



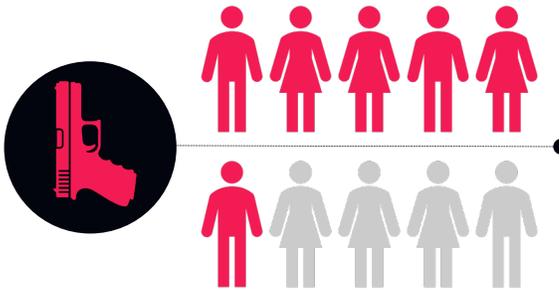
The Back-to-School Edition | September 2022

New research conducted by Benenson Strategy Group reveals how concerned parents in America are as their children return to school. This report was comprised from a survey of over 1,001 online interviews with parents of school-age children (K-12) to understand what they are thinking as this school year begins.

This school year, parents are worried about more than just what grades their children are going to get

As parents send their kids back to class, they fear for their safety.

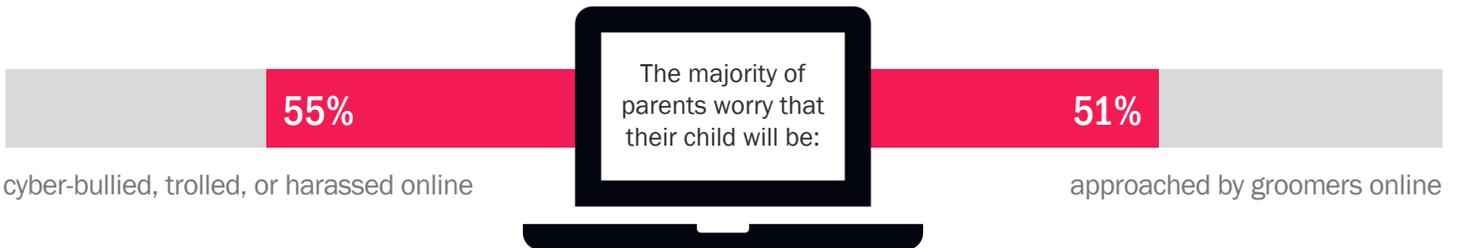
Kids aren't safe in the classroom: a majority of parents worry there will be a shooting at their child's school this year.



Following recent mass shooting tragedies across the country,

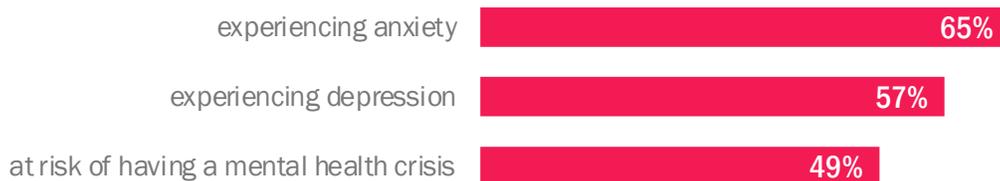
61% of parents worry that there will be a shooting at their child's school.

Kids aren't safe online either: half of all parents worry about the state of online threats children must navigate on a daily basis.



Parents see their child's mental health at a breaking point.

Most parents think their children are:

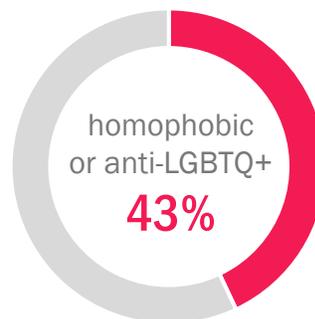
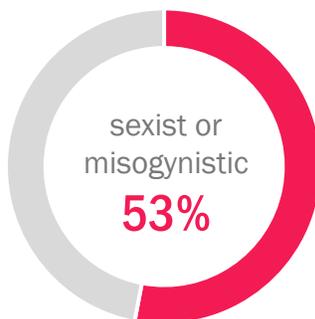
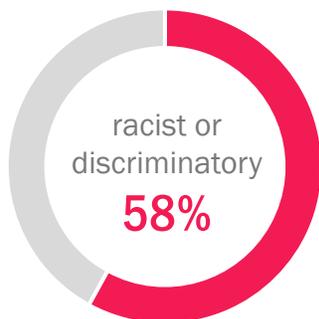


58% think their child **needs extra mental health support** at school this year



Hateful content is rife online. Parents worry it's having an impact on how their children think about minorities and women.

Parents are concerned about their children being exposed to content that is:



In schools, addictions of all sorts are widespread.



1 in 3 parents of high schoolers say that **drug and alcohol addictions are problems at their child's school**

Children in middle and even elementary school are not removed from these issues either. **A quarter of parents across the country agree their child confronts these issues at school, no matter their age.**

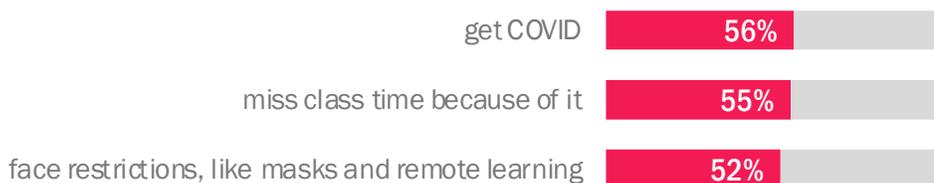


Nearly half of parents say **technology addictions are a problem at their child's school**

Parents of elementary and middle school children report tech addictions being worse for that age cohort than parents of high schoolers.

COVID-19 may have left newspaper headlines but not parent's "heads."

A majority are still concerned their children will:



Relatedly, **exposure to Monkeypox is a further notable concern.** More than 4 in 10 (44%) are concerned their child will be exposed to the virus this school year.



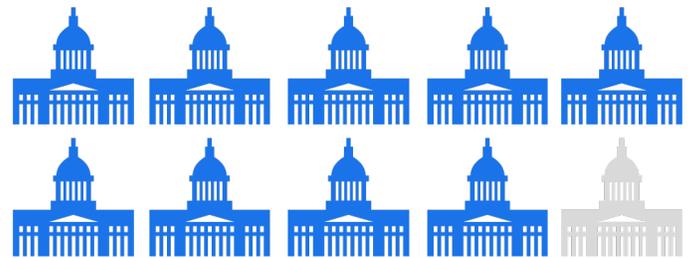
Politics is in the playground and in the classroom

Those under 18 can't vote, but this doesn't stop parents from saying that politics must be an important part of their children's lives.

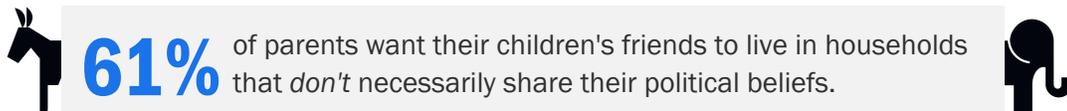
These days Republicans and Democrats find little on which they agree – but when it comes to the importance of young people being politically active and engaged, there's a rare moment of ubiquitous bi-partisanship.

Nearly 9 in 10 agree

that **their child has a responsibility to be a well-informed, engaged citizen in our democracy**, including 92% among Democrats and Republicans, respectively (interestingly, it was a little lower among Independents).



We've become polarized – parents want to change that for their children's generation.



Schools should be the hotbeds of early political activism.



71% of parents say **there should be opportunities for their child to be politically active and engaged at school.**

There's a book ban backlash.

The movement to ban books from school curricula may be having the opposite of its intended effect.

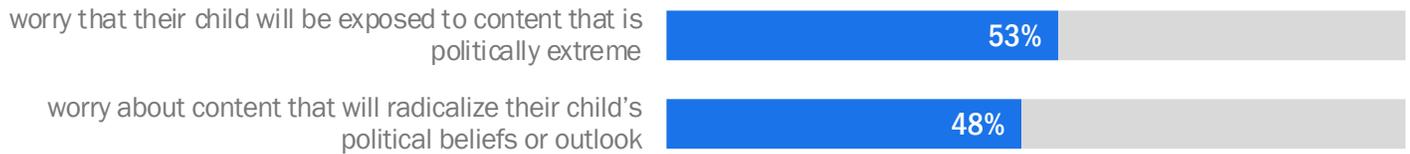


If their child's school banned a book, **more than twice as many parents (42%) said they would encourage their child to read the book anyways** as those who said they would ensure their child did not read it (16%).

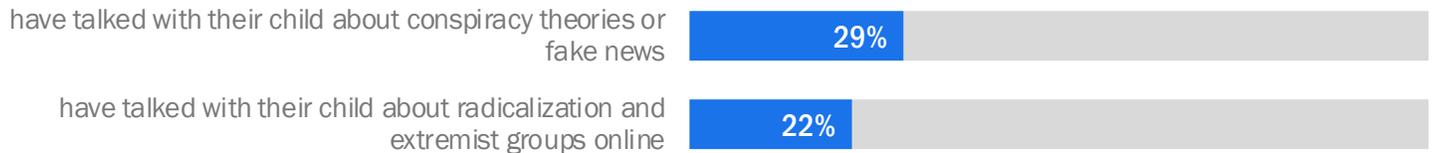


Parents worry that political extremism, from both the left and the right, will radicalize their children.

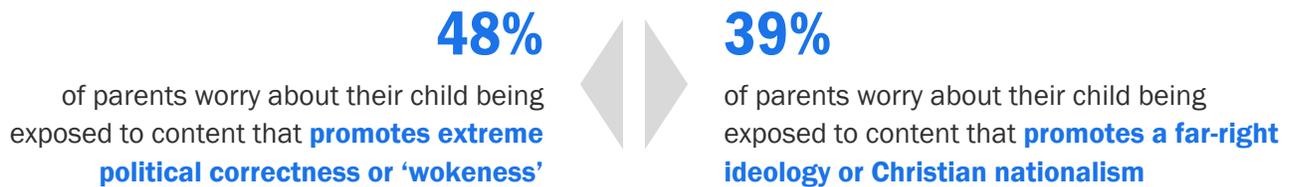
Many parents:



And yet few have taken the steps to help prevent their children from being radicalized...



On balance, parents are more concerned about the impact of the left's cancel culture than far-right rhetoric on their children.



The majority of parents do not want to limit free speech when it comes to race and racism.



Parents are reassessing the role of education and whether college is the best next step

Even as the Biden administration writes off college loans for millions of Americans, parents are rethinking the value of university.

A higher percent of parents feel like it's important for their children to learn a trade than the percent of parents who say it's important for their children to get a 4-year college degree.

In terms of what is important to parents for their children, parents want their children to:



Current economic conditions may contribute to this paradigm shift, with **60% of parents saying that rising prices mean they can't put away as much for their child's education as they want.**

Parents want curricula decisions left up to them *and* teachers, but they want the government to stay out of it.



When it comes to deciding what students should learn in school, **60% say it should be up to them as the parents/caregivers and teachers (59%)**

Despite being put in the crossfire of recent culture wars in the classroom – Teachers enjoy near universal approval (93%)



Only 20% or parents want their state government and 14% want the federal government involved in their child's education.

School should be preparing children for the job market but also to be good citizens.



Nearly 7 in 10 parents say that **preparing students with the skills they need to get a job (69%)** and **preparing them to be good citizens (68%)** are very important priorities.

COVID-19 set students back decades, parents are demanding schools provide the resources to help catch them up.

60% of parents say their child needs extra support at school to **make up for lost teaching time during the pandemic.**





Methodology

Benenson Strategy Group conducted 1,001 online interviews with parents who have kids in kindergarten through 12th grade. The survey was fielded from August 16 – 24, 2022. The data was weighted to reflect U.S. Census data to ensure an accurate demographic representation.

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