

Moms Sacrificing to Feed Children, Needing Additional Supports

Moms Nationwide Facing Difficult Trade-Offs to Provide Nutritious Meals For Their Children

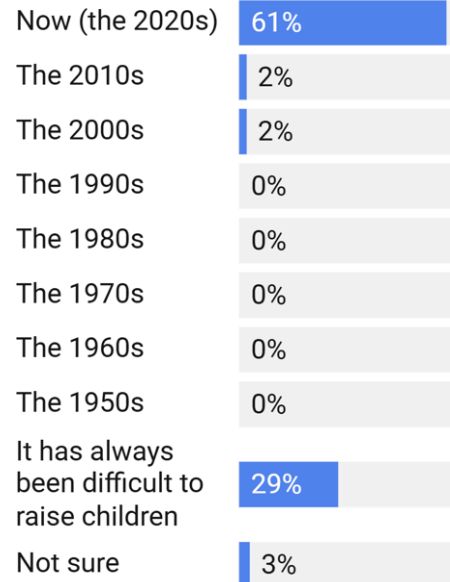
Moms Say Now is the Hardest Time to Raise Children

A new nationwide poll¹ conducted by Aspect Strategic on behalf of Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign highlights the challenges facing U.S. moms (women who are raising children under 18). A majority (61%) of moms agree that now—the 2020s—is the most challenging decade in recent history in which to raise children in the United States. Another 29% says it has always been difficult to raise children.

An alarming number of moms in the U.S. are concerned about providing enough food for their children, forcing difficult tradeoffs.

More than two-in-five (43%) say they worry about whether they can consistently provide their children with healthy meals. Many moms are making difficult sacrifices to feed their children: One-quarter (24%) took on debt in the past 12 months, 23% worked extra hours or took on additional work, and one-in-five (20%) skipped a meal or ate less so their children could eat. Moms of all incomes are facing these tradeoffs, with lower-income moms impacted the most. One-in-three lower-income moms accrued debt (32%) in the past 12 months, skipped meals or ate less (34%), delayed payments (35%), or relied on family and friends (33%) or community supports like food pantries (35%).

Comparing across decades, when do you believe raising children in the United States has been most challenging?



Select all that apply. In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following to make sure your child(ren) had enough nutritious food?

	All	Lower Income	Middle Income	Higher Income
Took on debt, including credit card debt	24	32	27	13
Worked extra hours or took on additional work	23	28	27	10
Skipped a meal or ate less so my child(ren) could eat.	20	34	20	5
Delayed paying a bill, like rent or utilities	17	35	14	3
Asked family or friends for help	17	33	16	3
Cut back or delayed my own medical care, including prescriptions	14	21	14	5
Relied on community support, like food pantries	14	35	10	0
Cut back or delayed my own mental health care	12	19	13	5
None of these	49	27	46	77
AT LEAST 1 OF THESE	51	73	54	23

¹ Aspect Strategic conducted a national survey of 1,508 women raising children under age 18. The survey was conducted March 10-16, 2026. The margin of error is 2.5% overall, and larger for subgroups. The sample was representative of the U.S. population of women raising children in terms of the sample's age, race/ethnicity, gender, education, region, and political party identification based on U.S. Census and voter file data. See full question text and sample characteristics [here](#).

Nearly All Moms Say They Need Additional Supports to Feel Confident Their Children Can Thrive

Moms are making tough sacrifices for the sake of their children’s well-being. Nearly all moms (93%) agree with the statement, “I make sacrifices so my child(ren) can thrive.” Over half (55%) *strongly* agree with this statement. Yet in spite of the sacrifices they are making, **moms feel they are not fully equipped to ensure their children thrive.** The vast majority (91%) say one or more supports would help them feel more confident in achieving this goal. More than half say easy access to healthy, affordable food would help (55% selected this item), as well as housing that is affordable (54%). Lower income moms are especially likely to say one or more supports would be helpful.

Which of the following would help you feel confident your child(ren) can thrive?

	All	Lower Income	Middle Income	Higher Income
Easy access to healthy, affordable food	55	67	56	36
Housing that is affordable	54	66	54	40
More stable income	47	66	46	27
Flexible work schedule	45	43	46	51
More mental health support	37	38	36	37
Stronger community support networks	34	34	33	38
Affordable, reliable childcare	31	30	30	39
More education or professional training to increase my income	25	32	25	17
None of these	9	5	9	15
AT LEAST 1 OF THESE	91	95	91	85

Moms are optimistic about their children's futures, with many seeking a better life for them than what moms are experiencing today. More than three-quarters (78%) agree with the statement, "Despite today’s challenges, I am optimistic about my child(ren)’s future." Programs and policies that provide the additional supports moms say they need may help mitigate moms’ concerns around their ability to feed their children and turn their hopes into realities.

What is your greatest hope for your child(ren)'s future?

That my son will be able to have a higher quality of living than my own. I know that was my parents' hope for me, but it's not the reality. I want him to be safe and healthy with opportunities for happiness and joy.

New York, 45 to 54

I just pray to God that my child will get enough education so that she will never have to know what struggling to pay bills or to buy food feels like.

Ohio, 35 to 44

My greatest hope is that my child will have a life that is better than mine. A life where she is happy and successful and is financially stable.

Florida, 35 to 44

That they never have to sacrifice to make sure their kids go without. I hope they have financial stability and are able to provide for themselves and their children. No child should go without, but parents should not either.

Kentucky, 35 to 44