

EDUCATION AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

How are Children and Caregivers Doing

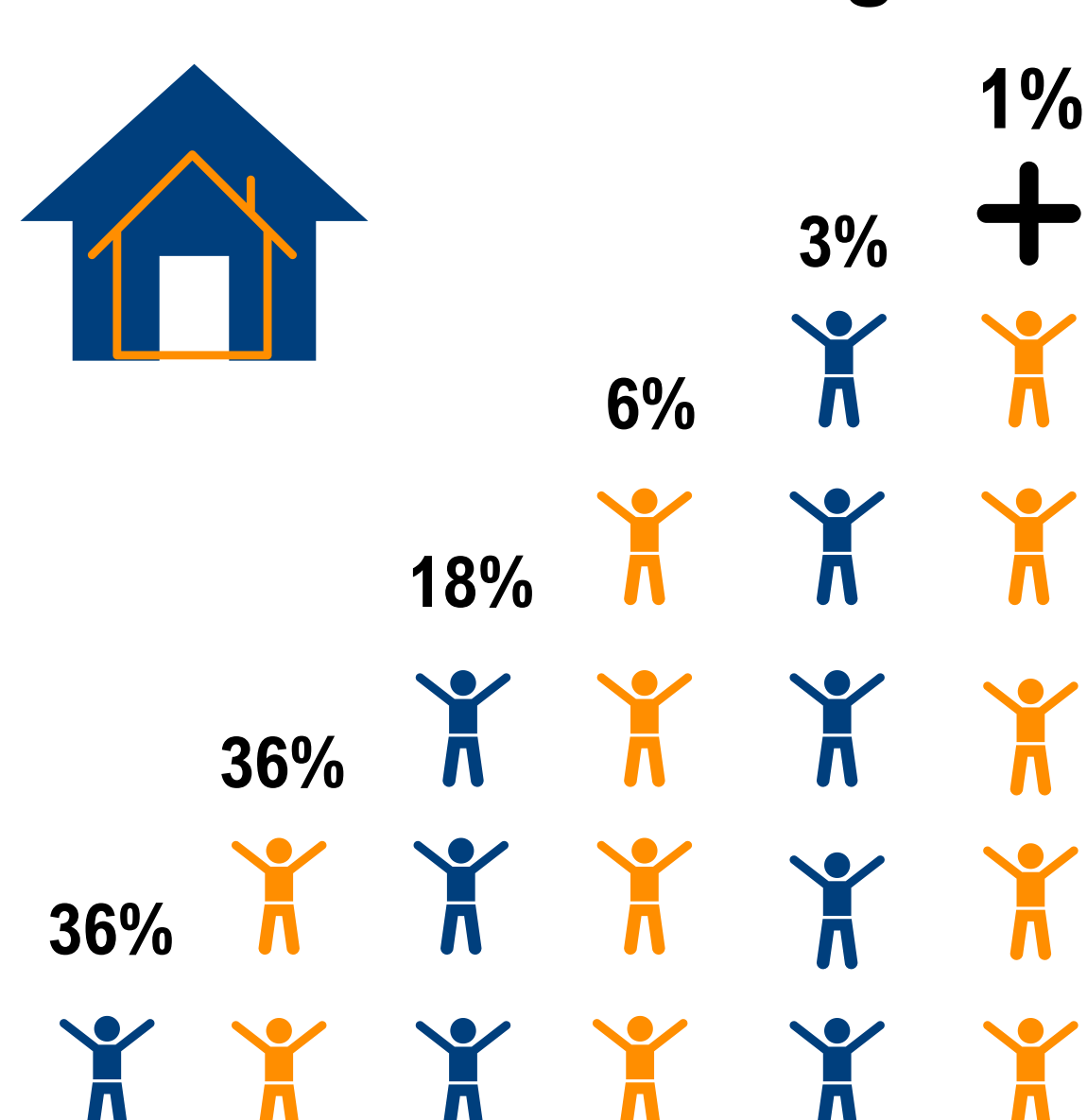
A YEAR LATER?

663
Families Responded

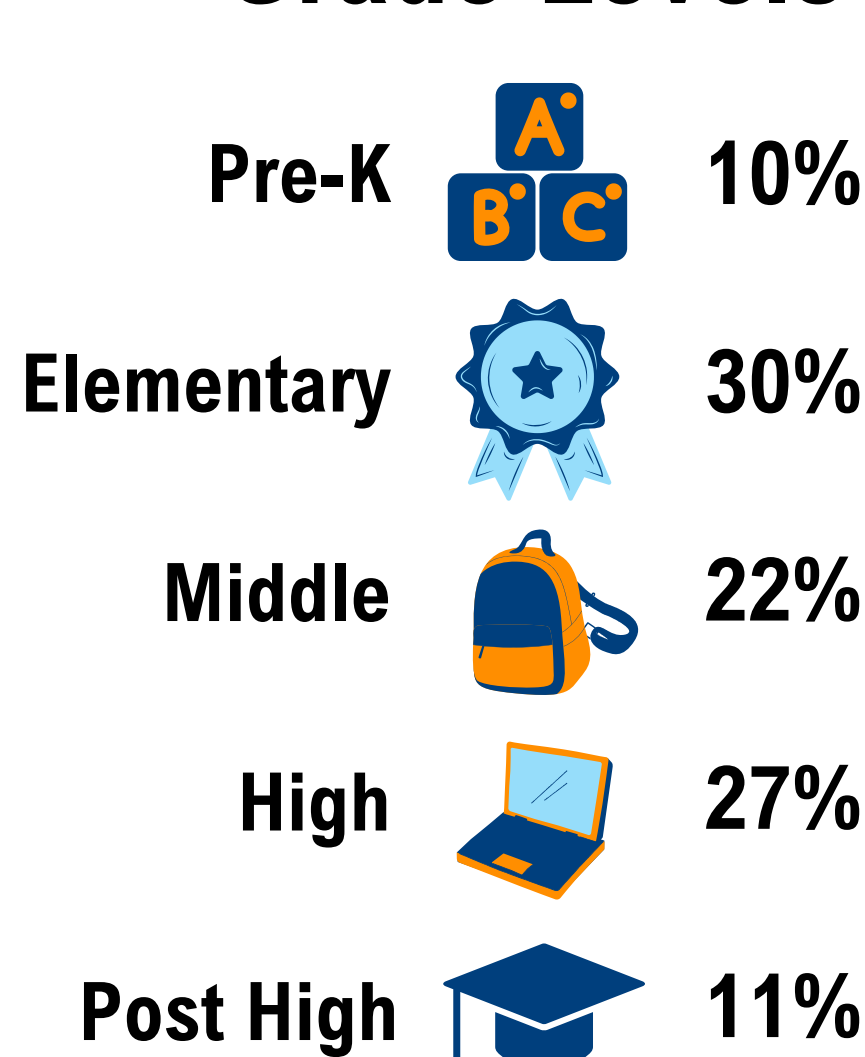
1,371+
Children Represented

Families Responded from all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

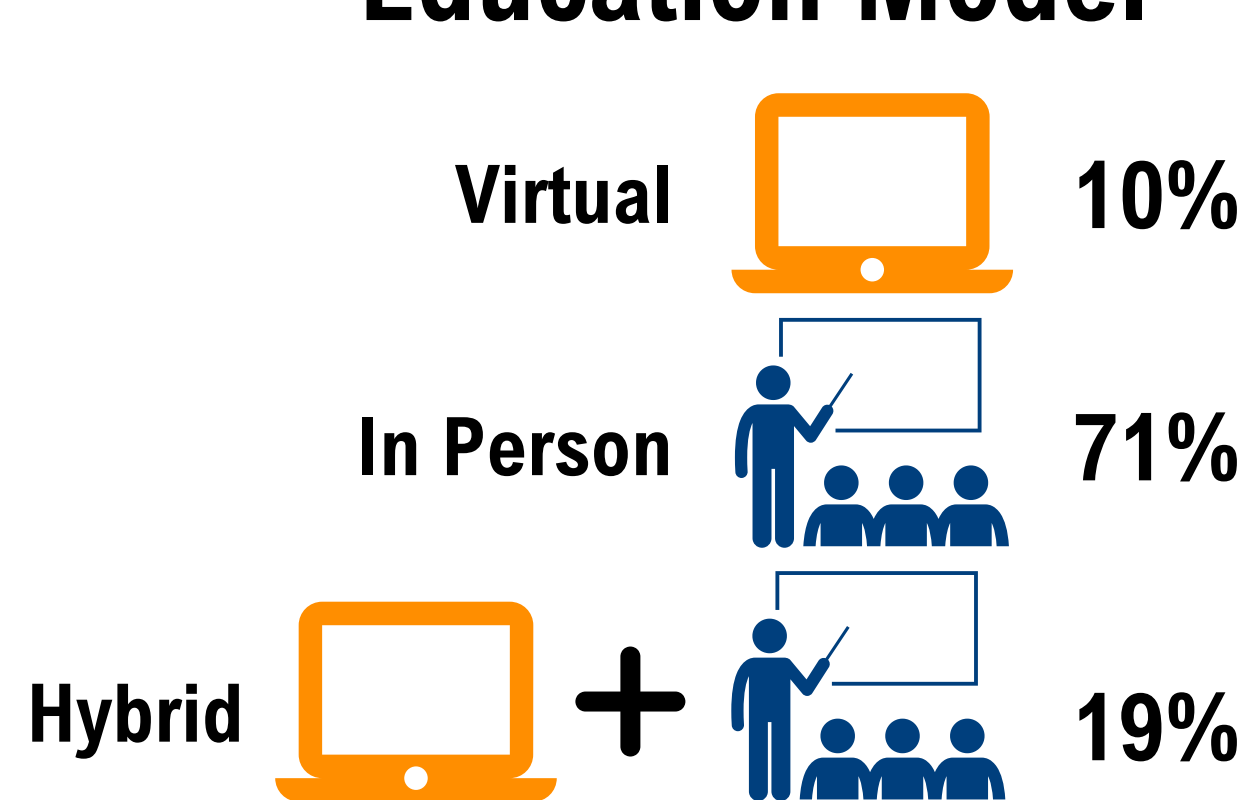
of Children Living at Home



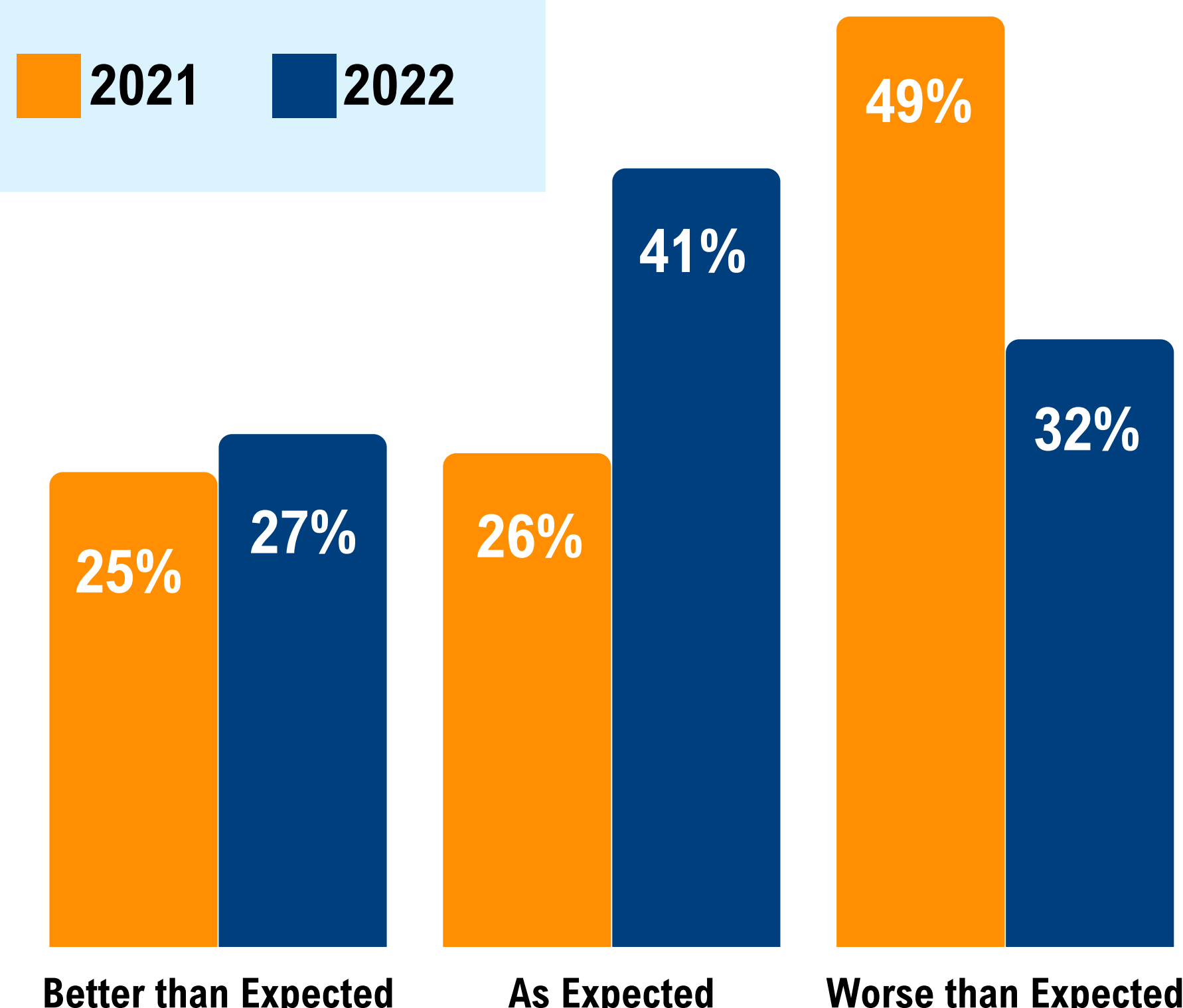
Grade Levels



Education Model



How Do Caregivers Feel School is Going for Their Children?



As a rule, I feel most people are doing the best they can under the circumstances - teachers and school staff, students and parents. I'm thankful our school is not stressing about "meeting requirements" and is instead focused on the emotional well being of our students. It would be nice if COVID didn't impact learning, but it is and it will. (South Carolina)

In-person learning this year is significantly better than the hybrid approach last year both for engagement and grades. (Maine)

It seems no one truly knows what to do with 504s/IEPs when a student is at home. (Arkansas)

What Do Caregivers Say is Most Challenging?

#1



Balancing School and Work (Time)

This has been the most stressful time of my entire life. As a single mom, I have tried to balance everything and at the end of most days I feel like I have failed in at least one category. It's like trying to succeed at an impossible task and the repeated daily failure is wearing on me and my self-esteem. As a result I am more anxious and my kids are too. I am really trying to get better so I can be better for them. (New Hampshire)

I pay a lot of money out of pocket to have a babysitter help with remote schoolwork so I can keep my fulltime job. (Pennsylvania)

#2



Meeting Special Education Needs

One of my children with an IEP is receiving support, the other requires home health instruction and has not had any services. My child who has a 504 plan is struggling due to a lack of support. (California)

Reliance on technology in the classroom does not meet my child's learning needs and his school refuses to implement his 504 plan designed to help him be more successful. My child has suicidal thoughts almost every school day because he feels like he is a terrible kid. (Kentucky)

#3



Access to Childcare

I'm struggling to find daycare due to my child's behavior and special needs. I'm experiencing a high level of stress and anxiety without daycare when the school calls me to pick up my child due to behavior issues while I'm at work. (North Dakota)

School hours are shorter than usual and having kids at home while I'm working is challenging. Childcare is either unavailable or the cost is beyond the means of my single income and I do not qualify for assistance, so I often feel stuck. (Georgia)

#4

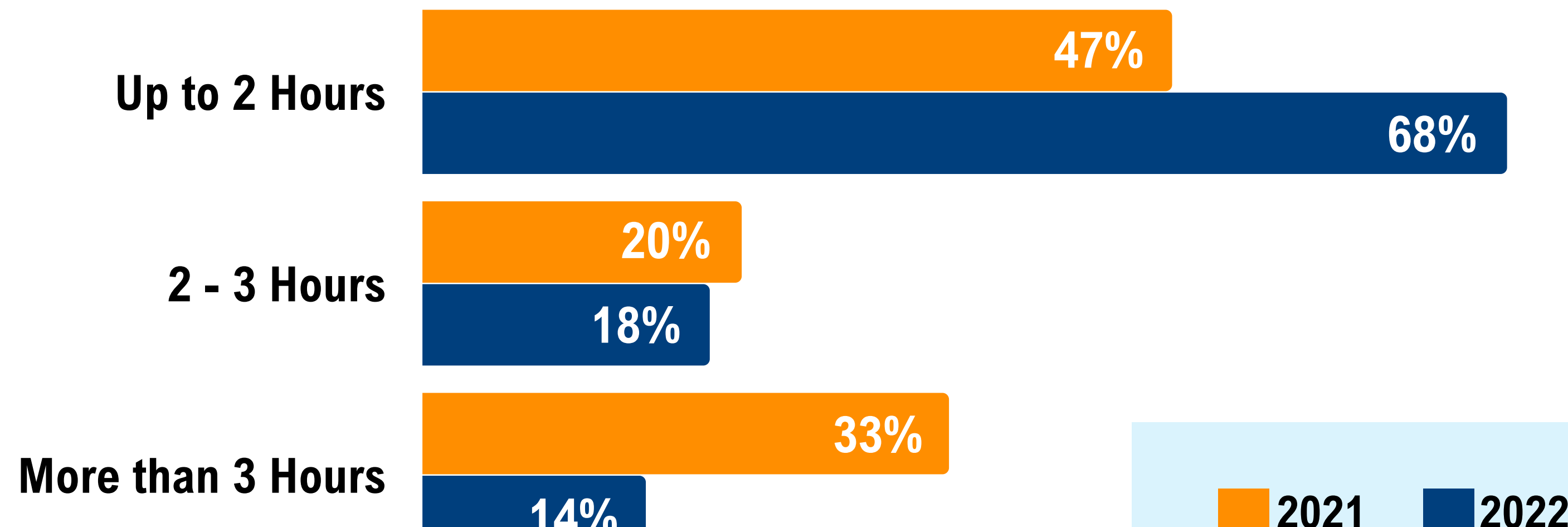


Support from School/Teachers

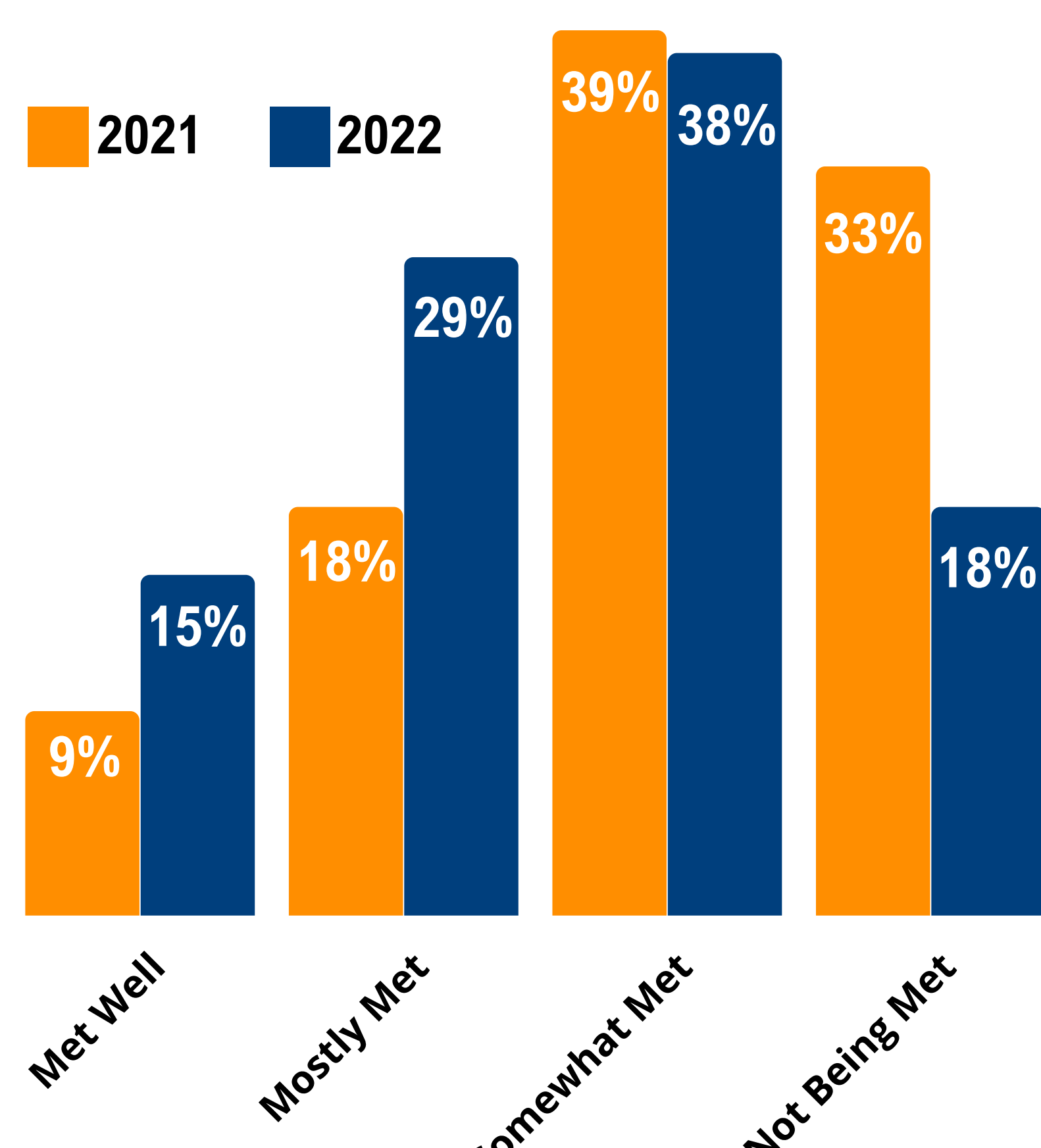
My son dreads Zoom and being on camera because he suffers from social anxiety. I wish they didn't require this for his classes so he could enjoy them more and focus on his learning. (Washington)

The teachers are very stressed with extra work and this is apparent in the classroom and in student interactions. They need more support. (North Carolina)

Hours Caregivers Spend Managing School at Home Daily



Are Your Child's I.E.P. / 504 Plans Being Met?



Of the 663 parents and caregivers who responded, 375 have a child(ren) with an I.E.P. or 504 Plan. Fifteen percent (15%) feel their child's needs are being met well, an increase of just 6% from last year.

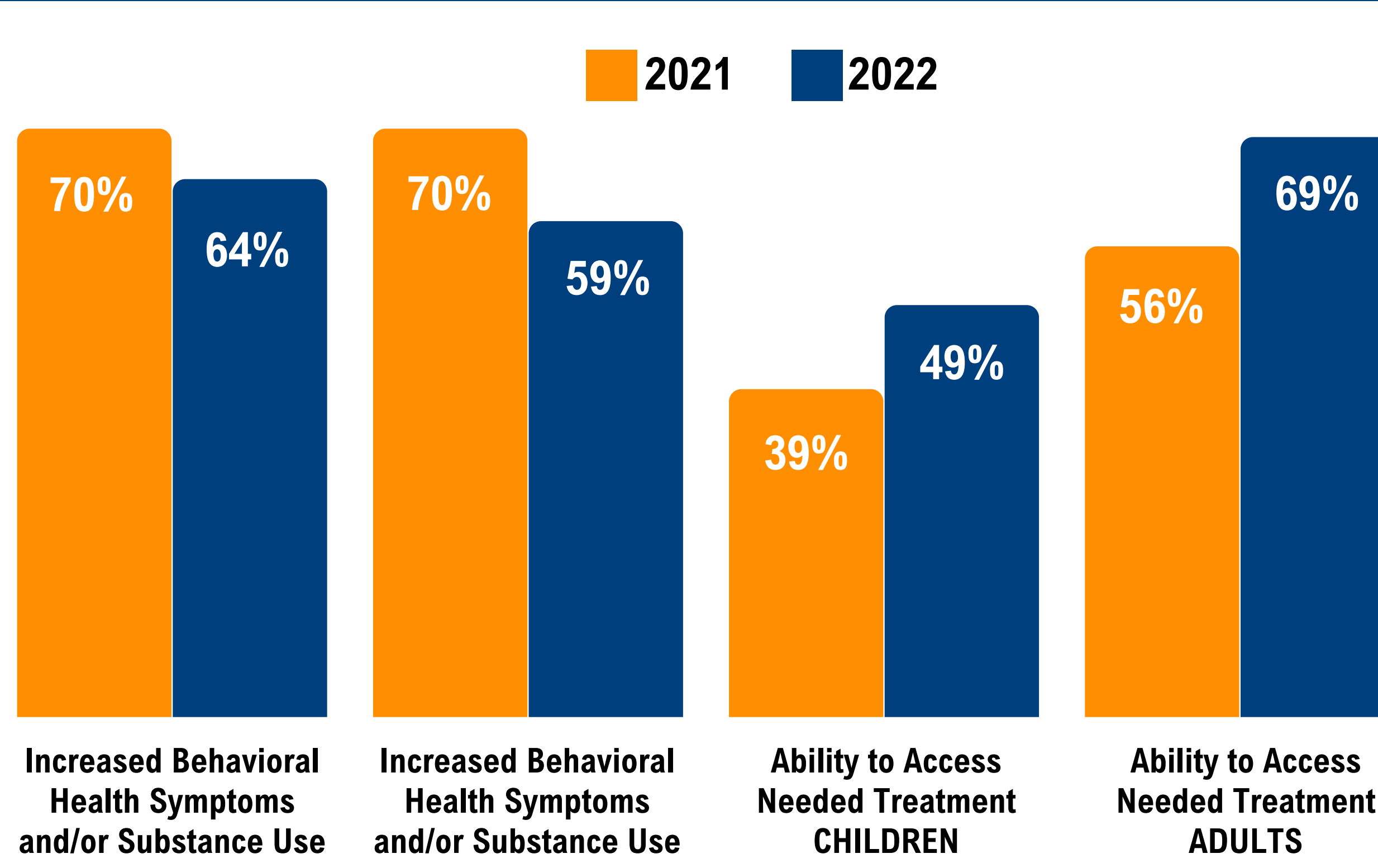
I wish our school district was more sensitive to our special needs children and the education they need to receive. Special education students are either lumped in with general education or treated as an after thought. (New Mexico)

My student with an IEP is not having her progress monitored to the full extent, which is likely due to the case load of her special education teacher. (Virginia)

Impact on Caregiver and Child Mental Health

The 2022 survey results show small decreases in behavioral health symptoms and increased access to mental health services and supports for both children and adults since 2021.

While these are small numbers, we hope this positive trend will continue in the coming year.



Accessing mental health services for my child was virtually impossible. Through my job I was aware of a "work around" for the issues I was facing in trying to find a provider through our insurance and I was able to access services in a different way. I got lucky, but there are so many parents and children out there that don't know how to access services and there are not nearly enough mental health providers for children or adults in our county. (Maryland)

"Uncertain times, make anxious children."

My child attempted suicide in May of 2021. Since then he has been to the psychiatric hospital twice and enrolled in 2 daytime programs. COVID was absolutely a major contributing factor. (Utah)

It has been extremely hard. My teenage son started cutting himself during the pandemic and it has continued. He has also attempted suicide 5 times since. He has been struggling and seeing a therapist and psychiatrist since then. (Michigan)

My children feel overwhelmed and have less support available to them because the supports are also overwhelmed. While learning about their world they feel scared and anxious. COVID is compounding the normal amounts of anxiety that children have while experiencing change at school. (New York)

"Social disconnection has had a big impact on my children."

My oldest child is a mess. She can't sleep, is having social issues, and her grades are dropping. I'm working with her school counselor and taking her to a psychiatrist and therapist. (North Carolina)

My kids have been super anxious about their school not following CDC recommendations like "Daddy's doctors" recommended. They don't understand why their father, who is immunocompromised, has to be super careful about getting COVID and why those who care about us aren't willing to take precautions. (Indiana)

I think we are all sad, anxious and burned out on the uncertainty of the pandemic. (Maine)

My daughter has become introverted and doesn't like participating in group activities anymore when she used to be very social. (Ohio)

"We had to give up on the education system."

COVID has made teachers impatient and unkind to their students. They don't explain lessons to struggling kids who are home to quarantine. It makes students feel like they are being punished for having come in contact with a virus. My college student failed 2 classes due to being home to quarantine for 3 weeks. There were no Zoom classes for him to attend. And then he had to show justification for why he failed out and why he should be allowed to stay on campus. (Colorado)

We had to give up on the education system and start homeschooling. Even with balancing work and home schooling our son has much more time for learning and is much happier. (South Dakota)

We had more time together, which was great. We feel it would be most helpful to shift toward a shorter work and school week. Standardized testing, lack of time outdoors, etc., during the school year, has led us to begin thinking about homeschooling and exiting the public school system. (Michigan)

"Expect a crippled society in 10 to 15 years."

Distance learning worked out so well for us during the shut down that we decided to enroll our kids in an online school. Other than still not having an appropriate platform and curriculum for teaching my child with dyslexia and ADHD, it's been great for our family. We actually have time for things important to us like serving at a food pantry in our community together as a family. (California)

They go to school in between outbreaks, but the pandemic is essentially a blank spot in their development as people. Expect a crippled society in 10 to 15 years when all these traumatized kids attempt college and careers. (Nevada)

One of my sons, who is on the spectrum, thrived academically in the virtual format. Upon return he needs lots of adult support to engage with previous friends and peers. We're all playing social catch up and need help with that process. (Massachusetts)

"Access to adequate services is dismal."

Children's access to adequate behavioral/mental health services covered by Medicaid is dismal and leaves children and parents in a bad place. (Kentucky)

I'm paying \$170 a child per session for counseling twice a month out of my own pocket. (Ohio)

We were on waitlists for outpatient counseling for over a year. As a Family Support Partner, I see how other families are struggling to get access and even when they do, the services are disrupted. (Virginia)

Although we have both been able to access some mental health services - they do not suffice. There's not enough availability of providers or meeting times that "work" with pandemic schedules. Everything we have - child care resources, outside support - is stressed to the max trying to make up for the complications from COVID-19. (Wisconsin)

Wait times for appointments are horrendous. Therapists are as exhausted as the rest of us. (Kansas)

"All of us are suffering from stress, anxiety and depression."

Because all of the programs are full, we had trouble getting mental health services for one of my children when he became suicidal. I do not blame the programs for this issue, but I feel that decreases in the work force are impacting the availability of services that could help my son. (Pennsylvania)

More children need therapy, but there is a massive waiting list. (New Hampshire)

Children's mental health is suffering and has been hit the hardest. Parents are struggling to maintain home/work life balance and are at the end of their rope. There are just not enough services or providers to work with each child and adult appropriately. (Connecticut)

"How do you get your child the help they need?"

Isolation during COVID put our family in crisis. We've been working through it and have made positive strides in managing symptoms of anxiety and depression. It's especially helpful that school started back in person. The partnership efforts of our public schools and the YMCA to support virtual learning was very helpful for us. Both of our children were able to benefit from the program. That was life saving for our mental health because prior to that program starting I was concerned that one or both of our children would end up in the hospital for mental health needs. (Louisiana)

I have reached out to everyone to try to access services and help for my child - the school, the county social services department, the state health department, Medicaid, community partners, my son's medical providers, state facilities, emergency room departments, mobile crisis, and more. I'm not able to get any behavioral or mental health services at the level my son needs due to lack of staffing, closed facilities, no open spots and very long waiting lists. When in a crisis - how do you get your child the help they need? There needs to be a backup plan, an emergency plan, a way to get your child the help they need. No one has answers. (North Carolina)

COVID and quarantine exacerbated her mental health issues.

I'm so worried about my son's continued exposure to stress and anxiety and about his mental health. This applies to my mental health as well. So tired of worrying.

Everyone's mental health has been impacted. With fewer available services, the constant stress, the increased cost of living, and no access to child care, it feels like a black hole.

We have exhausted the education workforce. They need to be paid better and trained in mental health needs as a standard of practice.

The selected quotes shared here offer a glimpse into the worry and desperation caregivers expressed. And, while their experiences have been as diverse as our nation's families are, many were complimentary and appreciative of educators.