

# ONTARIO'S FIRST REPORT ON COMMUNITY CHARACTER



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## ONTARIO'S FIRST REPORT ON COMMUNITY CHARACTER

**Toronto, ON** – A new Ipsos-Reid survey conducted on behalf of York Region District School Board and The York Region Character Council shows that while on the surface a majority of Ontarians portray a very positive image of their communities, the intensity of their agreement with a number of community attributes statements reveals a range of areas that could be improved.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/York Region poll conducted between March 15<sup>th</sup> and March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004. For the telephone survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Ontarians was interviewed. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm$  3.1 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 weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.*

*The sponsors would like to thank Dr. Matt Davidson of Davidson Consulting and Ken Fisher of the Abraham Lincoln Institute for Character for the provision of the field-tested behaviour questions.*



***Eight In Ten (77%) Agree That People Don't Learn Enough About Character Nowadays – One-Third (33%) Completely Believe This To Be The Case...***

Seventy-seven percent of Ontarians agree with the statement “people don’t learn enough about character nowadays” (33% completely/44% somewhat). Nearly one in five (17%) disagree with this statement (11% somewhat/6% completely), and a further 4% neither agree nor disagree with it.

***So, What About Their Own Community? Most (92%) Say The Character Of Their Community Is Good – Majority (54%) Say It Is Very Good...***

When thinking about their specific community in which they live, most Ontarians (92%) would say that the character of their community is good (54% very/38% somewhat). Only 8% say the character of their community is not good (5% not very good at all/3% not so good).

***And What Acts Do They Witness In Their Community? Half Or More Say They Witness “Respect” (57%), “Responsibility” (53%), “Honesty” (51%), And “Compassion” (48%), Almost Always...***

When it comes to the people that live in their community, nine in ten Ontarians say they witness acts of “respect” (93%: 57% almost always/36% sometimes), “responsibility” (93%: 53% almost always/40% sometimes), “honesty” (93%: 51% almost always/42% sometimes), and “compassion” (92%: 48% almost always/44% sometimes) on a regular basis - with half saying each of these attributes are demonstrated by people in their community “almost always”.

***But Less Than Half Witness Acts Of “Fairness” (47%), “Integrity” (45%), “Perseverance” (38%), And “Optimism” (35%), Almost Always...***

Similarly, nine in ten Ontarians say they witness acts of “fairness” (93%: 47% almost always/46% sometimes), “integrity” (91%: 45% almost always/46% sometimes), “perseverance” (86%: 38% almost always/48% sometimes), and “optimism” (87%: 35% almost always/52% sometimes) on a regular basis. But, in these cases, less than half of Ontarians say they witness these attributes in their community “almost always”.

***And Only One-Third Almost Always Witness “Initiative” And “Courage” ...***

When it comes to “initiative” (87%: 33% almost always/54% somewhat) and “courage” (81%: 33% almost always/48% sometimes), the majority of Ontarians say they witness these acts in their community on a regular basis, however only one-third say they see such acts “almost always”.

***Looking At Their Assessments Of Some Attitudes And Behaviours: A Majority (61%) Disagree That “People Here Only Care About Themselves” – But It Is A Sentiment That Is Only Strongly Held By 28%...***

A majority of Ontarians (61%) disagree with the statement that “people here only care about themselves” – 28% “completely disagree”. But, one-third agree with this statement (9% completely/24% somewhat). Five percent of Ontarians neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

***Most (85%) Believe People Would Help Someone New Feel Accepted – Four In Ten (39%) Strongly Feel This Way...***

Most Ontarians (85%) agree with the statement that “people would help someone who was new here feel accepted” (39% completely/46% somewhat). Eleven percent disagrees with this statement, and 3% neither agree nor disagree.



### ***And There's A Broadly Held View Of Inclusiveness...***

Six in ten (59%) disagree with the statement that “people here do not talk to or include those who are different – that is people who belong to a race, religion, culture or who are gay” (32% completely/27% somewhat). One-third (32%) agrees with this statement (10% completely/23% somewhat), and 6% neither agree nor disagree.

### ***But There's Also A View That People Make Fun Of Or Dismiss Ideas That Are Different...***

Seven in ten (70%) agree with the statement that “people make fun of or dismiss ideas that are different” (20% completely/50% somewhat), but 23% disagree (7% completely/16% somewhat). Six percent neither agree nor disagrees.

### ***And Only 30% Completely Agree That If People Are In Trouble They Can Rely On Others To Help Them...***

Over eight in ten (85%) agree with the statement that “if people are in trouble they can rely on others to help them” – but only 30% “completely agree” with this statement. Thirteen percent disagree with this statement (5% completely/8% somewhat), and 2% neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

### ***Further, Only 17% Completely Agree That When People See Someone Being Picked On They Try To Stop It...***

Six in ten (60%) agree with the statement that “when people see someone being picked on they try to stop it” – with 17% completely agreeing. Of the opposite opinion are the 30% who disagree with this statement (8% completely/22% somewhat) – a further 9% neither agree nor disagree.

### ***Only 15% Completely Agree That When Trying To Solve A Problem People Are Willing To Consider Everybody's Opinion...***

A majority (62%) agrees with the statement that “when trying to solve a problem, people are willing to consider everybody's opinion”, with 15% saying they “completely agree” with this



statement. Three in ten (28%) disagree with this statement (7% completely/21% somewhat), and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

***Further, One-Third (32%) Disagree That People Resolve Conflicts Without “Fighting, Insults Or Threats” ...***

One-third (32%) disagree with the statement that “people resolve conflicts without fighting, insults or threats” (9% completely/23% somewhat). Most (61%), however, agree with this statement (17% completely/44% somewhat). The remaining 6% neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

***So What About The Children? Full Majority (88%) Agree That Parents Are Involved In Children’s Activities, But Only 38% Agree Completely...***

A good majority (88%) agree with the statement that “parents are involved in children’s activities” – but only 38% agree completely with this statement. Of remaining respondents, 8% disagree with this statement, and 3% neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

***And Most (78%) Believe Adults Know Children And Care About Their Interests – But Only 32% Completely Agree...***

Most (78%) agree that “adults know children and care about their interests such as their friends, music, and hobbies” – with 32% who completely agree (45% somewhat agree). One in ten (13%) disagree with this statement, and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

***Similarly, 66% Agree That Parents Know Their Children’s Friends – But Only 23% Completely Agree...***

Two-thirds (66%) agree with the statement “parents know their children’s friends” (23% completely/44% somewhat), while 24% disagree (5% completely/19% somewhat). Six percent neither agree nor disagree.



***Eighty-one Percent Agree That If Children Knew Something Dangerous Would Happen They Would Go To An Adult For Help...***

Eight in ten (81%) agree that “if children knew that something dangerous would happen they would go to an adult for help” (29% completely/52% somewhat), while 12% disagree, and 5% neither agree nor disagree.

***But Would Adults Be Available to Talk With Those Children About Their Problems? A Majority (74%) Agree They Would – But Only 30% Completely Agree...***

A majority of adults (74%) agree that “there are adults available to talk with children about their problems” (30% completely/45% somewhat), while 12% disagree, and 9% neither agree nor disagree.

***Six In Ten (61%) Agree That Adults Listen To The Opinions Of Children, But Only 10% Agree Completely...***

Six in ten (61%) agree that “adults listen to the opinions of children” (10% completely/51% somewhat), while 32% disagree (7% completely/25% somewhat), and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

***Again, While A Majority (81%) Agree That Adults Go Out Of Their Way To Help Children Who Need Extra Help, Only 26% Completely Agree...***

Eight in ten (81%) agree with the statement that “adults go out of their way to help children who need extra help” (26% completely/55% somewhat agree), and 17% disagree with this statement (3% completely/14% somewhat) – a further 2% neither agree nor disagree.

***As For Children’s Behaviour Being Consistently Enforced By Adults, Agreement Drops to Just 59% --- 22% Completely Agree...***

Six in ten (59%) agree with the statement that “the rules for children’s behaviour are consistently enforced by adults” (22% completely/37% somewhat), and 33% disagree with





this statement (9% completely/24% somewhat). The remaining 5% neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

***With A Mirror Image On The “Unfair Treatment Of Children” ... One-third (32%) Agree That Adults Are Unfair – 59% Disagree (Only 22% Completely Disagree)...***

One-third (32%) agree with the statement “adults are unfair in the treatment of children” (4% completely/28% somewhat). A majority (59%) disagree with this statement, but only 22% “completely disagree” with it. Eight percent neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

***Ninety-one Percent Agree Adults Are Willing To Forgive Children Who Make Mistakes – But Only 32% Completely Agree...***

Nine in ten (91%) agree with the statement “adults are willing to forgive children who make mistakes” – as 32% “completely agree” with it. Meanwhile, 7% disagree with this statement and 1% neither agree nor disagree.

***So What About Character Development? – A Majority (70% - 26% Completely) Agree That Kids Today Don’t Learn The Basics Of Character Development...***

A majority of seven in ten (70%) agree with the statement “kids today don’t learn the basics of character development” (26% completely/44% somewhat), while 23% disagree (18% completely/18% somewhat), and 6% neither agree nor disagree.

***Almost The Same Proportion Agree That There Are Adequate Support And Resources Available For Character Development (55% - But Only 16% Completely)...***

Fifty-five percent agree with the statement that “there are adequate support and resources available for character development” (16% completely/39% somewhat) – one-third (32%) disagree (10% completely/22% somewhat), and 8% neither agree nor disagree.





***And Finally, What Of Community Leadership? Seven In Ten (69%) Agree That Educators And Community Leaders Welcome The Opinions Of Parents (26% Completely)...***

Seven in ten (69%) agree with the statement that “educators and community leaders welcome the opinions of parents” (26% completely/43% somewhat), while 21% disagree with this statement (8% completely/12% somewhat), and 5% neither agree nor disagree.

***Almost The Same Agree That Educators And Community Leaders Regularly Involve Parents (67% -- 21% Completely)...***

Two-thirds (67%) agree that “educators and community leaders regularly involve parents” (21% completely/46% somewhat), while 23% disagree (8% completely/15% somewhat), and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

***A Majority Agree (75% -- 28% Completely) That People Take An Active Role In Trying To Solve Community Or School Problems...***

Three-quarters (75%) agree that “people take an active role in trying to solve community or school problems” (28% completely/47% somewhat), 17% disagree (5% completely/12% somewhat), and 6% neither agree nor disagree.

***And Almost All (90% -- 45% Completely) Agree That People Believe That Working Together They Can Bring About Change In Their School Or Community...***

Nine in ten (90%) agree with the statement that “people believe that working together they can bring about change in their school or community” (45% completely/45% somewhat). Meanwhile, 5% disagree with this statement, and 3% neither agree nor disagree with it.



***Even More Agree That People Would Support You If You Tried To Do Something Good (91% -- 52% Completely)...***

Nine in ten (91%) agree with the statement that “people would support you if you tried to do something good” (52% completely/40% somewhat), 6% disagree with this statement, and 2% neither agree nor disagree.

***Seventy-nine Percent Agree That People Try To Get Others To Follow The Rules – Only 19% Completely Agree***

Seventy-nine percent agree with the statement that “people try to get others to follow the rules” (19% completely/60% somewhat), 13% disagree (2% completely/12% somewhat), and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

***Six In Ten (59%) Believe People Do Care If Others Cheat – 30% Completely Agree...***

Six in ten (59%) disagree with the statement that “people try to get others to follow the rules” (30% completely/30% somewhat). In comparison, 36% agree with this statement (10% completely/26% somewhat) – a further 4% neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

-30-

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