

# 2014

# YMCA

## Research Report

YMCA of Greater Toronto & YMCA of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford

### BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2014, the YMCA of Greater Toronto and YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford commissioned a research study on Southern Ontario parents, raising children between the ages of 0 – 5. The report aimed **to gain a better understanding of what parents need** and **identify the challenges parents face** when raising their children in the early developmental years.

### KEY FINDINGS:



**MORE THAN ONE-THIRD (37%)**

of children in Southern Ontario are described by their parents as **BEHIND** in one or more key areas of early child development.

The **BIGGEST CHALLENGE**



parents face when raising young children is **COMPETING PRIORITIES** that limit them from spending quality time with their children.

Parents place a high priority on all areas of early childhood development, but say they need more support to raise their children.



**67%**

of parents report it's **hard to**

**find enough quality time** with their kids.



**70%**

would like **more information**

about services for pre-school-aged children.



**59%**

are **unsure** which information is best for their kids.



**20%**

are **uncertain** about what **developmental milestones** they should look for in the first five years.

Parents of all ages, incomes and backgrounds say they need help fostering their child's development.

## #YHealthyKids



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## Methodology

The YMCA of Greater Toronto and Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford poll was conducted using a mixed methodology of online and telephone interviewing by Nielsen. The study was conducted from February 13 to March 12, 2014 with 650 parents/guardians of children between the ages of 0 to 5. The telephone portion of the study collected 150 responses with Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford parents/guardians of children 0-5, a sample of this size is considered accurate +/- 8%, 19 times out of 20. The online component was a standard panel survey among a random sample of GTA panel members who are parents/guardians of children 0-5, if this were a probability sample it would have a margin of error of +/-4.4%, 19 times out of 20.

### Percent of children whose parents rate as “a little” or “way behind”:

Intellectual development	6%	Social development	14%
Language development	17%	Physical development	12%
Emotional development	17%	Weight	18%

More than one-third (37%) of children in Southern Ontario are described by their parents as BEHIND in one or more key areas of early child development.

### Percent of parents who identified the following as somewhat or very challenging when it comes to raising children:

Challenge	Somewhat or very challenging
Competing priorities – finding time to focus on, or spend quality time with, just my preschool-aged child/children	59%
Financial concerns - being able to afford programs or services my child/children could benefit from	56%
Knowing where to find programs of services that my child/children could benefit from	42%
Family or marital stress	38%
Transportation – getting to programs or services my child/children could benefit from	36%
Language or cultural barriers	21%

The number one challenge parents face when raising young children is competing priorities that limit them from spending quality time with their children.

Qualified based on n=650 parents reporting on a total of 912 children

### Percent of parents who agreed/disagreed the following statements are somewhat or very challenging:

Parent Sentiment	Percent of parents
Disagree with statement “I know exactly what developmental milestones children 0-5 should reach as they grow up”	20%
Disagree with statement “I know where to find information about programs and services in my community that promote the development of preschool-aged children”	22%
Agree with statement “It’s hard to find enough quality time during the week to spend with my child/children”	67%
Agree with statement “I wish I had more information about programs and services in my community that promote the development of preschool-aged children”	70%
Agree “somewhat” or “strongly” that it’s hard to find enough quality time during the week to spend with their children	67%
Agree with statement “There is so much parenting information out there I’m not sure what is best for my children”	59%
Agree with statement “I worry that I’m not doing as much for my child/children as other parents do for their children”	47%

Qualified based on n=650 parents reporting on a total of 912 children

### Parents across all income levels report similar levels of confidence in their ability to foster their child’s development:

Development area in which parents have low confidence in their ability to help their children	Annual household income <\$40K/year	Annual household income >\$40K/year	Total % of parents with low confidence
Intellectual development	30%	27%	28%
Language development	30%	27%	28%
Emotional development	37%	41%	41%
Social development	36%	37%	37%
Physical development	41%	43%	43%

Note: Based on 650 parental reports for up to 972 children. Excludes those who did not give income (13.1% of parents)

### On all development areas, there are significant differences\* between parents’ priorities (what they see as important for their kids’ healthy development and their confidence they can help their kids)

Development area	Parent sees as a high priority	Parent have little or no confidence in this area
Intellectual *	88%	26%
Language *	83%	27%
Social *	79%	35%
Emotional *	79%	39%
Physical *	65%	41%