



Get Active

Perspectives of Canadians
on the Importance
of Physical Education,
Health Education,
and Physical Activity

March 2013



Study after study shows us the benefit of physical activity: active people are healthier, have higher self-esteem, less stress, less depression, and a strong supporting network of friends and peers. Active children are more focused and better prepared to learn.

But to what extent are Canadians – and parents in particular – aware of these benefits, and prepared to support action that provides more access, time, and resources to a key driver of physical activity: quality physical and health education?

This report outlines the findings of a public opinion research project that explored perceptions of:

- The value of physical education, health education, and physical activity
- The quality of physical and health education
- The appropriate amount of instructional time in physical education
- Impact on academic performance
- The physical, social, emotional benefits of physical education and activity
- Canadian views in support of prevention as a public health philosophy

In all, these results tell us that Canadians and parents understand the importance of physical education and physical activity, are supportive of greater investment of time and dollars in these areas, recognize a variety of benefits, and understand that time spent in these areas has a positive effect on academic performance.

About Physical & Health Education Canada

Physical & Health Education Canada is the national voice for physical and health education. We work with educators, and on-the-ground professionals to develop the resources, understanding, and networks to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead physically active and healthy lives, now and in their future.

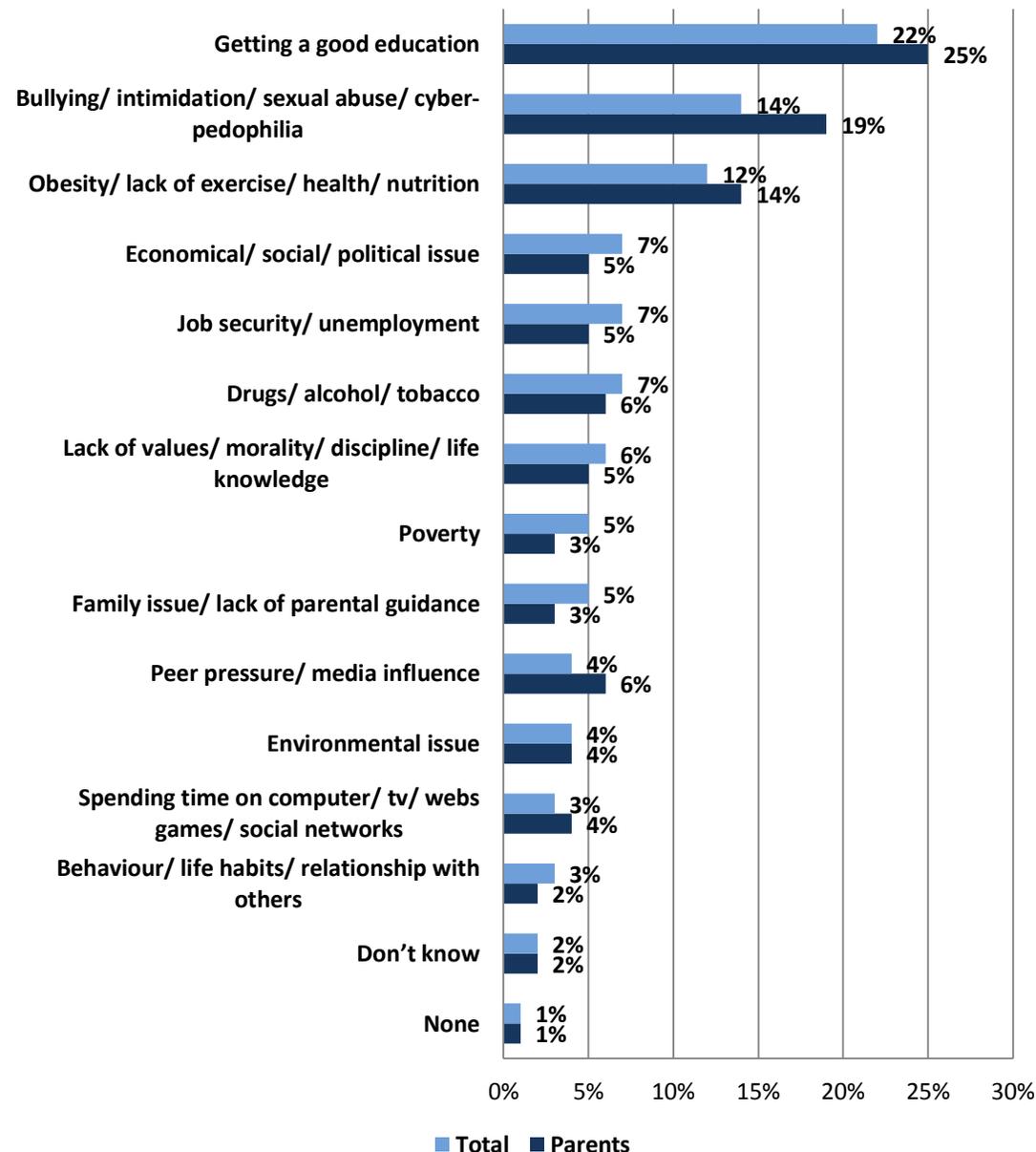
For more information visit www.phecanada.ca.

Methodology

The methodology for the research involved a custom online survey drawing on members of the Ipsos Reid Online Panel.

A total of 1,720 surveys were conducted from June 25-28, 2012 among a nationally representative sample of Canadians 18 years and older. This included an oversample among parents with children 5 to 16 years old to achieve a total of n=497 surveys among this audience. The overall sample was weighted to be representative of the adult Canadian population according to the latest Stats Can targets. An unweighted probability sample of n=1,720 would yield an estimated margin of error of ± 2.4 percentage points, 95% of the time. The margin of error is larger for sub-groups.



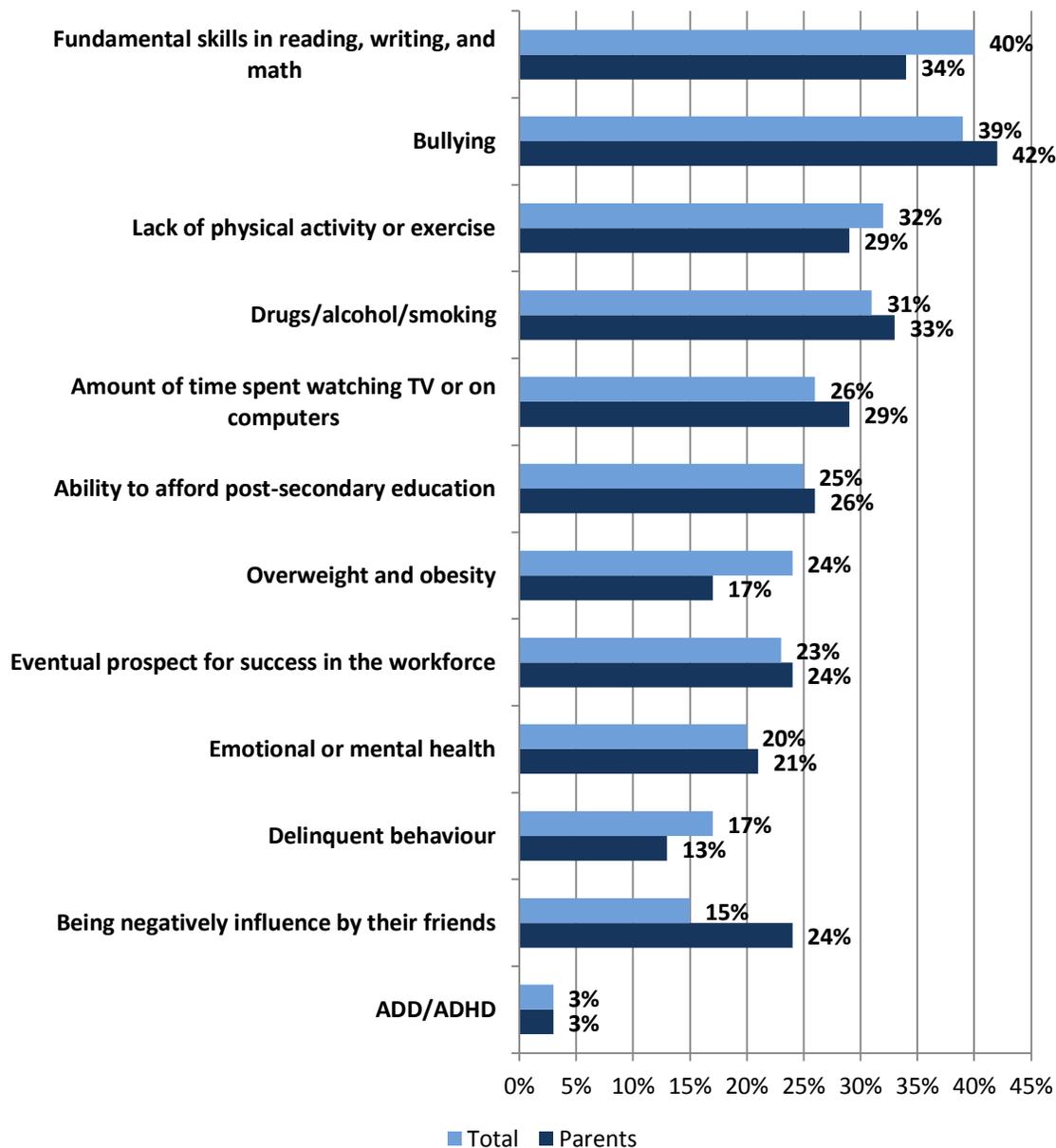


Getting a good education, abuse and obesity/health are considered to be the most important issues facing children and youth today among both parents and Canadians overall.

Strong health and physical education builds resilience among children and youth. Those who are active are more focused, have more positive relationships with their peers, and grow up to be healthy adults.

Most mentions less than 3% are not shown

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing children and youth today? Please type your response in the space provided. Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)



Given a list of choices, respondents were asked to rank the top three issues facing children and youth. This is a summary of the items ranked in the top three.

1 in 3 respondents rank a lack of physical activity or exercise in their top three issues of concern facing children and youth today.

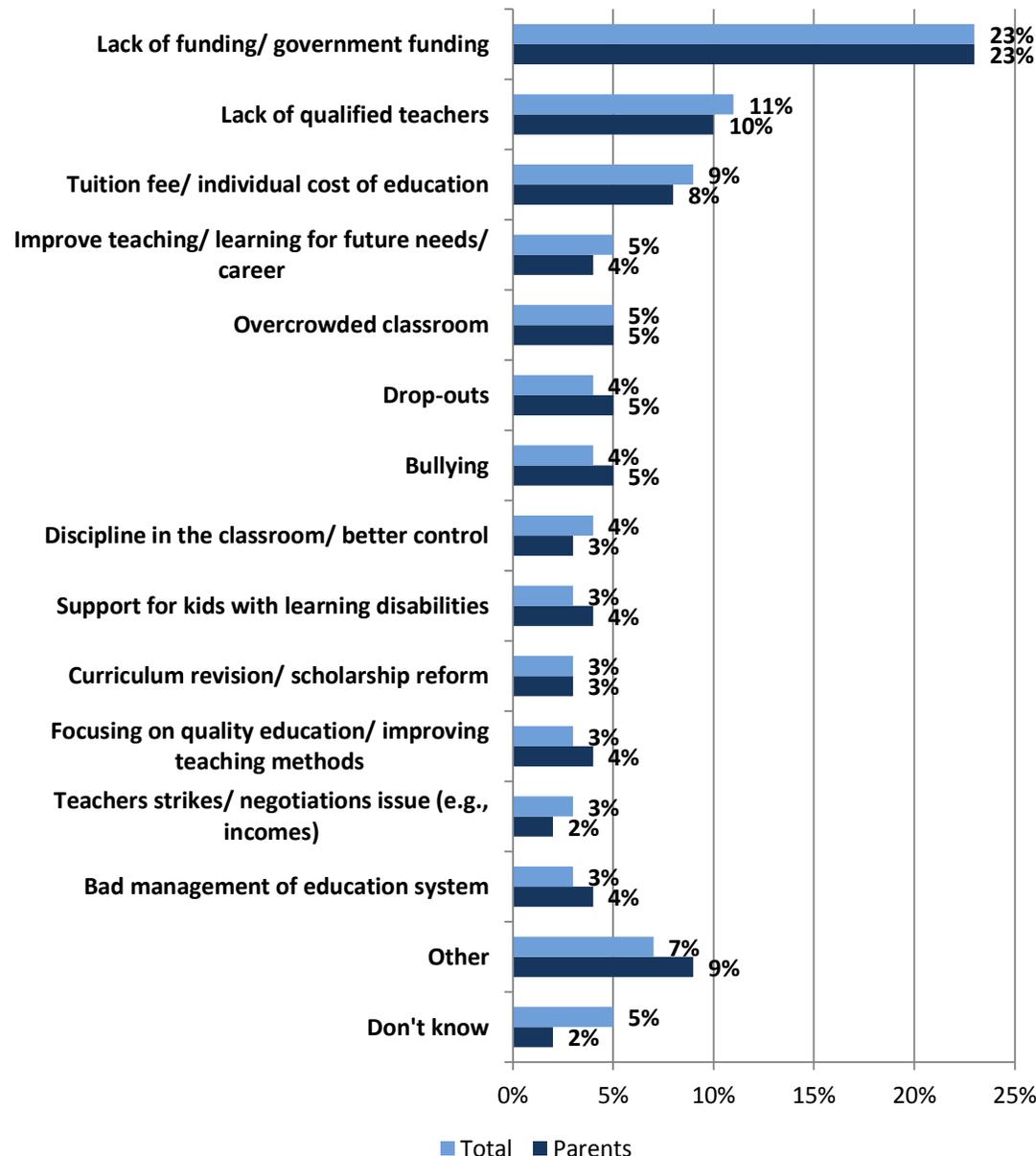
Which of the following issues facing children and youth today are you most concerned about? Please rank your top three by selecting a 1 for the issue you are most concerned about, a 2 for the issue you are next most concerned about and a 3 for the third. Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

Almost 1 in 4 respondents feel a lack of funding is the most important issue facing the education system in their province; 1 in 10 feel it is a lack of qualified teachers

The success of our education system depends upon well-qualified teachers who have the resources and support to deliver a strong curriculum.

For physical and health education, this means ensuring that principals and school board officials value the subjects as a core part of curriculum and give teachers the time, space to teach, and the opportunities for additional training so that they can continue to grow as professionals.

Most mentions less than 3% are not shown



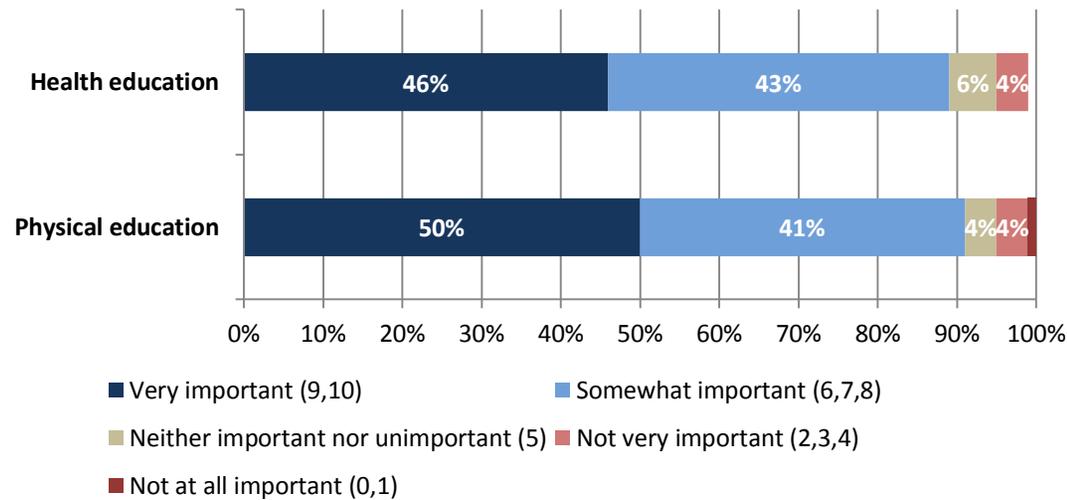
In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing the education system in your province? Please type your response in the space provided and be as specific as possible. Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

While approximately 90% of parents feel physical education and health education are very or somewhat important, only 77% are satisfied with the quality of teaching.

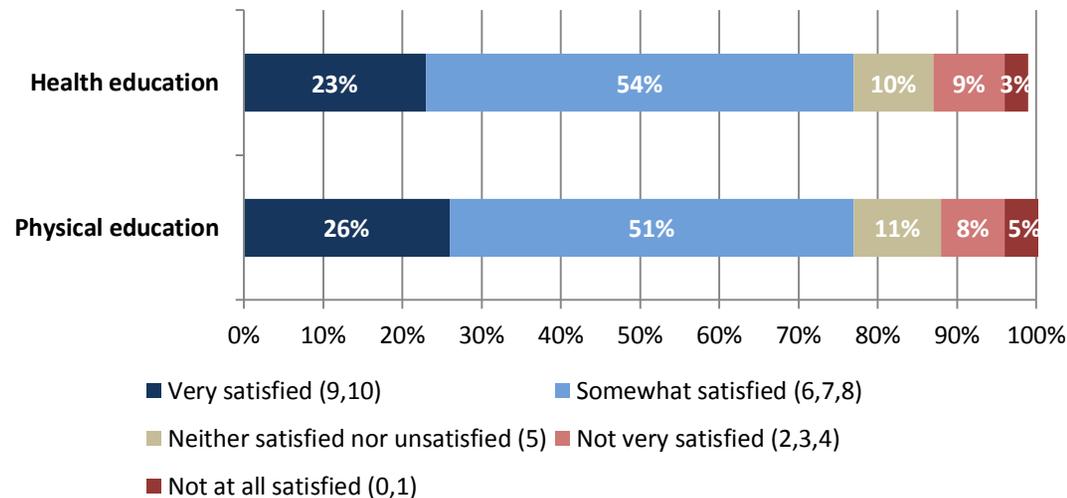
There is a gap between parent's expectations and the instruction that their children are receiving. In most provinces, physical education at the high school level is taught by teachers with specialized training, but at the elementary level this can vary widely.

PHE Canada defines a qualified physical educator as someone who, in addition to being fully certified by their province, holds a Bachelor of Physical Education, or a Bachelor of Education or Kinesiology with a concentration in Physical Education, and follows provincial curriculum using sound pedagogical principles.

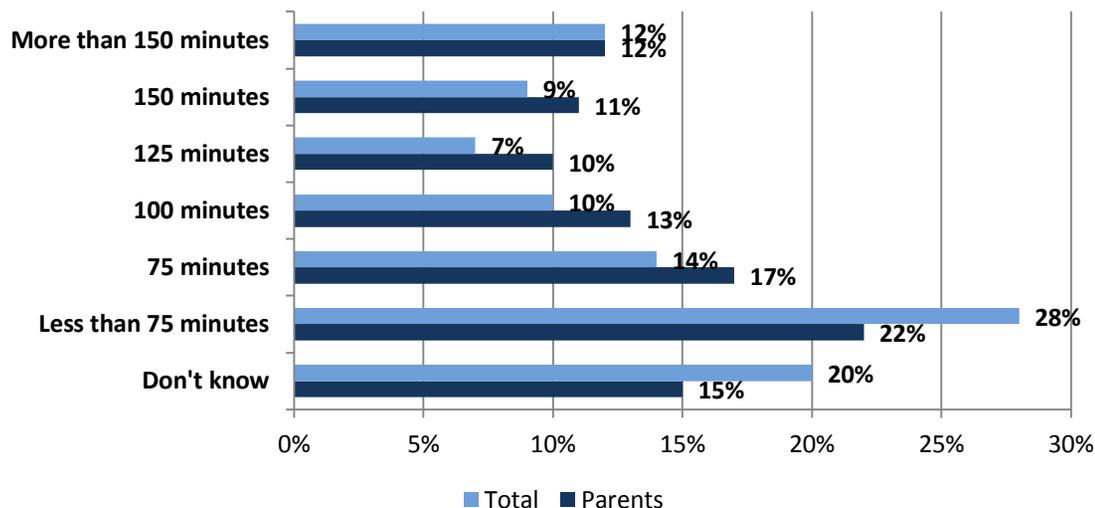
Physical and health education have changed dramatically over the past couple of decades, as pedagogy and curriculum evolve and the environment of students change. It is critical that our teachers are up-to-date on the latest teaching.



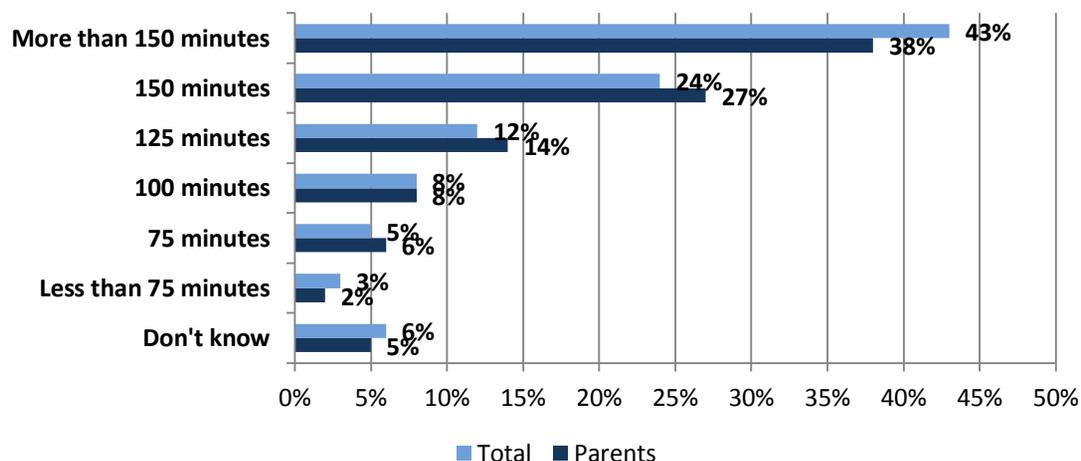
Thinking about your child's/children's education, in your opinion how important are each of the following subjects? Base: Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)



Thinking again about your child's/children's education, how satisfied are you with the quality of teaching your child/children receive(s) in each of the following subjects? Base: Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)



How many minutes of physical education do you think children in elementary school are required to take each week according to the curriculum of your province? Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)



In Canada, the minimum amount of weekly instruction in physical education for elementary schools range from 75 minutes to 165 minutes per week, depending on the province or territory. Knowing this, how many minutes of physical education do you think elementary students in Canada should take every week? Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

67% of Canadians and 65% of parents believe that children should receive 150 minutes or more of physical education each week.

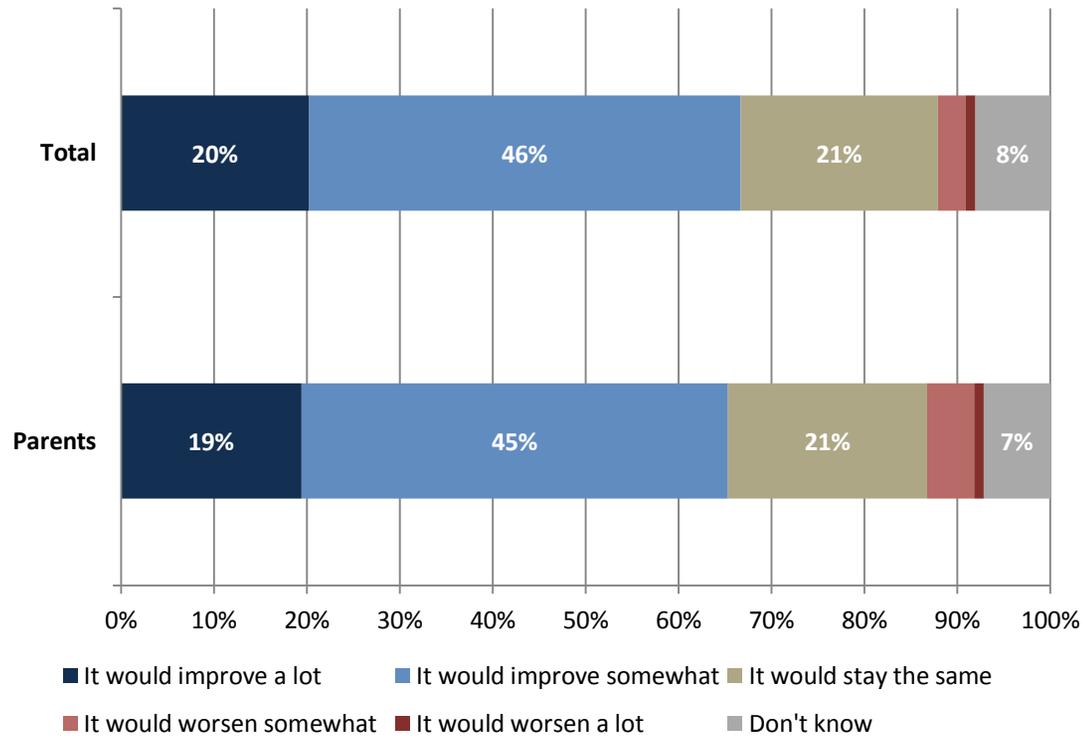
The reality is that curricula across the country vary widely in terms of the minimum instructional time in physical education that students should receive, and for most this is expressed as a guideline, not a requirement.

However, since these are minimums expressed as recommendations, it does not reflect those provinces, school boards, or schools who go above and beyond.

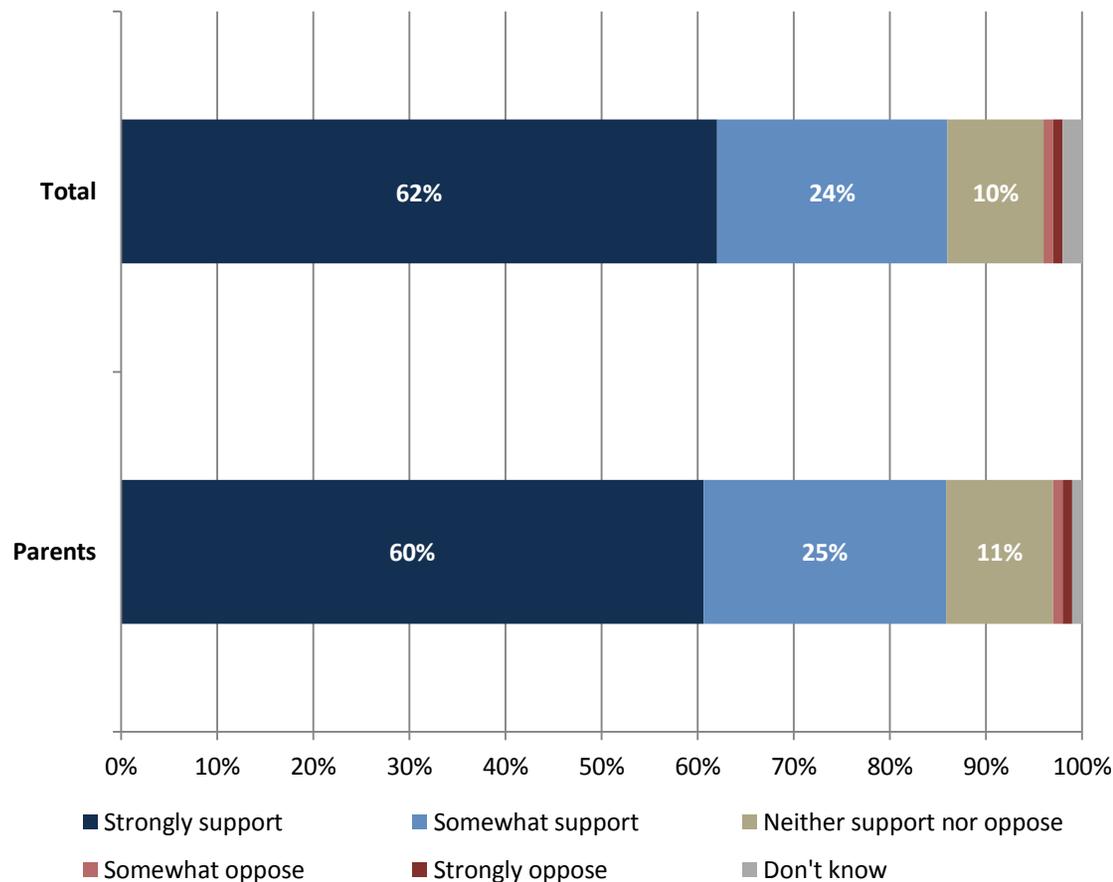
The lack of accountability measures make it very difficult to get a full picture of the state of physical education instruction in Canada, but some studies show that 43% of students are not receiving even the minimum recommended minutes.

PHE Canada urges that all students in Canada receive a minimum of 30 minutes of physical education instruction every day.

2 in 3 Canadians believe that if more time were devoted to physical education, students' success in math, science and reading/writing would improve.



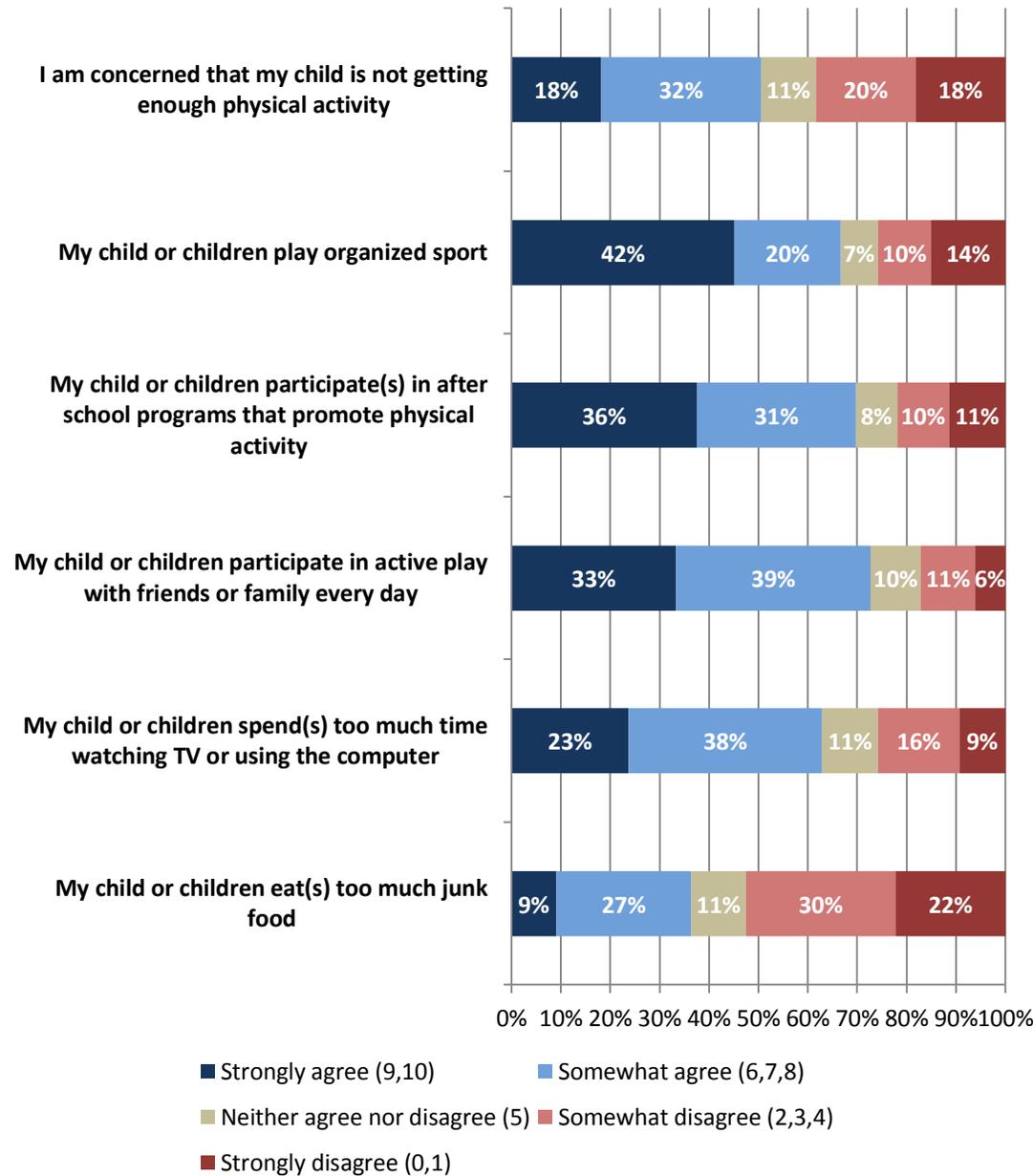
In your opinion, if schools devoted more time to physical education, how do you think students' success in mathematics, science and reading/writing would be impacted? Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)



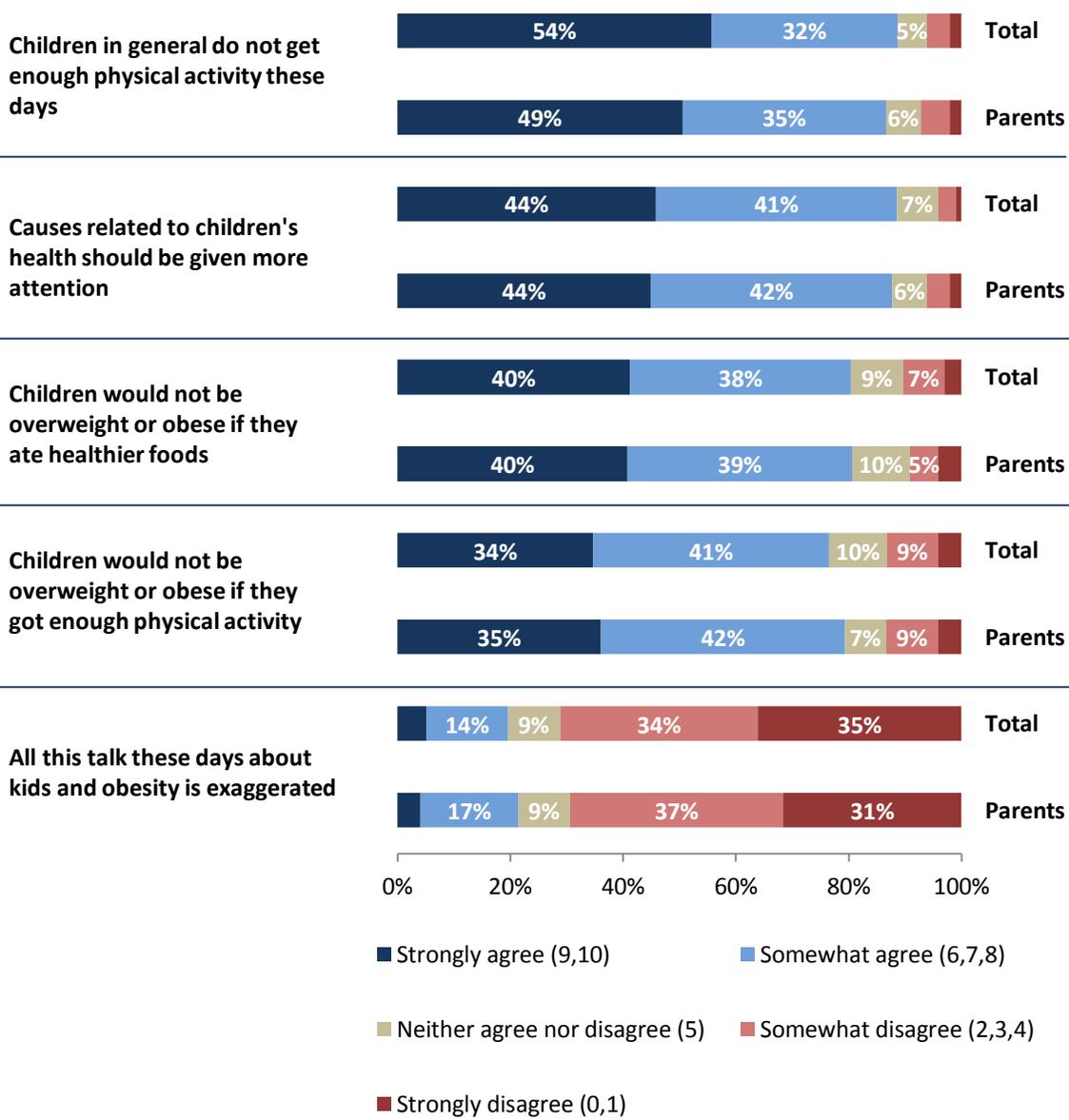
More than 4 in 5 Canadians strongly or somewhat support devoting more time to physical education in schools, after being told that research has shown it would not negatively impact achievement in other subjects.

Research has shown that schools can increase the amount of time devoted to physical education without negatively impacting achievement in other subjects. Knowing this, how much do you support schools devoting more time to physical education? Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

While the majority of parents indicate that their child participates in after school programs that promote physical activity and active play on a daily basis, half express concern that their child is not getting enough physical activity.



Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly disagree and 10 means strongly agree please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Base: Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

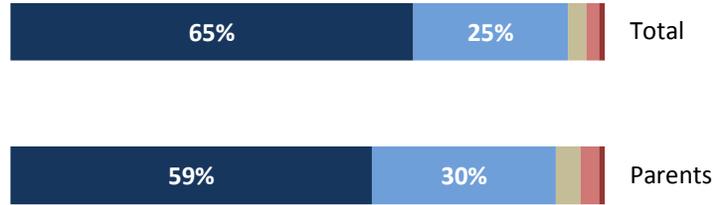


Nearly 9 in 10 Canadians agree that children do not get enough physical activity these days, while approximately 7 in 10 Canadians disagree that obesity concerns are exaggerated.

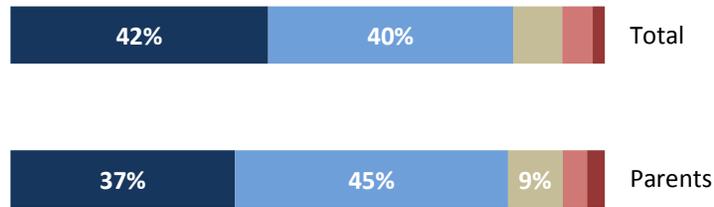
Strong majorities of Canadians look to healthier eating and physical activity as an important part of preventing children from becoming overweight.

Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly disagree and 10 means strongly agree please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

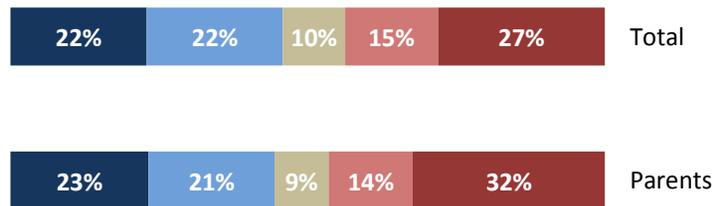
It is important for parents to get involved to ensure that their child is getting quality physical and health education



The education system should place more importance on providing quality physical education



There should be a special tax on unhealthy snack foods, such as potato chips, candy and chocolate, to discourage people from buying them



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- Strongly agree (9,10)
- Somewhat agree (6,7,8)
- Neither agree nor disagree (5)
- Somewhat disagree (2,3,4)
- Strongly disagree (0,1)

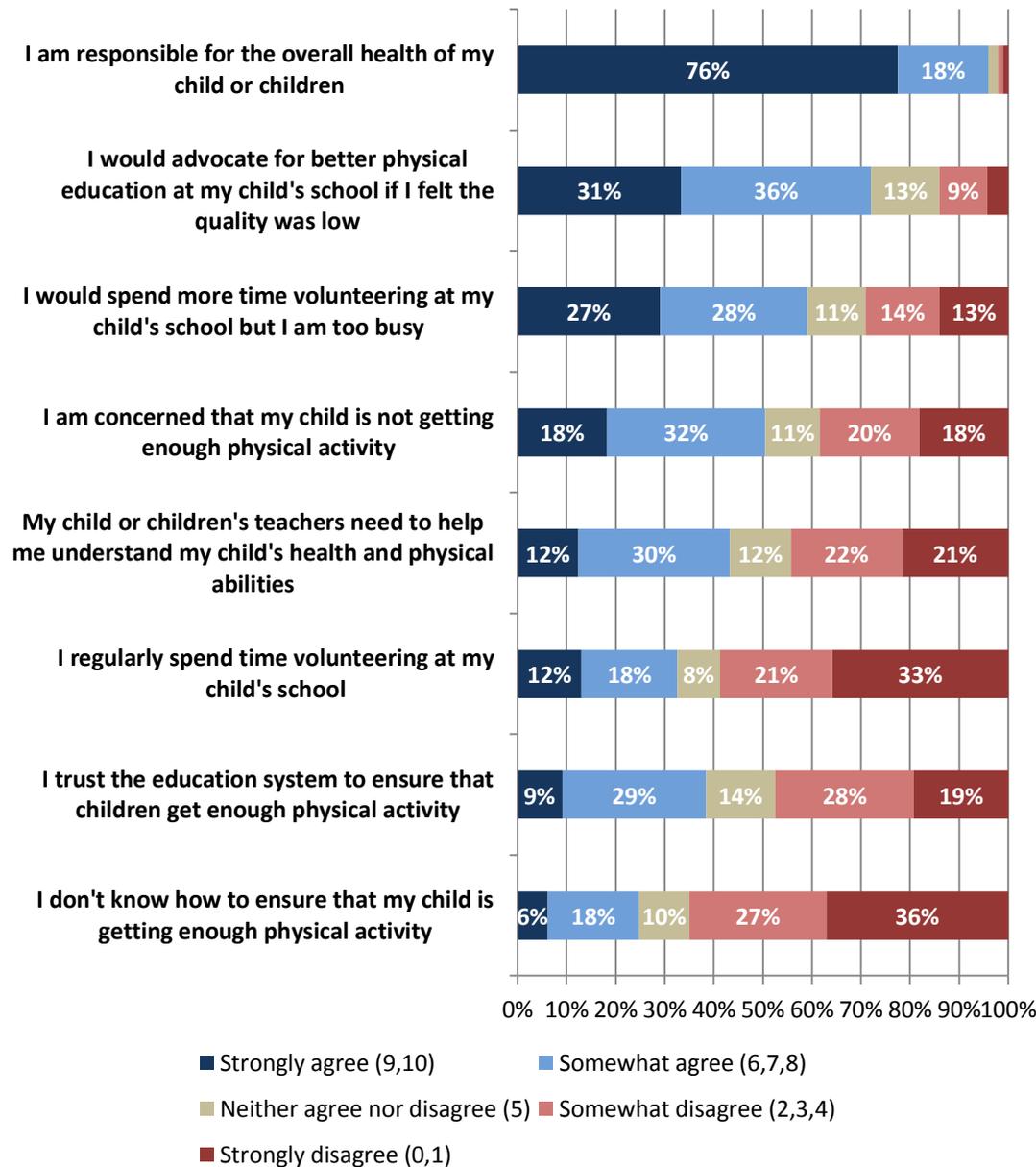
90% of Canadians agree that it is important for parents to get involved to ensure their child is receiving quality physical and health education.

In addition, over 4 in 5 Canadians believe that the education system needs to place more importance on providing quality physical education.

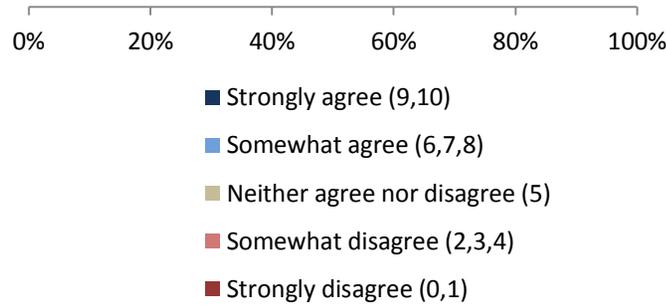
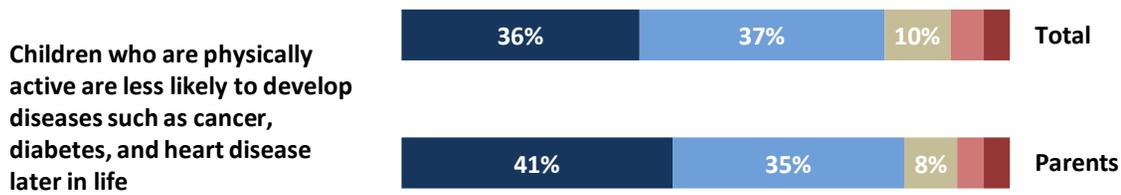
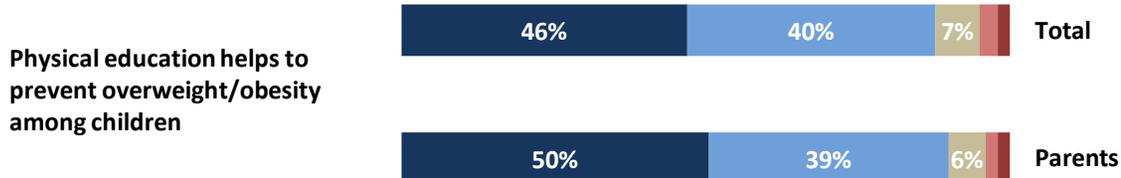
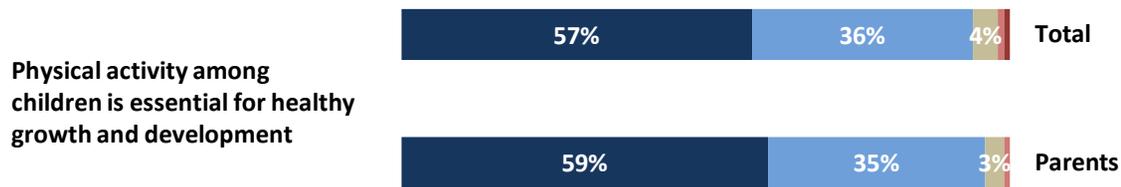
Support of taxation as a disincentive to the consumption of unhealthy snack food is strongly split, with strong agreement and disagreement.

Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly disagree and 10 means strongly agree please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

3 in 4 parents strongly agree that they are responsible for the overall health of their children.



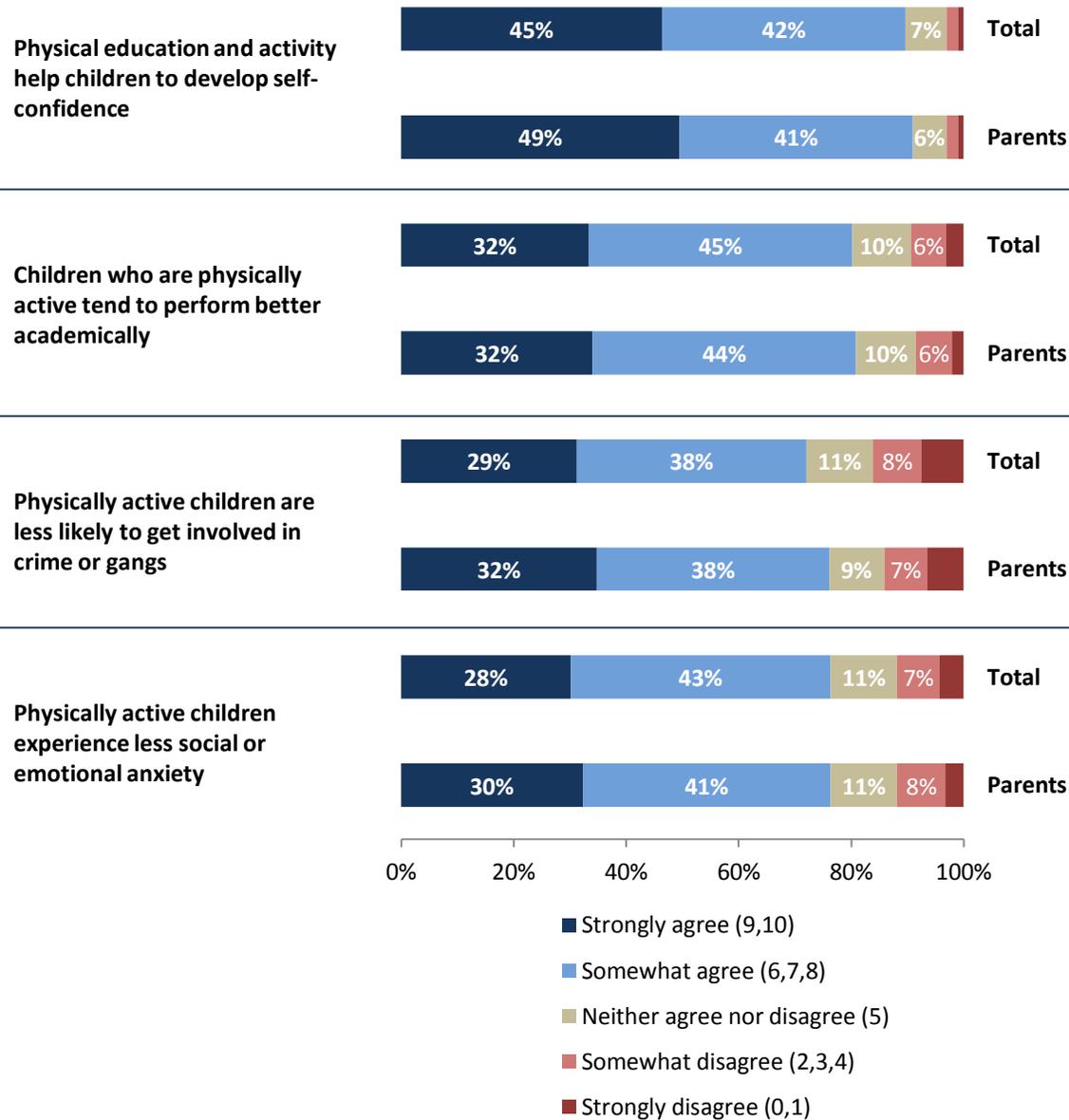
Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly disagree and 10 means strongly agree please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Base: Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)



High majorities of Canadians agree with various statements describing the physical benefits of physical activity and physical education.

In particular, 93% of Canadians agree that physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development, 86% agree that physical education can help prevent overweight/obesity, and 73% agree that physical activity today can prevent diseases later in life.

Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly disagree and 10 means strongly agree please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about physical education and activity among children.
 Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

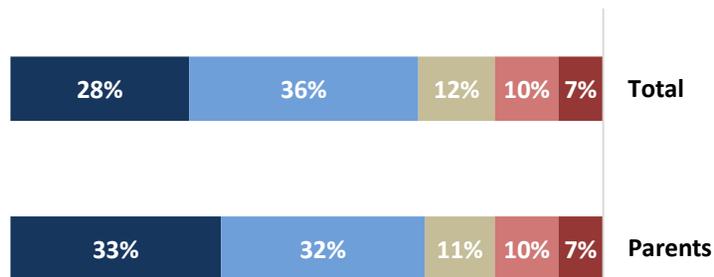


87% of Canadians agree that physical education and physical activity help children to develop self-confidence.

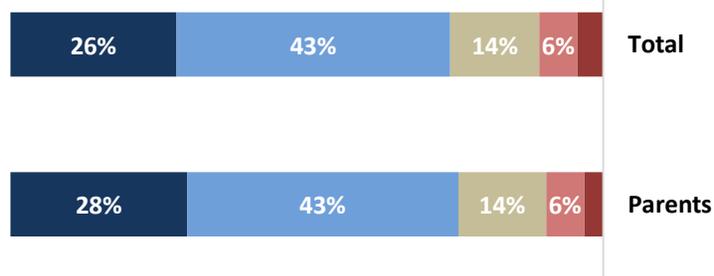
Nearly 3 in 4 Canadians agree that physically active children tend to perform better academically. More than 2 in 3 agree that physically active children are less likely to experience social or emotional anxiety, or to get involved in crime or gangs.

Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly disagree and 10 means strongly agree please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about physical education and activity among children.
 Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

Physically active children are less likely to begin smoking or abuse drugs/alcohol



Physically active children are more likely to become leaders in their community or career



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

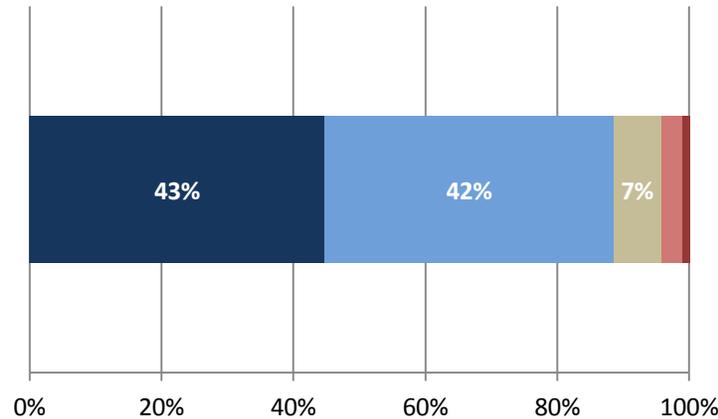
- Strongly agree (9,10)
- Somewhat agree (6,7,8)
- Neither agree nor disagree (5)
- Somewhat disagree (2,3,4)
- Strongly disagree (0,1)

7 in 10 parents strongly or somewhat agree that physically active youth are more likely to become leaders in their community or career.

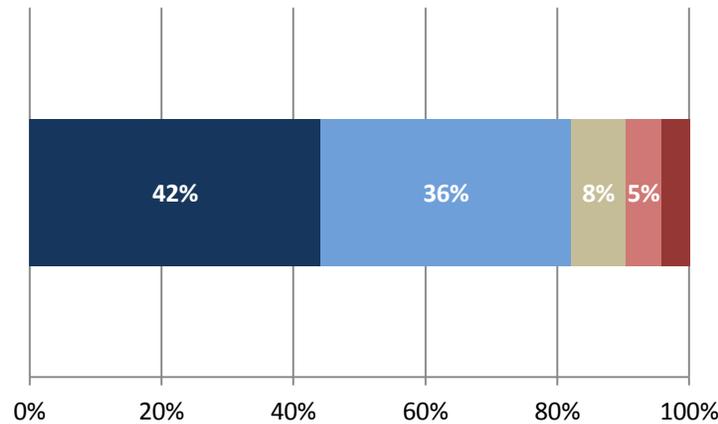
More than 2 in 3 parents believe that physically active children are less likely to begin smoking or abuse drugs/alcohol.

Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly disagree and 10 means strongly agree please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about physical education and activity among children.
 Base: All respondents (n=1720); Parents with child 5-16 (n=497)

How much do you agree or disagree that the federal and provincial governments should devote a greater percentage of the health care budget to investing in preventative measures so people do not get sick in the first place?



How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Of the \$200 billion spent on health care in Canada each year I support increasing the proportion spent on health promotion and disease prevention measures like physical activity, recreation, or sport from less than 1 percent to 2 percent.



- Strongly agree (9,10)
- Somewhat agree (6,7,8)
- Neither agree nor disagree (5)
- Somewhat disagree (2,3,4)
- Strongly disagree (0,1)

More than 4 in 5 Canadians agree that the federal government should devote a greater percentage of the health care budget to investing in preventative measures so people do not get sick in the first place.

Meanwhile, 8 in 10 Canadians indicate that they support increasing the proportion spent on health promotion and disease prevention measures like physical activity, recreation, or sport from less than 1 percent to 2 percent.

Base: All respondents (n=1720)



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