

## FACTUM

### **Nine in ten (91%) Canadians agree that we should be doing more to help kids continue to live at home and not enter the child welfare system.**

Less than six in ten agree that there are adequate resources in their community to help families at risk, demonstrating a gap in the aid that can be provided to families.

**Toronto, Ontario, October 10, 2023** — In Canada, around 300,000 children are at risk of entering the child welfare system, with over 9,000 children from Manitoba and 12,000 children from Ontario currently in the child welfare system. Various factors put children at risk of entering the child welfare system, complicated issues or circumstances that make it difficult for their families to care for them at home. Poverty is a leading factor contributing to family instability, with low-income households more likely to experience food insecurity, mental health challenges, addiction, and domestic abuse. Children living in the child welfare system away from their families are more likely to experience poor academic, social, employment and health outcomes than their peers. A new poll conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada reveals that Canadians are very supportive of more early intervention programs and resources to enhance the help that families at risk need to keep more children at home.

### *Over nine in ten Canadians agree that we should be doing more to get families the help they need to ensure children can continue to live at home.*

Over nine in ten (91%) Canadians agree that we should be doing more in Canada to get families the help they need so that children can continue to live at home and do not have to grow up in the child welfare system. This sentiment is more strongly felt among women (94% vs. 88% men) and older Canadians (Millennial to Boomer range 91%-94% vs. 81% Gen Z). Regionally, Canadians from BC are more likely to agree that we should be doing more compared to those in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Quebec (97% vs. 87%, 90%, 90% respectively). Agreement among Canadians in Manitoba (91%) and Ontario (91%) is at similar levels to the national sentiment (91%).

About two-thirds (67%) of Canadians personally know of families that are struggling and need help. Respondents who have kids in the household are more likely to know of strained families compared to households without children (74% vs. 65%). Canadians who live in the Atlantic regions (86%) and Ontario (71%) are more likely to know of families that are struggling compared to other provinces such as Alberta (59%), Manitoba (62%) and Quebec (62%). A larger proportion of women (70% vs. 64% men) and younger Canadians (Gen Z to Gen X range 70%-76% vs. 55% Boomer) agree that they know of families that are in need of help.

Just under six in ten (58%) Canadians agree that there are adequate resources in their community to help families at risk. However, over three-quarters (76%) of those living in Quebec agree that their community has adequate resources, significantly higher than other provinces (range 42%-56%).

## FACTUM

*A large majority of Canadians support more early intervention programs and resources to help care for children at home to enable better social outcomes.*

Overall, Canadians are found to be very supportive of more early intervention programs and resources that will provide families with the help they need in order to care for their children at home. Over nine in ten Canadians would support early intervention programs and resources if it led to better outcomes for children (93%) or if it reduced the number of children entering the welfare system (90%). At the same time, while the support for such programs is high if the investment saves money and reduces the number of children in care (91%), a smaller proportion (71%) are only supportive if there is a cost-savings. Over eight in ten (86%) support that no matter what the cost, we need to start using proven solutions to allow more children to stay at home with their families and prevent children from entering the child welfare system.

Canadians living in Manitoba are significantly more likely to support early intervention programs if it leads to better outcomes for children (96%), if it reduces the number of children entering the system (94%), and if it saves money while reducing the number of children in care (94%), compared to Canadians in Alberta and Ontario. Almost all (99%) respondents from the Atlantic provinces would support the programs if it leads to better outcomes for the children.

Almost half (49%) of women strongly support early interventions towards reducing the number of children entering the child welfare system. Gen Zers are the least likely to support early interventions for any of these outcomes compared to older Canadians, especially Boomers.

*Financial support, in-home support and counselling are among the top ways Canadians think families can be helped to continue to care for their children at home.*

Over six in ten (66%) of Canadians believe financial support to provide resources is important for families to continue to care for their children at home. A similar proportion thinks in-home support to prevent or address family challenges (63%) and counselling for mental health concerns, substance use, or to address trauma (63%) are important tools to help families. About six in ten think access to emergency support for basic necessities (62%), and parenting education/classes/resources (57%) will also help keep children at home.

Regionally, Canadians living in Manitoba are more likely to think counselling (74%) and parenting education (68%) will help families compared to those in Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec (Counselling 62%, 67%, 49%, respectively; Parenting education 51%, 57%, 47% respectively). Access to emergency support (73%), counselling (74%) and financial support (73%) are especially important for those living in British Columbia.

## FACTUM

Women (range 63%-71%) are significantly more likely to believe all the following ways will help families care for their children at home compared to men (range 51%-62%). Older Canadians, Boomers, think access to emergency support (67%) and financial support (72%) will be most beneficial for families compared to younger Canadians. In contrast, over one in ten (11%) Gen Zers think none of these ways will help families to keep caring for their children at home.

	GENDER			GENERATION			
	Total	Male	Female	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
<i>Base:</i>	1892	883	994	207	635	493	557
Financial support*	66%	62%	69%	55%	66%	63%	72%
In-home support†	63%	56%	69%	58%	63%	62%	64%
Counselling§	63%	55%	71%	59%	61%	66%	65%
Access to emergency support*	62%	58%	66%	53%	58%	65%	67%
Parenting education/ classes/ resources	57%	51%	63%	53%	54%	61%	58%
None of the above	7%	9%	6%	11%	9%	9%	4%

	REGION						
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	Atlantic
<i>Base:</i>	129	107	104	438	775	234	105
Financial support*	73%	65%	52%	61%	65%	61%	74%
In-home support†	59%	63%	61%	62%	63%	64%	64%
Counselling§	74%	67%	62%	74%	67%	49%	61%
Access to emergency support*	73%	59%	53%	61%	62%	55%	72%
Parenting education/ classes/ resources	61%	70%	51%	68%	57%	47%	58%
None of the above	5%	7%	7%	5%	8%	10%	2%

Q3. In which of the following ways do you think families can be helped so that they can continue to care for their children at home:

\* to provide resources for their children such as school supplies and tutoring

† to prevent or address family challenges such as babysitting, income or housing support

§ for mental health concerns, substance use, or to address trauma/ intergenerational trauma

\* for basic necessities



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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between June 30 to July 04, 2023 and July 6 to 10, 2023, on behalf of the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. For this survey, a sample of 1,892 Canadians was interviewed. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 2.6$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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### About Ipsos

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