



## Parents Want More Than ABCs from Early Education

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*New research reveals 82% of parents agree children entering kindergarten with confidence is just as important as reciting the alphabet*

NEWTON, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug. 6, 2025-- In today's AI-driven world, parents are rethinking the role early education plays in preparing their children not only for kindergarten, but for lifelong success. New research from the [Modern Family Index](#) (MFI), commissioned by Bright Horizons (NYSE:BFAM) and conducted by The Harris Poll, reveals that 73% of parents feel the rise of AI has made durable skills, such as creativity, social skills and emotional skills, just as important as traditional academic skills like reading, writing and math when it comes to their children's development. This aligns with national conversations around early education. As [U.S. News & World Report](#) noted, experts are increasingly advocating for play-based, holistic preschool experiences that emphasize social and emotional development alongside academics.

These findings illustrate emerging shifts in what parents consider important in early education, emphasizing not only the value of academic preparation, but of skills that will help children be successful throughout their lives. In fact, the survey found that 82% of parents agree children entering kindergarten with confidence is just as important as being able to say the alphabet.

### Additional Results Identified:

- 73% of parents feel that AI will have a significant impact on the skills that are important for children to develop early in life.
- 79% of parents feel that developing creative skills will be crucial for children growing up in an AI-driven world.
- 71% of parents with children under age 6 worry about properly preparing their child(ren) for kindergarten, with the majority (83%) recognizing the need for their child to develop holistic skills (both traditional academic skills and soft / durable skills) to be prepared for kindergarten.
- 80% of parents with children under age 6 expect their child's preschool to teach them the skills they need for kindergarten, while an equal number (80%) wish they had the resources and support to better understand how to prepare their child(ren) for kindergarten.
- Most parents deem durable skills like socially responsible behavior (75%), social skills (74%), self-help skills (73%), creative skills (72%) and emotional skills (69%) as absolutely essential or very important for children to develop to prepare for kindergarten, similar to that of traditional academic skills like reading (73%), math (70%) and writing (69%).

"Parents today are navigating a rapidly changing world and want to do everything they can to set their children up for success," said Rachel Robertson, Chief Academic Officer at Bright Horizons. "This research makes it clear that parents are looking to preschools not just for academics, but for support in building a variety of both social and emotional skills. High quality early education that fosters curiosity, builds confidence, and nurtures the whole child is what truly lays the foundation for kindergarten and beyond."

### About the Bright Horizons Modern Family Index

Over the past decade, Bright Horizons has tracked trends impacting working families through its annual Modern Family Index (MFI), highlighting the unique challenges and priorities they've faced. In 2025, the report has been refreshed and encompasses several waves of survey data focused on timely topics to be released throughout the year.

To download Wave Three of the 2025 Bright Horizons Modern Family Index, [click here](#).

### Research Method

The research was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll between June 17-20, 2025, among 2,100 adults ages 18 and older – among whom 653 are a parent or guardian of child(ren) under 18 years of age ("parents") and 235 are a parent or guardian of child(ren) under 6 years of age ("parents of younger children"). Data are weighted where necessary by age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, household income, education, marital status, size of household, and political party affiliation to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents are selected among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. The sample data is accurate to within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

**About Bright Horizons Family Solutions Inc.**

Bright Horizons® is a leading global provider of high-quality early education and childcare, back-up care, and workforce education services. For more than 35 years, we have partnered with employers to support workforces by providing services that help working families and employees thrive personally and professionally. Bright Horizons operates more than 1,000 early education and childcare centers in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, and India, and serves more than 1,450 of the world's leading employers. Bright Horizons' early education and childcare centers, back-up child and elder care, and workforce education programs help employees succeed at each life and career stage. For more information, go to [www.brighthouse.com](http://www.brighthouse.com).

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