



Opinion poll regarding aggression among young children in Canada

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

OMNIBUS RESEARCH REPORT

Perceptions and opinions of Canadians regarding aggression among young children

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Introduction

Context and research objectives

Léger Marketing was mandated by the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development to assess:

- the perceptions of Canadians with regard to violence manifested by children
- the perceived influence of age and gender on manifestations of violence among children
- prioritization regarding additional governmental investment in violence prevention programs in specific age categories.

Methodology

This poll was conducted by Léger Marketing through telephone interviews with a random sample of 1,500 Canadians, aged 18 years and older, who spoke either French or English.

Interviews were conducted from June 18 to June 23, 2002 from our call centre in Montreal. We allowed for up to 10 callbacks in cases where there was no reply.

With the help of Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to region, gender of respondents and language spoken in the household in order to make the sample representative of the adult population of Canada as a whole.

Given the 1,500 people polled, there is a maximum margin of error of $\pm 2.6\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Note to the reader

- The poll results are presented in comparative tables according to the region in which respondents resided.
- The tables in this document are highlighted with blue to indicate a significantly larger proportion of respondents from one region compared with respondents from the other regions, overall. Conversely, data highlighted in yellow indicate a significantly smaller proportion of respondents from one region compared with respondents from other regions, overall.

Research findings

1. Main concerns among Canadians

- ✎ Currently, the two top concerns among the Canadians polled are **poverty in families** (32%) and **youth violence** (32%).
- ✎ From the most pressing concerns to the least pressing, the other concerns were rated as follows: youth suicide (12%), school failure (11%), and youth health (8%).
- ✎ It should be noted that these answers were not spontaneous. The respondents had to chose from among the five possibilities they were given.

Table 1a: QD1. Among the following problems, which is of most concern to you personally?

INITIAL MENTION

Base: All respondents	Total (n=1500)	Maritimes (n=100)	Quebec (n=400)	Ontario (n=600)	Prairies (n=125)	Alberta (n=125)	B.C. (n=150)
▪ ...Poverty in families	32%	35%	31%	30%	34%	34%	39%
▪ ...Youth violence	32%	24%	31%	32%	36%	36%	37%
▪ ...Youth suicide	12%	23%	19%	10%	11%	6%	5%
▪ ...School failure	11%	8%	8%	14%	8%	15%	6%
▪ ...Youth health	8%	6%	11%	8%	7%	3%	8%
▪ None of the above	2%	2%	-	4%	3%	2%	3%
▪ Don't know/Refusal to answer	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%

**Table 1b: QD1. Among the following problems, which is of most concern to you personally?
And which problem concerns you the most after that?**

MENTIONS GROUPED TOGETHER*

Base: All respondents	Total (n=1500)	Maritimes (n=100)	Quebec (n=400)	Ontario (n=600)	Prairies (n=125)	Alberta (n=125)	B.C. (n=150)
▪ ...Poverty in families	56%	61%	58%	53%	56%	63%	55%
▪ ...Youth violence	54%	49%	52%	53%	65%	55%	61%
▪ ...Youth suicide	27%	36%	37%	23%	24%	22%	20%
▪ ...School failure	24%	17%	17%	30%	21%	29%	21%
▪ ...Youth health	18%	15%	22%	19%	13%	14%	18%
▪ None of the above	2%	2%	-	4%	3%	2%	3%
▪ Don't know/Refusal to answer	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%

*The vertical total may exceed 100% since respondents had the possibility of giving up to two answers.

The tendency to be concerned with **poverty in families** (32%) was most prevalent among people between the ages of 25 and 34 (42%), and among those whose gross annual household income was between \$20,000 and \$39,999 (39%).

No group of respondents stood out significantly in the concern it showed regarding **youth violence**.

2. The critical age when children resort to violence

2.1 Physical violence among boys

- ✎ Regardless of their region of residence, over one-third (37%) of the Canadians polled thought that boys resort most frequently to physical aggression between 12 and 14 years of age.
- ✎ The other two periods during which respondents thought that boys resorted most frequently to physical aggression were the period between ages 15 and 17 (24%) and that between 8 and 11 (18%).
- ✎ It should be noted that 8% of the Canadians polled had no answer to this question.

Table 2.1: QD2. At what age do you think that boys from your province resort most frequently to physical aggression?

ONLY ONE ANSWER

Base: All respondents	Total (n=1500)	Maritimes (n=100)	Quebec (n=400)	Ontario (n=600)	Prairies (n=125)	Alberta (n=125)	B.C. (n=150)
▪ 0 to 4 years	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	4%	1%
▪ 5 to 7 years	5%	8%	5%	5%	3%	4%	4%
▪ 8 to 11 years	18%	12%	18%	19%	22%	15%	17%
▪ 12 to 14 years	37%	46%	33%	38%	39%	37%	38%
▪ 15 to 17 years	24%	18%	32%	21%	20%	26%	23%
▪ 18 years or older	5%	4%	8%	5%	2%	2%	5%
▪ None (no aggression)	0%	1%	-	-	1%	-	1%
▪ Do not know/Refusal to answer	8%	9%	3%	9%	9%	11%	12%

Most of the Canadians who believed that boys resort most frequently to physical aggression between 12 and 14 years of age were anglophones between ages 55 and 64 (44%), and people with a post-secondary education (42%).

The tendency to state that boys resort most frequently to physical aggression between ages 15 and 17 was most prevalent among people 18 to 24 years of age (32%), francophones (31%), residents of Quebec (32%), and people with a high school education (28%).

The largest proportions of Canadians who thought that boys resort most frequently to physical aggression between the ages of 8 and 11 were between 35 and 44 years of age (23%), and the working public (19%).

2.2 Physical violence among girls

- ✎ Regardless of their region of residence, more than two out of five of the Canadians polled (42%) thought that girls resort most frequently to physical aggression between the ages of 12 and 14.
- ✎ The other period during which respondents thought that girls resort most frequently to physical aggression was between the ages of 15 and 17 (27%).
- ✎ It should be noted that nearly one-eighth (12%) of the Canadians polled had no answer to this question.

Table 2.2: QD3. At what age do you think that girls from your province resort most frequently to physical aggression?

ONLY ONE ANSWER

Base: All respondents	Total (n=1500)	Maritimes (n=100)	Quebec (n=400)	Ontario (n=600)	Prairies (n=125)	Alberta (n=125)	B.C. (n=150)
▪ 0 to 4 years	1%	-	-	2%	2%	2%	-
▪ 5 to 7 years	2%	5%	1%	3%	1%	3%	2%
▪ 8 to 11 years	9%	8%	9%	8%	8%	7%	12%
▪ 12 to 14 years	42%	48%	40%	39%	49%	44%	46%
▪ 15 to 17 years	27%	22%	31%	28%	24%	28%	22%
▪ 18 years or older	5%	3%	7%	6%	2%	5%	4%
▪ None (no aggression)	1%	-	2%	1%	-	-	1%
▪ Do not know/Refusal to answer	12%	14%	8%	14%	13%	12%	13%

It is mainly anglophones (44%) who think that girls resort most frequently to physical aggression between the ages of 12 and 14.

The tendency to state that girls resort most frequently to physical aggression between ages 15 and 17 was most prevalent among people 18 to 24 years of age (42%), residents of Quebec (31%), and people with a high school education (31%).

2.3 Physical punishment is most frequent before age 8

- ✎ According to the respondents, parents resort most frequently to physical punishment during the first seven years of a child's life. Indeed, 29% of the Canadians polled stated that parents resort most frequently to physical punishment when their children are 0 to 4 years old, while 28% of respondents chose the period between ages 5 to 7.
- ✎ In the opinion of 15% of the respondents, parents resort most frequently to physical punishment when their children are 8 to 11 years of age.
- ✎ It should be noted that one-seventh (14%) of the Canadians polled had no answer to this question.

Table 2.3: QD4. According to you, during which period of a child's life do parents most often use physical punishment?

ONLY ONE ANSWER

Base: All respondents	Total (n=1500)	Maritimes (n=100)	Quebec (n=400)	Ontario (n=600)	Prairies (n=125)	Alberta (n=125)	B.C. (n=150)
▪ 0 to 4 years	29%	30%	27%	26%	30%	36%	36%
▪ 5 to 7 years	28%	15%	34%	30%	26%	30%	21%
▪ 8 to 11 years	15%	13%	19%	15%	13%	7%	16%
▪ 12 to 14 years	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	7%	5%
▪ 15 to 17 years	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%
▪ 18 years or older	0%	-	-	-	2%	-	1%
▪ None (no aggression)	5%	7%	5%	6%	5%	4%	5%
▪ Do not know/Refusal to answer	14%	24%	8%	14%	15%	15%	16%

Most of the Canadians who thought that parents resort most frequently to physical punishment when their children are between ages 0 and 4 were women (35%), people between the ages of 55 and 64 years (36%), anglophones (31%), residents of British Columbia (36%), people whose gross annual household income was \$60,000 or more (36%), professionals (34%), and people with a university education (34%).

The tendency to state that parents resort most frequently to physical punishment when their children are between ages 5 and 7 was most prevalent among men (31%), people aged 18 to 24 (37%), francophones, residents of Quebec (34%), and members of the working public (34%).

The largest proportions of Canadians who thought that parents resort most frequently to physical punishment when their children are between ages 8 and 11 were found among men (18%), people between 18 and 24 (21%) or between 25 and 34 years of age (20%), francophones (19%), residents of Quebec (19%), people whose gross annual household income was between \$40,000 and \$59,999 (19%), and students (26%).

3. Physical aggression among children 6 to 11 years of age

- Opinions are divided with regard to the influence of gender in children's physical manifestations of aggression. On one hand, 44% of the respondents stated that there are more boys than girls between the ages of 6 and 11 who physically attack others. On the other hand, 41% of the respondents stated that there are as many girls as boys between the ages of 6 and 11 who physically attack others.
- It should be noted that less than one-tenth (8%) of the respondents thought that there are more girls than boys between the ages of 6 and 11 who physically attack others.

Table 3: QD5. Do you think that nowadays, among children between the ages of 6 and 11, more girls physically attack others, more boys physically attack others, or that both do so equally?

ONLY ONE RESPONSE

Base: All respondents	Total (n=1500)	Maritimes (n=100)	Quebec (n=400)	Ontario (n=600)	Prairies (n=125)	Alberta (n=125)	B.C. (n=150)
More boys than girls physically attack others.	44%	37%	62%	42%	32%	34%	32%
As many girls as boys physically attack others.	41%	51%	32%	42%	49%	44%	47%
More girls than boys physically attack others.	8%	6%	4%	9%	12%	14%	12%
Do not know/Refusal to answer	6%	6%	3%	7%	7%	9%	10%

The tendency to state that there are more boys than girls between the ages of 6 and 11 who physically attack others was most prevalent among men (47%), people between 18 and 24 years of age (57%), francophones (63%), residents of Quebec (62%), people whose gross annual household income was \$60,000 or more (52%), professionals (55%), members of the working public in general (46%), and people with a university education (52%).

The tendency to state that there are as many women as boys between the ages of 6 and 11 who physically attack others was most prevalent among women (45%), people aged 65 and older (50%), anglophones (44%), residents of the Maritimes (51%), people whose gross annual household income was less than \$20,000 (49%), and people with an elementary school (60%) or a high school (46%) education.

Anglophones (10%), residents of Alberta (14%), and manual labourers (12%) tended to state that there are more girls than boys between the ages of 6 and 11 who physically attack others.

4. Violence prevention programs

- ✍ Generally speaking, two Canadians out of five (41%) stated that **teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17** should be made a **top priority** for any additional investment in government violence prevention programs.
- ✍ In addition, one-third (33%) of respondents thought that **top priority** should be given to providing for **children between the ages of 5 and 11** if the Canadian government were to invest \$100 million in additional violence prevention programs.
- ✍ It should be noted that 5% of the Canadians polled **had no answer** to this question.

Table 4: QD6a + QD6b. There are currently violence prevention programs aimed at adults, young adults, teenagers, children and very young children. If the Canadian government invested another \$100 million in these prevention programs, which age group should be given priority?

OR

There are currently violence prevention programs aimed at very young children, children, teenagers, young adults and adults. If the Canadian government invested another \$100 million in these preventive programs which age group should be given priority?

Base: All respondents	Total (n=1500)	Maritimes (n=100)	Quebec (n=400)	Ontario (n=600)	Prairies (n=125)	Alberta (n=125)	B.C. (n=150)
▪ ...Very young children between the ages of 0 and 4	10%	10%	10%	8%	12%	9%	13%
▪ ...Children between the ages of 5 and 11	33%	40%	27%	35%	35%	29%	36%
▪ ...Teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17	41%	36%	45%	42%	32%	44%	35%
▪ ...Young adults between the ages of 18 and 29	9%	8%	11%	8%	9%	9%	6%
▪ ...Adults 30 years of age and older	3%	2%	5%	2%	6%	1%	3%
▪ Do not know/Refusal to answer	5%	4%	3%	5%	5%	9%	7%

Most of the Canadians who thought that priority should be given to **teenagers between ages 12 and 17** were people between 18 and 24 (53%) or 35 and 44 years of age (47%), allophones (49%), people whose gross annual household income was between \$20,000 and \$39,999 (48%), manual labourers (48%), and people with a high school education (46%).

There was a tendency to state that **children between the ages of 5 and 11 should be given priority** among people between the ages of 25 and 34 (44%) or between 45 and 54 (38%), allophones (36%), professionals (43%), and people with a university education (42%).

Questionnaire

1

QD1. Among the following problems, which is of most concern to you personally... And which concerns you the most after that?

READ 5 CHOICES * 2 ANSWERS POSSIBLE

Rotation => 5

- ...School failure..... 1
- ...Youth health..... 2
- ...Youth suicide..... 3
- ...Youth violence..... 4
- ...Poverty in families..... 5
- (DO NOT READ) None of the above..... 7 X
- Don't know..... 8 X
- Refusal..... 9 X
- «QD1_01 »
- «QD1_02 »

QD2

Rotation => QD3

QD2. At what age do you think that BOYS from <PROV> resort most frequently to PHYSICAL aggression? CAUTION: **DO NOT READ** THE AGE CATEGORIES, WAIT FOR A SPONTANEOUS ANSWER FROM THE RESPONDENT

- (DO NOT READ) 0 to 4 years of age..... 01
- (DO NOT READ) 5 to 7 years 02
- (DO NOT READ) 8 to 11 years 03
- (DO NOT READ) 12 to 14 years 04
- (DO NOT READ) 15 to 17 years 05
- (DO NOT READ) 18 years or older..... 06
- (DO NOT READ) None (no aggression)..... 97
- Don't know..... 98
- Refusal..... 99
- «QD2 »

QD3

QD3. At what age do you think that GIRLS from <PROV> resort most frequently to PHYSICAL aggression? CAUTION: **DO NOT READ** THE AGE CATEGORIES, WAIT FOR A SPONTANEOUS ANSWER FROM THE RESPONDENT

- (DO NOT READ) 0 to 4 years of age..... 01
- (DO NOT READ) 5 to 7 years 02
- (DO NOT READ) 8 to 11 years 03
- (DO NOT READ) 12 to 14 years 04
- (DO NOT READ) 15 to 17 years 05
- (DO NOT READ) 18 years or older..... 06
- (DO NOT READ) None (no aggression)..... 97
- Don't know..... 98
- Refusal..... 99
- «QD3 »

QD4

QD4. According to you, in which period of a child's life do parents most often use physical punishment? CAUTION: **DO NOT READ** THE CATEGORIES. WAIT FOR A SPONTANEOUS ANSWER FROM THE RESPONDENT AND THEN CLASSIFY

(DO NOT READ) 0 to 4 years of age.....	01
(DO NOT READ) 5 to 7 years	02
(DO NOT READ) 8 to 11 years	03
(DO NOT READ) 12 to 14 years	04
(DO NOT READ) 15 to 17 years	05
(DO NOT READ) 18 years or older.....	06
(DO NOT READ) None (no aggression).....	97
Don't know.....	98
Refusal.....	99

«QD4 »

QD5

QD5. Do you think that nowadays, for children between the ages of 6 and 11, MORE GIRLS PHYSICALLY attack others, MORE BOYS PHYSICALLY attack others or that BOTH do so equally?

More girls than boys physically attack others.....	1
More boys than girls physically attack others.....	2
As many girls as boys physically attack others.....	3
Don't know.....	8
Refusal.....	9

«QD5 »

QD6A

Rotation => QD6B
=> +1 if MOD (\$Q,2) ==0

QD6a. There are currently violence prevention programs aimed at adults, young adults, teenagers, children and very young children. If the Canadian government invested another 100 million dollars in these preventative programs which age group should be given priority?

READ 5 CHOICES

...Adults 30 years of age and over.....	01
...Young adults between the ages of 18 and 29.....	02
...Teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17.....	03
...Children between the ages of 5 and 11	04
...Very young children between the ages of 0 and 4	05
Don't know.....	98
Refusal.....	99

«QD6A »

QD6B

=> +1 if	MOD (\$Q,2) ==1
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QD6b. There are currently violence prevention programs aimed at very young children, children, teenagers, young adults and adults. If the Canadian government invested another 100 million dollars in these preventative programs which age group should be given priority?

READ 5 CHOICES

...Very young children aged between 0 and 4.....	01
...Children aged between 5 and 11.....	02
...Teenagers aged between 12 and 17.....	03
...Young adults between 18 and 29.....	04
...Adults aged 30 and over.....	05
Don't know.....	98
Refusal.....	99

«QD6B »