
POLL: University changes attitudes toward child care

Women's attitudes change more than men's

Ottawa, Canada, October 7, 2013 – A majority of Canadians with university degrees say children under six are best off at home with a parent. However, they are less likely to say this than Canadians at large.

[*Daycare Desires, Part III: How education affects attitudes toward daycare*](#) is based on a national childcare poll in which Canadians were asked what type of care is best for a child under six. The majority of Canadians (76%) believe a child is better off at home with a parent rather than with a competent caregiver.

However, support for parental care dips at higher educational levels. Only 68% of Canadians with a university degree, and 62% with a post-graduate degree, choose parental care.

The effect is more pronounced among women.

Among Canadians with high school degrees, equal numbers of men and women (78%) believe a child is best off at home with a parent. The number diverges for Canadians with a university degree: 72% of men choose parental care while 65% of women do. Among those with post-graduate degrees, the gender disparity is greater, with 69% of men and only 54% of women preferring parental care for children under six.

When asked what is best for children under six, a parent or a competent caregiver, the highest percentage to say they don't know are women with a university degree at 12%.

The findings raise questions as to why educated Canadians are less likely to prefer parental care.

“Though we didn't poll on this, we did ask educated mothers for their thoughts,” says report author Andrea Mrozek, Executive Director of the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. “They expressed a desire to stay home with small children, but a simultaneous fear that it would be hard to re-enter the workforce if they were home for longer than a year's maternity leave.”

“Each educated Canadian family had their own story, which speaks to the diversity of childcare arrangements across the country,” says Mrozek.

For this reason, the report advocates for public policy that would mirror Canadians' desires, which is currently not the case. Today, taxpayer dollars preferentially fund institutional daycare, which the majority of Canadians rank as their bottom choice. The report calls for an end to this discriminatory use of public funds.

"Pouring public funds into one system that then parents 'choose' because there are no other options is a real failure of public policy to truly help Canadian families," says Mrozek.

"This poll shows full-time daycare is not what a majority of women in general, and educated women in particular, prefer," Mrozek concludes.

Daycare Desires, Part III: How education affects attitudes toward daycare can be found online at: <http://www.imfcanada.org/daycaredesires/education>

(Questions and margins of error [can be found online here.](#))

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