



Voices of Child Health in Chicago REPORT

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Dads were more likely than moms to report using their local park.

Dads and moms agree that gun violence is the leading social concern affecting youth health in Chicago.

Dads were similar to moms in terms of their rates of self-reported physical and mental health problems, but dads were less likely than moms to have had a routine physical exam in the last year.

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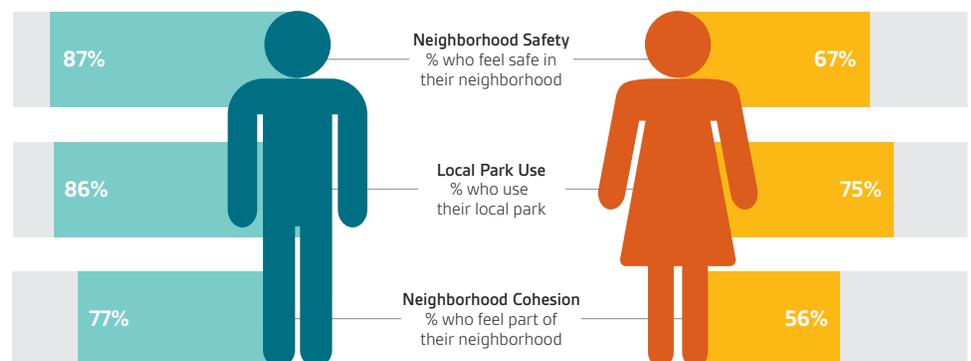
On Father's Day: Examining Dads' and Kids' Health

In this month's Voices of Child Health in Chicago Report, we are focusing on fathers in honor of Father's Day. Fathers play an important role in their children's lives and research shows that when dads are more involved in caring for their kids, it benefits the whole family.¹ 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. to ask dads (34%) and moms (66%) from all 77 community areas in Chicago about issues related to parenting, youth health and family health.

Dads Were More Likely than Moms to Use Their Local Park

Parks are an important component of a family's environment and they serve as centers for community. Outdoor recreation and local park use offer benefits for both children and their parents. Among parents at the time of the survey, dads were more likely than moms to report using their local park (86% vs. 75%) (Figure 1). This supports other research that points to the role that play has as a major way in which children and fathers interact.² Dads also reported feeling a part of their neighborhood more often than moms (77% vs. 56%). Additionally, parental perceptions of their neighborhood park and community play a role in park usage. The likeliness of feeling safe in their neighborhood most or all of the time was greater among dads (87%) than among moms (67%). It is important to note that safety and other contextual factors are known to influence park use.³

Figure 1. Respondents' park use and neighborhood factors, by parent gender



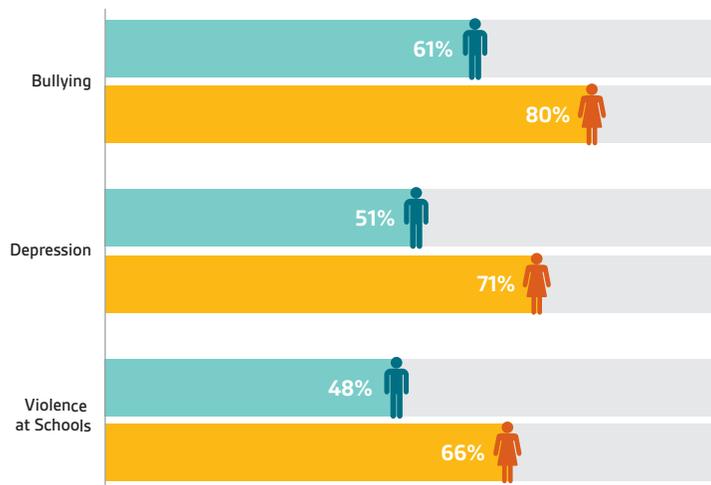
Dads' Concerns for Youth in Chicago

Both dads and moms had similar rates of concern about gun violence, the top youth social issue of concern for parents for the past two years (84% vs 86%, respectively, reported gun violence was a big problem).^{4,5} In addition, dads and moms share similar concerns about childhood obesity and racial disparities in health, suggesting these are universal concerns for all parents in Chicago.

While dads and moms do share worries about youth in Chicago, in general, dads were less concerned than moms about select youth health and social issues. For instance, dads were less worried than moms about bullying (61% vs. 80%), violence at schools (48% vs. 66%) and depression (51% vs. 71%) (Figure 2).

Dads still had worries about youth growing up in Chicago. For example, a majority (over 50%) of the dads surveyed considered the following issues as a big problem impacting youth in Chicago: poverty (64%), racism (62%), social media (61%), stress (60%), not enough jobs for teens (57%), not enough jobs for parents (56%), drug abuse (56%), hunger (56%), tobacco use (52%) and unsafe housing conditions (51%).

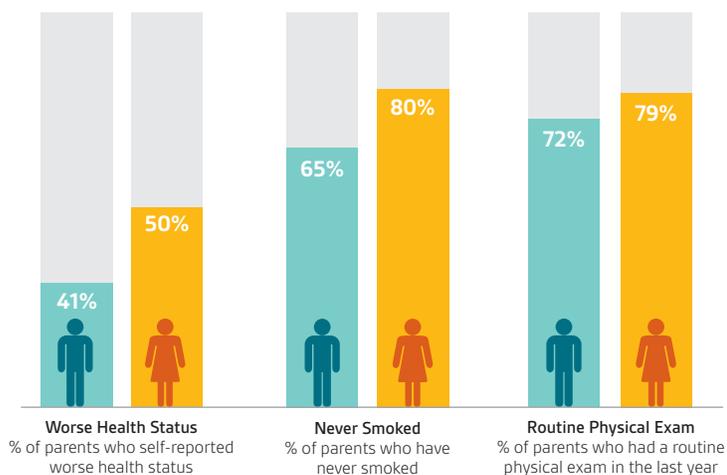
Figure 2. Youth health and social issues of concern, by parent gender



How Healthy are Dads?

Overall, dads were less likely to self-report being in worse health themselves (41% vs. 50%) compared to moms (Figure 3). When rating their physical health and mental health problems, dads and moms were similar. Dads and moms were also similar in reporting preventive dental visits, a healthy weight and having a personal doctor or primary care physician. However, dads were less likely than moms to have had a routine physical exam in the last year (72% vs. 79%). This finding is consistent with national data indicating that women were more likely than men to have a preventive doctor's visit.⁶ Additionally, when reporting on their own children, dads were less likely than moms to report that one of their children was in worse health (14% vs. 22%). Moms were more likely to say that they often or sometimes (10% and 26%) worried whether food would run out before they got money to buy more food than dads (7% and 17%). On the topic of diet and lifestyle, dads and moms were equally likely to have five or more servings of fruits and vegetables and partake in healthy habits such as exercise. Lastly, when asked about smoking, dads were less likely to have never smoked cigarettes (65%) than moms (80%).

Figure 3. Respondents' health outcomes, by parent gender



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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.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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