

Canadian daycare desires

IT'S NOT OFTEN enough that Canadians are actually asked about their daycare preferences. This poll shows three quarters of Canadians believe it is best for children under six to be at home with a parent, failing that, their second choice is a relative, with institutional daycare coming in last. These results hold steady across age, income, gender, working arrangements and, to a lesser extent, regional lines. If governments should support families, Canadians prefer the money should go to them, rather than to schools or public daycare institutions.

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QUESTIONS AND MARGINS OF ERROR - FOUND ONLINE AT IMFCANADA.ORG/DAYCAREDESIRES

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CANADIAN PARENTS MATTER. They are the most important input into their children's lives. They are the ones doing the hard work of raising children.

Unfortunately, those designing public policy don't often turn to parents to ask what they prefer when it comes to childcare choices.

When Canadians are asked what the best childcare arrangements are for children under six, the majority at 76% believe it is good when a parent is home. This is their distinct preference

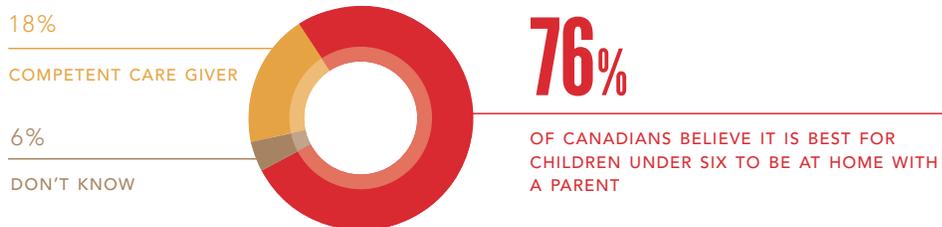
when contrasted with a competent caregiver.

This holds true across age, income, gender, working arrangements and, to a lesser extent, across regional lines.

On funding, Canadians prefer, not surprisingly, to see funding go directly to them, rather than into school bureaucracies or institutional daycare. A total of 61% of Canadians believe that when it comes to government funding of childcare, funding should go directly to parents.

PART I

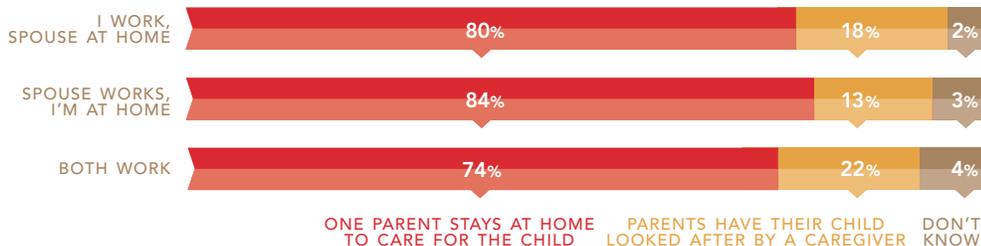
Parent or competent caregiver?



DO FAMILIES WHERE BOTH PARENTS WORK FEEL DIFFERENTLY?

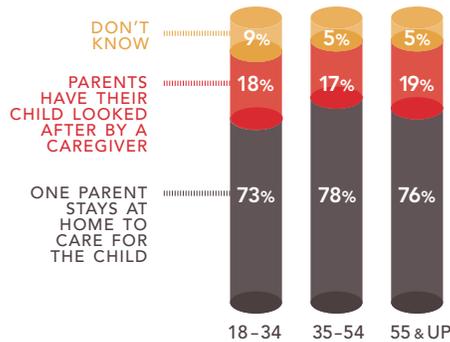
One might assume that there would be a drop in this percentage for families where both parents are working, however, this is not the case. In families where both parents are working, 74% of Canadians still believe that it is best for children under six to be cared for by a parent. It is worth noting

that often parents go to extraordinary lengths to rearrange schedules so that children can be home with a parent. Therefore, the category of "both parents working" need not always mean that children are being watched by an outside caregiver.



BY AGE

Canadians agree on what is best for children under six regardless of age. That children under six are better off with a parent at home is not the view of those who have long ago raised their own children and are now telling younger parents what to do.

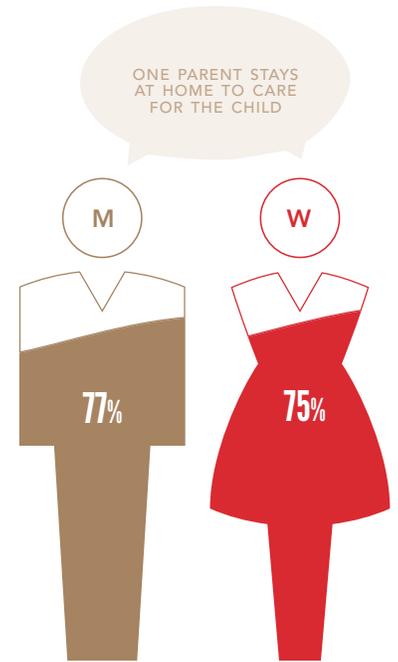


BY GENDER

Women feel roughly the same as men. Seventy-five percent of women think it's best if one parent stays at home to care for their child. Seventy-seven percent of men say the same.

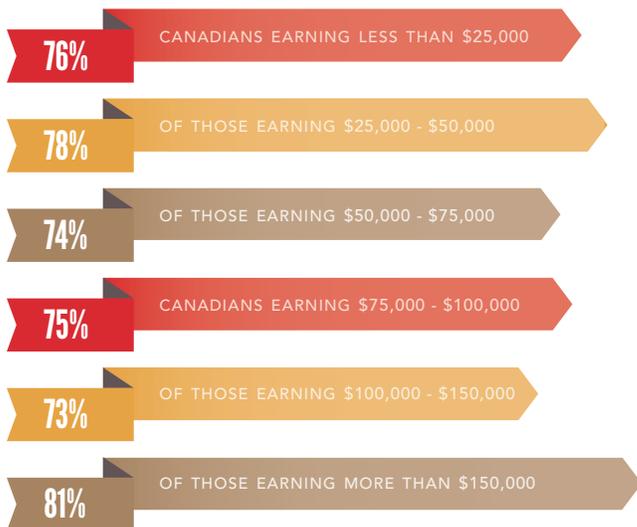
When we look at the various age categories, there is little variation of any substance: 70% of Canadian women age 18 to 34 think that it is best for children under six to be home with a parent, contrasted with 75% of men age 18 to 34.

The same percentage of men and women age 35 to 54, 78%, think it is best for children under six to be at home with a parent.



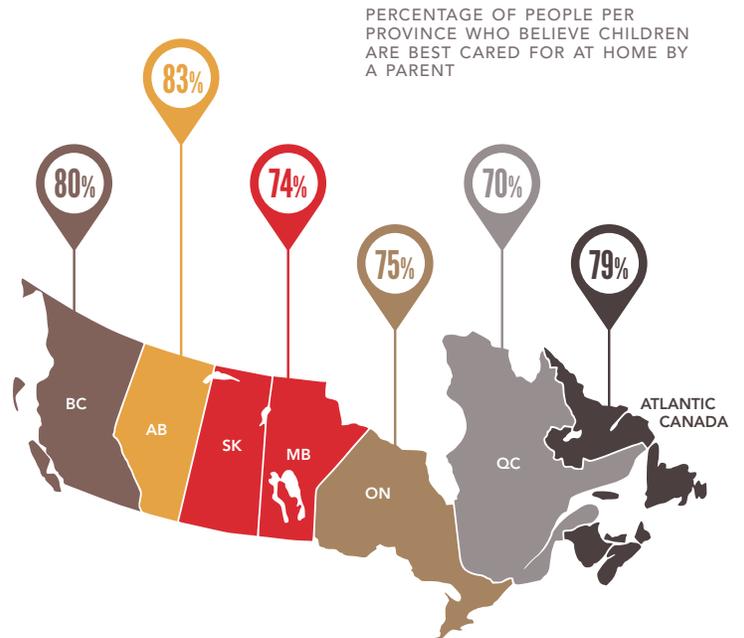
INCOME

Whether Canadians are high income earners or low income earners, they believe in high percentages the best arrangement for children under six is a parent at home. The following are the percentages of Canadians who believe this to be true:



Regardless of whether Canadians are high income or low income earners, there is a very high consistency in the results.

BY REGION, THE CONSISTENCY REMAINS:



Ironically, given the taxpayer funded daycare system in Quebec, only 26% of Quebecers believe it is better for a child under six to be cared for by a competent caregiver.

HOW DO CANADIANS WITH CHILDREN UNDER SIX RIGHT NOW FEEL?

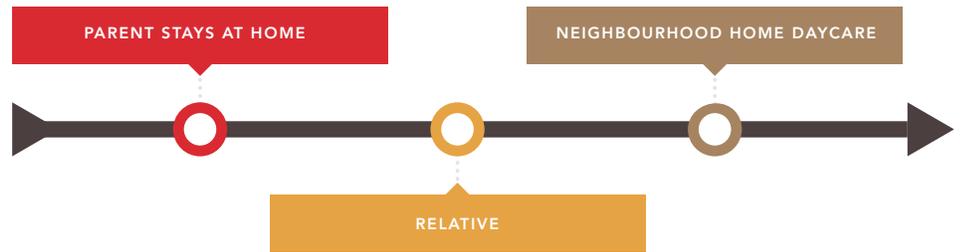
76% of Canadians prefer a parent to a competent caregiver when asked what is best for children under six. The response is not markedly different when considering those who are parenting children under six *right now*.

69% of Canadians with children under six right now believe that having one parent at home to care for their child is the best option when contrasted with a competent caregiver.

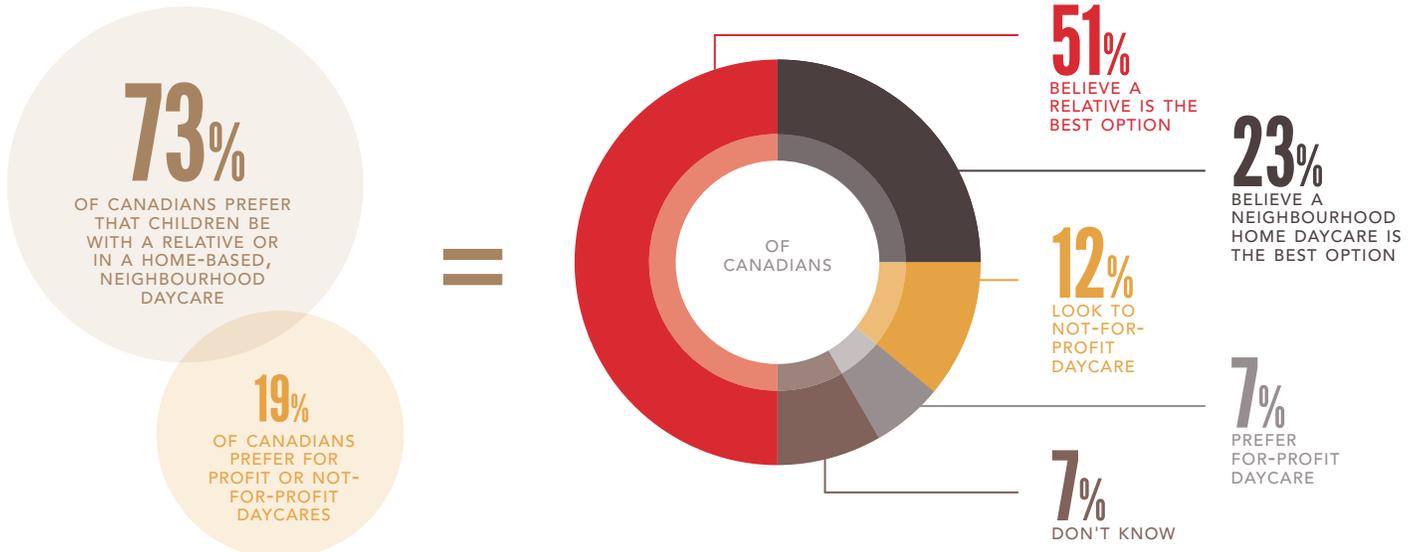
WHAT ABOUT WHEN PARENTS CANNOT BE AT HOME?

For many Canadian families, it is impossible to have one parent at home. When parents cannot be home with children under six, Canadians choose options that most closely replicate the home environment. Canadians

believe that after a parent, a relative is the next best option, followed by a neighbourhood home daycare. The smallest percentage of parents prefer centre-based care, whether not-for-profit or for-profit.

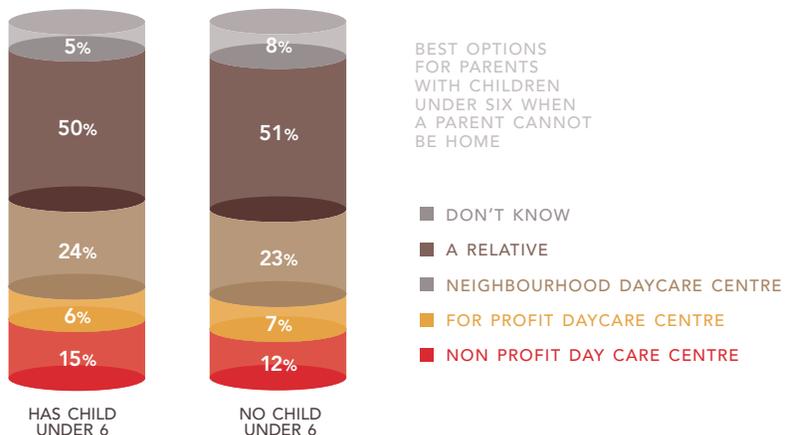


WHEN IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR PARENTS TO BE HOME WITH THEIR CHILDREN

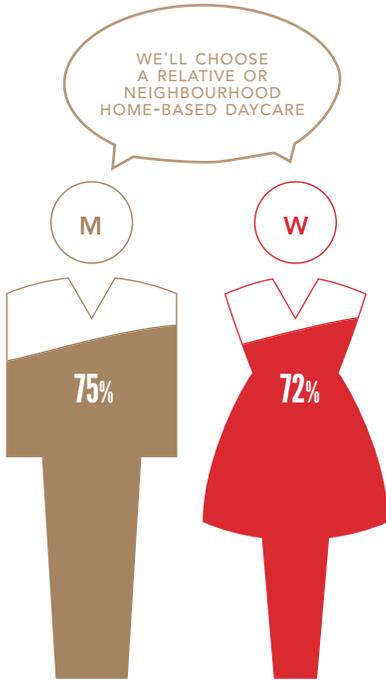


Parents with children under six concur with Canadians' views in general on best options when a parent cannot be home:

Seventy-four percent of Canadians with a child under six think relatives or neighbourhood home-based daycares are the best option.



OPTIONS FOR WHEN A PARENT CANNOT STAY HOME BY GENDER



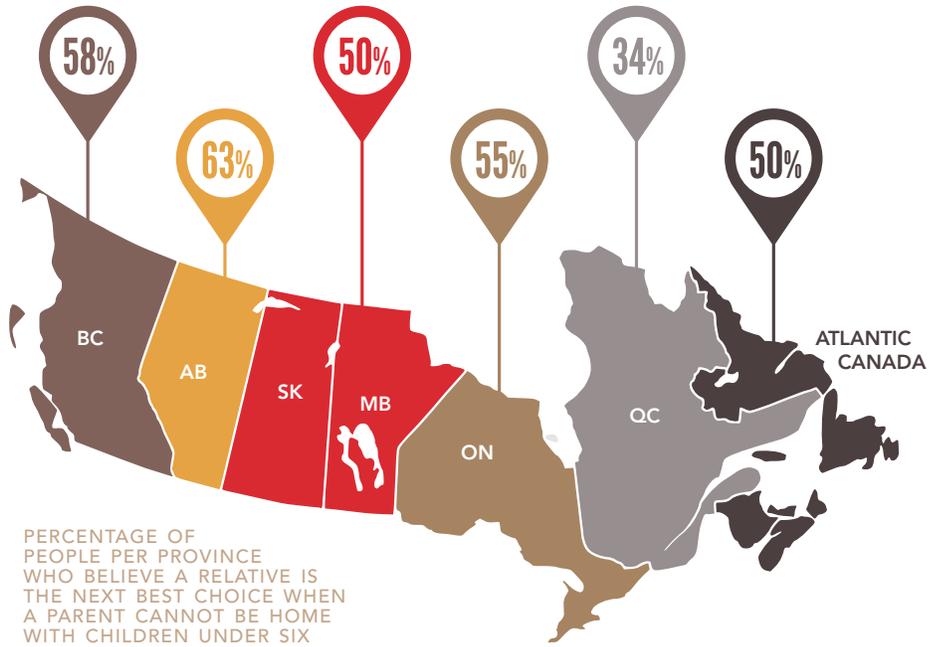
Seventy-two percent of women believe the best choices after a parent are a relative or a neighbourhood home-based daycare. Seventy-five percent believe the same.

OPTIONS FOR CARE BY INCOME, WHEN A PARENT CANNOT STAY HOME

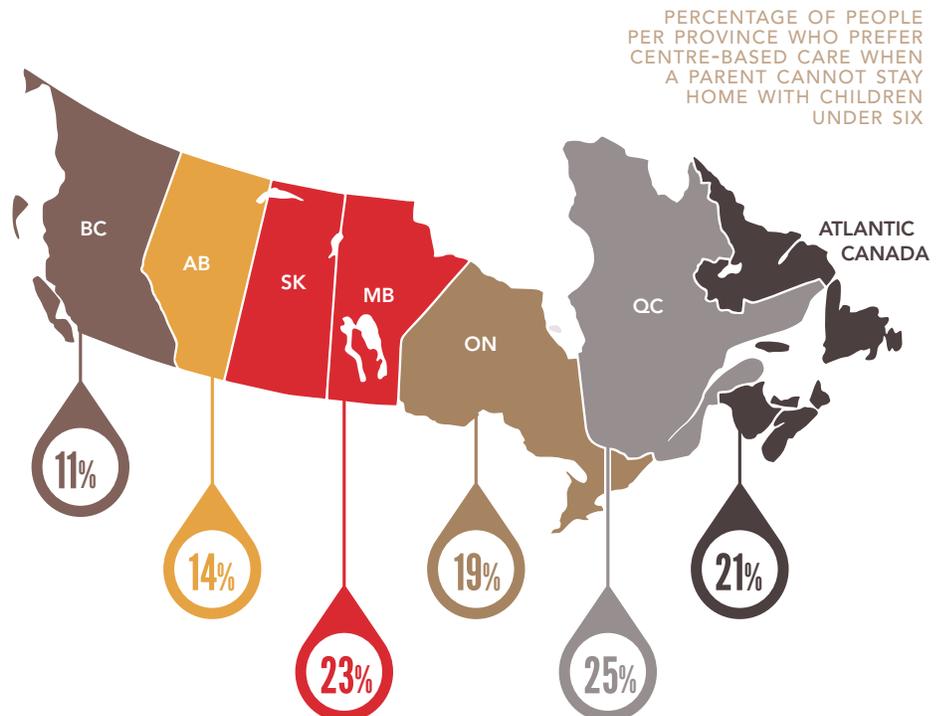


When a parent cannot stay home, the majority choose parents or neighbourhood-based options over centre-based daycare, when looking at the data by income.

REGIONALLY, THERE IS SOME VARIATION:



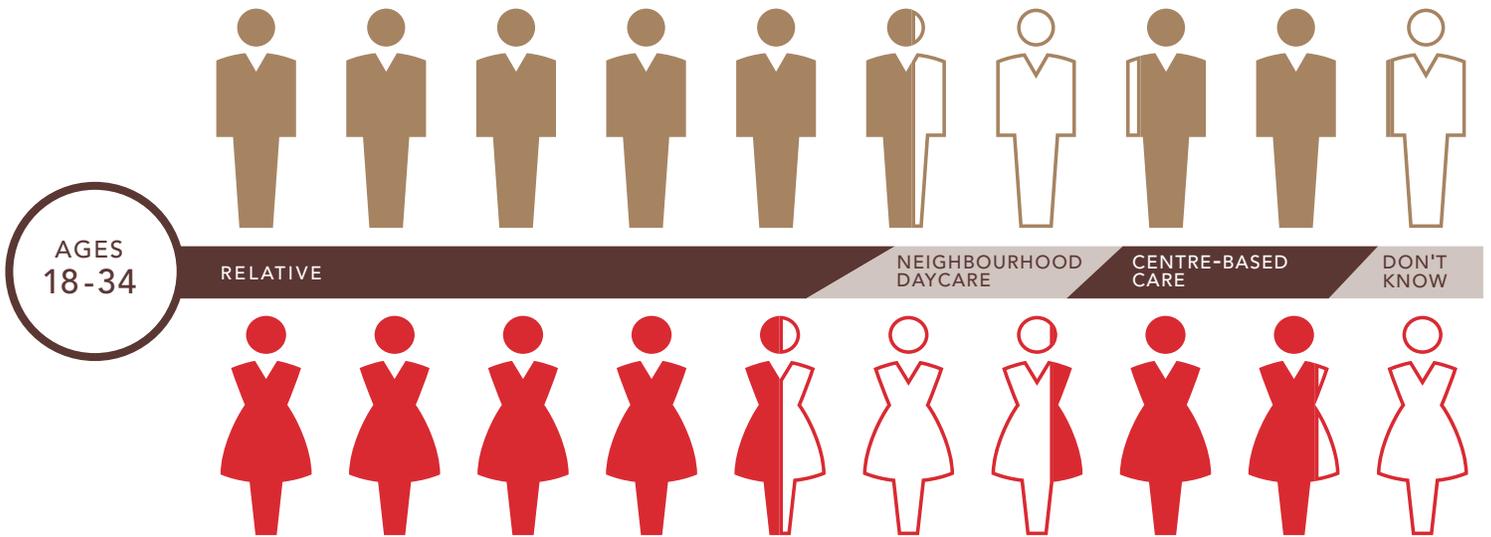
Only a minority of Canadians choose centre-based care as a good choice, if a parent cannot stay at home with children under six. This is the form of care most often promoted by government policy in British Columbia and Ontario.



IF A PARENT CANNOT BE HOME, BY GENDER

If it is not possible for a parent to be home with children, 47% of all women believe a relative is the next best option. This remains true for women who are most likely to have small children. Forty-five percent of women age 18 to 34 believe a relative is the best option. The next choice for women in that age range is a neighbourhood daycare at 23%. For men in age range of 18 to 34, 56% believe a relative is

the best option, while 17% believe a neighbourhood home daycare is the best option. Of note, neither men nor women choose centre-based care in high percentages: Only 20% of women and 18% of men think centre-based care, whether not-for-profit or for-profit, is a good option if a parent cannot be home with children under six.



ON THE WHOLE, Canadians strongly believe that it is preferable that a child under six be home with a parent as contrasted with a competent caregiver. Seventy-six percent of Canadians in general believe this to be true and 69% of Canadian parents with children under six right now agree.

When this is not possible, Canadians prefer the option closest to the home environment, either care by a relative or in a neighbourhood home-based daycare. The last option is centre-based daycares.

PART II

Canadian daycare funding preferences: If governments should fund daycare, how should they do so?

THE NEXT QUESTION concentrates on how parents believe governments should help families, if at all. Here, there is consensus on the idea that money should go to parents, not school bureaucracies or daycare centres. In this poll we see that Canadians' desires differ from the direction being taken by provincial governments in Canada today.

In 2007 in Ontario, then premier Dalton McGuinty hired an education consultant, Dr. Charles Pascal, who proposed public schools be turned into community hubs where parents could drop their kids off and have access to daycare, school and other resources. The immediate result of this was an expansion of all-day kindergarten. It appears that due to the poor state of Ontario's finances, that's where the expansion will stop.

British Columbia too, has seen an increase in calls for inexpensive or free daycare, with Dr. Paul Kershaw of "Generation Squeeze" leading the charge. His "new deal for families" calls for \$10 dollar-a-day daycare.

Now thanks to these poll results, we can see how the policy push in these two provinces counters the desires of Canadians, who prefer to see funding go directly to them, rather than into school systems or institutional daycare.

CANADIANS' DESIRES FOR FAMILY FUNDING

A total of 61% of Canadians believe that when it comes to government funding of childcare, funding should go directly to parents. Canadians were given seven options and asked to choose one to answer the question: "If government should spend money to look after children, how should they do so?"

THE 61% IS MADE UP OF THE FOLLOWING:

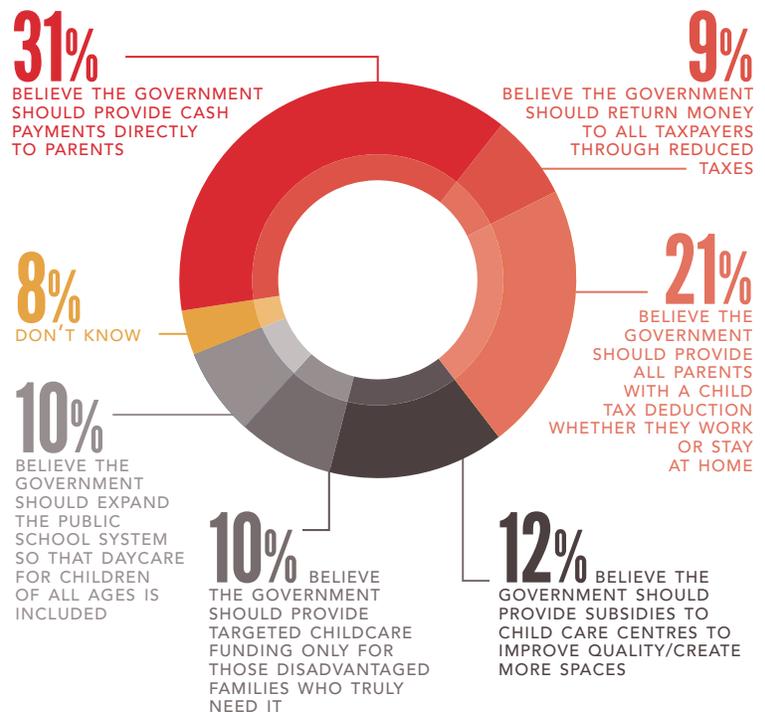
- 31%--the largest group--believe the government should provide cash payments directly to parents

- 21% believe the government should provide all parents with a child tax deduction whether they work or stay at home
- 9% believe the government should return money to all taxpayers through reduced taxes

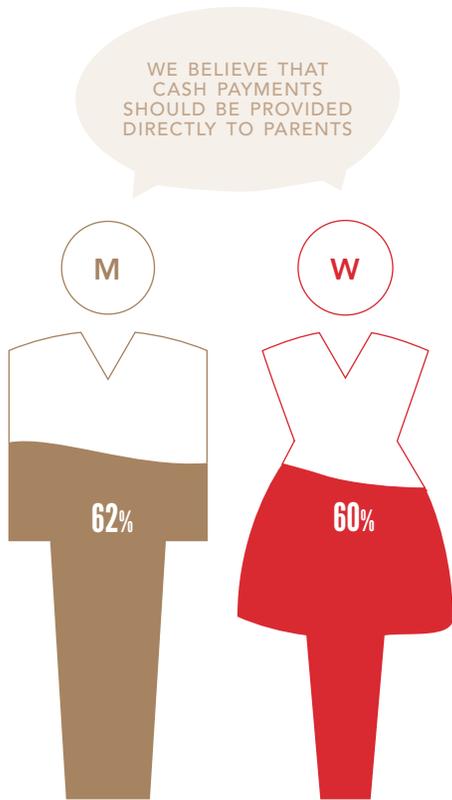
At most, 32% believe governments should provide money to bureaucracies or institutions. At most, because included in this category are the 10% of Canadians who believe that government should provide targeted childcare funding only to those who need it, and this does not provide clarity on how that targeted funding should reach those who most need it.

- 12% believe the government should provide subsidies to child care centres to improve quality/create more spaces
- 10% believe the government should provide targeted childcare funding only for those disadvantaged families who truly need it
- 10% believe the government should expand the public school system so that daycare for children of all ages is included

CANADIAN BELIEFS ABOUT HOW TO BEST FUND CHILD CARE: SHOW PARENTS THE MONEY DIRECTLY!



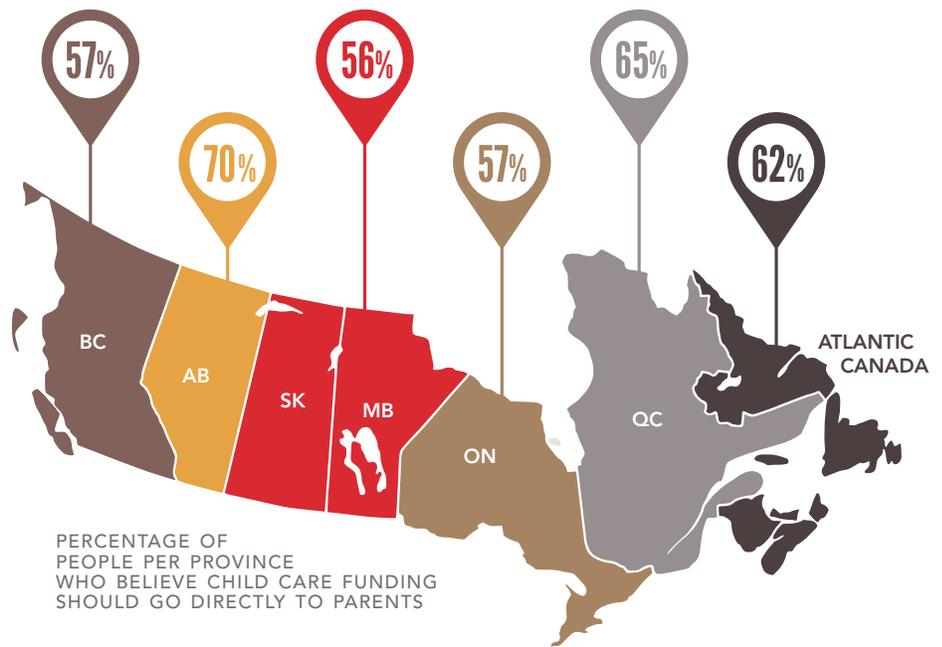
FUNDING OPTIONS—BY GENDER



The belief that cash payments should be provided directly to parents holds between men and women. 60% of women believe that cash payments directly to parents are the best way for government to fund childcare, 62% of men believe the same.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING PREFERENCES BY REGION

When we look by region, we see the largest percentage of Canadians who believe child care funding should go directly to parents are in Alberta, at 70%. Surprisingly, Quebec follows Alberta, where 65% of Quebecers are in favour of direct payments to parents. This is in sharp contrast to the system they have, which offers parents subsidized daycare, with the money flowing to daycare centres, not parents.



Very interesting to note is that the idea of a direct subsidy to parents is most popular with Quebecers, at 45%. After that, it is most popular with parents with children under six, at 43% and females age 35 to 54 at 36%.

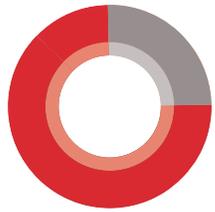
The child tax deduction is most popular with Albertans, at 34%, followed by the Atlantic provinces at 27% and then BC and Ontario at 21%.

BEST WAY FOR GOVERNMENT TO SPEND ON CHILDCARE - BY REGION

Based on question #5: If the government should spend money to look after children, how should they do so? Please choose the option that is closest to your point of view.

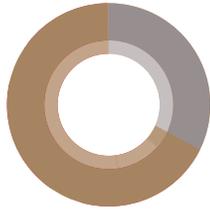
	BC	AB	MB+SK	ON	QUEBEC	ATLANTIC
PROVIDE ALL PARENTS WITH A CHILD TAX DEDUCTION WHETHER THEY WORK OR STAY AT HOME	21%	34%	26%	21%	13%	27%
PROVIDE SUBSIDIES TO CHILD CARE CENTRES TO IMPROVE QUALITY OR CREATE MORE SPACES	12%	8%	14%	12%	15%	9%
PROVIDE CASH PAYMENTS DIRECTLY TO PARENTS WHO COULD CHOOSE ANY FORM OF CHILDCARE THEY DEEM BEST	26%	28%	19%	27%	45%	26%
EXPAND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM SO THAT CHILDCARE FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES IS INCLUDED	13%	9%	12%	12%	6%	11%
RETURN THE MONEY TO ALL TAX PAYERS THROUGH REDUCED TAXES	10%	8%	11%	9%	7%	9%
PROVIDE CHILDCARE FUNDING EXCLUSIVELY FOR DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES	11%	8%	9%	10%	9%	9%
DON'T KNOW	7%	7%	9%	9%	5%	7%

Conclusion



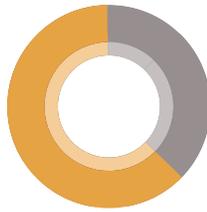
76%

OF CANADIANS BELIEVE IT IS BEST FOR CHILDREN UNDER SIX TO BE RAISED BY THEIR PARENTS WHEN CONTRASTED WITH A COMPETENT CAREGIVER



69%

OF CANADIAN PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER SIX RIGHT NOW BELIEVE IT IS BEST FOR CHILDREN TO BE RAISED BY A PARENT



61%

OF CANADIANS BELIEVE FUNDING TO SUPPORT FAMILIES SHOULD GO STRAIGHT TO FAMILIES

Government policy ought to maximize flexibility for families. Parents across the country face unique circumstances with regards to work and childcare arrangements. In spite of this diversity, there is a remarkable level of consensus in the belief that it is best for a parent to care for children under six.

There is also consensus on how to fund childcare. Given that the infrastructure for funding parents already exists, it remains the most efficient way in which to fund childcare choice. It is very expensive and less efficient to create new bureaucracies to fund additional childcare spaces or schools and then regulate those same spaces or schools.

Ultimately, public policy decisions to fund more daycare spaces overlooks both parental desires to have one parent care for their children under six and for parents to receive funding directly. 🍁

Please note that statistics have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

E-Pendix: Questions and methodology

POLL QUESTIONS

C1. First, do you have any children under the age of 6 currently living in your household?

- Yes
- No

C2. Below are some possible arrangements for caring for children under six. Please tell me which arrangement you would ideally prefer for your children, even if you don't have children under six. Would you prefer to:

- Have one parent stay home to care for your child
- Have your child looked after by a competent care giver
- Don't know

C3. If you had to work full time and could not have a parent stay at home with your child, with which one of the following would you prefer to leave your child while you work:

- A non-profit day care centre
- A for-profit day care centre
- A family daycare (that is in a neighbourhood home)
- A relative, such as the child's aunt or grandparent
- Don't know

C4. I am going to read you some possible arrangements for caring for children under six. Please tell me which arrangement you think is best for children in general. Do you think it is better for children if:

- One of the parents stays at home to care with their child
- Parents have their child looked after by a competent care giver
- Don't know

C5. Sometimes, staying at home full-time with children is not option for many parents. If the parents have to work full time and cannot stay at home with their child, which one of the following arrangements is best for young children:

- A non-profit day care centre
- A for-profit day care centre
- A family daycare (that is in a neighbourhood home)
- A relative, such as the child's aunt or grandparent
- Don't know

C6. If the government should spend money to look after children, how should they do so? Please choose the option that is closest to your own point of view.

- Change the tax system to provide all parents with a child tax deduction whether they work or stay at home with their children
- Provide subsidies directly to child care centres in order to improve quality and/or create more spaces
- Provide cash payments directly to parents who could choose any form of childcare they deem best, including having a parent stay at home and care for their children
- Expand the public school system to include younger children so that eventually, childcare for children

of all ages exists within the public school system

- Return the money to all tax payers through reduced taxes
- Provide targeted childcare funding exclusively for disadvantaged families
- Don't know

D1. Now we are going to ask you some demographic questions to help us analyze the results. What is your current employment status?

- Working full-time (35 or more hours per week)
- Working part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
- Self-employed
- Unemployed, but looking for work
- Attending school full-time/A student
- Retired
- Not in the workforce (Full-time homemaker/Unemployed, not looking for work)

D2. What is your current marital status?

- Single and never married
- Married
- Common-law
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed or Widower

ASK D3 ONLY IF D2 IS MARRIED OR COMMON-LAW

D3. What is your spouse's or partner's current employment status?

- Working full-time (35 or more hours per week)

- Working part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
- Self-employed
- Unemployed, but looking for work
- Attending school full-time/A student
- Retired
- Not in the workforce (Full-time homemaker/Unemployed, not looking for work)

D5. In what year were you born?

D6. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

D7. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

- Grade 8 or less
- Some high school
- Complete high school
- Technical, vocational post-secondary , CEGEP
- Some university
- Complete university degree
- Post graduate degree

D8. Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? That is, the total income of all persons in your household combined, before taxes?

- Under \$25,000
- \$25,000 to just under \$50,000
- \$50,000 to just under \$75,000
- \$75,000 to just under \$100,000
- \$100,000 to just under \$125,000
- \$125,000 to just under \$150,000

- More than \$150,000

Thank you for your time.

METHODOLOGY

2,022 Canadians were interviewed using a representative online panel between January 25 and 28, 2013.

The margin of error is +/- 2.2%, nineteen times out of twenty.

Questions were asked in English or French, depending on the preference of the respondent.

The results have been weighted according to the most recent Statistics Canada by region, age and gender.

The poll was conducted by Abingdon Research, <http://www.abingdon.ca/>

Canadian daycare desires, Part II

Attitudes toward daycare in Québec

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THE INSTITUTE of Marriage and Family Canada recently released a poll about parental attitudes toward daycare. It revealed that 76% of Canadians believe the best place for children under six is at home with a parent. This belief is remarkably consistent across age, income, gender and working arrangements.

Regionally, however, there is some variation. Some of the most significant differences are in Québec. There, only 70% hold that the best place for children under six is at home with a parent. While this is still seven in ten Canadians, it is the lowest of all the regions polled.

Furthermore, the differences widen with other questions. When a parent can't stay home, only 34% of Québécois prefer a relative as caregiver. This is low

compared to an average of 55% across the rest of the country.

The most surprising difference comes when asking about the best way to fund child care. Forty-five percent of Québécois prefer cash payments to parents compared to an average of 25% elsewhere in Canada. This desire stands in contrast to the system they have, which funds daycare centres, not parents.

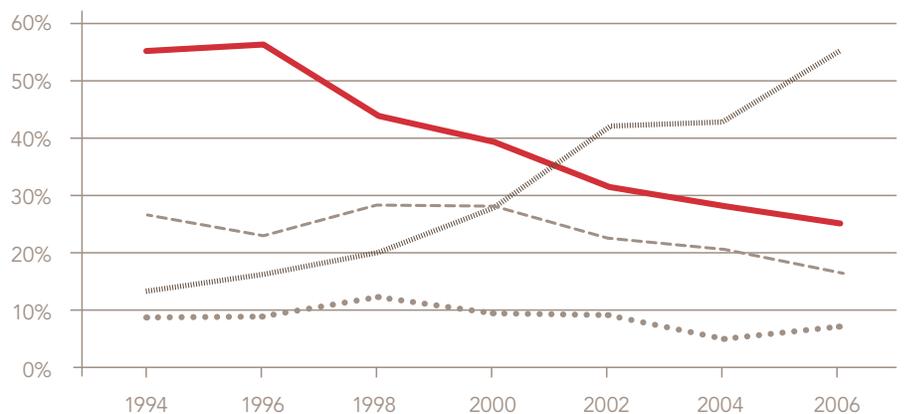
Québec—distinct in many ways—is clearly also distinct with regards to childcare preferences. It could be that the creation of a provincially-funded daycare system has played a role in changing this result. Further research is required to probe to what extent Québécois actually want the system they have, where funding goes to daycares, not parents.

Why so different?

THERE COULD BE many reasons for this difference in attitudes. One might be Québec's heavy subsidizing of institutional daycare. Created in 1997, initially the daily parental cost of the provincial daycare was \$5 per child, which later rose to \$7 per child. This policy of heavily subsidizing institutional daycare is partly responsible for transforming parental behaviour.

The chart to the right shows how childcare choices changed in the nine years following the introduction of subsidized daycare. The percentage of children in centre-based care grew from fewer than 20% to almost 55%.¹

Québec: Primary care arrangement
 CHILDREN AGED 1-4 YEARS



Source: Lefebvre, P., Merrigan, P. and Roy-Desrosiers, F. (2011, January). Québec's childcare universal low fees policy 10 years after: Effects, costs and benefits.

1. Lefebvre, P., Merrigan, P. and Roy-Desrosiers, F. (2011, January). Québec's childcare universal low fees policy 10 years after: Effects, costs and benefits, p. 40. Retrieved from http://cirano.qc.ca/icirano/public/pdf/20101202_P-Lefebvre_2.pdf

It is likely that Québécois have “chosen” the government-subsidized child care in some part because it is now the only affordable option. Prior to 1997, Québec had a range of family benefits, which were removed in order to pay for the provincial daycare plan.²

State-subsidized daycare programs are expensive because child care is expensive. The creation of such programs calls for more government revenue. In Québec, these funds have been attained through high levels of taxation and debt.

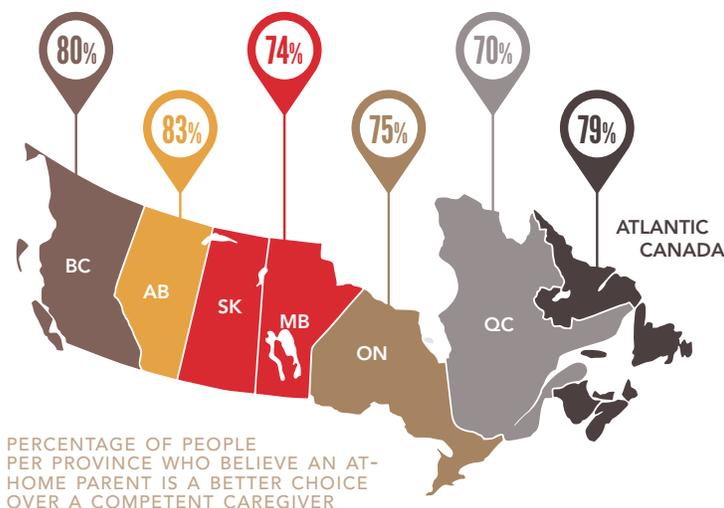
The HST in Québec is 15%, compared to 13% in Ontario and 0% in Alberta.³ Income tax rates are also noticeably higher in Québec than either Ontario or Alberta.⁴ The Conference Board of Canada found that Québec’s debt to GDP ratio was 50% in 2012, highest of all provinces.⁵

Ironically, the low cost of daycare to parents in Québec may create barriers to making other family choices. Government-funded daycare systems act as a monopoly, eradicating other childcare options.

Parents, relatives or competent caregivers?

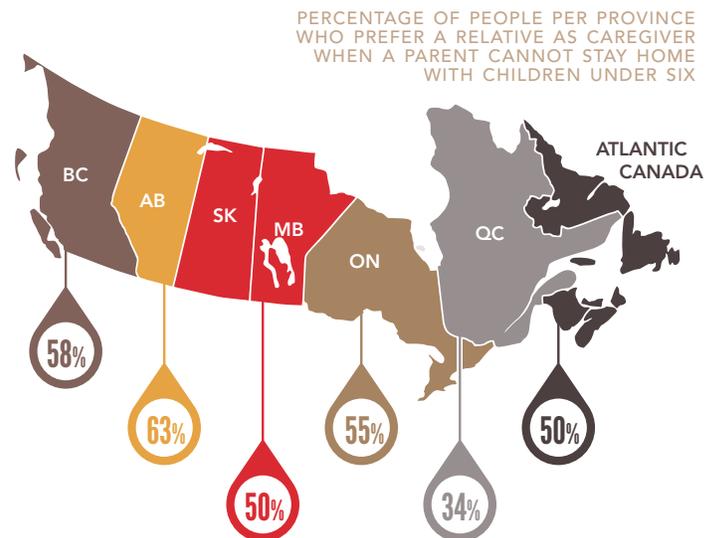
HOW EXACTLY ARE Québécois different from the rest of Canada with respect to their childcare opinions? A closer look at the poll results tells us.

When asked which arrangement is best for children in general – a parent or a competent caregiver – 70% of Québécois say a parent. In the rest of Canada, over 79% say a parent.



If a parent can’t stay home in Québec, only 34% of respondents prefer a relative as caregiver. An average of 55% in the rest of the country holds the same opinion.

Québécois in general support out-of-home child care more than any other part of Canada.



2. Malvern, P., Mrozek, A. and Benesch, C. (2011, November). A Quebec family portrait. Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, p. 8. Retrieved from <http://www.imfcanada.org/issues/quebec-family-portrait>

3. Révénue Québec. (2013). Consumption taxes. Retrieved from http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/entreprise/taxes/tvq_tps/

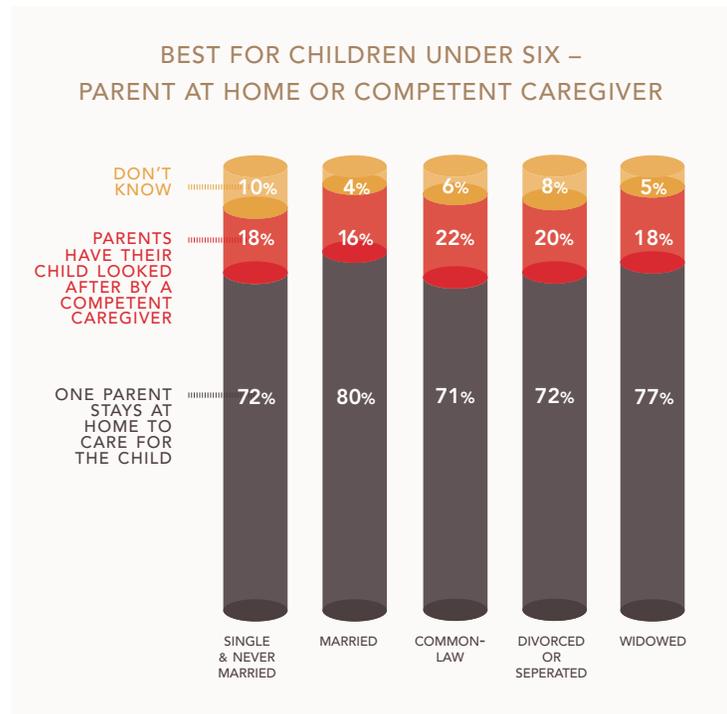
4. TaxTips.ca. (2012). Personal income tax rates for Canada and Provinces/Territories for 2012 and 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.taxtips.ca/marginaltaxrates.htm>

5. Hodgson, G. (2012, September 6). Quebec’s economic future: A hard road ahead. Retrieved from http://www.conferenceboard.ca/economics/hot_eco_topics/default/12-09-06/quebec_s_economic_future_a_hard_road_ahead.aspx

Marital status as a factor in the poll results

MARITAL STATUS MAY mean different attitudes toward child care.

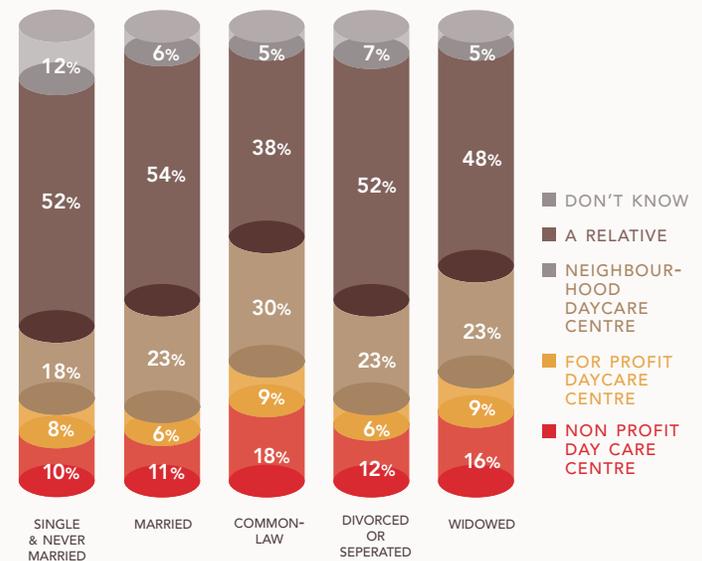
Across Canada, common-law couples view child care differently than married couples.



On the question of what's best for children under six, our poll found that support for parental care is 9% lower among Canadians living common-law as contrasted with married respondents. Common-law support is also 6% lower than widowed respondents, and virtually on par with support among divorced/separated and single/never married respondents.

Across Canada, common-law attitudes also differ when considering what to do if a parent can't stay home to look after their child. Of common-law respondents, only 38% prefer a relative. On average, 51% of all other respondents

BEST OPTIONS FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER SIX WHEN A PARENT CANNOT BE HOME



(single/never married, married, divorced/separated, and widowed) support a relative as caregiver in this situation.

However, common-law respondents in Québec differ from common-law respondents in the rest of Canada.

When a parent can't stay home to look after their child, just 27% of common-law respondents in Québec support the relative as caregiver option. Over 46% of common-law respondents outside Québec choose the same.

The sample size of Québec common-law respondents in this poll is small and should be viewed cautiously.

Still, these findings are significant when you consider that Québec has by far the greatest number of cohabiting couples in the country. There, 37% of couples are common law, compared to an average of about 20% in the rest of Canada.⁶

6. Statistics Canada. (2011). Legal marital status, common-law status, age groups and sex for the population 15 years and over of Canada, provinces, territories, census divisions, census subdivisions and dissemination areas, 2011 Census. Catalogue no. 98-312-XCB2011039. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/tbt-tt/Rp-eng.cfm?TABID=1&LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=102090&PRID=0&PTYPE=101955&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2011&THEME=89&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=> with author's calculations

Why might marital status matter?

WE KNOW THAT common-law couples across Canada support non-parental care more than all other respondents.

We can only muse about why common-law couples in Canada and particularly those in Québec have different attitudes.

It may have to do with the higher break up rates of cohabiting relationships.

A 2004 study by Céline Le Bourdais of the University of Québec and Évelyne LaPierre-Adamyck of the University of Montréal found that the risk of separation for Québec couples was two times greater for common-law couples

than for those who had married without living common-law.⁷

In the rest of Canada, the likelihood of separation was almost five times greater for the former than for the latter.⁸ It may be that if a person feels their relationship has a good chance of breaking up, they need to be more concerned about working to protect their own financial wellbeing.

Other studies point to how relationships can influence work habits. A 2002 study by Lorien C. Abroms, assistant professor of Prevention and Community

Health at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, examined mothers' motivations for working. She found that "the other adult's resources appear to reduce a mother's financial motivations for employment only for women who live with a spouse."⁹ In the study, the term "spouse" is used for those who are married, not those living common-law.

We do know that marital status influences childcare choices from the poll. However, we can only speculate as to why.

Conclusion

OUR POLL FOUND that Québécois stand apart from the rest of Canada in their views on child care. Québécois are less likely than other Canadians to say the best place for a child under six is at home with a parent. When a parent cannot be at home, Québécois are less likely than other Canadians to choose a relative as caregiver.

Marital status also influences views on child care, and this is true across Canada. Common-law respondents are the least likely to say that children are best cared for by a parent at home. When a parent is not available, common-law respondents are by far the least inclined to choose a relative as caregiver.

Common-law respondents in Québec, however, are even less likely to choose a relative as caregiver than common-law couples elsewhere in Canada.

From this we can conclude that marital status affects childcare beliefs, but residency in Québec is also a strong factor.

The presence of the provincially funded daycare system appears to have changed Québec residents' attitudes toward child care. This is something other provinces should take into consideration as they debate possible ways to support child care.

Ironically, the poll also reveals that Québécois, more than any other province, would prefer that governments fund child care by providing parents with cash payments. This is the opposite of the system they have, which favours funding daycares instead of parents. Therefore, how Québécois truly feel about their current subsidized system is a topic for further research. 🍁

E-pendix: Questions and margins of error can be found online at imfcanada.org/daycaredesires

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7. Le Bourdais, C. and Lapierre-Adamcyk, É. (2004). Changes in conjugal life in Canada: Is cohabitation progressively replacing marriage? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 66, pp. 937.
 8. *Ibid.*
 9. Abroms, L. C., Goldscheider, F. K. (2002). More work for mother: How spouses, cohabiting partners and relatives affect the hours mothers work. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 162.

Canadian daycare desires, Part III

How education affects attitudes toward daycare

BY ANDREA MROZEK

AN INSTITUTE of Marriage and Family Canada poll released earlier this year showed that 76% of Canadians believe it is best for children under six to be cared for at home by a parent. This result was consistent regardless of income, gender or working arrangements. It also held, to a lesser extent, across regional lines.

In this analysis, we examine how the poll results are affected by education level.¹

E-PENDIX

QUESTIONS AND MARGINS OF ERROR ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT IMFCANADA.ORG/DAYCAREDESIRES

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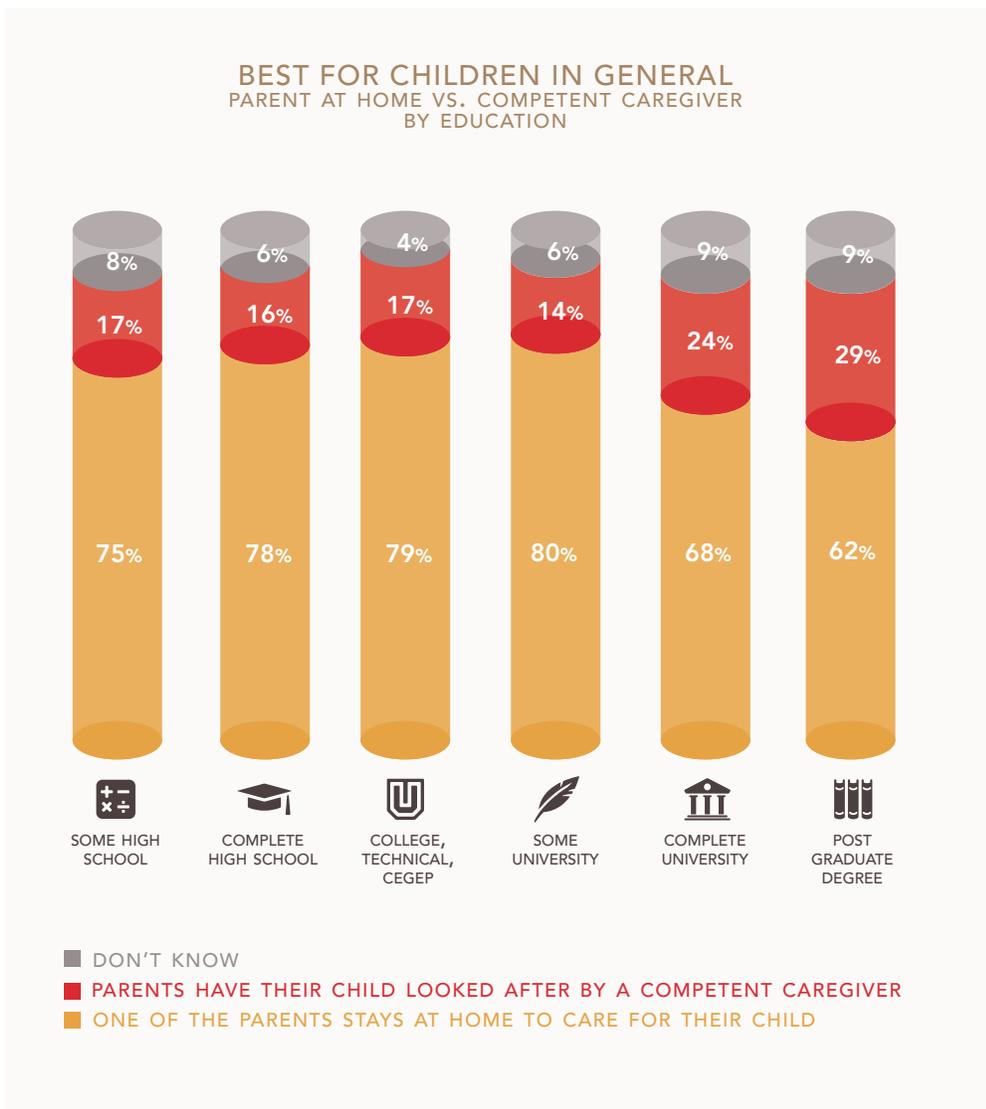
What is better for children in general – a parent or a competent caregiver?

THE MAJORITY of educated Canadians believe a child under six is better off at home with a parent. Canadians prefer this over a competent caregiver. However, support for parental care drops at higher education levels.

While 76% of Canadians as a whole prefer parental care, that number dips

to 68% for those who have completed a university degree. For those who have a post-graduate degree, it is 62%.

The greatest support for parental care was found among Canadians with technical degrees (79%) and those with some university experience but not a complete degree (80%).



1. In Part I of the daycare poll we released the general attitudes of Canadians. In Part II, we examined Quebec specifically.

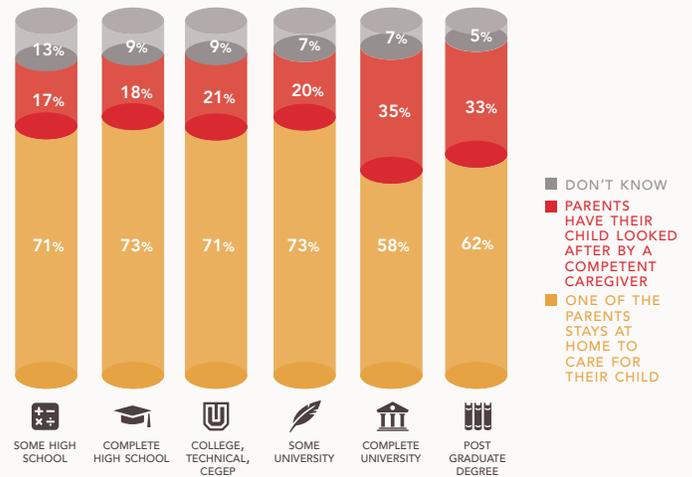
What is better for your own children – a parent or a competent caregiver?

SUPPORT FOR parental care is slightly less when talking about the care of one's own child.

Sixty-nine percent of Canadians regardless of education level believe it is best for their own child under six to be cared for at home by a parent.

While 73% of Canadians with some university agree, that number drops to 58% once their degree is in hand.

PREFERRED FOR THEIR CHILD
PARENT AT HOME VS. COMPETENT CAREGIVER:
BY EDUCATION



If a parent can't stay home

INTERESTINGLY, if a parent can't stay home, university-educated Canadians are the least likely to see a relative as the next best option.

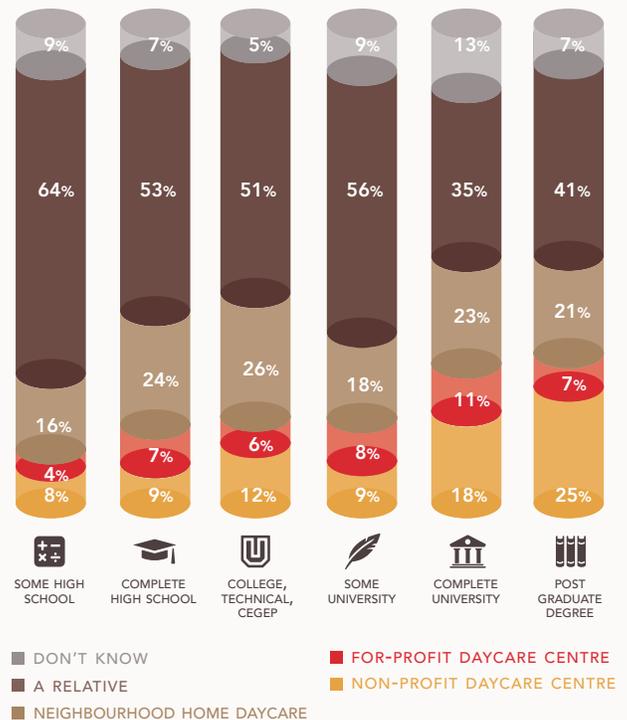
In *Canadian Daycare Desires (Part I)* we learned that in general, 51% of Canadians believe a relative is the next best choice if a parent cannot stay home. After a relative, the next choice is a neighbourhood home daycare at 23%.² Both of these options involve a home environment.

The home environment is similarly popular amongst those with technical degrees or some university.

Among those with university or post-graduate degrees, the neighbourhood home daycare keeps its appeal, but the preference for relatives drops. Only 35% of Canadians with a university degree and 41% with a post-graduate degree choose a relative as the next best option if a parent cannot stay home.

While 18% of those with some university choose a neighbourhood home daycare as the next best option, 23% of those with university degrees and 21% of those with post-graduate degrees do.

BEST FOR CHILDREN IN GENERAL
OUT OF HOME CARE OPTIONS
BY EDUCATION



2. Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. (2013, May). *Canadian daycare desires (part I)*, p. 3. Retrieved from http://www.imfcanada.org/sites/default/files/monthly_release/DaycareDesiresMay2013.pdf

Funding preferences

SIX FUNDING OPTIONS were given. The most popular, chosen by 31% of Canadians, was for government to provide cash payments directly to parents. (Regionally, this option was most popular in Quebec, at 45%.)

The second most popular option (21% of Canadians) was for government to provide all parents with a child tax deduction whether they work or stay home.

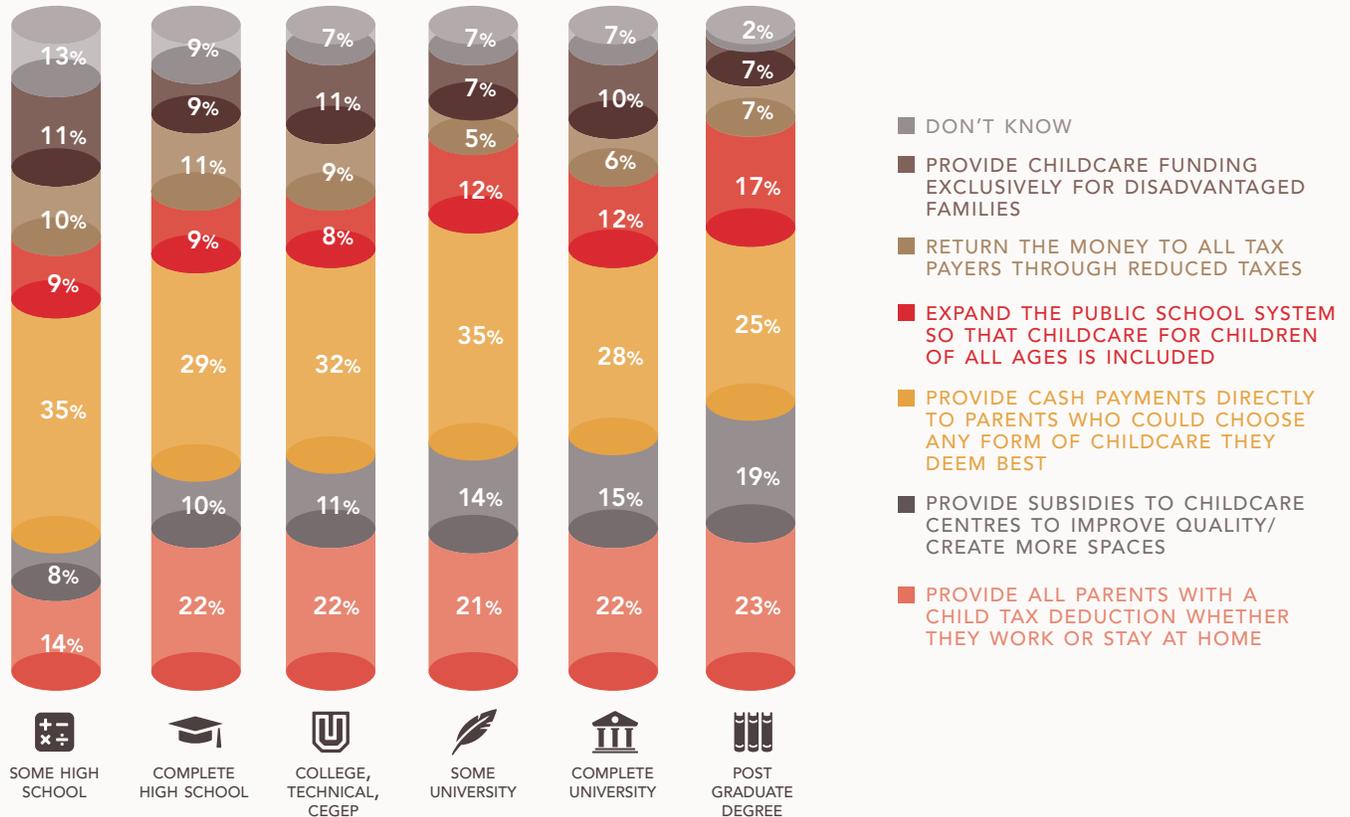
In *Canadian Daycare Desires (Part I)*, we noted that a minimum of 61% of Canadians believe that government funding of child care should go directly to parents. This included those who chose cash payments for parents (31%),

a child tax deduction (21%) and money for all taxpayers through reduced taxes at nine percent. (Sixty-one percent is a minimum since an additional 10% chose targeted childcare funding only for disadvantaged families who need it most. In this category we did not specify precisely how those funds should be administered, whether to parents or institutions.)

For Canadians who have completed university, the 61% falls to 56%. For those with a post-graduate degree, it is 55%.

While this paper reflects on why fewer educated Canadians say a parent with a child under six is best, a majority of educated Canadians still believe this to be true.

BEST WAY FOR GOVERNMENT TO SPEND ON CHILDCARE
BY EDUCATION



Daycare desires by gender and education

HIGHER EDUCATION affects women’s attitudes toward child care more than men’s.

Amongst Canadians who have completed high school, 78% of both men and women say a parent at home is best for a child under six. Amongst Canadians who have completed university, the number drops to 72% of men and 65% of women. Amongst post-grads, 69% of men and only 54% of women still choose parental care.

The differences are not big enough between the various groups of men to cover the margin of error given the smaller sample size. However, the differences are big enough beyond the margin of error for women.

It is interesting to note that the most likely group to respond “don’t know” to this question was women with a university degree, at 12%.

Percent of time Canadian mothers of young children spend working

WE FREQUENTLY HEAR in the media that approximately seventy percent of mothers of young children are working.³ This statistic is used as a justification for more public expenditures on centre-based daycare. There is more nuance to that statistic than we are told, as evidenced below. Importantly, where approximately 70% of mothers of young children are working full-time, we don’t know where or when.

From the most recent survey of household spending in 2009, we see the following.

For **TWO PARENT** families with at least one child four years old or under:

73% of spouses worked **FULL-TIME** for at least **ONE WEEK**

62% of spouses worked **FULL-TIME** for at least **26 WEEKS**

45% of spouses worked **FULL-TIME** for at least **50 WEEKS** (a full year, full-time worker)⁴

For **SINGLE MOTHER** families with at least one child of four years or less:

43% of single mothers worked **FULL-TIME** for at least **ONE WEEK**

28% of single mothers worked **FULL-TIME** for at least **26 WEEKS**

23% of single mothers worked **FULL-TIME** for at least **50 WEEKS** (a full year, full-time worker)⁵

Economics professor at Nipissing University Chris Sarlo points out there are bigger questions relating to the work statistics. “While the data show that, in two parent families with one pre-schooler, about 73% of spouses work full-time for some of the year and about 44% work full-time full-year, we really don’t know how many of those working spouses work outside the home,” he says.

Better data is needed to truly understand where and when mothers work. Regardless of how mothers of young children work, simply saying that seven in ten mothers are working does not immediately mean they are looking for full-time centre-based care.

3. Statistics Canada. *Table 282-0002 - Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by sex and detailed age group, annual (persons unless otherwise noted)*, CANSIM (database). Retrieved from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.lt.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=13#M_7
 4. According to calculations done for this paper by Professor Chris Sarlo of Nipissing University using the Statistics Canada Survey of Household Spending microdata file
 5. *Ibid.*

A note on daycare, education, gender and freedom

HOW TO CARE for one's children should be a choice freely made, without government interference, which today very often comes in the form of funding.

Research frequently asks questions about the gender gap and the impact of children on women's labour force participation, among other questions.⁶ The same questions are less frequently asked about men. This may be because only a small percentage of fathers stay home to care for kids. Statistics Canada tells us that in 2005, 11% of stay-at-home parents were fathers.⁷

Indeed, overcoming the gender gap almost always refers to the lack of women in particular industries or in upper echelons of management or politics. Therefore, gender equity is one

reason given for publicly-subsidized daycare and early learning programs.⁸

Importantly, our findings reveal that publicly-subsidized daycare is not the first choice of women in general or women with the highest level of education, like post-doctorate degrees.

It is in defence of freedom for families to make their own choices that the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada actively speaks against government resources being put into one particular system. It is likewise on these grounds that we speak in favour of family income splitting, which reduces the taxes a family pays by recognizing that families work as a unit.⁹

In her own words: Stories from mothers

OUR POLL DIDN'T ASK why people responded the way they did. So we reached out to Canadians with higher education to ask why they do what they do with regards to caring for their children. We also asked why fewer educated Canadians believe a parent at home is best. This provides an anecdotal narrative behind the poll results.

MINA¹⁰, 38, OTTAWA

MOTHER OF THREE, AGES FOUR, TWO AND FIVE MONTHS
 • ELECTRICAL ENGINEER, MANAGER • FULL-TIME WORK
 OUTSIDE THE HOME, CURRENTLY ON MATERNITY LEAVE

"PERSONALLY, MY BIGGEST motivator for going back to work is the fear that it will be very difficult to re-enter my profession if I take more than the one-year protected maternity leave. In discussions with other professional moms, I know this fear is common. If there was some magical guarantee that I could quit my job now, and in five years still get back into my profession, I would leave

the workforce until all our children are in school, no question. The loss of five years of income is not a big concern for me, what I fear is the loss of a career that I spent 16 years (six in school and 10 in the field) building...

I think that educated parents will state a preference for competent caregivers in polls because they are being pragmatic, as they feel the professional and financial pressure to work. I think there is also some guilt over choosing work over children, and I think educated parents sometimes try to convince themselves their children are 'better off' in child care in order to diminish some of the guilt."

6. Some examples include: Hoffman, S. (2009, February). The changing impact of marriage and children on women's labor force participation. *Monthly Labor Review*; Milligan K. and Stabile, M. (2009). Child benefits, maternal employment, and children's health: Evidence from Canadian child benefit expansions. *American Economic Review*, 99:2, pp. 128-132; Hakim, C. (2006, August). Women, careers, and work-life preferences. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, Vol. 34, No. 3; England, P., Gornick, J. and Fitzgibbons Shafer, E. (2012, April). Women's employment, education, and the gender gap in 17 countries. *Monthly Labor Review*; Cohen, P.N. and Bianchi, S. (1999, December). Marriage, children, and women's employment: What do we know? *Monthly Labor Review*.
7. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/10706/sharing-1.gif>
8. "Economic, generational and gender equality means creating societal structures to sustain families and children by ensuring that the necessary resources to support them are generated through a fair tax system." Friendly, M. (2012, July 3). Why universal child care is essential for a more equal Canada. *Childcare Resource and Research Unit*. Retrieved from <http://www.childcarecanada.org/blog/why-universal-childcare-essential-more-equal-canada>
9. On April 29, 2013 the IMFC hosted economist Dr. Jack Mintz to discuss income splitting. His presentation is available here: <http://www.imfcana.org/event/family-income-splitting-dr-jack-mintz>
10. Preferred not to use her real name.

DR. SUZANA KOVACIC, 42, BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

MOTHER OF FOUR, AGES EIGHT, SEVEN, FOUR AND THREE MONTHS • PHD CHEMISTRY, RESEARCHER AT SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY • PART-TIME WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

"WHEN I COMPLETED my Ph.D. in chemistry from UBC, work/life balance was not something I had ever seriously considered. I wasn't yet married and the career implications of starting a family were not yet a reality for me...

The first day of my first real job after finally finishing 14 years of training (four undergrad, six grad, four postdoc) was also the day I found out I was pregnant. I worked for nine months in a research support position at SFU and then went on maternity leave for one year.

...While I was on leave with my second child, my work contract ended and I effectively had no job to return to. With two kids now, I felt that I didn't want to return

work and expect to be able to return to work when the children were older. Techniques and new developments proceed so rapidly, one really has to be actively involved in the research.

One thing that sticks out in my mind is when a prospective employer remarked during an interview that 16 months was a very long time to have been out of research and that my skills would be rusty. This had a motivating influence on me (actually, it terrified me).

I finally found a position as a part-time researcher at SFU with a professor, herself a mom with young kids, who decided to take a chance and hire me part-time even though she herself acknowledged that she

It was difficult for me to realize that unless I started actively pursuing a job, I would remain a stay-at-home mom. It would be impossible for me to take a significant break from work and expect to be able to return to work when the children were older.

to work full time. I had, however, never heard of or encountered a researcher who worked part-time. I didn't know what type of work I could return to so I spent a few months considering career options. I attended a networking meeting with my husband during this period - the type of event where everybody exchanges business cards. I had no business card to exchange and if I did, I could only say that I was a stay-at-home mom but that I had once been a biochemist. It was difficult for me to realize that unless I started actively pursuing a job, I would remain a stay-at-home mom. It would be impossible for me to take a significant break from

wasn't sure [it would work]. I now work for a different professor and he has also been very supportive of my working part-time. While I am working, my children are cared for at home by my father, who enjoys spending time with his grandchildren. Without his support I would not choose to work outside the home.

I feel that I have found a balance where I can spend the majority of my week with my children and still retain my skills as a scientist for the day when the children are old enough that I can return to work full-time."

DR. ANNE-LISE HOLAHAN, 37, OTTAWA

MOTHER OF THREE, AGES EIGHT, SIX AND THREE • PHD PSYCHOLOGY, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST • PART-TIME WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

“THE MOST CHILDCARE we have ever resorted to was 1.5 days/week. We have always wanted to have them at home as much as possible. ...

I happen to believe that children under six are better off at home with a parent - assuming the parent is able and willing to stimulate their child socially, emotionally and cognitively. Those first few years of life are important years for establishing a strong sense of security with—and attachment to—parents. I have chosen to spend more time at home than at work because I want to have a strong connection with my children. I also want to instill the values that I believe in. I want my children to be raised by my husband and I, and want to parent/teach/praise/give consequences in a way that I am comfortable with. It has been a constant struggle to maintain the balance between home and work life.

Our society still places a lot more value on working parents. Individuals who have spent a lot of time and money on their education and then become parents are faced with the dilemma of whether to give up their current employment and spend time with their young child, knowing that it will likely require extra work to get back to the same level of employment once they return.

It is possible that a portion of those parents with higher education who choose to continue working (for fear of losing their high-paying job) actually desire to be at home with their young child, and actually believe that they should. But because they themselves have chosen to work instead of stay at home, it is too uncomfortable to acknowledge in a poll that in their minds, their child would have been better off at home than with a competent caregiver. So they attempt to rationalize their own actions and answer the poll by saying that children are not necessarily better off being at home, and they feel more at peace inside. That is cognitive dissonance for you. It’s an inner drive that we all have that tries to restore harmony between our beliefs and our actions. This could be worth considering as a partial explanation.”

KATE¹¹, 40, TORONTO

MOTHER OF TWO, AGES SIX AND FOUR • TEACHER/LAWYER • FULL-TIME WORK INSIDE THE HOME (AKA “STAY-AT-HOME” MOM)

“I WANTED TO be there consistently and not feel like my time was divided. It was just a gut feeling when holding my baby. Also this was supported by literature on attachment parenting and other parenting books. I thought it would be fun and I knew I would enjoy being there to be a witness to all the miraculous stages. I felt it would be easy to leave and come back to my job later. I had a feeling that my job was less important than this little newborn looking at me.

In my twenties, I had a vision of sitting in a high, glassy office tower, wearing suits and doing something big. But the glamour of the suit does wear off. It forces you to ask ‘what’s really important?’

Hence, I was quite happy to wear sweats for six years while cavorting around parks, wiping kids and surfaces, reading books, dancing, etc. It all seems worthwhile to me.

I should add that being a “stay-at-home mom” makes me realize that

—
Someone told me once, ‘it is a sacrifice but it is worth it.’
—

there is a lot that goes into making your house a home; you can put in lots or little, and it’s not all the same.

Someone told me once, ‘it is a sacrifice but it is worth it.’ And that’s what I believe.”

11. Preferred not to use her real name.

CANDACE¹², 37, OTTAWA

MOTHER OF TWO, AGES FOUR AND TWENTY-TWO MONTHS • PUBLIC SERVANT • FULL-TIME WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

"I CHOOSE TO work in part because I think I am setting an example for my daughters by being a successful working woman. Also, I love my work and would never want to feel any resentment towards my children, feeling 'stuck' at home. Further, with our mat leave I have had the experience of being at home for two years and know both sides. I enjoy that time, but am ready to go back to work and know my children will be well taken care of, learn things from their caregivers I would never think to teach them and are socializing with other children.

Finally, I have amazing work/life balance so I am able to make dinner every night. We eat as a family, do bedtime routines together and I am very 'present' when I am at home. I absolutely could not do what I do without huge involvement from my husband. He is immensely helpful and we both have jobs that allow for work life balance. I wouldn't choose this lifestyle if I had no support from my spouse.

Do I think they are better off in child care? Maybe not, but I certainly don't think it is worse for them and feel that we have found the right balance for all of us."

DR. TAMARA PIERCE, 36, CALGARY

MOTHER OF ONE, AGE 10 MONTHS WITH ONE ON THE WAY • PHYSICIAN • PART-TIME WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

"I SUSPECT educated parents are less likely to stay at home due to many factors. 1) Time invested in education/career with resultant reticence to give up the investment and associated self-definition. 2) Personal career satisfaction. 3) Increased income 'needs' in a society with abundance and sense of entitlement. I say this as a woman who continues to work part-time outside the home for these reasons.

That said, I am able to do this thanks to a mother-in-law whom I trust implicitly who takes care of my little one. If she were not available, I am not sure I could have returned to the work force as I do not trust others with the well-being of my child: My precious, vulnerable, dependent son. I love being able to keep my mind academically active and I so appreciate the chance to socialize with adults, but working outside the home has definitely taken a toll on me and on the home. Welcome, chaos. There was such a sense of security and grounding when I ponder my mother's presence throughout my childhood and I want to emulate this with my own children."

Recommendations

- Current public policy does not mirror Canadians' desires. Taxpayer dollars preferentially fund a form of care a majority of Canadians say they do not prefer. The discriminatory use of public funds must end.
- If government should be involved in helping to care for kids, a majority of Canadians believe that cash payments to parents, tax credits or child tax deductions are a better way to do so than funding national or provincial systems.
- Further polling/research to more conclusively examine why Canadian parents make the choices they do with regards to the care of their own children would be valuable. 🍁

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12. Preferred not to use her real name.



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