

# Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2019

First Look-Summary

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## **National Household Education Surveys Program**

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# Introduction

This report presents data on students in the United States attending kindergarten through grade 12. The focus of the report is on parent and family involvement in the students' education during the 2018–19 school year, as reported by the students' parents. It includes the percentage of students who participated in selected family activities. Demographic information about students and families is presented, including students' poverty status and parents' education and language spoken at home, as well as school characteristics, such as school size and school type. Tabular findings are in appendix A. These data represent circumstances before the implementation of coronavirus pandemic restrictions.

The data for this report come from the Parent and Family Involvement in Education (PFI) Survey, administered as part of the 2019 National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES:2019). The PFI survey collects data about students who are enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 in a physical or virtual school or are homeschooled for equivalent grades and asks questions about various aspects of parent involvement in education, such as help with homework, family activities, and parent involvement at school, such as attending a school or class event. For homeschooled students, the survey asks questions related to students' homeschooling experiences, the sources of the curriculum, and the reasons for homeschooling. For students taking virtual courses, the survey asks about parents' reasons for choosing virtual schooling and the cost and the amount of time each week the student takes virtual courses. The PFI questionnaires were completed by a parent or guardian who knew about the sampled child.

The NHES:2019 used a nationally representative address-based sample covering the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The survey was conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau from January through August 2019. The 2019 administration of NHES included a screener survey and two topical surveys; the Early Childhood Program Participation Survey, and the PFI. The screener survey asked for an enumeration of household members and was used to select an eligible child to be the focus of a topical survey. For more information about the NHES:2019 methodology, please reference the forthcoming *National Household Education Surveys Program of 2019: Data File User's Manual* (Jackson et al., forthcoming).

Although the NHES is a repeating cross-sectional survey, changes in the sample frame, data collection methods and wording of some items have occurred over time. Because of these changes, homeschooling estimates are not included in this report,<sup>1</sup> and caution should be used in comparing results in this report to those from prior NHES collections. When weighted, the PFI data in this report are nationally representative of the non-homeschooling population of students in grades kindergarten through 12, including children enrolled in public, private, and virtual schools. The total number of cases used in this report is 15,950 students, representing a population of 51.5 million non-homeschooled students in kindergarten through grade 12.

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<sup>1</sup> Homeschooling estimates will be provided in a later report, but are not included here because of major changes in the data collection methodology for these estimates. Homeschooling data are included in the PFI data files.

PFI questionnaires were completed for 16,446 students in kindergarten through grade 12, for a weighted PFI unit response rate of 83.4 percent and an overall estimated weighted unit response rate (the screener weighted unit response rate multiplied by the PFI unit weighted response rate) of 52.6 percent. An analysis of bias in the NHES:2019 data detected some measurable bias in certain demographic characteristics and survey responses. The level of potential bias detected is considered to be low. Additional details about the survey methodology, response rates, and data reliability are provided in appendix B.

Results presented in this report are weighted. All statements of comparison have been tested for statistical significance using two-tailed *t*-tests and are significant at the 95 percent confidence level. No adjustments were made for multiple comparisons. Some estimates that appear different may not be measurably different in a statistical sense due to sampling error. Readers are directed to the Statistical Tests section of appendix B for information about how to compare estimates in the tables.

This *First Look* report presents selected descriptive information. Readers are cautioned not to draw causal inferences based on the results presented. It is important to note that many of the variables examined in this report may be related to one another, and complex interactions and relationships among the variables have not been explored. The variables examined here are just a few of the variables that can be examined in these data; they were selected to demonstrate the range of information available from the study. The release of this report is intended to encourage in-depth analysis of the data using more sophisticated statistical methods.

For readers interested in appendixes with tables of estimates, definitions of terms used in the findings and tables, and additional information about the survey from which the findings are drawn, please see the “View full report” link at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020076>.

## Selected Findings

- In the 2018–19 school year, school communication with parents, as reported by parents, most commonly occurred through school-wide newsletters, memos, e-mails, or notices. This type of communication, addressed to all parents, was reported for 89 percent of students in kindergarten through grade 12. Receiving emails or notes specifically about the student was reported for 66 percent of students and receiving phone calls about a specific student was reported for 40 percent of students (table 1).
- On average, students in kindergarten through grade 12 had parents who reported participating in 6.5 school related activities in the 2018–19 school year. The most common school-related activity was attending a general school or parent-teacher organization or association meeting (reported for 89 percent of students). That was followed by attending a school or class event (79 percent) and attending a parent-teacher conference (75 percent) (table 2).
- About 8 out of 10 students in kindergarten through grade 12 (77 percent) had an amount of homework that their parents said was “about right.” Parents also reported being “very satisfied” (the highest on a four-point scale) with the following school characteristics: the school overall (64 percent of students); the student’s teachers (63 percent); the academic standards of the school (61 percent); the order and discipline at the school (59 percent); and the school staff’s interaction with parents (56 percent) (table 3).
- For students whose parents considered more than one school for the student, the factors most frequently rated as “very important” when choosing a school were the quality of teachers, principal or other staff at the school (selected for 79 percent of students); and safety, which includes student discipline (71 percent) (table 4).
- According to parents, a higher percentage of students attended a community, religious, or ethnic event (50 percent) with their family in the past month than attended an athletic or sporting event (38 percent); visited a library (34 percent); went to a play, concert, or other live show (33 percent); visited a bookstore (32 percent); visited an art gallery, a museum, or a historical site (24 percent); or visited a zoo or an aquarium (20 percent) (table 5).