

# MOST CANADIANS WANT GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION IN FIGHT AGAINST CHILD OBESITY



**Ipsos Reid**

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## **MOST CANADIANS WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION IN FIGHT AGAINST CHILD OBESITY**

**Toronto, ON** – A new Ipsos Reid study conducted on behalf of CanWest Global reports that large majorities of Canadians would support new government measures in the battle against child obesity, specifically:

- 84% support the idea of introducing “a new regulation that requires doctors to tell parents if their child is clinically overweight or obese” (52% strongly support this idea); and
- 79% support the idea of developing “a new federal health program that informs parents about how to tell if their child is at an unhealthy weight” (43% strongly support this idea).

But, Canadians are less receptive towards the idea of a potential ‘junk-food’ tax. Forty-five percent support introducing “a special tax on snack foods, such as potato chips, candy and chocolate, to discourage people from buying them” (25% strongly support) versus 53% who oppose this idea (36% strongly oppose).

And when asked to choose from a list, Canadians are most likely to say the major reason why parents in Canada have overweight and obese children is:

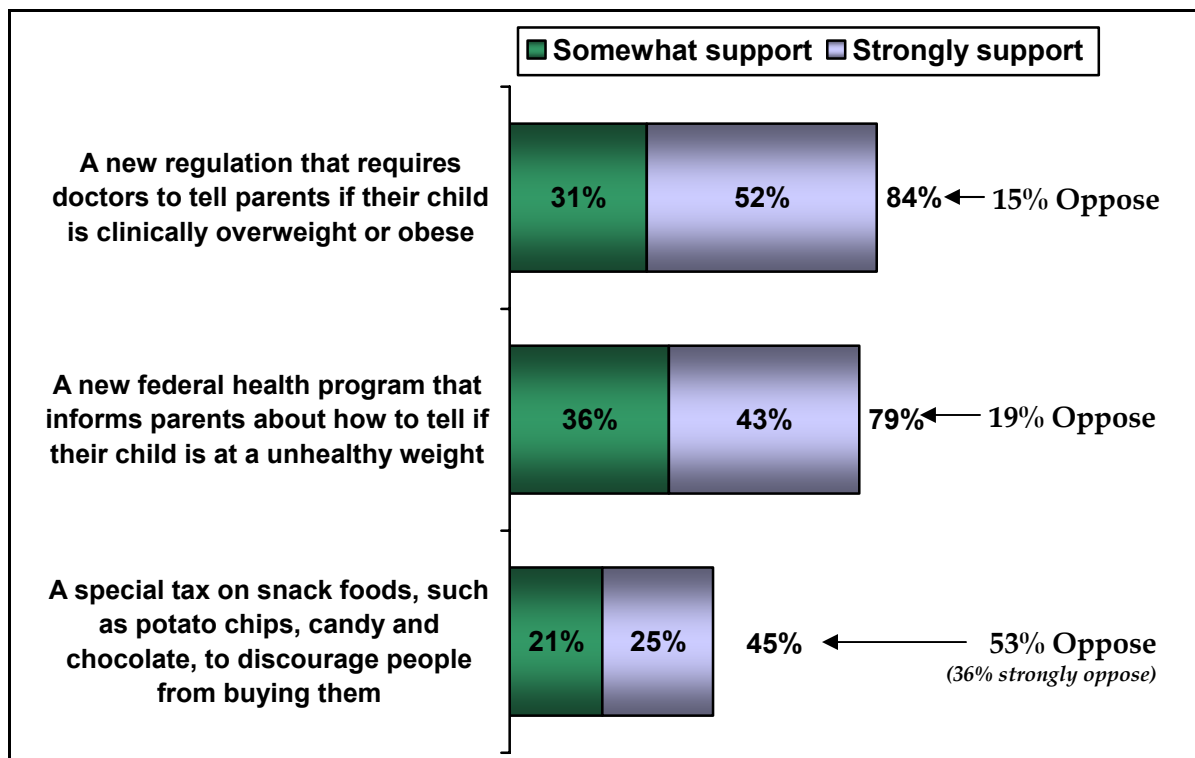
- “Parents don’t know what they should do to control their child’s weight” (33%); followed by
- “Parents don’t know about the negative health consequences of their child being overweight or obese” (25%); while others feel
- “Parents are afraid they may cause psychological damage to their child if they discuss weight issues with them” (17%); and
- Parents with obese children “don’t realize their child is overweight” (14%).



These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for CanWest/Global and fielded from November 14-16<sup>th</sup>, 2006. For the survey, a representative sample of 1000 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. The sample used in this study has been weighted according to Census data to accurately reflect the population Canadians. With a sample of this size, the aggregate results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had this entire population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within each sub-grouping of the survey population.

### ***Strong Support For Informing Parents About Their Child's Obesity, But Canadians Split When It Comes To Potential 'Junk Food' Tax...***

***I am going to read a number of statements of things that might be done to help reduce the number of children in Canada who are overweight or obese. For each one, please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this measure ...***



***Asked of All Canadians, n=1000***

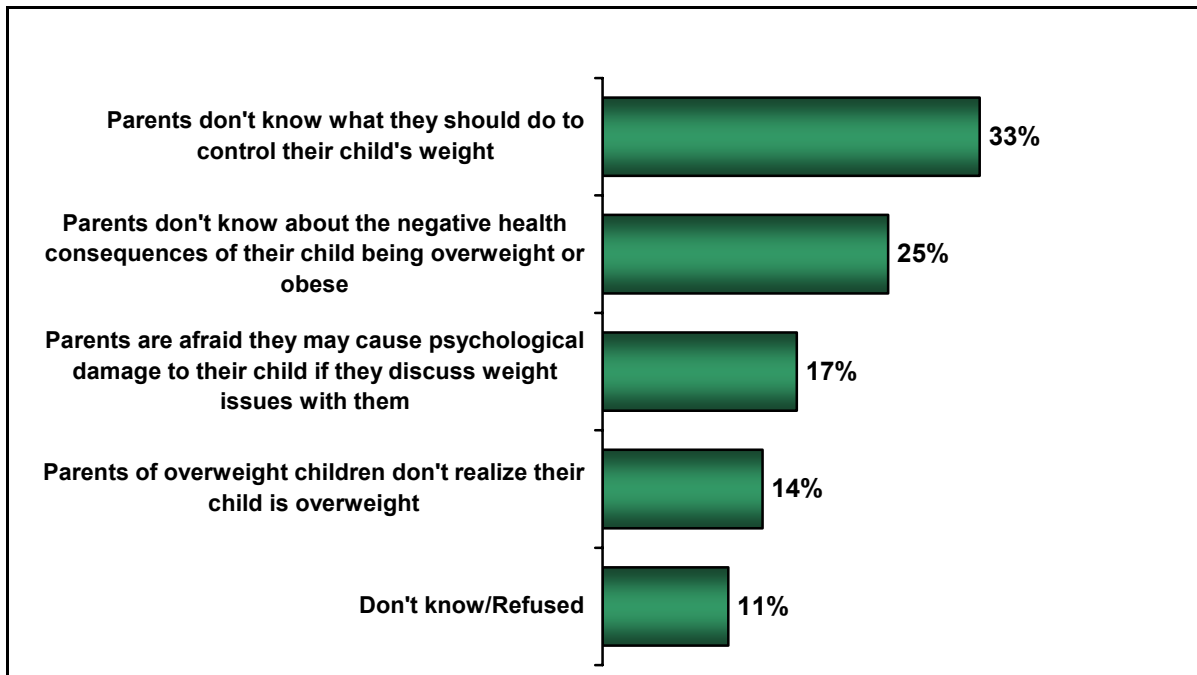


- Residents of Atlantic Canada are more likely than other Canadians to support each of the three measures. Most notably, 62% in Atlantic Canada *strongly* support “a new federal health program that informs parents about how to tell if their child is at an unhealthy weight” (vs. 43% of all Canadians).
- University graduate as a little less likely than Canadians on the whole to support “a new regulation that requires doctors to tell parents if their child is clinically overweight or obese” (80% vs. 84% in Canada overall) and are more likely to strongly oppose such a policy (19% vs. 15% overall).
- When it comes to “a special tax on snack foods, such as potato chips, candy and chocolate, to discourage people from buying them”, a slight majority in Atlantic Canada (57%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (54%) support the tax, while Albertans (38%) are the least likely to support this potential measure.
- Younger adults age 18-34 are the most likely to support the ideas of “a new regulation that requires doctors to tell parents if their child is clinically overweight or obese” (91% vs. 82% among those age 35 and over); and “a new federal health program that informs parents about how to tell if their child is at an unhealthy weight” (86% vs. 77% among those age 35 and older).



## *One in Three Say Parents In Canada Have Overweight/Obese Children Because They Don't Know How To Control Their Child's Weight...*

**Which of the following would you say is the major reason why parents in Canada have overweight and obese children?**



**Asked of All Canadians, n=1000**

- Residents in Atlantic Canada (46%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (45%) are the most likely to point to the suggestion that “parents don’t know what they should do to control their child’s weight, while those in British Columbia (29%) are the least likely to choose this reason.

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