andy Krackov, director of public information and electronic media. A statewide poll last year found that the overall California public also ranks the well-being of children as its top concern, but this survey focuses solely on the Bay Area, he said.

"These results highlight areas of children's health that are priorities for the local public," Krackov said. "The findings also illustrate that some emerging issues need greater public awareness."

For example, while public attention to children's weight and Internet/media use has grown, other children's health issues, such as asthma and depression, are not as high on the public's radar. "Yet chronic illnesses such as asthma affect a growing proportion of children in this area," Krackov said, "and research shows the strong connection between emotional issues like depression and a child's health and ability to succeed in school."

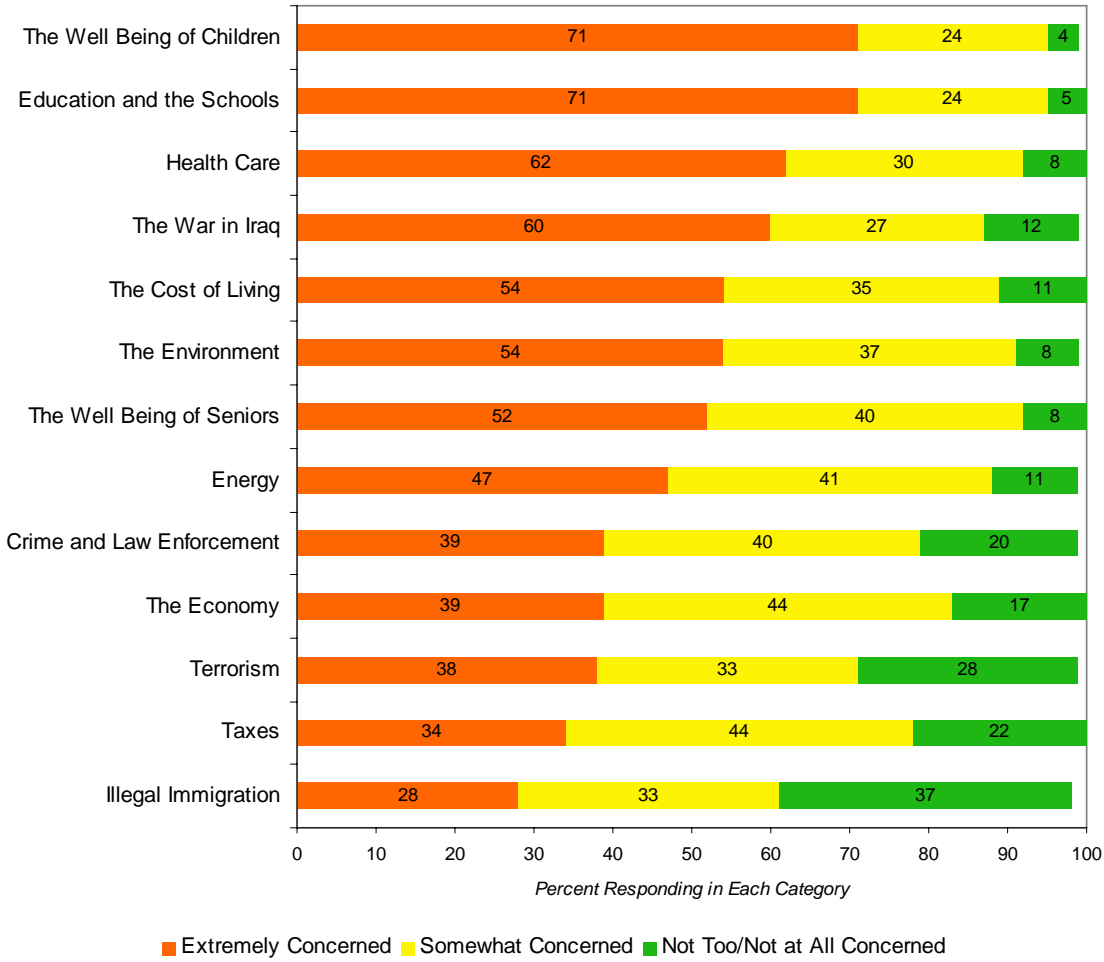
In other key findings from the survey:

- When asked an open-ended question about what they believe are the biggest problems facing children in their communities, half of the survey respondents (50 percent) cited problems related to schools. The second most-frequently mentioned issue was family- and parenting-related problems (24 percent). Among Latino respondents, 41 percent named schools first, closely followed at 38 percent by fear of violence, gangs and crime outside of school.
- Asked whether they favor directing more state and local tax dollars to nine children's programs, more than two-thirds of overall respondents said they "strongly support" four: quality after-school programs (75 percent); more nutritious food in schools (74 percent); universal preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds (69 percent); and full-time counselors at every school (67 percent).
- Latinos are more supportive than the overall population of increasing funding for all nine children's programs, with dental care for low-income children ranking highest, at 86 percent. (*See Graph 5*)

Additional survey results, including breakdowns for San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, are available at kidsdata.org. This foundation-sponsored website provides data about the health status of children in California, and in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, along with news, research articles and listings of community resources.

The Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health is a Palo Alto-based 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, see www.lpfch.org.

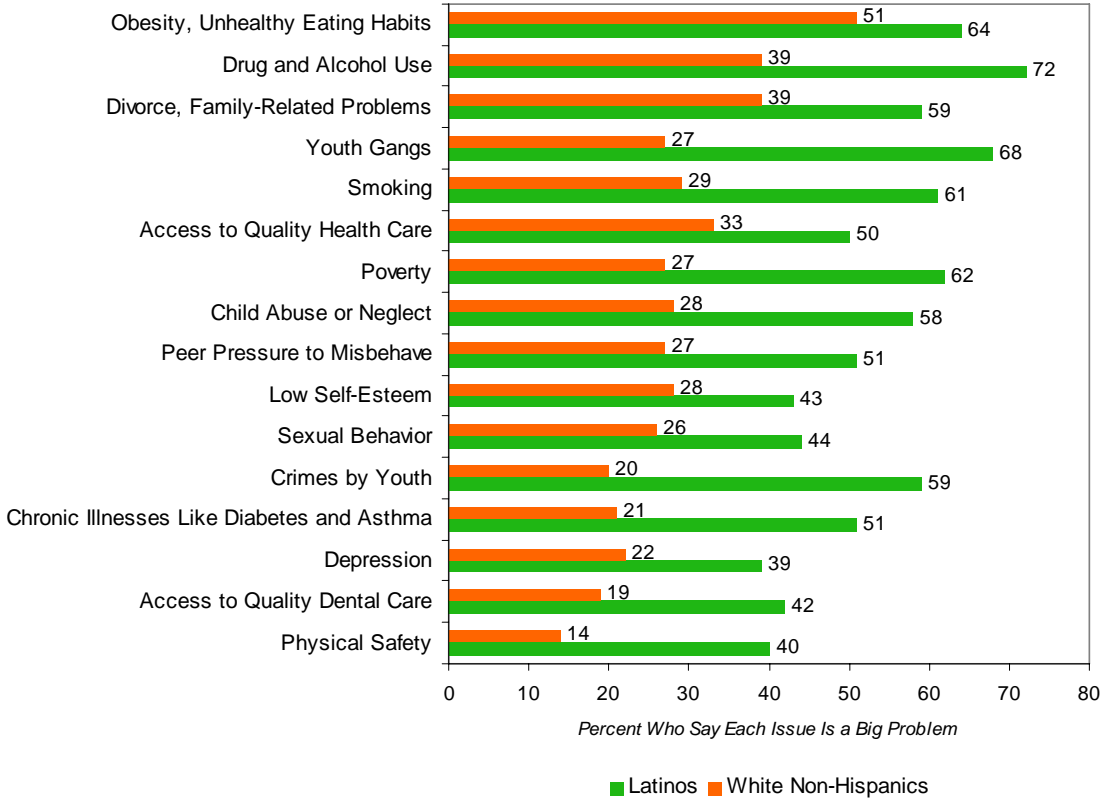
*Graph 1
Level of Concern About 13 Issues Facing California*



Note: Differences between 100% and the sum for each item equal proportions of respondents with no opinion

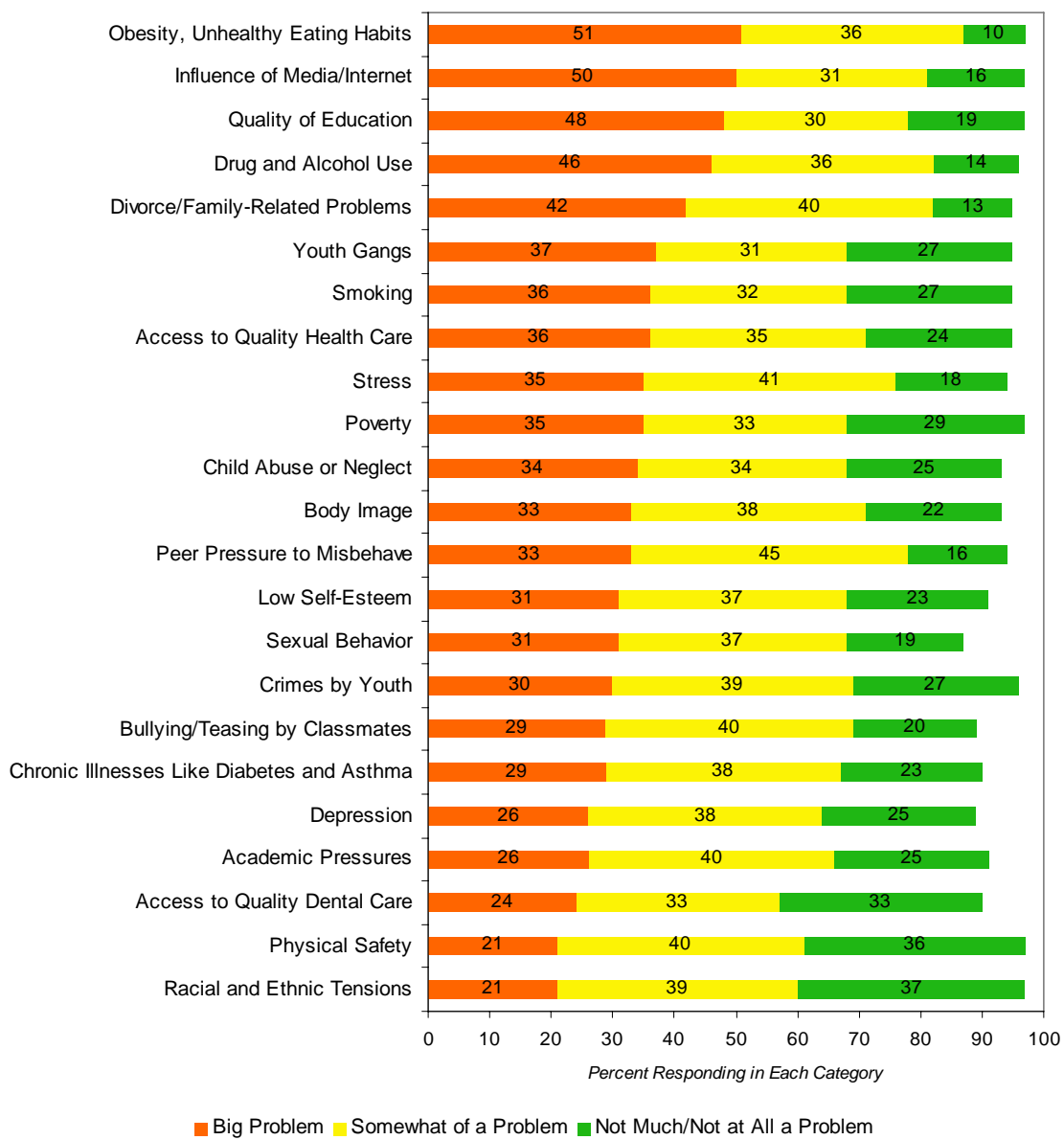
Source: Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, from a poll conducted by the Field Research Corporation

Graph 2
Percent of White non-Hispanics and Latinos
Who Say Each Issue Is a "Big Problem"



Source: Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, from a poll conducted by the Field Research Corporation

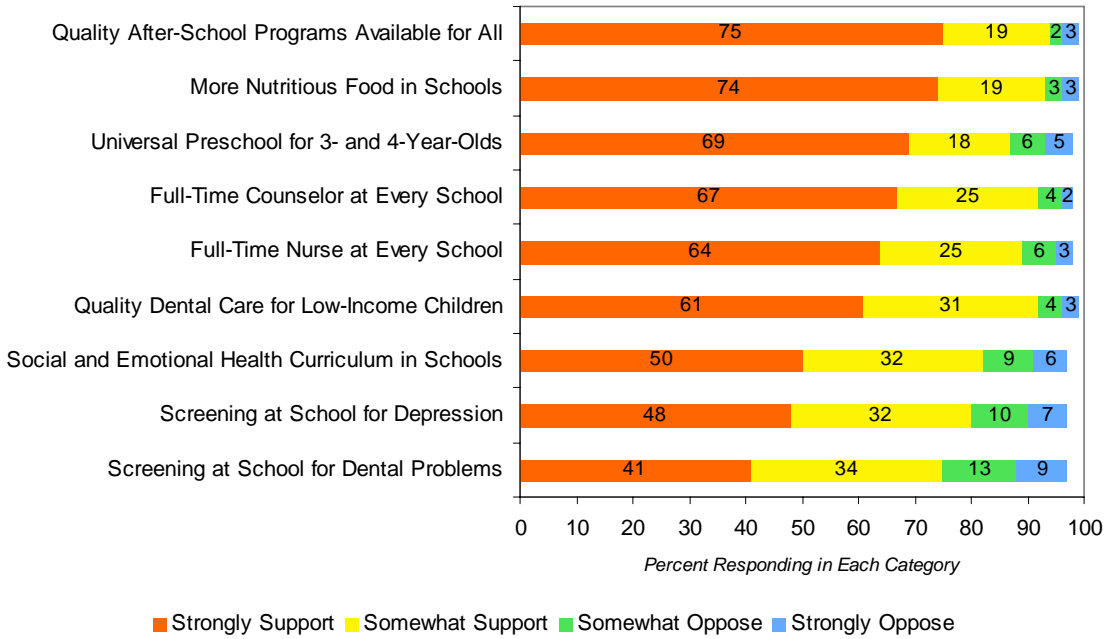
Graph 3
Resondents' Views on 23 Issues Affecting Children



Note: Differences between 100% and the sum for each item equal proportions of respondents with no opinion

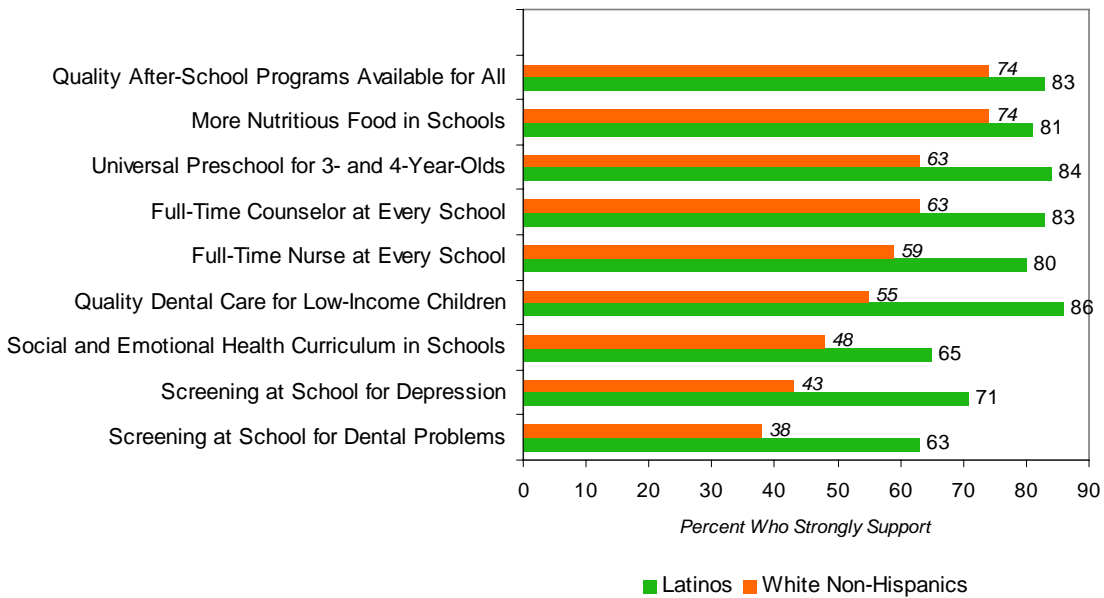
Source: Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, from a poll conducted by the Field Research Corporation

Graph 4
Views About Devoting More State and Local Tax Dollars to Specific Programs for Children



Note: Differences between 100% and the sum for each item equal proportions of respondents with no opinion
 Source: Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, from a poll conducted by the Field Research Corporation

Graph 5
Percent of White non-Hispanics and Latinos Who "Strongly Support" Spending More Tax Dollars on Programs for Children



Source: Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, from a poll conducted by the Field Research Corporation