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CHILDREN NEED FOR A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION —
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WITH THEIR CHILD'S PROGRESS TOWARDS THIS
GOAL**

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Agree Curriculum Becoming More Difficult To Keep Up With*



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*Study of 1,000 Parents of Children Aged 8-15 finds That 44% Agree
Curriculum Becoming More Difficult To Keep Up With*

Toronto, ONTARIO (Tuesday, February 25th, 2003) – According to a survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid for Kumon Math and Reading Centres, most Canadian parents are not completely satisfied that the education system is helping their children reach what they deem to be important education goals.

The study, involving 1,000 parents of children aged eight to fifteen found that almost all parents (91%), when given a list of eight educational goals, rated a good understanding of the basics is extremely important. However only 51% are completely satisfied with their child’s progress towards this goal. Other goals that three quarters of parents rated as extremely important are the skills to get a good job (77%) or to attend university (76%), developing disciplined study habits (76%) and the ability to work independently (74%). One-half (51%) rate gaining confidence to work alone as extremely important, while fewer (42%) give achieving good grades a top score.

Further, 44% agree that the curriculum is becoming more difficult to keep up with.

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These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between January 7th and January 16th, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 Canadian parents of children aged 8 to 15. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.

'A Good Understanding Of The Basics' (91%) Tops 7 Goals As To What Parents Say Their Children Need For A Successful Education – But Only Half (51%) Are Satisfied With Their Child's Progress Towards This Goal

In terms of goals for education, almost all parents (91%) rate achieving a good understanding of the basics as extremely important. This is followed by building the skills to get a good job (77%) or to attend university (76%), developing disciplined study habits (76%) and the ability to work independently (74%). One half (51%) rate gaining confidence to work alone as extremely important, while fewer (42%) give achieving good grades a top score.

Just over one half (51%) of parents are actually satisfied with their child's progress toward the understanding of the basics, and 46% are satisfied that their child is achieving good grades.

Notably, significantly fewer are satisfied with their progress toward other educational goals. Only one third are satisfied with their child's building of skills for a job (30%) or university (37%). One in four (25%) are satisfied that their child is developing good study habits. For these three goals, the proportion who are completely satisfied is less than one-half of the proportion who find the goal extremely important.



- While parents of boys and girls rate the importance of educational goals similarly, the parents of boys are generally less satisfied with their child's progress towards these goals than are parents of girls.
- Regionally, parents of children in Québec are less likely to rate most goals as very important, in comparison with other provinces. They are also less likely to say they are completely satisfied with their child's progress on these goals. Just over half of parents of children in Ontario (52%), the Prairies (56%) and Atlantic Canada (56%) are relatively satisfied with their children's understanding of the basics. Parents in these same regions are relatively satisfied with their child earning good grades (Ontario: 48%, Prairies: 52% and Atlantic Canada: 54%).

Keeping Up is Becoming More Difficult

While the majority of parents (72%) think their child's school is spending enough time teaching the basics, 44% agree that the curriculum is becoming more difficult to keep up with.

Almost two thirds (64%) of parents agree that children need to stay ahead of their peers and not just keep up. As well, almost three quarters (72%) agree that individual assistance in the classroom or after school is available for their child.

- Parents in Ontario are significantly more concerned about the tougher curriculum than parents elsewhere. Fully 59% of them agree that the curriculum is getting tougher, whereas a quarter of those in B.C. (26%), and a third of those in the Prairies (29%), Québec (36%) and in Atlantic Canada (35%) feel this way.
- Parents in Québec are more likely than parents in other provinces to agree that additional help in school is available (84%).



- Parents whose children are behind are more likely to agree (73%) that the curriculum is getting tougher, but less likely to agree that extra help (62%) and a focus on the basics (44%) are in place. While less than one third (29%) of parents whose children are ahead believe that school standards and curriculum are getting tougher, almost half (48%) of parents whose children are right at grade level feel this way.
- Parents of girls are significantly more likely than parents of boys to agree that keeping up is not enough (68% and 61% respectively), and that it is more difficult to keep up with the evolving curriculum (47% and 41% respectively).
- The same can be said for a child's grade level: parents of children in intermediate/high school are more likely than parents of children in elementary school to agree that their child must stay ahead of peers (69% and 60% respectively), and that it is more and more difficult to keep up (50% and 39% respectively).

Making the grade...

Most parents believe that their child is at (58%) or ahead of (33%) grade level.

- More boys (10%) than girls (7%) are perceived to be behind grade level, as are those in higher grade levels, as 11% of children in high school are seen as being behind grade level.
- Wealthier parents (those with household incomes above \$60K) are more likely to see their child as ahead of grade level (38%), as are those who have a college diploma or university degree (36%).

When it comes to helping their child succeed in school, more than a third of parents (39%) feel that the best thing they can do to help is encourage their children and offer them support. One in five (20%) mention being involved in their child's education, 19% state that helping

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their child with their work is key, while 8% believe that teaching them positive habits/behaviour is most helpful. Only 2% of parents mentioned tutoring or supplemental learning.

Are Children Spending Enough Time or Too Much Time Doing Homework?

Almost half of Canadian children (46%) are spending 30 minutes to one hour per night on homework. Just over one quarter (28%) spend 30 minutes or less, while one quarter (25%) spend one to three hours per night.

- Regionally, those living in the Prairies (32%) tend to spend 30 minutes or less per night on average doing homework, while just over half of those living in Quebec and in B.C (55% and 53% respectively) spend 30 minutes to one hour. Although almost half of those living in Ontario and in Atlantic Canada (42% and 46% respectively) spend 30 minutes to one hour on homework, they are significantly more likely to spend between one and three hours per evening doing homework (28% and 33% respectively).
- Although almost half of the boys (48%) and the girls (45%) spend between 30 minutes to one hour, a third (33%) of boys tend to spend less than 30 minutes, whereas a third (32%) of girls tend to spend between one and three hours on homework in a night.
- Not surprisingly, the time spent on homework increases with grade level.

Parents spend time helping out their children as well. Two thirds (64%) spend 30 minutes or less per evening with their children on schoolwork, while almost one third (29%) spend 30 minutes to one hour per night. Only 6% spend one and three hours on average helping their children each night.



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- For the most part, parental involvement is similar with the child's homework routine. Parents whose children spend more time on homework tend to spend more time with them.

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