

FAMILY VOICES:

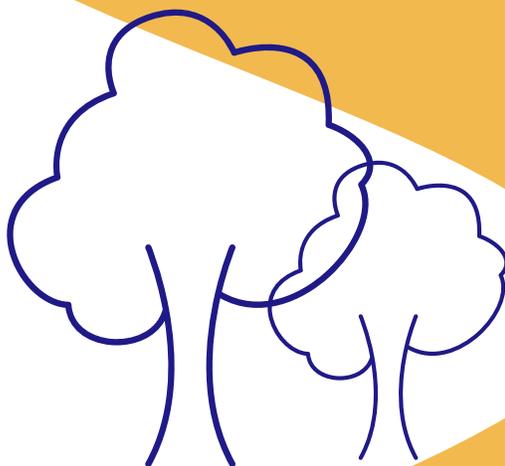
CRISIS IN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Results of a countywide survey of 600 Monroe County parents about how their children are faring and the supports they need

Parent voices matter. They tell us what their children are experiencing, barriers their families face, and the solutions they support. Our latest poll of Monroe County parents shows that the crisis in youth mental health that accelerated during the pandemic continues. **Providing children with a path to healing requires:**



Expanded Services



Supportive Environments



Community Networks



Youth in Crisis

One year ago, half of Monroe County parents said their children were struggling with their emotional or mental health. Although that number has decreased, far too many children continue to struggle.

2 out of **5*** parents say at least one of their children has struggled with their emotional or mental health since going back to school in-person

Yet Only

1 out of **4** parents say at least one of their children is receiving some type of emotional or mental health counseling

Highest for

Children with disabilities	54%
Latino children	52%
Low and middle income children	44%

From

42%	Therapist or psychiatrist
33%	Counselor or other school staff
25%	Doctor, nurse or healthcare professional

* This is consistent with national rates that led the American Association of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child Psychiatry, and Children's Hospital Association to declare a national emergency in child and youth mental health.



Expanding Services

To meet the needs of our community's children, we must expand access to both formal and informal emotional and mental health services. The expansion must be supported by state, local and private investment and it must systematically remove barriers that keep youth from receiving the support they need.

3 out of 4 parents think the government should invest more on mental health services

This includes a majority of Democrat, Independent and Republican parents.

Barriers Identified by Parents

County-wide

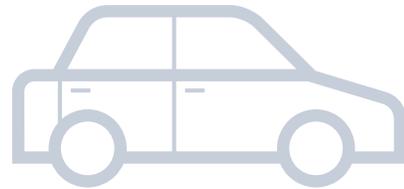
Finding and navigating services **78%** → *Identified more by middle and high income families*

Affording services **78%**

Long wait times **77%**

Inaccessible locations **73%**

Office hours not aligning with family schedules **73%**



80% of Rochester families also identified challenges with transportation to get to services

89% of parents identified 3 or more barriers, indicating that multiple solutions are needed to ensure access to services

Parents of high school students identified the most barriers.



Connecting to Services

Seeking help for emotional and mental health challenges requires that youth and their families trust the person they turn to. As trusted resources, healthcare providers can play a critical role in this process.

93% of parents trust their child's healthcare provider as a source of advice about their child's emotional health

This includes at least 9 out of 10 parents in all demographic groups.

However, when asked about their child's healthcare provider, **Latino parents** report lower quality relationships.

PARENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THEIR CHILD'S HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

	All Parents	Black	White	Latino
Provides family with information we need	82%	90%	84%	74%
Listens carefully to what I tell them	82%	84%	83%	76%
Helps me feel like a partner in my child's care	80%	82%	83%	78%
Understands my family's culture and respects our values and customs	73%	81%	74%	78%
Spends enough time with my child	71%	70%	76%	60%



Community Networks

Parents trust a wide array of people if they need advice about their children's emotional health, especially those who are closest to them. Therefore, the community needs to be ready to support youth and their families.

HIGH TRUST

Healthcare provider	93%
Family	92%
Friend	89%

Parents primarily trust **those closest to them** and their **child's health professional** to give advice about their **child's emotional health**.

MODERATE TRUST

Therapist	85%
Child's teacher	84%
Emergency medical services	82%
Child's school counselor	79%
Child's school nurse	78%
Child care provider	75%

While the majority of **Black and Latino parents** trust these potential supporters, there was a consistent pattern of **lower trust** than expressed by white parents.

LOWER TRUST

After-school or recreation leader	66%
Neighborhood organization	66%
Law enforcement	65%
Clergy or faith leader	60%

The one exception was for **clergy and faith leaders** who were trusted by **70% of Black parents**, **65% of Latino parents**, and **56% of white parents**.



Supportive Schools

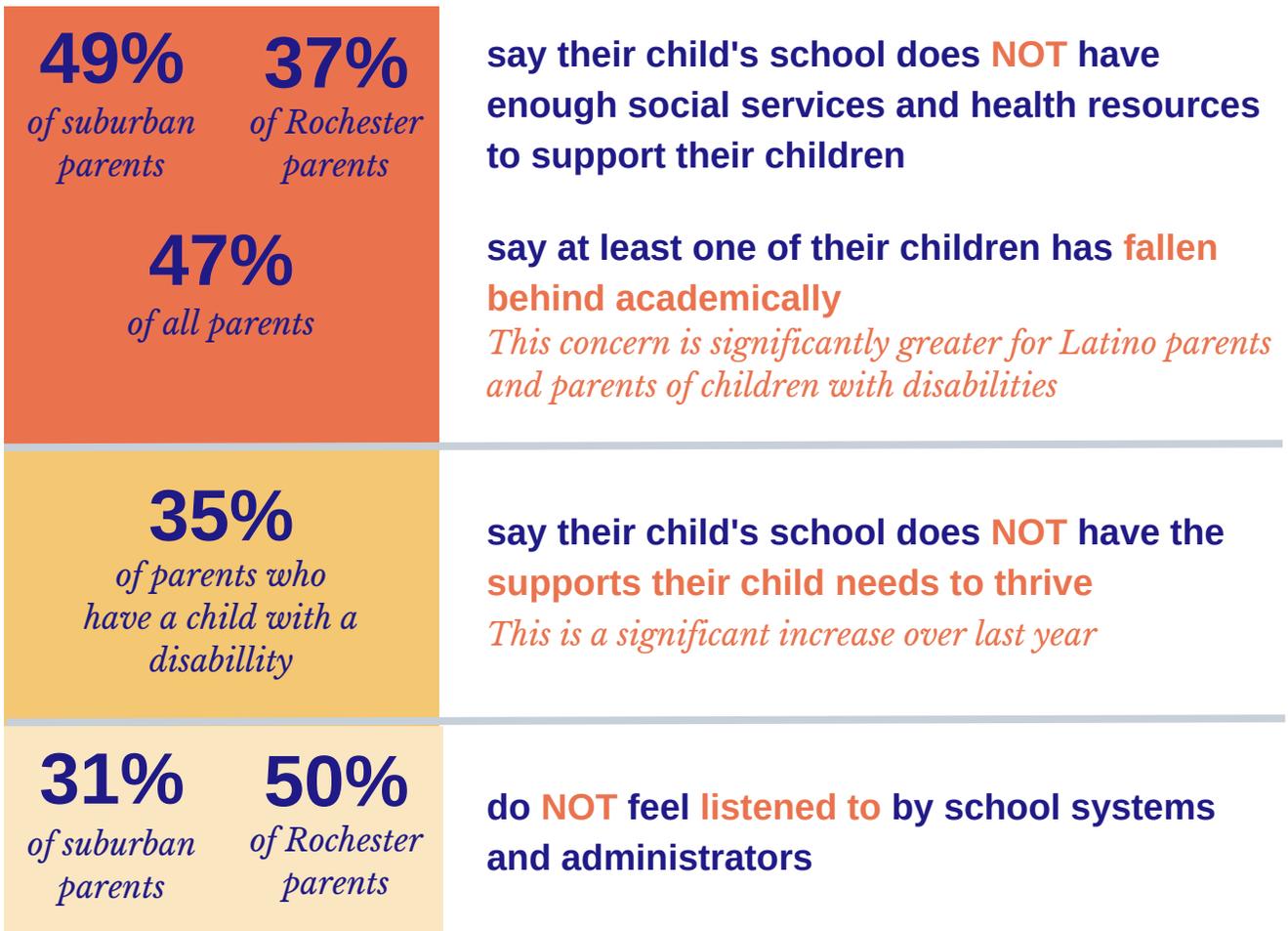
Parents are looking for supportive environments where their children can thrive. They value protective factors such as positive relationships with adults, opportunities for enrichment, and safe, healthy environments. There are notable concerns about schools being safe and supportive for all children.

Improving academics and implementing better safety measures in local schools are the

Top 2 Concerns

Rochester parents are also concerned about improving neighborhood safety.

PERSISTENT AND GROWING CONCERNS





Out of School Enrichment

After-school programs can be an important opportunity for enrichment, positive relationships and adult guidance. They provide a safe space for exploration and social-emotional development.

34%

Rochester parents

48%

Suburban parents

currently have their child enrolled in an after-school program

MONROE COUNTY

Reasons Why Did Not Enroll

Child not interested	28%
Cost too high	13%
Hours did not work	13%
Parent not interested	12%
Transportation difficult	10%
No space available	6%
Program not high quality	6%

Rochester

Cost and hours were as much of a barrier as child's interest

Suburbs

Lack of interest was the primary reason

Parents are nearly unanimous in valuing as extremely or very important:

- Positive relationships with an adult in the family*
- Opportunities to participate in sports, arts, music, etc.*
- Access to parks and green space*

PUBLIC POLICY SOLUTIONS

What families have told us makes clear that the **youth mental health crisis** and **academic losses** persist. Far too many children in our community are struggling. Responding to their needs requires many things, including **changes in public policy** and **smart use of public funds**, **supporting community networks**, and **ensuring children's environments help them thrive**.

1

Expand youth emotional and mental health services through systemic changes supported by governmental and private investments

- **Increased funding, Medicaid and private insurer reimbursement for mental health services in all settings** including school-based mental health centers, neighborhood centers, pediatric practices, clinics, and by telehealth
- Funding to ensure **timely access** to Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, and fulfillment of services in Individualized Education Plans
- **Prohibiting suspensions Pre-K to 3rd grade**, and replacing suspensions wherever possible in all grades with **evidence-based solutions**, including Restorative Justice in Education, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning

2

Support a network of community members with skills to identify when kids are struggling, support them and their families, and connect them to services and activities that help

- Training and peer support, especially for family, friends, recreation/after-school leaders, faith leaders, peer navigators, community health workers and health care providers to ensure the availability of BIPOC-led and culturally responsive care

3

Ensure our community is one where children can thrive

- Safe schools that support academic, social and emotional learning and whole child development
- Continuous Medicaid coverage, prenatally to age 6
- Enriching opportunities outside of school to explore, grow and be nurtured
- Affordable homes in safe neighborhoods with parks and greenspaces
- Wages that allow parents to provide for their families
- Availability of high quality, affordable child care

You can support these efforts by joining The Children's Agenda's **Action Network** at www.thechildrensagenda.org. Rochester parents and families are invited to join our **Very Invested Parents advocacy group** by calling (585) 256-2620.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The goal of this poll was to document family experiences in a way that provides compelling evidence to county and state legislators for supporting public policies that help children thrive. This survey of **600 Monroe County parents** was conducted by Global Strategy Group on behalf of The Children’s Agenda from February 21 - March 2, 2023. Parents were contacted by **phone call or text**, and respondents had the option of taking the survey in either **English or Spanish**.

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is **+/- 4.9%**. The margin of error for sub-groups is greater.

Weighted targets were generated by using data from the 2015-2019 **American Community Survey-Education Tabulation (ACS-ED)**, a collaboration between the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

The ACS-ED includes data on characteristics of the parents of school-age children. Data were aggregated for **every school district** entirely or mostly within the geographic lines of Monroe County.

Special care was taken to ensure the **sample matched the target population** as closely as possible across demographic variables including age, education status, gender, geography, gender, party registration, and race/ethnicity.

	Survey Sample	
	600	%
Rochester Suburbs	260	43%
	340	57%
Parent Race		
Black/African-American	144	} 40%
Hispanic/Latino	74	
Asian-American/Other	25	
White	357	60%
Parent Gender		
Female	387	65%
Male	213	35%
Family Income		
Under \$50,000	172	29%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	178	30%
Over \$100,000	204	34%
Parent Education		
Did not complete high school	21	} 34%
Graduated high school	93	
Some college or technical school	87	
Associate's degree	97	16%
Bachelor's degree	155	26%
Advanced degree	145	24%
Have a child with a developmental delay or disability	122	20%

This poll was made possible by the generous support of the ESL Charitable Foundation.