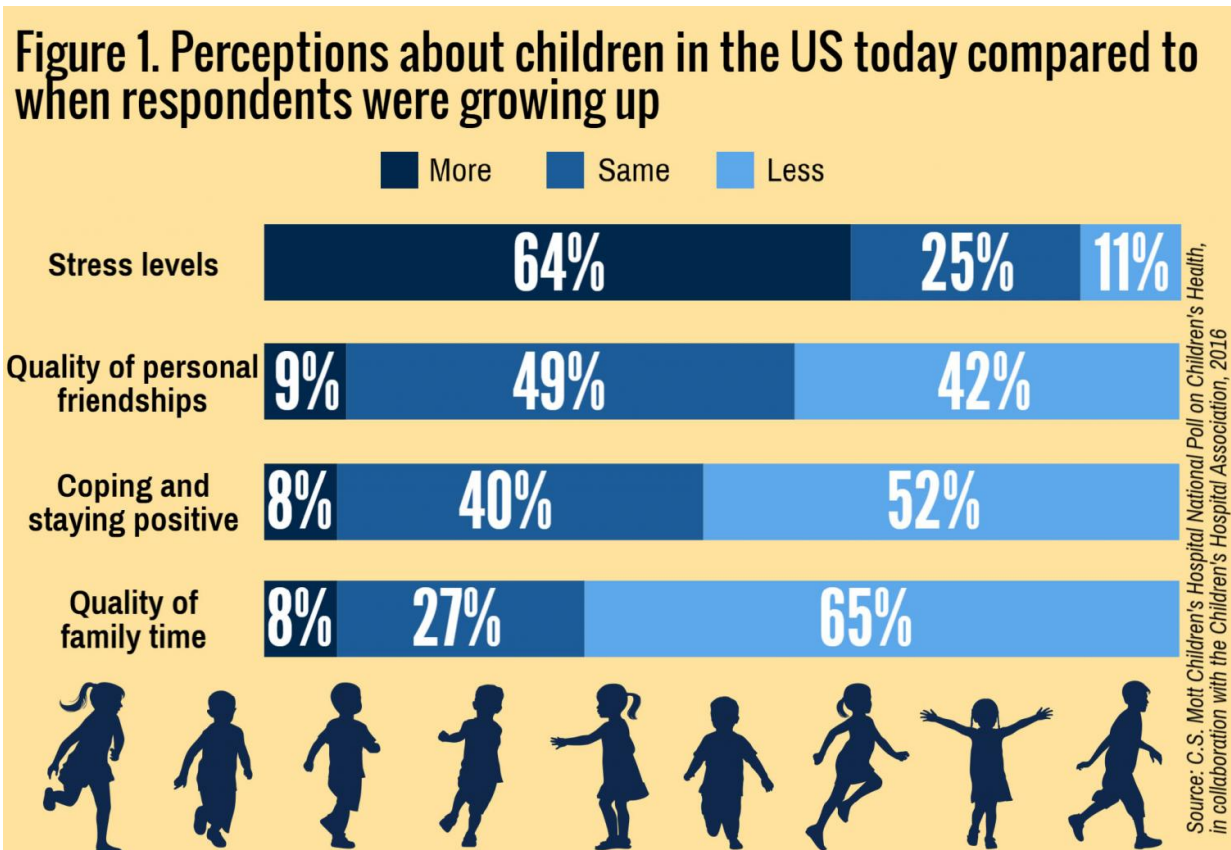


# Most US adults say today's children have worse health than in past generations

April 18 2016



The poll of nearly 2,700 adults in a nationally representative sample asked respondents to assess key variables for children growing up today, compared to those in prior decades. Credit: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.

More than half of adults believe children today are more stressed, experience less quality family time and have worse mental and emotional health than children in past generations, according to the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.

"We have seen major advances in medicine and public [health](#) over the last century that have greatly reduced [children's](#) illness and death. On the other hand, conditions like childhood obesity, asthma and behavior problems have become more common," said Matthew M. Davis, M.D., M.A.P.P., director of the poll and professor of pediatrics and internal medicine at the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

"We wanted to know how the public perceives these trends, so we conducted this latest national poll to gain insights into [adults'](#) perceptions of children's health today. We found that adults in the U.S. broadly agree: children's health today seems worse than for children over the past several decades."

Among the key results, 55 percent of adults polled believe kids' mental and [emotional health](#) is worse today than when they were children. Coping and personal friendships for children were also widely viewed as worse than for children in the past.

"The dominant view from this poll is that children's health is worse today than it was for generations past, and we need to more urgently address these challenges," said Mark Wietecha, CEO and president of Children's Hospital Association, which collaborated on the poll.

In addition to the perception of diminished emotional and mental health, the poll found adults perceive children as having worse [physical health](#) as well. Forty-two percent of adults say kids today are in worse physical health compared to their own childhoods.

The poll also found generational differences in adults' perceptions of children's health: Pre-baby boomers ages 70 and older were most likely to perceive that children's physical health today is better than when they were growing up. Baby boomers (ages 51-69), generation Xers (ages 35-50) and millennials in the 18-34 age group were less likely to perceive that children's physical health is better now.

The [poll](#) of nearly 2,700 adults in a nationally representative sample asked respondents to assess key variables for children growing up today, compared to those in prior decades. The findings linked to behavioral health are consistent with previous Mott polls that cited bullying, stress, suicide, and depression as leading child health concerns identified by adults across the U.S.

Provided by University of Michigan Health System

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