

# SURVEY OF CANADIAN PARENTS ON THEIR CHILDREN'S TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE BEHAVIOURS

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PREVNet



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A nationally representative sample of Canadian parents with children between the ages of 8 to 17 completed an online survey assessing their experiences with technology, as well as their children's online bullying, victimization, and sexting experiences. A similar survey titled "Survey of Canadian Parents on Technology and Electronic Bullying" has been completed in 2018. The results from the 2021 survey indicated that:

- Canadian youth continue to be "plugged in". About 66% of youth spend between 1 and 5 hours online every day, with older youth (15-17 years) being more likely to spend more time online. On average, children are spending more time online in 2021 compared to 2018.
- Parents are concerned about their children's technology use, particularly around the time spent online (62% of parents) and the content their child is exposed to online (57% of parents). They also report concerns about who their child interacts with online (40% of parents) and what their child is doing online (41% of parents).
- Parents are aware that their children benefit from technology use. In particular, the parents of girls and older children (15-17 years) were more likely to report that their children use technology for general education, emotional support and development, and entertainment.
- When it comes to their child's online activities and safety, parents prefer to talk to their child about what they do online (52%) rather than using technical software or tools to track or block their child's online use (21%) or going online with their child (19%).
- Cyberbullying was and is still at the forefront of parents' minds. Almost half of parents are concerned that their child is being cyberbullied (41%), but only 13% of parents report knowing that their child has been cyberbullied. Upon learning that their child has been cyberbullied, parents often speak directly with their child about cyberbullying to educate and give tips on how to prevent cyberbullying (91%) and how to cope (87%). Some parents choose to limit their child's social media use (31%) or time online (23%) which can result in unintended negative outcomes. A smaller proportion of parents report that they instruct their child to bully back (10%).
- Parents are concerned about their child's sexting behaviours. Around a quarter of parents are concerned that their child has sent a sext (24%) or forwarded another individual's sext without their consent (23%). Even more parents (30%) are concerned that their child has received a sext. Half of the parents have not discussed sexting with their children (49%), and of the other half, the majority of parents discussed sexting with their children between the ages of 9 and 12.
- The majority of children (69%) were reported to be doing well in terms of mental health. Nonetheless, approximately 16% meet the criteria of being diagnosed with problematic social media use, and 43% with internet gaming disorder.

# INTRODUCTION

There is no question that youth are growing up in a digitally connected world. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased youth's reliance on the internet as they have come to rely on such connectivity to learn, stay connected to friends, and have fun while following COVID-19 health guidelines. As technology use and access to online content and devices become more wide-spread, parents are increasingly concerned about the potential consequences and opportunities associated with digital device use. As adolescence is a crucial time for emotional, physical, and social development, it is important for parents to understand how they can be involved in and manage their children's online behaviours to promote positive digital citizenship, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parents play a critical role in youth's technology behaviours by enabling access to different types of technology (i.e., devices and accounts), providing coaching and feedback on how to behave online, and/or being gatekeepers of the content to which their child is exposed. Parents may have household rules about children's online activities, including rules about how long or where they can use devices, who the child can connect with online, which sites they are allowed access to, and how to treat others while online – particularly for children and younger adolescents. There is limited research on these issues during the pandemic. This current survey will help identify key parental concerns and the ways in which they are supporting their children during the pandemic. In doing so, we will be able to identify gaps in our current understanding of parents' needs and target key areas of concern when developing future materials or training for parents.

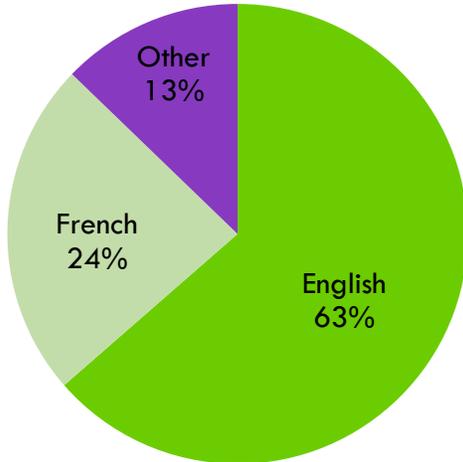
Cyberbullying and sexting activities among youth are a great area of concern for many parents, schools, and communities. Cyberbullying is associated with negative consequences for all youth involved (i.e., those who bully others, those who are victimized, those who witness bullying, and those who defend others). Although the 2018 survey informed us on parents' awareness of cyberbullying incidents and their concerns around cyberbullying, we do not know how these two concerns may have changed after COVID-19. Furthermore, little is known about parents' knowledge of their children's sexting experiences. There is a need to learn more about the extent to which parents are aware of their child's online experiences during COVID-19 (i.e., cyberbullying and sexting), whether they discuss sexting with their children, and how they help their children cope with cyberbullying. This knowledge will help us better protect and support children.

The goals of this report are to understand Canadian parents' understanding and concerns about: 1) their children's technology use; 2) cyberbullying among youth; 3) sexting among youth; and 4) their children's wellness during COVID-19. We hope the findings provide insight on any changes between 2018 and 2021 and help inform future education and intervention efforts to keep Canadian youth safe online.

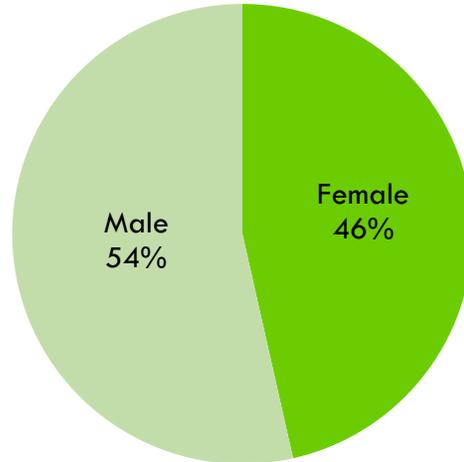
# 1. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

1005 parents participated in the survey.

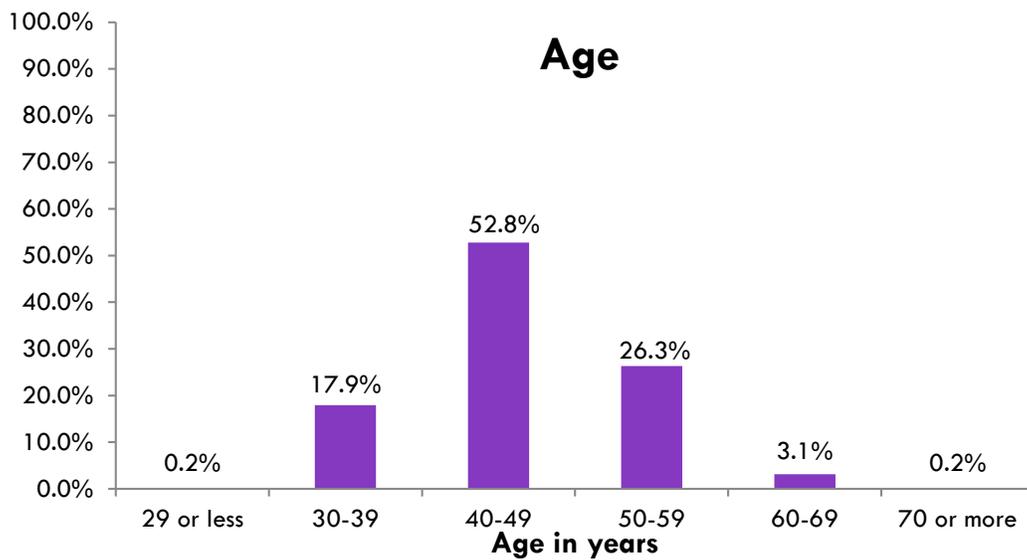
**Language**



**Gender**



Participants ranged in age from 29 years to 73 years. 528 (52.8%) were in the 40 to 49-year-old range.



Participants came from 10 provinces.

Province	% of Canadian population <sup>1</sup>	% of current sample
British Columbia	13.2	13.4
Alberta	11.6	10.2
Saskatchewan	3.1	3.1
Manitoba	3.6	3.5
Ontario	38.3	38.3
Québec	23.2	24.2
New Brunswick	2.1	2.4
Nova Scotia	2.6	2.9
Prince Edward Island	0.4	0.5
Newfoundland & Labrador	1.5	1.5

Participants were asked to self-identify their race or ethnicity. They were able to select as many identities as they desired. Most of the sample identified as White/European-Canadian.

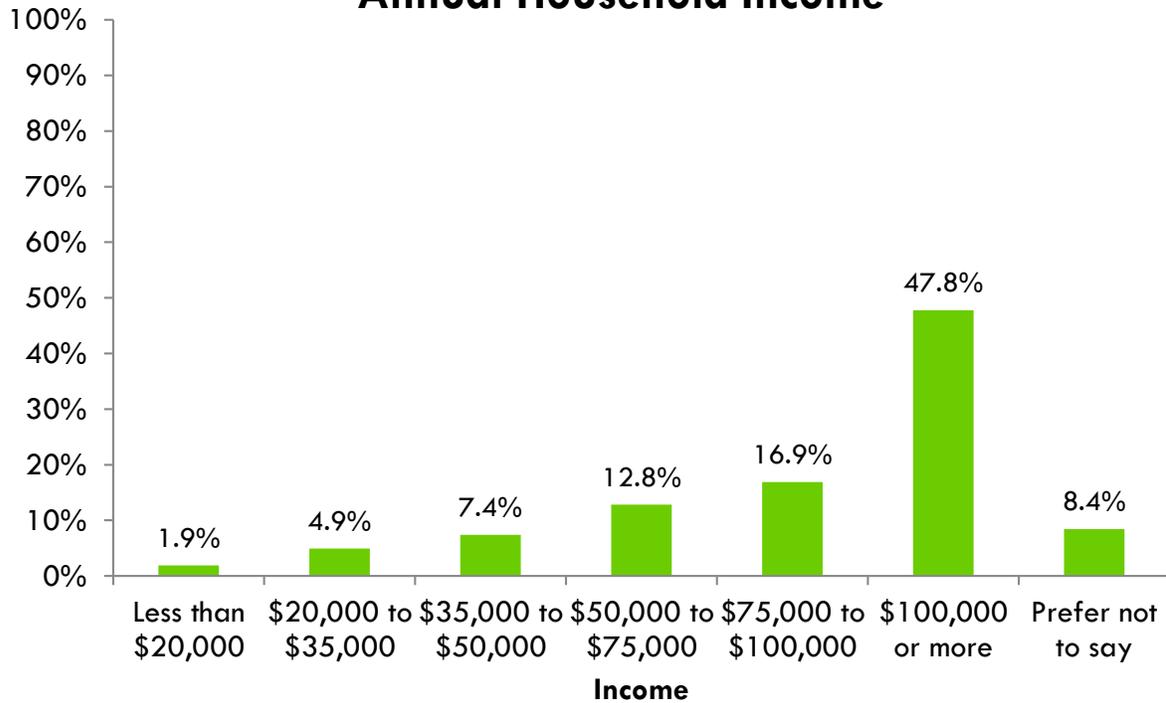
Race / Ethnicity	% of current sample
White / European	71.5
Black	3.3
Aboriginal / First Nations	1.5
Chinese	8.3
Filipino	1.2
South Asian	3.9
Korean	0.8
Japanese	0.6
Southeast Asian	1.1
Latin American	2.3
Arab	1.6
Middle Eastern / West Asian	0.8
Other	4.1
Did not respond	1.3

<sup>1</sup> Based on 2016 Canadian census data.

Participants were asked to answer questions about their level of education, household income, employment status, and relationship status.

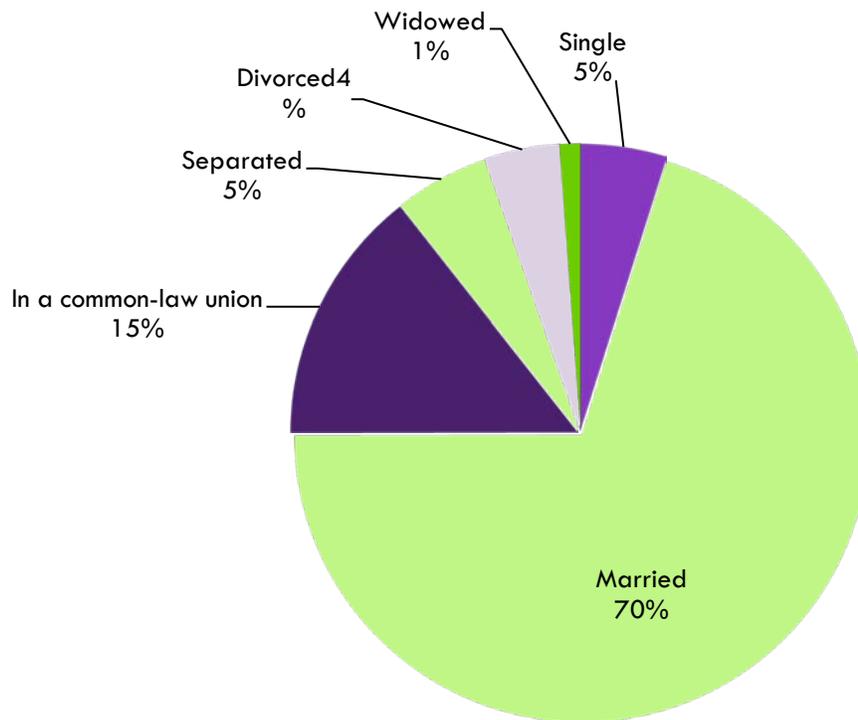
Highest Level of Education Completed	% of current sample
Elementary or middle school	0.6
Completed Grade 8	0.1
Some high school	1.6
Graduated from high school or equivalent	10.5
Vocational, trade, or business school	11.4
Community college	20.9
University	34.5
Graduate or professional school	20.0
Prefer not to respond	0.6

### Annual Household Income

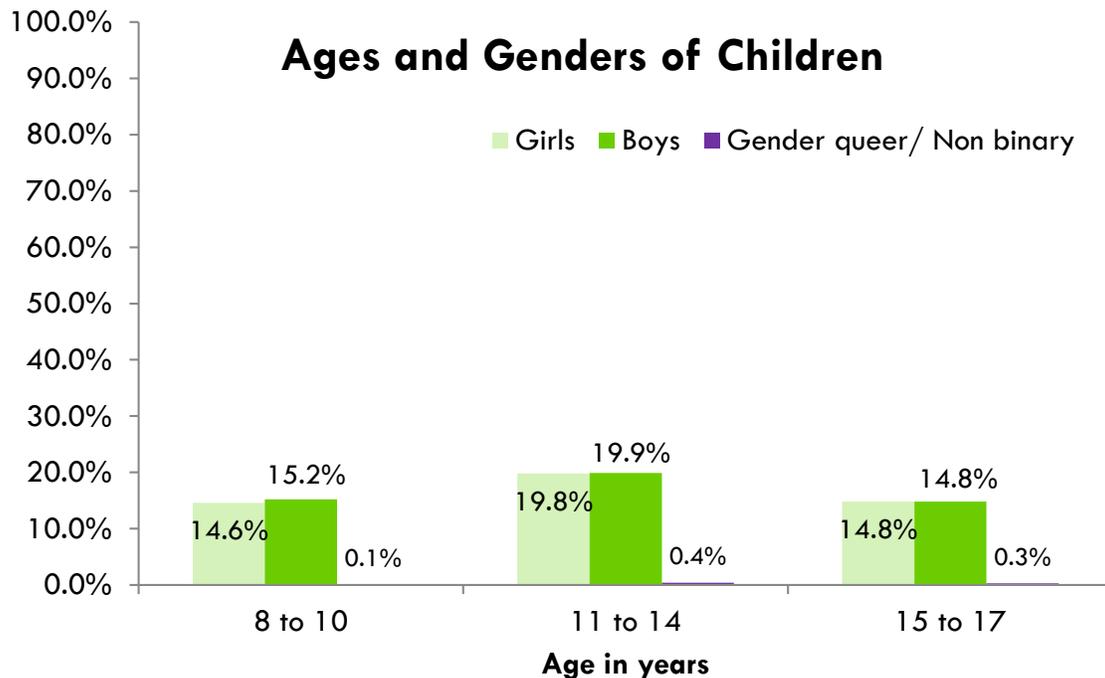
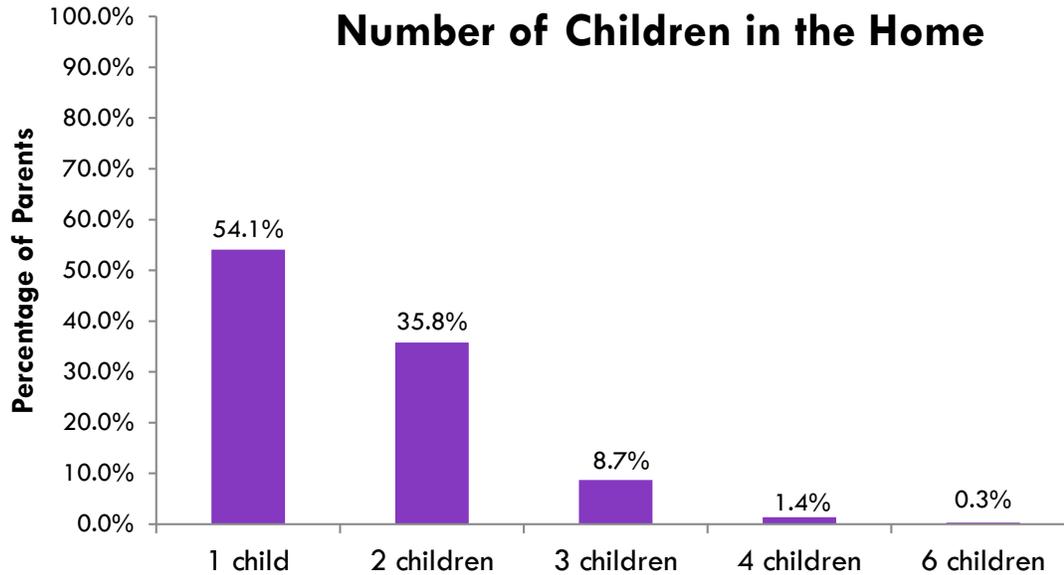


Employment Status	% of current sample
Employed full-time	70.1
Employed part-time	6.8
Self-employed full-time	6.0
Self-employed part-time	2.6
Unemployed	2.9
Stay at home full-time	6.5
Student	0.5
Retired	2.7
Disability pension	1.4
Prefer not to respond	0.6

## Relationship status

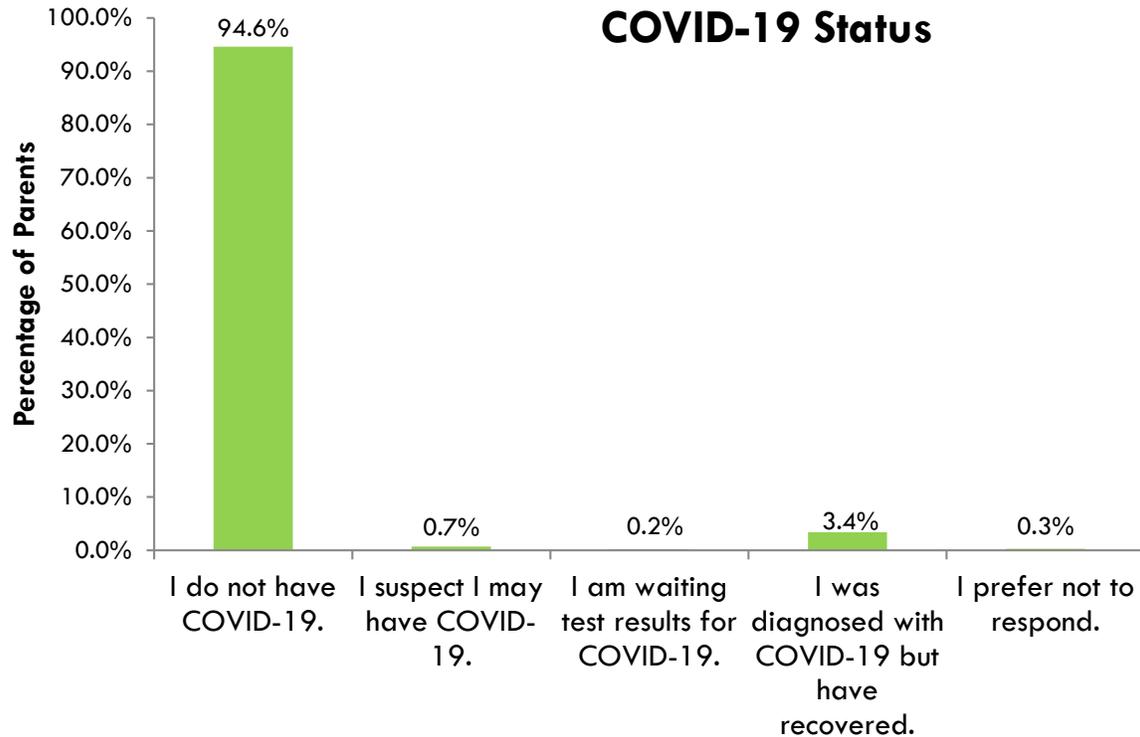


Participants were asked how many children, between ages 8-17, they were personally involved in caring for as a parent or guardian. The majority of participants reported having 1 (54.1%) or 2 (35.8%) children in their care. As well, participants were asked about the ages and genders of each of the children in their care.



## 2. IMPACT OF COVID-19

Participants were asked about their COVID-19 status and the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on their lives.



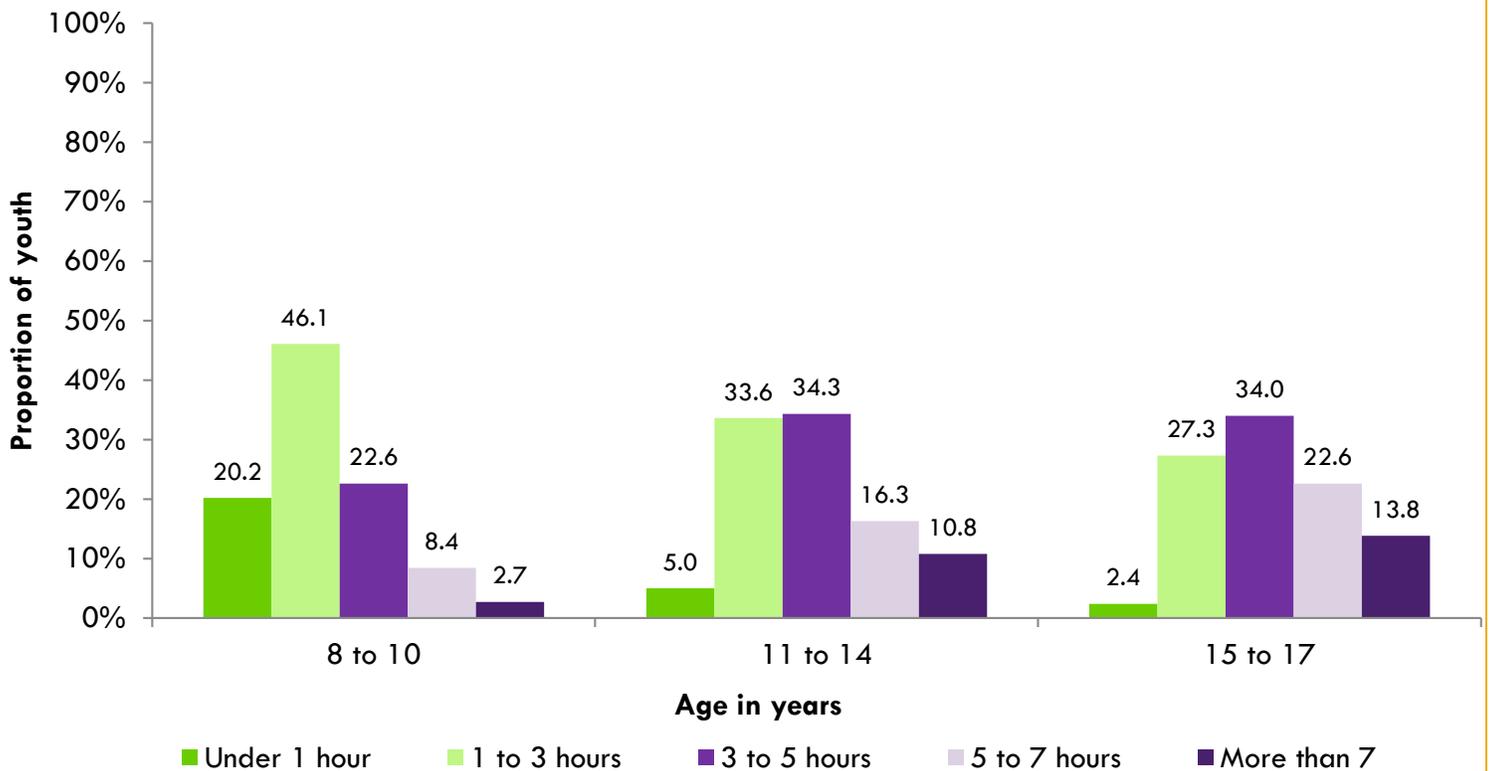
Since COVID-19 started:

- **9.9%** of participants have lost their job
- **26.3%** of participants have made less money
- **64.6%** of participants agree that it has been harder for them to restrict or manage their child's technology use
- **78.2%** of participants agree that their family has become more reliant on the Internet

### 3. PARENTING AND TECHNOLOGY USE

Participants were asked to report approximately how many hours their child spent online daily. Around 66% of parents reported that their child spends between 1 and 3 hours (35.4%) or between 3 and 5 hours (30.7%) online every day. A quarter of parents (25.1%) reported that their child spends more than 5 hours online every day. While there were no gender differences with girls and boys being just as likely to spend time online<sup>2</sup>, youth who are 11-14 years old are more likely to spend more time online than youth who are 8-10 years old, and older youth (aged 15-17) are more likely to spend more time online than younger youth across all age groups<sup>3</sup>.

#### Time Spent Online



Most parents report that their children spend between 1 and 3 hours online per day (35.4%), but 25.1% of youth spend more than 5 hours online every day.

<sup>2</sup>  $t(983) = 0.71, p = .478, d = 1.094$

<sup>3</sup>  $F(2, 993) = 62.66, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .112$

Participants were asked about the degree to which their children use social media in a way that is beneficial to them. In general, girls are more likely to benefit from social media than boys<sup>4</sup>, and older children are more likely to benefit than younger children<sup>5</sup>.

Three forms of social media benefits were assessed: (1) emotional support and development, (2) general education, (3) entertainment. Girls are more likely to use social media for emotional support and development than boys<sup>6</sup>. Older children (aged 11-14 and 15-17) are more likely to use social media for emotional support and development than younger children (aged 8-10)<sup>7</sup>.

## Emotional Support and Development



Girls are more likely to use social media for general education than boys<sup>8</sup>. Older children are more likely to use social media for general education than younger children<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>  $t(979) = -4.11, p < .001, d = .881$

<sup>5</sup>  $F(2, 988) = 39.04, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .073$

<sup>6</sup>  $t(971) = -4.59, p < .001, d = .928$

<sup>7</sup>  $F(2, 980) = 25.46, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .050$

<sup>8</sup>  $t(972) = -2.78, p = .006, d = 1.034$

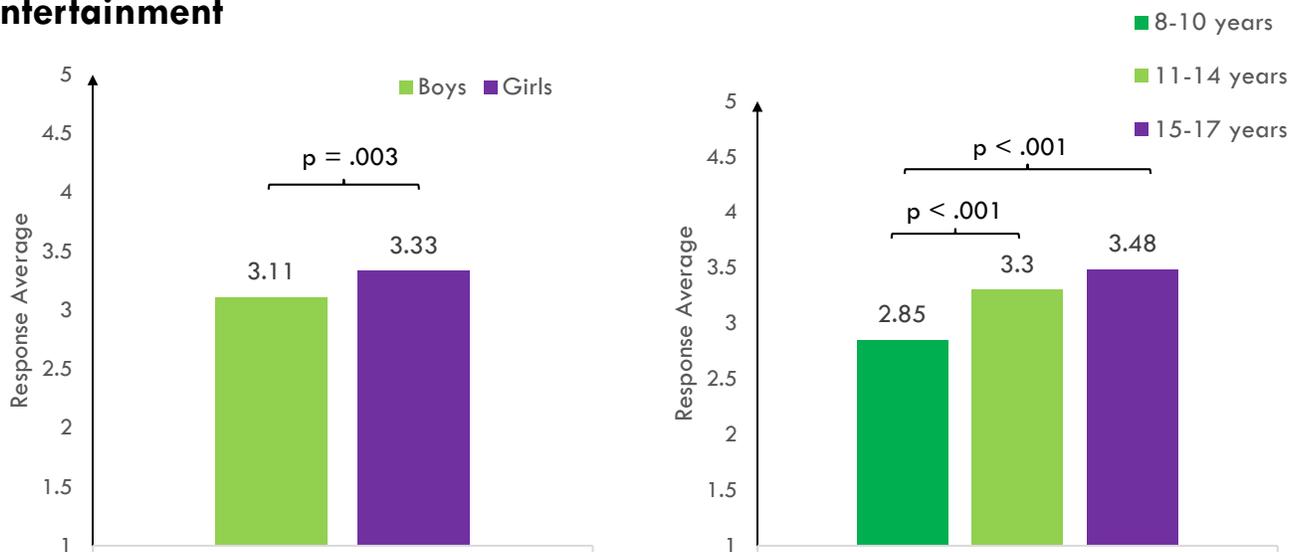
<sup>9</sup>  $F(2, 982) = 38.37, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .073$

## General Education



Girls are more likely to use social media for entertainment than boys<sup>10</sup>. Older children (aged 11-14 and 15-17) are more likely to use social media for entertainment than children aged 8-10 years<sup>11</sup>.

## Entertainment



<sup>10</sup>  $t(975) = -3.02, p = .003, d = 1.133$

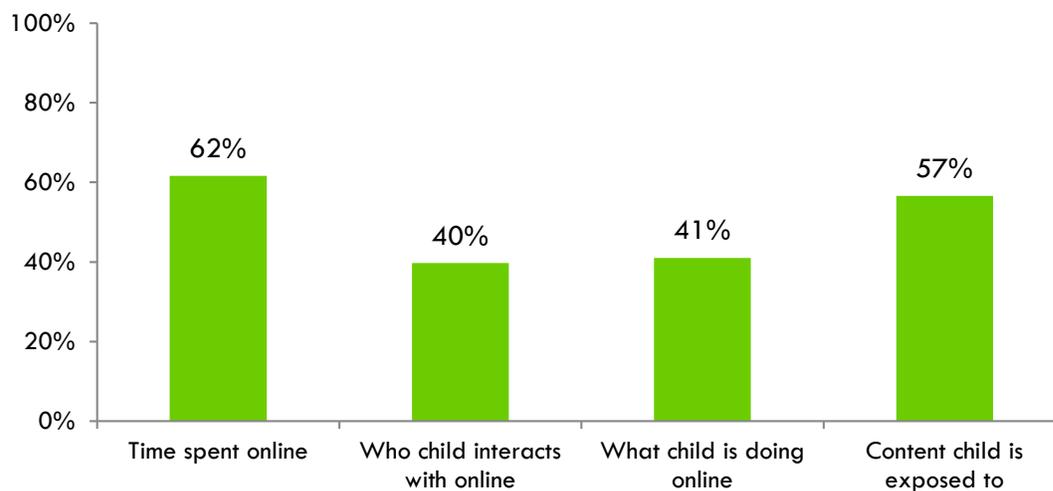
<sup>11</sup>  $F(2, 984) = 25.57, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .050$

Participants were asked about concerns they may have regarding their child's technology use.

Parents of boys and girls were just as likely to be concerned about the amount of time their child spent online<sup>12</sup>, who their child interacts with online<sup>13</sup>, what their child is doing online<sup>14</sup>, and the content that their child is exposed to while online<sup>15</sup>.

Parents of children aged 11-14 years were more likely to be concerned about the amount of time their child spent online compared to the rest of the parents<sup>16</sup>, and about who their child interacts with online compared to parents of older children (aged 15-17)<sup>17</sup>. However, parents of all youth were just as likely to be concerned about what their child is doing online<sup>18</sup>. Parents of younger children were more concerned about the content that their child is exposed to online than parents of older youth (ages 15-17)<sup>19</sup>.

### Parental concerns about...



**Parents are mostly concerned about the time their child spends online (62%), and this concern differs between the age groups of children.**

<sup>12</sup>  $t(994) = 0.48, p = .96, d = .99$

<sup>13</sup>  $t(992) = -0.99, p = .32, d = 1.03$

<sup>14</sup>  $t(992) = 0.18, p = .86, d = .98$

<sup>15</sup>  $t(993) = -1.20, p = .23, d = .94$

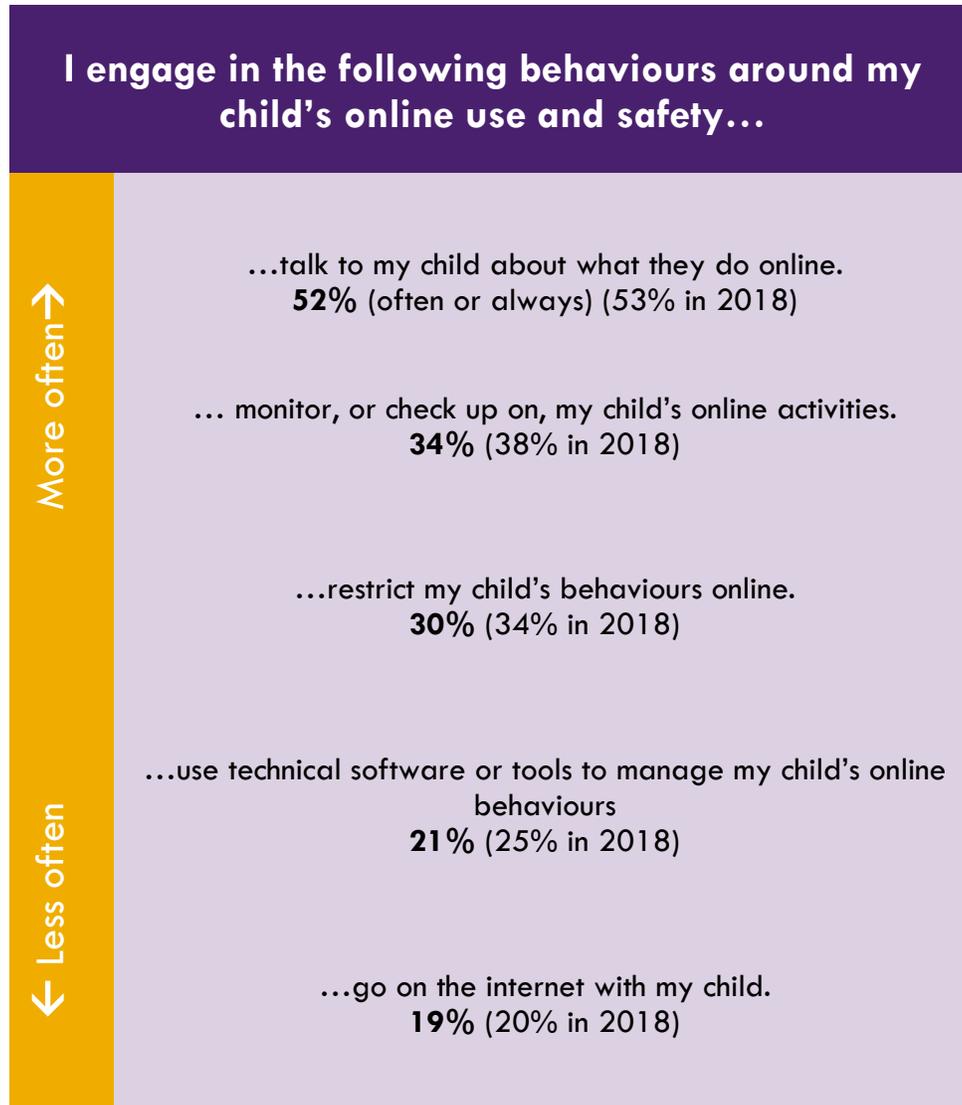
<sup>16</sup>  $F(2, 1004) = 5.73, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .011$

<sup>17</sup>  $F(2, 1002) = 3.15, p = .043, \eta_p^2 = .006$

<sup>18</sup>  $F(2, 1002) = 2.80, p = .061, \eta_p^2 = .006$

<sup>19</sup>  $F(2, 1003) = 5.80, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .011$

Participants were asked how often they engaged in behaviours to manage their child's online use and safety. Parents prefer to talk to their child about their online activities (52%) rather than go on the internet with their child (19%). There were no gender differences in behaviours between the parents of boys and girls. However, the percentage of parents who reported talking to their child about what they do online<sup>20</sup>, monitoring their child's online activities<sup>21</sup>, restricting their child's online behaviours<sup>22</sup>, using technical software to manage their child's online behaviours<sup>23</sup>, and going on the internet with their child<sup>24</sup> decreased with age. The parents of younger children were more likely to engage in behaviours around their child's online activities and safety than those of older children.



<sup>20</sup>  $F(1, 998) = 22.39, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .043$

<sup>21</sup>  $F(1, 998) = 82.81, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .143$

<sup>22</sup>  $F(1, 973) = 78.57, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .139$

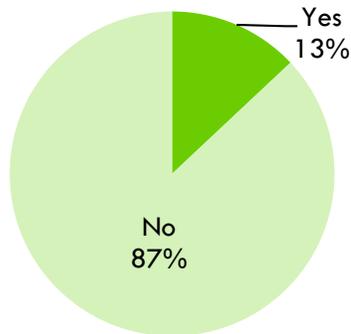
<sup>23</sup>  $F(1, 989) = 34.27, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .065$

<sup>24</sup>  $F(1, 998) = 52.58, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .095$

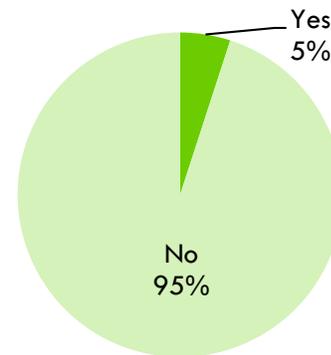
## 4. PARENTING AND CYBERBULLYING

Parents were asked about their child's history with bullying and cyberbullying.

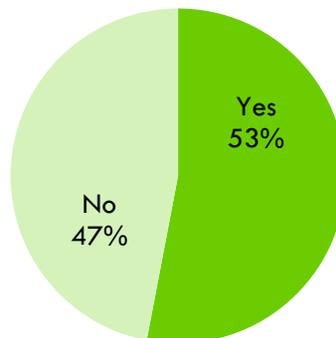
**Has your child ever been cyberbullied?**



**Has your child ever cyberbullied someone else?**



**Has your child ever defended others against bullying, online and in-person?**



Participants were asked how concerned they were that their child was involved in cyberbullying, either directly (i.e., being victimized or perpetrating) or indirectly (e.g., defending).

- **41%** of participants were concerned that their child could be cyberbullied.
- **23%** of participants were concerned that their child could be cyberbullying someone else.
- **28%** of participants were concerned that their child defends others when they see bullying online and in-person.

Parents of girls were more likely to be concerned that their child is being cyberbullied than parents of boys<sup>25</sup>. Parents of children aged 11-14 years were more likely to be concerned that their child is being cyberbullied<sup>26</sup>, is cyberbullying someone else<sup>27</sup>, and is defending others<sup>28</sup> than parents of older children (aged 15-17).

Parents were asked about whether their child has disclosed to them that they have been bullied in the past couple of months and how they reacted. Approximately a quarter of parents reported that their child has told them that they have been verbally bullied in the last couple of months. Children were less likely to tell their parents that they had been bullied online; only 8% of parents reported that their child has told them that they have been cyberbullied in the last couple of months. Most of the parents (91%) responded by advising their child on how to prevent future incidents of bullying.

### In the last couple of months, my child has told me about ...

More common →

... having been called mean names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way by other youth  
**27%**

... having been left out of things on purpose, excluded from friend groups, or completely ignored by other youth  
**24%**

... having been physically hurt or threatened to be physically hurt by other youth  
**17%**

... having been lied about, targeted by false rumors by other youth to make others dislike them  
**15%**

... having been made fun of because of their body weight  
**10%**

... having been threatened, embarrassed, gossiped about, or made to look bad through the internet, text message, or online pictures by other youth  
**8%**

← Less common

... having been targeted by sexual jokes, comments, or gestures by other youth  
**7%**

<sup>25</sup>  $t(987) = 2.33, p = .02, d = 1.04$

<sup>27</sup>  $F(2, 991) = 4.00, p = .019, \eta_p^2 = .008$

<sup>26</sup>  $F(2, 997) = 4.93, p = .007, \eta_p^2 = .010$

<sup>28</sup>  $F(2, 916) = 4.45, p = .012, \eta_p^2 = .010$

## Reactions to Child being Cyberbullied

More common →

Gave my child tips on how to prevent cyberbullying in the future (**91%**)

Advised my child to ignore the youth who bully them (**91%**)

Asked my child to stay away from the youth who bully them (**88%**)

Educated my child on the dangers of cyberbullying and taught them how to cope (**87%**)

Told my child to stand up for themselves (**85%**)

Told my child to block the person cyberbullying them online (**80%**)

Told my child to assert themselves when other youth who bully them (**77%**)

Notified child's school (**52%**)

Asked my child to try and work things out on their own (**42%**)

Told my child to report the cyberbullying on the website/platform (**40%**)

Contacted the parents of the person cyberbullying my child (**37%**)

Instructed my child to delete all of their social media accounts (**31%**)

← Less common

Tried to stay out of it (**25%**)

Talked to the child bullying my child (**23%**)

Reduced the time my child spends online (**23%**)

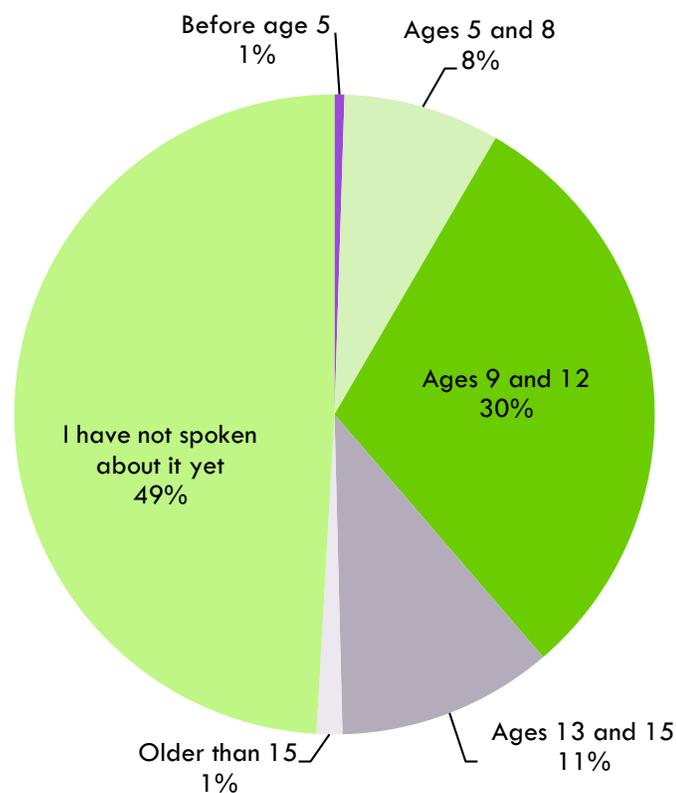
Consulted a lawyer or reported to the police (**16%**)

Instructed my child to get back at the child bullying them (**10%**)

## 5. PARENTING AND SEXTING

Participants were asked when they first talked to their child about sexting. Around half of participants (49%) have not discussed sexting with their child yet. Thirty percent of parents reported talking to their children about sexting between the ages of 9 and 12 years.

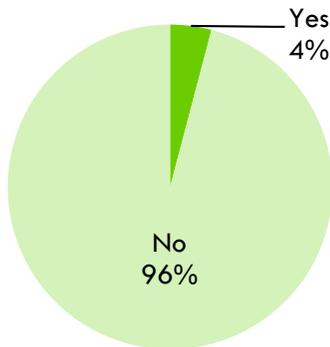
### At what age did you first start talking to your child about sexting?



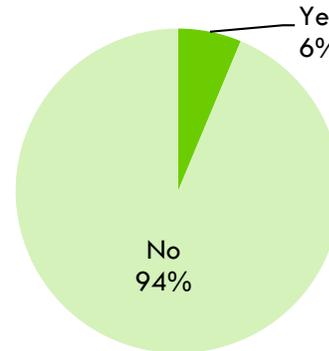
Participants were asked to report on whether their child has engaged in consensual sexting, nonconsensual sexting, and sext distribution.

### Consensual sexting

Has your child ever consensually sent a sext?

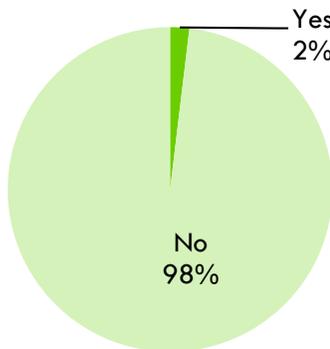


Has your child ever consensually received a sext?

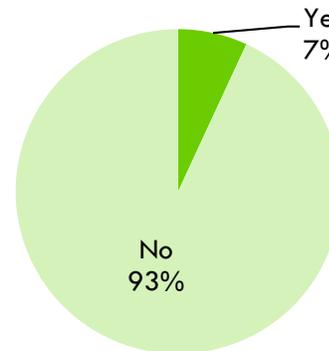


### Nonconsensual sexting

Has your child ever sent an unwanted/unsolicited sext?

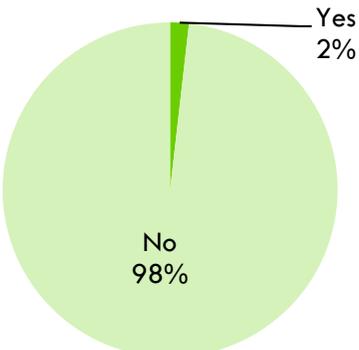


Has your child ever received an unwanted/unsolicited sext?

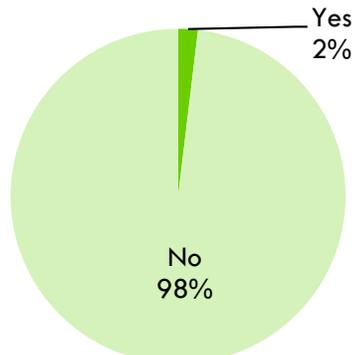


### Sext distribution

Has your child ever forwarded another person's sext(s) without their consent?



Has anyone forwarded a sext of your child without your child's consent?



Participants were asked how concerned they were that their child was involved in sexting.

- **24%** of participants were concerned that their child has sent a sext.
- **31%** of participants were concerned that their child has received a sext.
- **23%** of participants were concerned that their child has forwarded another individual's sext(s) without their consent.

Parents were more likely to be concerned about girls sending<sup>29</sup> and receiving<sup>30</sup> sexts than boys. In addition, parents were more likely to be concerned about older children sending<sup>31</sup>, receiving<sup>32</sup>, and distributing<sup>33</sup> sexts than younger children (aged 8-11).

**Sexting is an area of concern for Canadian parents, especially the parents of girls and older children.**

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<sup>29</sup>  $t(945) = 2.66, p = .008, d = 1.09$

<sup>30</sup>  $t(946) = 3.71, p < .001, d = 1.13$

<sup>31</sup>  $F(2, 978) = 5.58, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .011$

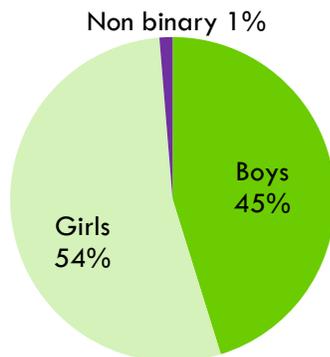
<sup>32</sup>  $F(2, 973) = 11.47, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .023$

<sup>33</sup>  $F(2, 951) = 6.51, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .014$

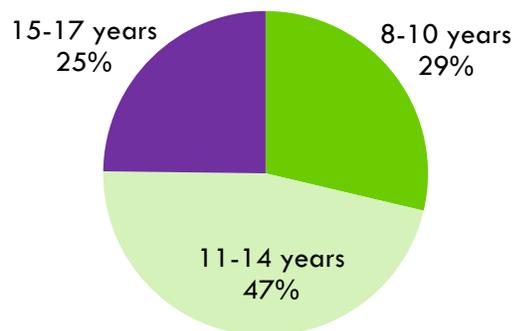
## 6. CHILD WELLNESS

Participants reported on the extent to which their child displays signs of problematic social media use and disordered internet gaming. Problematic Social Media Use is a disorder of dependence on social media whose symptoms mimic those of substance use disorders (e.g., being preoccupied with social media and experiencing withdrawal symptoms). Approximately 16% of children meet the criteria of being diagnosed with problematic social media use. There were no differences in the gender<sup>34</sup> and age<sup>35</sup> of these children.

**Gender of children with problematic social media use**

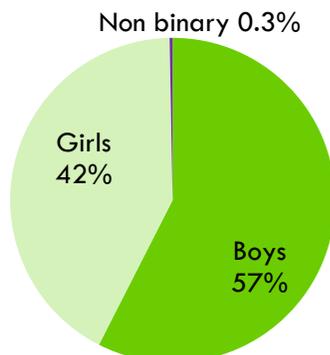


**Age of children with problematic social media use**

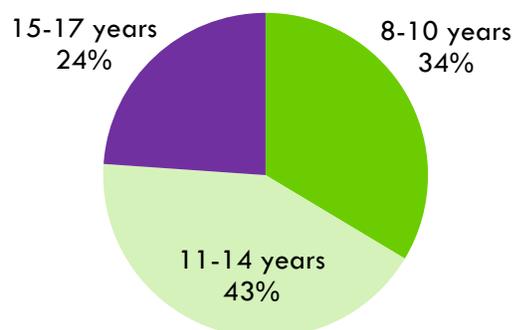


Internet Gaming Disorder is a disorder characterized by a persistent and recurrent involvement with video games in a way that impairs other typical daily activities (e.g., work, education). Approximately 43% of children meet the criteria of being diagnosed with internet gaming disorder. There were no differences in gender<sup>36</sup> and age<sup>37</sup> of these children.

**Gender of children with internet gaming disorder**



**Age of children with internet gaming disorder**



<sup>34</sup>  $t(153) = 0.39, p = .70, d = .063$

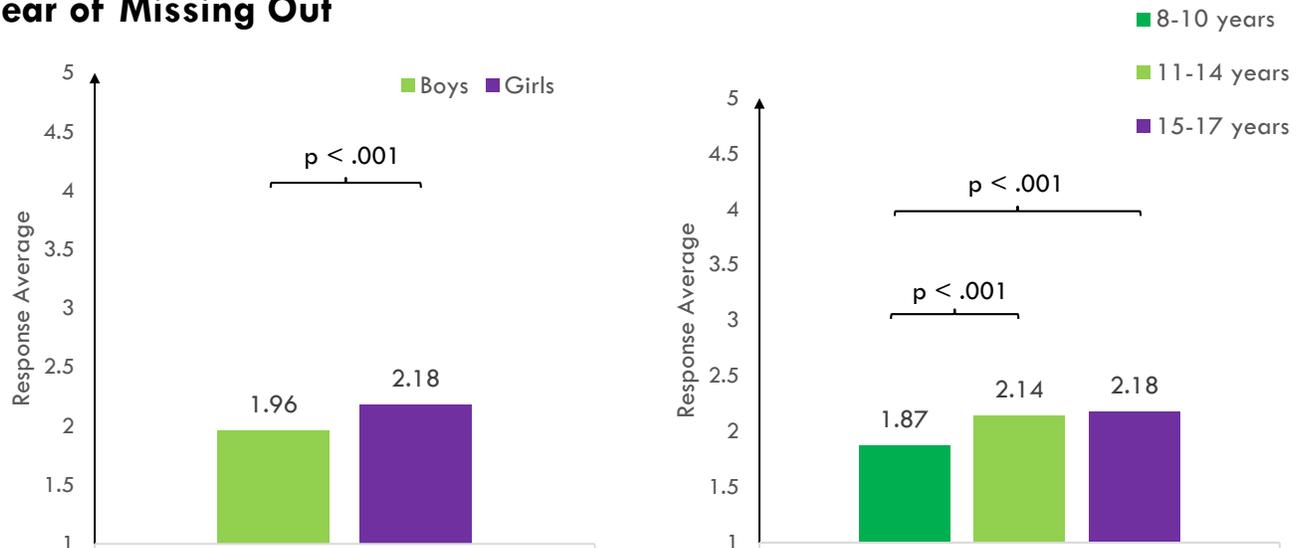
<sup>35</sup>  $F(2, 157) = 0.41, p = .67, \eta_p^2 = .005$

<sup>36</sup>  $t(282) = 1.58, p = .12, d = .175$

<sup>37</sup>  $F(2, 351) = 2.32, p = .100, \eta_p^2 = .013$

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which their children are fearful of missing out on a scale from 1 (not true) to 5 (extremely true). Parents were more likely to report a greater fear of missing out in girls than boys<sup>38</sup>, and in older children than younger children (aged 8-11)<sup>39</sup>.

## Fear of Missing Out



Finally, participants were asked about the mental well-being of their children. There were no differences in the mental well-being of children between the gender<sup>40</sup> and age<sup>41</sup> groups. The majority of children (69%) are well adjusted (often or always), as reported by their parents.

**A significant percentage of children (16%) meet the diagnostic criteria of problematic social media use, and close to half of the children (43%) meet the diagnostic criteria of internet gaming disorder.**

<sup>38</sup>  $t(969) = -3.89, p < .001, d = .89$

<sup>39</sup>  $F(2, 990) = 11.18, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .022$

<sup>40</sup>  $t(978) = 1.16, p = .246, d = .074$

<sup>41</sup>  $F(2, 987) = 1.60, p = .202, \eta_p^2 = .003$

## 7. COMPARING 2018 AND 2021

- A greater percentage of children in 2021 (25%) spend more than 5 hours online per day than 2018 (15%). Boys were more likely than girls to spend time online in 2018. However, this gender difference was not observed in the 2021 results. Older children (aged 15-17) were and still are more likely to spend time online than younger children.
- Parents in 2018 were most likely to be concerned about the content their child is being exposed to online, while parents in 2021 are most likely to be concerned about the time their child spends online. Unlike 2018, where parents were more concerned about screen time for boys compared to girls, in 2021 there were no differences in the level of concern, with parents being equally likely to be concerned about screen time for boys and girls. As for age, all parents in 2018 were equally as likely to be concerned about the amount of time their child spends online. However, in 2021, parents of children aged 11-14 years are the most concerned about the amount of time their child spends online compared to the rest of the parents.
- More parents in 2021 (13%) report that they are aware that their child has been cyberbullied by someone else compared to 2018 (5%).
- More parents in 2021 (53%) report that their child defends the person(s) being bullied when they witness bullying online or in-person compared to 2018 (44%).
- Parents continue to be concerned about their children engaging in cyberbullying and sexting behaviours. Nonetheless, fewer parents in 2021 (55%) are concerned that their child has sent or received a sext compared to 2018 (68%).

**Technology use, cyberbullying, and sexting in youth continue to be areas of concern for Canadian parents. We need to enable parents to effectively support their kids online, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS:

- Canadian youth spend a significant portion of their day online. While most youth spend between 1 and 3 hours (35.4%) or between 3 and 5 hours (30.7%) online, 25.1% of parents report that their child spends more than 5 hours online every day. Older youth are more likely to spend more time online than younger youth. Children are spending more time online in 2021 than 2018.

Results suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced the amount of time youth spend online. Being online may have helped youth “stay connected” while social distancing during the pandemic. That said, we need to ensure that youth develop healthy digital habits early on, so that they may continue to be good digital citizens as they become older. Given the associations between time spent online with physical (e.g., sleep disruption), emotional (e.g., depression), and social difficulties (e.g., cyberbullying perpetration and victimization), it is important to provide youth with support to navigate the challenges that come with being “plugged in”.

- Parents are concerned about their children’s technology use, particularly around the time spent online (62%) and the content their child is exposed to (57%). They also report concern about who their child interacts with online (40%) and what their child is doing online (41%). In general, parents of 11–14-year-old children are particularly concerned about their children’s technology use. This is unlike previous findings from 2018 when parents of younger children were the most concerned.

It is important to target these specific concerns in education and intervention efforts with attention to the nuances for different age groups.

- Canadian youth are using social media in ways that benefit them. In particular, girls and older children are more likely to use social media to access general education, for emotional support and development, and for entertainment.

These results suggest the importance of viewing social media from a new lens that allows for the appreciation of the benefits it provides. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has acted as a valuable resource for children to stay connected. It is important to learn more about these benefits in order to optimize them and encourage them in all children (e.g., boys and younger youth who are just starting to use social media), while helping minimize the depleting effects of excessive social media use.

- When it comes to their child’s online activities and safety, parents prefer to talk to their child about what they do online (52%) rather than using technical software or tools to track or

block their child's online use (21%) or going online with their child (19%). Parents also report monitoring their child's online use (34%) or restricting their child's online activities (30%).

The literature suggests that approaches such as having discussions about online activities and setting limits together are associated with less online risk in youth (e.g., cyberbullying perpetration and victimization, digital addiction). On the other hand, blocking or limiting youth's access to online content is associated with decreased online opportunities for learning and higher levels of cyberbullying victimization in youth. We need to continue to move parents towards a model of parenting around technology that is collaborative and less restrictive.

- Cyberbullying continues to be an area of concern for Canadian parents. Close to 50% of parents reported being concerned that their child has been cyberbullied, while approximately 23% of parents reported being concerned that their child is cyberbullying someone else, and 28% that their child is defending others in person or online.

Despite high levels of parental concerns in this area, results suggest a large gap in parents' knowledge when it comes to youth's cyberbullying experiences. There is a notable difference between the level of parents' concerns about cyberbullying perpetration (23%) or victimization (41%), and parents' reported knowledge about their child's cyberbullying perpetration (5%) or cybervictimization (13%) experiences. This large gap was also previously reflected in the results from 2018. To close this gap, we need to work to equip parents with the tools required to better identify if their child is experiencing or perpetrating cyberbullying. This may include educating them about the warning signs and providing them with conversation starters and suggestions for how to discuss the topic with their children.

- Upon learning that their child has been cyberbullied, parents often speak directly with their child about cyberbullying to educate and give tips on how to prevent cyberbullying (91%) and how to cope (87%). Parents may also involve the child's school (52%) when the incidents involve their child's schoolmates. Some parents choose to delete their child's social media accounts (31%) or limit their child's time spent online (23%), which are less helpful strategies. A smaller proportion of parents report that they instruct their child to bully back (10%).

Most parents know how to support their child when they experience cyberbullying and use strategies that can help their child cope with the bullying (e.g., blocking and reporting the person doing the bullying, educating their child about how to prevent incidents in the future). They may also involve other parties, such as the school or the parents of the child who is cyberbullying their child to ensure that the bullying stops. However, a significant proportion of parents report restricting their child's time spent

online and instructing their child to delete their social media accounts following cyberbullying victimization. While these strategies appear to be helpful because they reduce the likelihood or opportunities for the youth to be cyberbullied, they may do more harm than good. Limiting youth's social media use and time spent online removes the child from their social supports and limits their ability to interact with their friends outside of school. As well, these strategies may make it less likely for the youth to seek support following cyberbullying victimization in the future, as they may be concerned that their online privileges will be taken away. While most parents' responses to learning that their child has been victimized online is appropriate, further work is needed to ensure that Canadian parents are well informed about how to best support their child.

- Approximately half of the parents reported not talking about sexting with their children (49%). Thirty percent of parents discussed sexting with their children when they were between 9 and 12 years of age. Some parents (9%) reported discussing sexting with children younger than 9 years of age.
- While a very small number of parents reported that their children have engaged in sexting (for example, 4% of parents report that their child has sent a sext), around a quarter of the parents were concerned that their children have sent (24%), received (31%), or distributed (23%) sexts. Parents of girls and older children were more likely to be concerned.

These results are concerning. Similar to what is seen in cyberbullying, there is a notable difference between the level of parents' concerns about sexting and their reported knowledge about whether their child has engaged in sexting behaviours. These results suggest a large gap in parents' knowledge when it comes to youth's sexting experiences. Recent research from TELUS found that 56% of youth had sent a sext. There is a mismatch between the number of parents who have had the conversation with their children about sexting and the number of youth that have sent a sext. Parents need to be aware of how frequent and normative the behaviour is so that they can begin to have important conversations with their youth. Furthermore, other research has reported that parental sex education can address the risks associated with sexting in adolescents (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). Future interventions should aim to encourage parents to discuss sexting with their children in order to optimize their safety and wellness. Furthermore, efforts should be placed to better educate parents on the most appropriate time to engage in a conversation with their children about this topic.

- The majority of children (69%) were reported to be doing well in terms of mental health. Nonetheless, approximately 16% meet the criteria of being diagnosed with problematic social media use, and 43% with internet gaming disorder.

These results highlight the need to better support children and parents, especially after the increase in time spent online during the pandemic among youth. Being online provides various benefits and allows youth to remain connected to friends while following COVID-19 health guidelines. However, it is also associated with various risks that can be better managed by educating parents and youth on what the risks are and how to minimize them.

- Generally, parents of 11–14-year-old children are the most concerned about their children's online presence and behaviours.

This age range seems to be an important period in which adolescents are more vulnerable. At this age, risk-taking behaviours may increase, and adolescent-family bonds may weaken. It is of importance to especially support youth in this age group and their parents during this critical period of development.

The results of this research highlight Canadian parents' concerns about 1) their children's technology use; 2) cyberbullying among youth; 3) sexting among youth; and 4) their children's wellness during COVID-19. The findings provide specific direction for education and intervention efforts for both parents and youth pertaining to problematic media use, cyberbullying, and sexting.