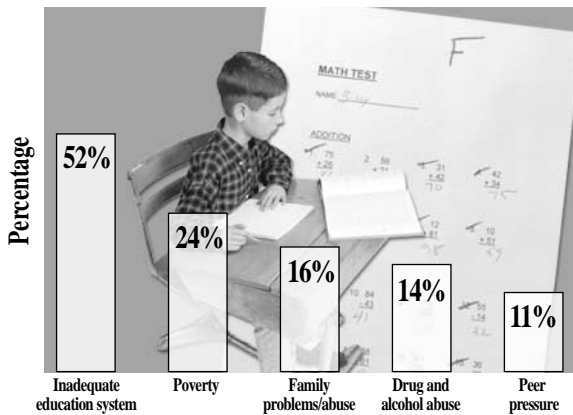


poll station

By Linda Banister

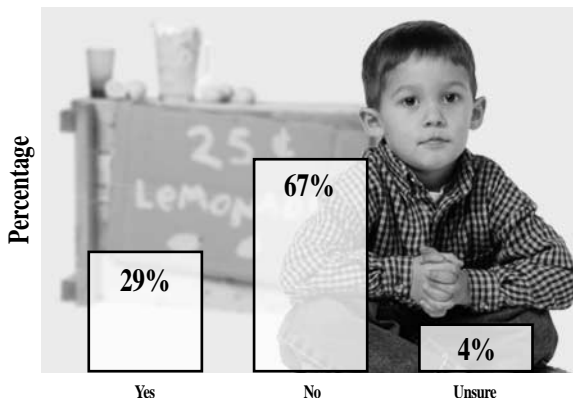
Today's children face many pressures growing up—from increased class sizes and growing amounts of homework to participating in extracurricular activities. Kids today need a Palm Pilot just to keep track of their day. In this month's Poll Station we asked Edmontonians for their input on the most prominent pressures facing children and how these pressures affect children.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES FACING CHILDREN TODAY?



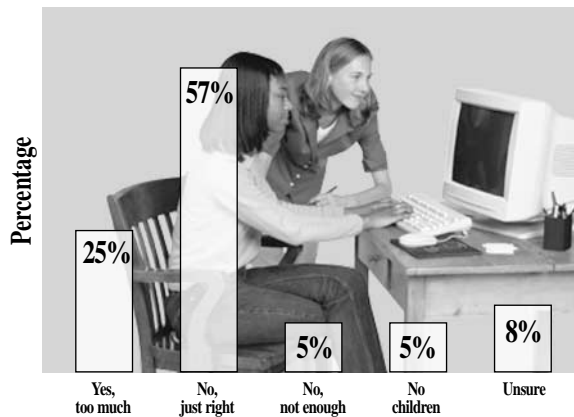
When asked what they thought were the most pressing issues facing today's children, the majority of respondents (52%) felt the inadequate education system, including the lack of teachers and resources, puts the most strain on kids. Poverty (24%), family problems and abuse (16%), and drug, alcohol and substance abuse (14%) followed. Other pressures impacting children included peer pressure (11%), health-related issues such as depression (11%), and a lack of leadership and discipline (10%).

IN GENERAL, DO CHILDREN HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO JUST BE "KIDS"?



Two-thirds of respondents (67%) felt today's children do not have time to just be kids. The majority of respondents (67%) felt that parents put undue pressure on children by placing them in too many extra-curricular activities. Twenty-one percent of respondents felt kids are placed in the right amount of activities, while two percent felt they aren't involved in enough, and nine percent were uncertain.

DO YOU FEEL THE SCHOOLS PUT UNDUE PRESSURE ON CHILDREN BY GIVING THEM TOO MUCH HOMEWORK?



One-quarter (25%) of respondents felt schools put too much pressure on kids by assigning excessive homework. Just over half of respondents (57%), felt that kids received just the right amount of homework, while five percent felt that they don't receive enough, and eight percent were uncertain.

Respondents who thought children were under pressure were asked to comment on the consequences of this stress. The most common response: children would suffer stress-related illnesses at a very young age (40%), followed by the belief children who don't understand the advanced curriculum will be left behind or dropout of school (21%). Sixteen percent of respondents felt kids would be forced to grow up too fast and miss out on their childhood. ✓



Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research & Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. If you have a question you would like included in the Edmontonians Poll, contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at research@banister.ab.ca. For further information on the firm visit banister.ab.ca.