



**ACCESS TO
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

December 2014

**Report Prepared by
Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research**

INTRODUCTION

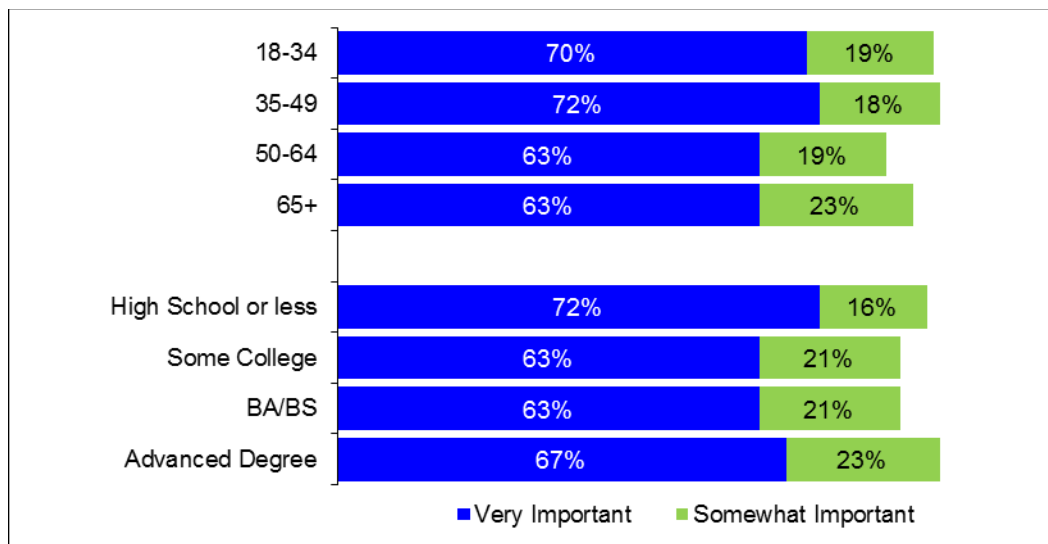
Since 2002, the Rauch Foundation, a Long Island-based family foundation focused on children and families, the environment, and leadership, has commissioned a series of public opinion surveys to assess the attitudes of Long Island's residents on the important issues facing them. As part of the Foundation's *Long Island Index* project, these surveys are intended to provide an awareness of the concerns and opinions of Long Island residents.

The current survey was conducted by the Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research during the fall of 2014. Telephone interviews were conducted by cell phone and landline with a randomly selected sample of 800 Long Island residents and an oversample of 250 young residents (aged 18-34). Further information on the methodology, as well as the questionnaire and responses, is available in the Appendix to the report.

Children and Families

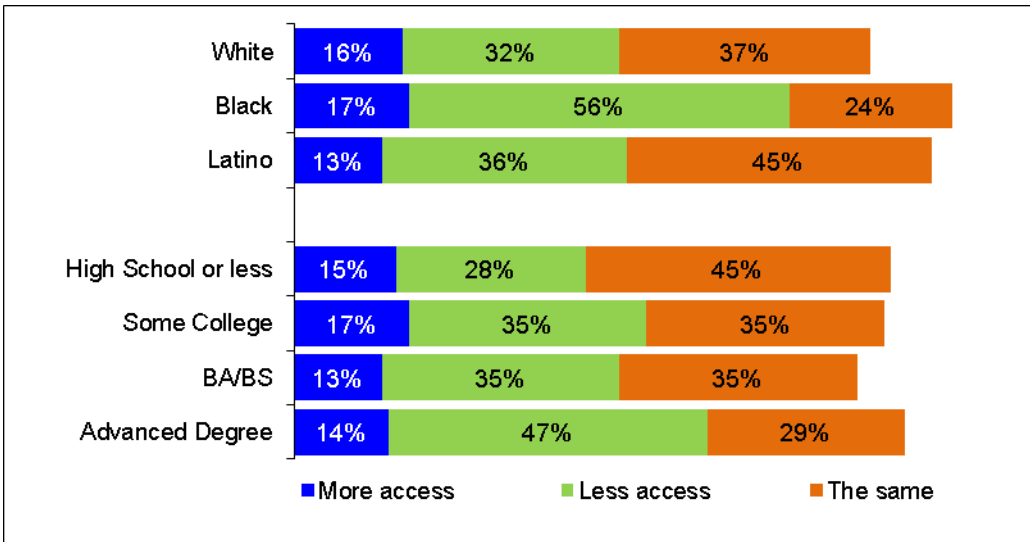
When asked about the importance of attending a preschool for at least a year in order to succeed in school almost all local residents agreed that this is very or somewhat important (87%) for children's future success. Support for preschool attendance was high in all income, age, education, and racial groups. There was slight variation in political parties with more liberals rating preschool attendance very important (75%) than conservatives (57%).

Figure 1: How important is it for children to spend at least one year attending a preschool program in order to succeed in school? (Q1)



More than half (52%) of Long Island residents believe that children from low-income homes on Long Island have more or the same access to preschool programs as children from middle-income families. There are racial differences in this view, however. A majority of Blacks (56%) perceive income disparities in access to pre-school programs compared to many fewer Whites (32%) or Latinos (36%). Residents with an advanced degree are also less likely than those with a high school degree to believe that low and middle-income children have equal access to pre-school programs (28% vs.47%). (Figure 2)

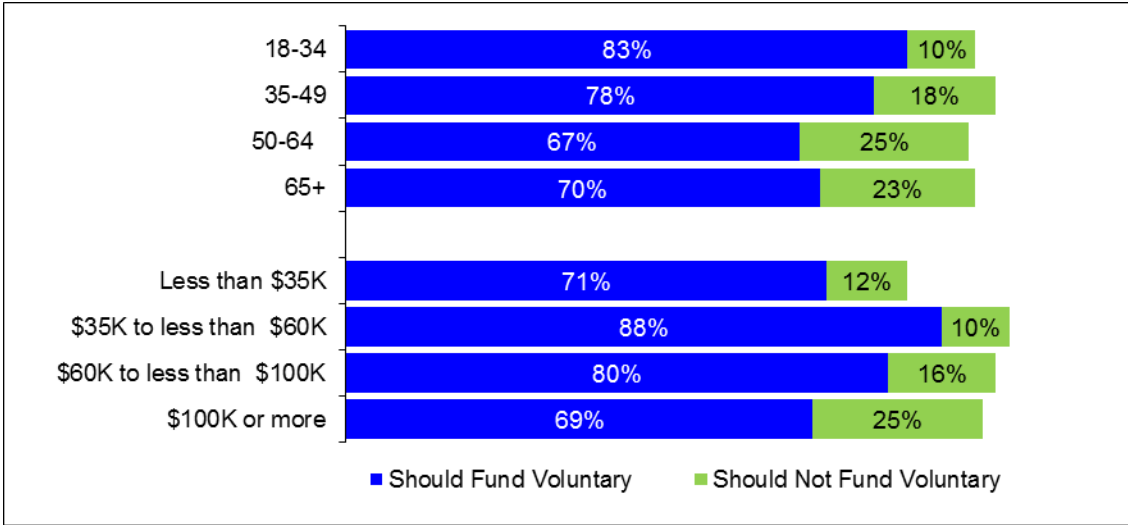
Figure 2: Do you think that children from LOW-INCOME homes on Long Island have more access to pre-school programs than MIDDLE-INCOME children, less access, or is their access about the same? (Q2)



Seventy-four percent of local residents supported the funding of voluntary pre-kindergarten programs for all families by state and local governments, whereas 19% oppose this. Those aged 18 to 34 were the most strongly supportive of voluntary pre-kindergarten funding (83%); a majority of older residents also supported the programs but somewhat less uniformly (67% support among those aged 50-64 and 70% support among those aged 65 and older). Support was also decreased slightly between the lowest and the highest income groups. (Figure 3)

There was little difference in support for funding of pre-kindergarten programs by Long Island residents' level of educational attainment. Blacks (90%) and Latinos (83%) were more supportive than Whites (71%) of this funding.

Figure 3: Do you think that state and local governments should or should not fund voluntary pre-kindergarten for all families, just as they do now for kindergarten through twelfth grade? (Q3)



METHODOLOGY

The Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research conducted this survey by telephone between August 13 and October 16, 2014. The study was conducted in Nassau and Suffolk County on Long Island. A total of 1050 interviews were completed, with 500 completed interviews with residents of Nassau County and 550 completed interviews with residents of Suffolk County.

A total of 800 interviews were conducted in the general population of Long Island, with 376 completed interviews with residents of Nassau County and 424 completed interviews with residents of Suffolk County. A list-assisted method of random-digit-dialing (RDD) for landline and cellphone was used to obtain phone numbers for this sample. Within selected households, individuals 18 years and over were selected at random for participation. Up to 6 contact attempts at various times of the day and week were made at each household phone number. In order to assure a representative sample, all households and individuals who initially were not willing to participate in the survey were contacted again, and an attempt was made to persuade them to participate.

In addition, young adult Long Island residents between the ages of 18 and 34 were oversampled using a targeted telephone sample. Additional telephone interviews were conducted with a total of 250 young adults, with 124 completed interviews with Nassau County residents and 126 with Suffolk County. Similarly to the RDD sample, up to 6 contact attempts at various times of the day and week were made at each cellphone and landline number. Respondents who initially refused to participate in the study were contacted again and persuaded to participate.

The data is weighted to match population characteristics of Nassau and Suffolk Counties on gender, age, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity as well as cellphone only users, based on the 2010 U.S. Census county-level data. Weighting was done using an iterative raking process developed to estimate joint weights for any number of demographic variables for which population percentages are known only individually, not jointly. In the current sample, minority groups, males, people with a lower level of education, and younger respondents were underrepresented.

The results for Nassau and Suffolk Counties were tabulated both separately and jointly. The young adult oversamples of Long Island residents were included in all comparisons of responses by age.

Margin of error for the Long Island sample is +/- 3.4%.

Frequency Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. We are conducting a study regarding several quality of life issues here on Long Island.

Your telephone number was randomly dialed by a computer. To make sure we obtain an accurate cross-section of local residents, we need to speak to the person in your household who is 18 years of age or older, and had the most recent birthday. Is that you?

AFTER THE SELECTION OF THE ELIGIBLE RESPONDENT:

This survey only takes about 15 minutes to complete. We will skip over any questions you don't want to answer, and all answers will be kept confidential. You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. For your information, the study is funded by the Rauch Foundation. With your permission, let's begin.

NOTE: Percentages are based on the 800 respondents in the main sample and an oversample of 250 young adults for a total of 1050.

Question Q1

How important is it for children to spend at least one year attending a preschool program in order to succeed in school?

RESPONDENTS: 1050	Total	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%
Very important	67	70	72	63	63
Somewhat important	20	19	18	19	23
Not very important	7	5	7	6	9
Not at all important	6	4	2	10	6
Don't know	1	2	1	1	-
Refused	-	-	-	-	-

Question Q2

Do you think that children from LOW-INCOME homes on Long Island have more access to pre-school programs than MIDDLE-INCOME children, less access, or is their access about the same?

RESPONDENTS: 1050	Total	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%
More access	15	11	17	19	12
Less access	34	48	37	31	22
The same	37	33	33	34	50
Don't know	14	9	12	16	16
Refused	-	-	-	1	-

Question Q3

Do you think that state and local governments should or should not fund voluntary pre-kindergarten for all families, just as they do now for kindergarten through twelfth grade?

RESPONDENTS: 1050	Total	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%
Should fund voluntary	74	83	78	67	70
Should not fund voluntary	19	10	18	25	23
Don't know	6	6	3	9	7
Refused	1	1	1	-	-