

New 'On Our Sleeves' survey highlights top stressors as students prepare to head back to school

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Preparing to head back to school can be a time of many emotions, from excitement to nerves. But for children who found the previous school year to be challenging, it can be an especially stressful experience.

In a new national survey conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of [The On Our Sleeves Movement for Children's Mental Health](#), 71% of American parents say their children experienced challenges last school year.

The top factors identified by parents included safety concerns (37%), academic challenges (26%), bullying (24%), ongoing social challenges related to the pandemic (24%), and [mental health challenges](#) (22%). The results closely match what parents anticipated [when asked the same question](#) prior to the start of last school year.

"Between academic struggles, behavioral challenges, increased depression and anxiety, and challenges making [social connections](#), we've been hearing firsthand from families about how tough last school year was for many kids," said Whitney Raglin Bignall, Ph.D., associate clinical director of On Our Sleeves and a pediatric psychologist at Nationwide Children's Hospital. "As we head into the new school year, it's crucial to understand how kids are thinking and feeling about returning to the classroom. Checking in and having conversations with them is a simple, yet critical way to help minimize any lingering issues before they turn into even bigger challenges this upcoming school year."

On Our Sleeves is equipping parents and caregivers with tools to help all children adapt to the upcoming school year. The new resources have been developed by [mental health](#) experts with On Our Sleeves to help parents and caregivers [start the conversation](#) about going back to school, [establish habits and routines](#) to set kids up for success this [academic year](#) and increase their sense of school belonging. The resources also offer a starting point for caregivers to work with their schools to address challenges they may experience when children are returning to the classroom.

"Talking about mental health can be difficult but it's recommended that

parents and caregivers initiate daily conversations. This helps children feel comfortable and supported enough to share their thoughts and feelings," Raglin Bignall said. "Having families work together to understand the child's challenges and develop goals for the new year can help set kids up for a more successful academic year."

For more information and resources on [children's](#) mental health and well-being ahead of the upcoming [school](#) year, visit OnOurSleeves.org.

Provided by Nationwide Children's Hospital

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