



Voices of Child Health in Chicago **REPORT**

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Consistent with last year, the top social issues that Chicago parents were concerned about for youth were gun violence, bullying and cyberbullying, and poverty.

Hunger was new to the top 10 list this year, with 62% of parents considering this a big problem.

Parents with high household income were more concerned about racial disparities in health, followed by those with very low household income and those with middle income.

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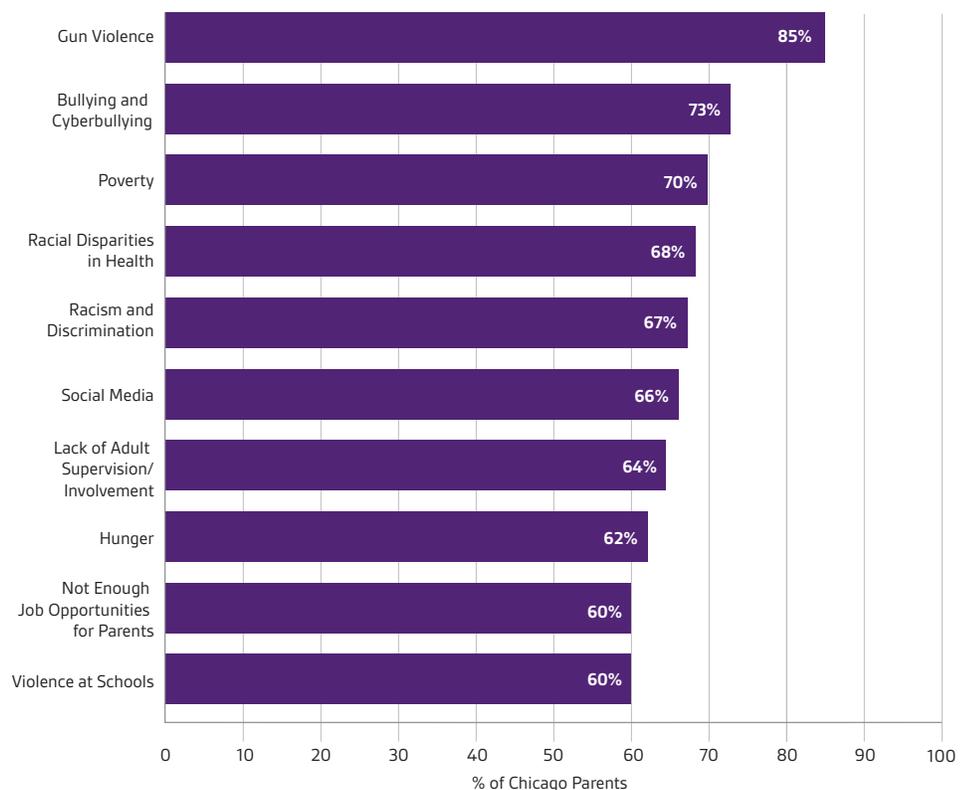
 **HEALTHY
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CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Chicago Parents Identify the Top 10 Social Issues Affecting Chicago Youth 2018–2019

Children and adolescents in Chicago continue to face many social challenges. In our second wave of data collection, we again asked parents in Chicago which social issues they were most concerned about for youth in the city. To do this, researchers at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago teamed up with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) on the 2018–19 Healthy Chicago Survey, Jr. We asked parents from all 77 community areas in Chicago which social problems they considered to be "big problems" for all children and adolescents in Chicago – not just for their own kids.

In this report, we share the "Top 10" social issues facing youth in Chicago identified by those parents (Figure 1). To learn more about the Top 10 social issues, visit luriechildrens.org/Top10SocialIssues2019.

Figure 1. Top 10 Youth Social Issues for 2018–19



Here are the **top 10** social issues facing Chicago youth in 2018–2019, rated by Chicago parents

1 GUN VIOLENCE – 85%

Gun violence was the top social concern that parents identified for Chicago youth again this year.¹ Gun violence was the number one concern for parents of all ages, household income levels, and parents of kids of all ages.

In 2018, there were 475 firearm homicides in Chicago, compared with 604 firearm homicides in 2017.² In Chicago, Non-Latinx Black adolescent males have a much greater risk of being victim of a firearm homicide compared with adolescents in the United States and Chicago as a whole.³

2 BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING – 73%

The second most frequent social concern was bullying and cyberbullying. Parents living in poverty (below the federal poverty level (FPL), which in 2019 is \$25,750 for a family of four) were more concerned about this issue (89%), than those with near-poor or middle income (100–399% of the FPL) (68%) or those with higher income (400% or above the FPL) (67%) (Figure 2). Moms also were more likely to be concerned about bullying and cyberbullying (80%) than dads (61%).

The 2018 Illinois Youth Survey found that 47% of 8th grade students, 23% of 10th grade students and 14% of 12th grade students reported being bullied in the last year. Bullying included being called names, being threatened, being physically bullied (e.g., hitting, punching, kicking or pushing) and being bullied through the Internet or text messages.⁴

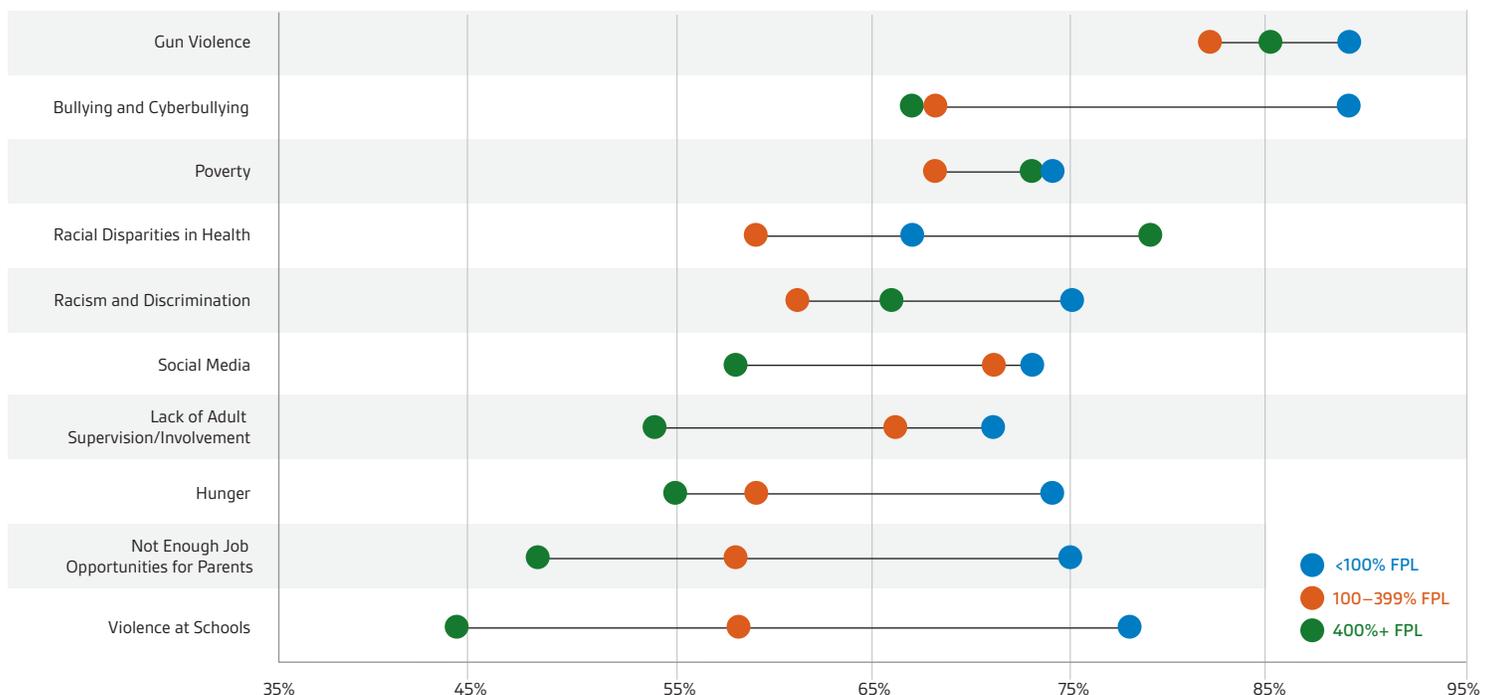
The Crisis Textline provides text message support for those in crisis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Text CONNECT to 741741.

3 POVERTY – 70%

Poverty was the third most frequent social concern. Parental concern about youth poverty did not vary by a person's household income.

Data from the 2017–2018 National Survey on Children's Health (NSCH) indicates that youth living in households in poverty (<100% FPL) are less likely to be in excellent or very good health compared with youth living in households with income 400% of the FPL (81% vs. 96%).⁵ Research suggests that experiencing poverty in childhood can negatively affect health across the life course through toxic stress and chronic inflammation.^{6,7} However, the negative effects of poverty may be buffered by parent engagement and positive relationships.⁸

Figure 2. Proportion of parents rating social issues as "big problems" for Chicago youth, by household income (federal poverty level, FPL)



4 RACIAL DISPARITIES IN HEALTH – 68%

Racial disparities in health, or worse health for children of color than for white children, was number four on the list. Parents with higher income (400% FPL) were most concerned about this issue (79%), followed by parents living in poverty (<100% FPL) (67%), and those with near-poor or middle income (100–399% FPL) (59%) (Figure 2). Racial disparities in health was the second biggest concern among parents who were 45 years old and older (72%).

National data on children’s health supports parents’ concerns. In 2017–18 Non-Latinx Black children and Latinx children were less likely to be in excellent or very good health than Non-Latinx White children.⁵ Additionally, Non-Latinx Black children and Latinx children were more likely to have forgone healthcare than Non-Latinx White children.⁹

5 RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION – 67%

Closely connected to the previous issue, approximately two in three parents considered racism and discrimination a big problem facing Chicago youth. Concern about racism and discrimination differed by household income level. Parents living in poverty (<100% FPL) were most concerned about this issue (75%), followed by those with higher income (400%+ FPL) (66%), and those with near-poor or middle income (100–399% FPL) (61%) (Figure 2).

Experiencing racism and discrimination in childhood can lead to chronic stress, which is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes such as chronic disease and mental health problems.¹⁰

6 SOCIAL MEDIA – 66%

The sixth most commonly identified social problem for kids in Chicago was social media. Similar to what we found last year, parents with at least one older child (11+ years old) were more likely to be concerned about social media (74%) than parents of only younger children (0–5 years old) (54%). In fact, social media was the third top concern among parents with at least one older child.

The Illinois Youth Survey found that among Chicago students, 25% of 8th grade students had been bullied through social media (e.g., Internet, text messages) in the last year, as well as 13% of 10th grade students and 9% of 12th grade students.⁴

Recent research suggests that for adolescent girls, negative mental health effects of very frequent social media use may be due to a combination of exposure to cyberbullying, and reduction of sleep and physical activity, but less is known about how social media negatively affects adolescent boys.¹¹

7 LACK OF ADULT SUPERVISION AND INVOLVEMENT – 64%

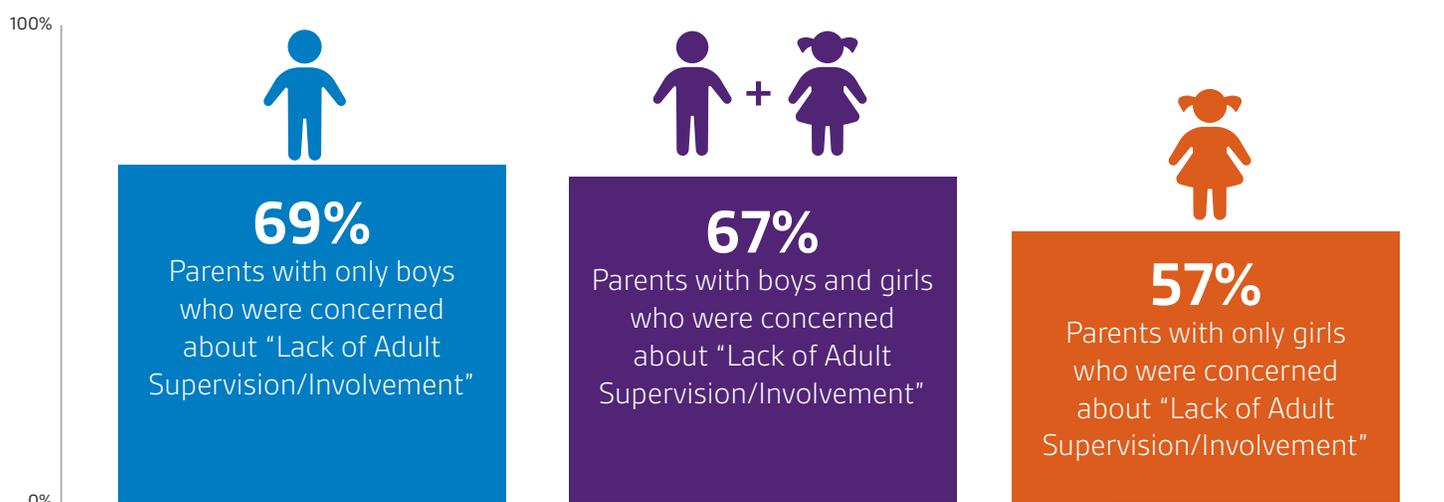
Lack of adult supervision and involvement was the seventh most common social concern for Chicago youth. Parents who had only boys or who had boys and girls were more likely to be concerned about this issue (69% and 67%, respectively) than parents with only girls (57%) (Figure 3). Additionally, moms were more likely to be concerned about this issue than dads (68% vs. 57%).

8 HUNGER – 62%

New to the top ten list of youth social concerns is hunger, with 62% of parents considering this a big problem facing Chicago youth. Concern about youth hunger was greater for parents with lower income than higher income. Specifically, parents living in poverty (<100% FPL) were most concerned about this issue (74%), followed by those with near-poor or middle income (100–399% FPL) (59%), and those with higher income (400%+ FPL) (55%) (Figure 2). Additionally, hunger was the fourth biggest concern among younger parents between 18–29 years old (67%).

The Greater Chicago Food Depository maintains an online map (chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/) where individuals can enter an address or zip code to find the nearest food pantry, soup kitchen, mobile food distribution or shelter in Cook County.

Figure 3. Proportion of parents who considered lack of adult supervision and involvement a “big problem” for Chicago youth, by their child(ren)’s gender



9 NOT ENOUGH JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS – 60%

Another top youth social concern that Chicago parents identified was that there were not enough job opportunities for parents. Parents living in poverty (<100% FPL) were most concerned about this issue (75%), followed by those with near-poor or middle income (100–399% FPL) (58%), and those with higher income (400%+ FPL) (48%) (Figure 2).

One way that limited job opportunities for parents can affect children is that children are more likely to live in poverty if their parents work part time, or only part of the year, or are not employed, compared with children who have a parent who is employed full time, year-round.⁸ As noted above in the third section on poverty, experiencing poverty early in life is associated with negative health outcomes across the life course.^{6,7}

10 VIOLENCE AT SCHOOLS – 60%

The tenth most common social concern that parents identified for youth in Chicago was violence at schools. Moms were more likely to be concerned about this issue than dads (66% vs. 48%).

Results from the 2018 Illinois Youth Survey indicated that 12% of 8th grade students, 7% of 10th grade students, and 9% of 12th grade students in Chicago reported they did not go to school at least once over the previous 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.⁴

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HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

This report presents findings from the 2018-19 Healthy Chicago Survey, Jr., administered by the Chicago Department of Public Health in collaboration with Lurie Children's. The survey was administered via phone interviews from December 2018 through May 2019. The sample consisted of 2,982 adults in Chicago, 740 of whom were the parent, step-parent or guardian (referred to as "parents" in this report) of at least one child under 18 years old living in the household. The survey cooperation rate was 12%. All analyses were conducted with statistical weighting so that they are representative of the adult population of the City of Chicago during the time period of data collection. For more information about health in your community, visit chicagohealthatlas.org.

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