

Survey on Hong Kong parents’ views on the experience of their children in online learning during COVID-19

Survey Results Summary

May 2021



Save the Children
救 助 兒 童 會

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To learn about the views and experiences of parents in Hong Kong with regards to their children's participation in online learning activities during the COVID-19-related school suspensions and teaching adaptations. Collected information will help Save the Children Hong Kong understand the situation for parents and children in order to better advocate for and support the well-being and learning of children and inform children's policies.

KEY FINDINGS

- Parents worry that online classes may go wrong and they do not know what to do. 30% of the responding parents said they lacked the technical skills required to support their children's online learning, and about 1/3 (36%) said support from schools was insufficient.
- Nearly half of the parents (49%) said they have struggled with supporting their children's learning while simultaneously handling personal and work responsibilities. This situation is more challenging for low-income families with 58% saying they have struggled. Overall, parents with younger children appear to feel more stressed. 77% and 80% of the parents who have children in kindergarten and primary school respectively said they felt stressed during the pandemic, as compared to 60% of parents whose children are in high school.
- Parents are also concerned about the effectiveness of online learning. Nearly half of them (47%) felt their children were learning only "a little" or "nothing at all" during school closures, while 46% suggested that schools should either omit grades from transcripts or only offer pass or fail grading option for the period of online learning.
- Almost all respondents (98%) indicated that they have seen positive changes in their relationship with their children during the school suspensions and online learning period, such as having the opportunity to spend more time together. Nonetheless, almost a third of them admitted that they have become less patient with their children (30%), and more worryingly, almost 1 in 10 parents (9%) revealed they now resort to yelling and physical punishment "too often".

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This survey was conducted with a non-probability-based sampling method with responses collected via an online mobile-app-based self-administered survey. The target population is a selection of pre-recruited voluntary survey respondents self-identifying as parents living in Hong Kong who were offered a modest incentive to complete the survey through the panel research platform Votee. A total of 255 valid responses were collected in March 2021 from parents of children either in kindergarten, primary, or secondary school who during the pandemic had participated in online learning activities facilitated by their schools.

Respondents were classified as low-income and non-low-income based on information they provided about their household income and the number of children they have with referenced with the Hong Kong Census Department 2019 poverty line threshold. Those respondents which could be classified as falling under the poverty line according to the official threshold and those who were very close to the poverty line were categorized as "low income", however the information provided by survey respondents about the number of persons in their household is incomplete so it is possible that more survey respondents are from low-income households below the poverty line than identified in the summary tables below. As is shown in the demographic breakdown tables that follow, the survey sample is biased towards parents of younger children with parents of kindergarten and primary school children making up the largest portion of the sample.

Sample Demographics Analysis Tables

Q1. Gender	
Excluding parents of university students and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q1	Count of Q1
Female	70%
Male	30%
Grand Total	100%

Q2. Which best describes the school level at which your child(ren) are currently enrolled?	
Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q2	Count of Q2
Kindergarten	42%
Primary	40%
Secondary	18%
Grand Total	100%

Q0. Respondents whose household monthly income and number of children classify them as below the 2019 Hong Kong poverty line or very close to the poverty line	
Household monthly income	Count of household monthly income
Low income	34%
Non low income	66%
Grand Total	100%

Survey Questions Analysis Tables

Q3 How has having your child(ren) participating in online learning during the pandemic affected your stress levels in regards to your responsibilities as a parent?	
Excluding parents of university students and children not enrolled in school	
Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q3	Count of Q3
Did not feel more stressed	25%
Felt more stressed	75%
Grand Total	100%

Q3 How has having your child(ren) participating in online learning during the pandemic affected your stress levels in regards to your responsibilities as a parent? (segmented by school type)		
Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning		
Q2 School type	Q3	Count of Q3
Kindergarten	Parents who did not feel more stressed	23%
	Parents who felt more stressed	77%
Kindergarten Total		41%
Primary	Parents who did not feel more stressed	20%
	Parents who felt more stressed	80%
Primary Total		40%
Secondary	Parents who did not feel more stressed	40%
	Parents who felt more stressed	60%
Secondary Total		18%
(blank)	Parents who did not feel more stressed	100%
(blank) Total		1%
Grand Total		100%

Q3 How has having your child(ren) participating in online learning during the pandemic affected your stress levels in regards to your responsibilities as a parent? (segmented by income type)		
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning		
Household monthly income	Q3	Count of Q3
less than 15K HKD	Respondents did not select this option Respondents felt more stressed	11% 89%
less than 15K HKD Total		7%
15K - 30K HKD	Respondents did not select this option Respondents felt more stressed	31% 69%
15K - 30K HKD Total		24%
30K - 45K HKD	Respondents did not select this option Respondents felt more stressed	21% 79%
30K - 45K HKD Total		11%
45K - 60K HKD	Respondents did not select this option Respondents felt more stressed	25% 75%
45K - 60K HKD Total		20%
60K - 75K HKD	Respondents did not select this option Respondents felt more stressed	23% 77%
60K - 75K HKD Total		12%
above 75K HKD	Respondents did not select this option Respondents felt more stressed	27% 73%
above 75K HKD Total		9%
(blank)	Respondents did not select this option Respondents felt more stressed	27% 73%
(blank) Total		17%
Grand Total		100%

Q4. Which of the following are sources of stress during online learning? (respondents who answered: "Supporting my children's learning while meeting personal and work responsibilities", segmented by income category)		
Excluding parents of university students and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning		
Household monthly income	Q3	Count of Q3
Low income	Respondents who did not indicate balancing supporting children's learning with personal and work responsibilities as a source of stress	42%
	Respondents who indicated balancing supporting children's learning with personal and work responsibilities as a source of stress	58%
Non-low income	Respondents who did not indicate balancing supporting children's learning with personal and work responsibilities as a source of stress	55%
	Respondents who indicated balancing supporting children's learning with personal and work responsibilities as a source of stress	45%
Grand Total		100%

Q4 Which of the following are sources of stress during online learning? (“insufficient support from the school to supervise my child(ren)’s online learning”)	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q4	Count of Q4
Respondents did not select this option	64%
Respondents selected this option	36%
Grand Total	100%

Q4 Which of the following are sources of stress during online learning? (“Lack of technical skills and knowledge to guide my child(ren) in online learning”)	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q4	Count of Q4
Respondents did not select this option	70%
Respondents selected this option	30%
Grand Total	100%

Q4 Which of the following are sources of stress during online learning? (“Supporting my children’s learning while meeting personal and work responsibilities”)	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q4	Count of Q4
Respondents did not select this option	51%
Respondents selected this option	49%
Grand Total	100%

Q5 Which of the following are positive changes you’ve experienced in your relationship with your child(ren) since the global outbreak of COVID-10? (Select all that apply)	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q5 Respondents who selected any positive options	Count of Q5
Respondents did not select this option	2%
Respondents who experienced positive changes in their relationship with children	98%
Grand Total	100%

Q6 Which of the following are negative changes you've experienced in your relationship with your child(ren) since the global outbreak of COVID-10? ("I resort to yelling and physical punishment too often")	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q6	Count of Q6
Respondents did not select this option	91%
Respondents selected this option	9%
Grand Total	100.00%

Q6 Which of the following are negative changes you've experienced in your relationship with your child(ren) since the global outbreak of COVID-10? ("I am less patient and speaking less calmly with them")	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q6	Count of Q6
Respondents did not select this option	70%
Respondents selected this option	30%
Grand Total	100%

Q9 Compared to a normal school year, which do you think best describes how much your child(ren) has/have learned during COVID-19? ("A little bit" and/or "Nothing at all")	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q9	Count of Q9
Respondents did not select these options	53%
Respondents selected these options	47%
Grand Total	100%

Q11 Which of the following should schools do when face-to-face classes are fully resumed? (select all that apply)	
Excluding parents of university and children not enrolled in school Excluding parents of children who did not participate in online learning	
Q11 Respondents who selected "use grades for feedback but omit them from transcripts" and/or "don't give grades but only pass or fail option"	Count of Q11
Respondents did not select this option	54%
Respondents supported no grades should be given	46%
Grand Total	100%

APPENDIX- Questionnaire

Save the Children Hong Kong

Survey on parents' experiences with online learning during COVID-19 in Hong Kong

COVID-19 has brought unprecedented challenges and changes to the daily lives of students, parents and just about everyone in society. Online learning has become a new normal for students to continue their education during this challenging time. In order to facilitate student learning at home, parents are more likely to spend increased time and effort supporting their children's learning, many doing so while continuing to work.

Save the Children Hong Kong is conducting a survey to learn about parents' experiences with their children's online learning during COVID-19, and ultimately raise awareness and provide suggestions on how to improve the situation.

Collected information will help us understand the needs of parents and children and inform suggestions to the government and other stakeholders on how to support the well-being and learning of children and young people. The survey will require about **2-3 minutes** for completion. Your participation in this survey is **voluntary**. Please rest assured that all information and responses will be kept in strict confidence and will only be used for internal research purposes only, while no personal data is collected.

Q1. Gender *

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say/Other

Q2. Which best describes the school level at which your child(ren) are currently enrolled? *

- Kindergarten
- Primary
- Secondary
- University
- Not enrolled in school
- Other: write in

Q3. How has having your child(ren) participating in online learning during the pandemic affected your stress levels in regards to your responsibilities as a parent?

- Much more stressed than before
- More stressed than before
- About the same levels of stress
- Less stressed than before
- Much less stressed than before
- My child(ren) has/have not been doing online learning

Q4. Which of the following are sources of stress during online learning? (Select all that apply)

- Supporting my children's learning while meeting personal and work responsibilities
- Lack of technical skills and knowledge to guide my child(ren) in online learning
- Insufficient support from the school to supervise my child(ren)'s online learning
- Providing an appropriate learning environment
- Arranging a caregiver or looking for child-care services
- Costs or loss of income related to supporting my child(ren)'s online learning
- Managing my child(ren)'s screen time and ensuring their online safety
- Other: write in

Q5. Which of the following are positive changes you've experienced in your relationship with your child(ren) since the global outbreak of COVID-19? (Select all that apply)

- I spend more time with them
- We show more love and affection to each other
- I have a greater bond with them
- I am more responsive to my child(ren)'s needs
- My child(ren) is/are happier spending more time with me
- We have developed new positive habits as a family
- I feel more confident in my parenting ability
- Other, write in

Q6. Which of the following are negative changes you've experienced in your relationship with your child(ren) since the global outbreak of COVID-19? (Select all that apply)

- I spend less time with them
- My child(ren) show me less love and affection
- I am more frustrated with their behavior
- I feel less able to adequately care for my child(ren)
- I am less patient and speaking less calmly with them
- I resort to yelling and physical punishment too often
- I feel less confident in my parenting ability
- Other, write in

Q7. How does your family feel about resuming half or full face-to-face classes after the long period of online learning during the fourth wave of COVID-19? (Select all that apply)

- We feel stressed and concerned
- We are not ready for school to resume
- We are ready for school to resume
- We need some time to get ready for school to resume
- We are looking forward to returning to school
- Other, write in

Q8. Please indicate your level of agreement to the below statement. (1 is strongly disagree and 4 is Strongly agree)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with the arrangement of online learning during COVID-19.				

Q9. Compared to a normal school year, which do you think best describes how much your child(ren) has/have learned during COVID-19?

- As much as a normal school year
- A lot
- A little bit
- Nothing at all
- I don't know

Q10. In the past month, have you worried about the following? (Select all that apply)

- The impact of the pandemic on my child(ren)'s chances to get into desired schools
- My child(ren) will have difficulty progressing to the next grade level
- The grading scheme at my child(ren)'s school during online learning was unfair
- My child(ren)'s interpersonal and learning skills have been weakened
- My child(ren) is/are disadvantaged by their school's weak online learning support
- My child(ren)'s lack of physical exercise and weakened health
- My child(ren)'s motivation or ability to stay focused in class
- My child(ren)'s mental wellbeing

Q11. Which of the following should schools do when face-to-face classes are fully resumed? (Select all that apply)

- Keep grading schemes the same as before online learning
- Use grades from online learning for feedback but omit them from transcripts
- Don't give grades for the period of online learning, only a pass or fail option
- Provide after class and One-on-One tutoring to help students catch-up
- Allocate students to remedial classes based on their academic level by subjects
- Allow flexibility for past-due assignments from the online learning period
- Provide guidelines and support on how to better manage original study plan
- Ensure school social workers actively promote useful tips and support to students

Thanks for your participation! If you have any questions regarding this survey, please send us an email at advocacy.hk@savethechildren.org