First Book
Survey Results

Survey for:
Foundation for Appalachian Ohio
Educational Barriers & Solutions

January 2020

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

First Book & Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO) – Identifying Educational Barriers & Solutions Study

Survey Type: Cross-sectional online questionnaire

Survey Goal: The goal of this survey was to identify educational barriers faced by kids & potential solutions for educators.

Participants in this study were registered First Book members who work in classrooms or programs in which at least 70 percent of the children served come from low-income families. Participants all work for schools or organizations based in Appalachian Ohio.

N = 116 participants

The survey administration period opened on January 24th and closed February 10th, 2020. The First Book team programmed this electronic survey in the survey platform Qualtrics and distributed it via email.

- ❖ Audience size: 1,545
- ❖ Recorded Responses (partial):   116
- ❖ Completed responses: 89
- ❖ Response rate: 7.5%
- ❖ Survey completion rate: 77%

This study was designed by First Book Research & Insights, with support from The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio.
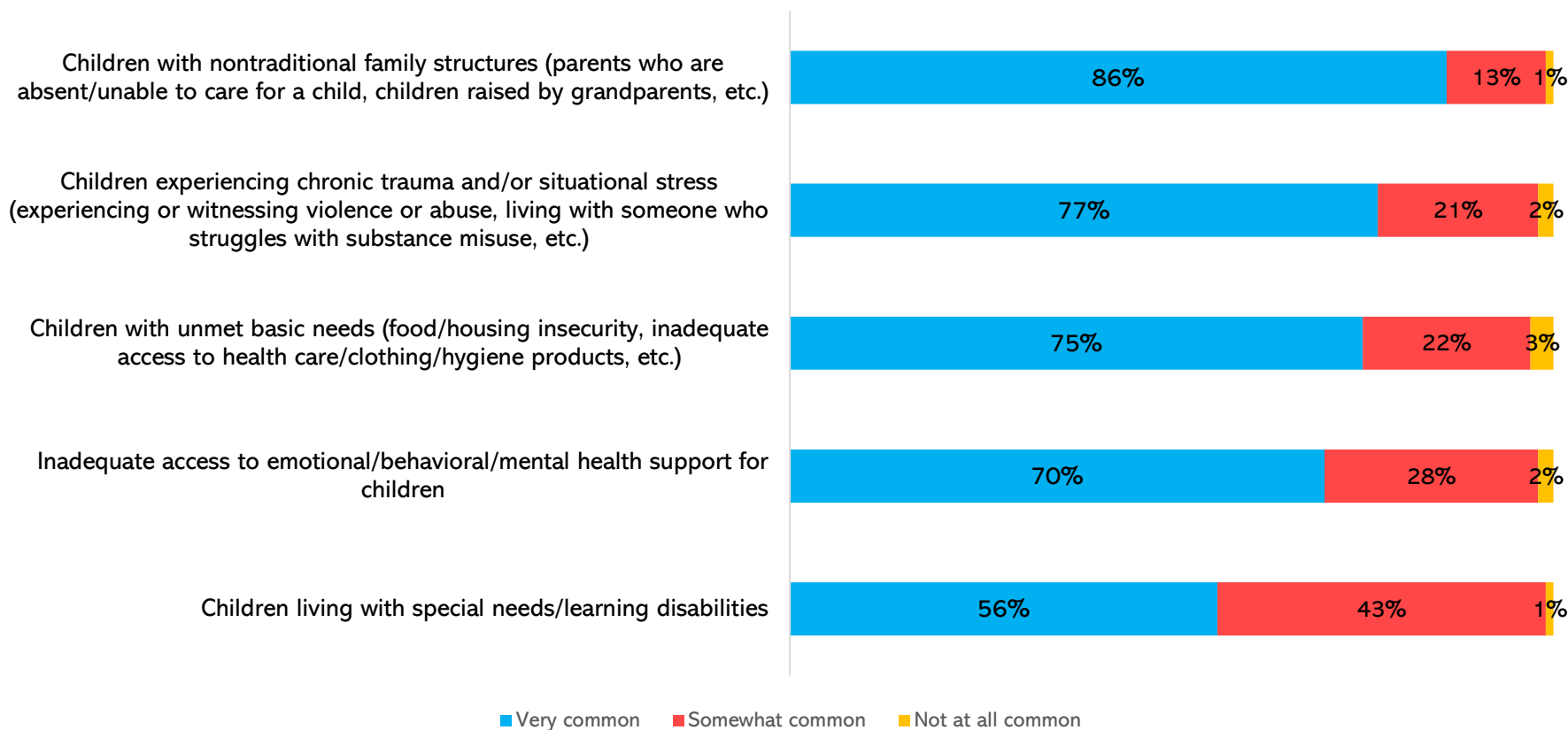
Identifying Educational Barriers

Below is a list of the educational barriers we heard at the town hall meetings, focus groups and one-on-one conversations. For each example, please indicate how common it is among the children you serve, and the extent to which the situation impedes your ability to help your children reach their full learning potential.

	How common is this situation among the children you serve?			How much does this situation impede your ability to help your children reach their full learning potential?		
	Very common	Somewhat common	Not at all common	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all
Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children	○	○	○	○	○	○
Children experiencing chronic trauma and/or situational stress (experiencing or witnessing violence or abuse, living with someone who struggles with substance misuse, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Children living with special needs/learning disabilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Children with nontraditional family structures (parents who are absent/unable to care for a child, children raised by grandparents, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Children with unmet basic needs (food/housing insecurity, inadequate access to health care/clothing/hygiene products, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Educators in Appalachian Ohio Cite Children with Nontraditional Family Structures as the Most Common Educational Barrier Faced by the Children they Serve

How common are the following situations among the children you serve?
Q2 – Part 1 response
(n = 116)

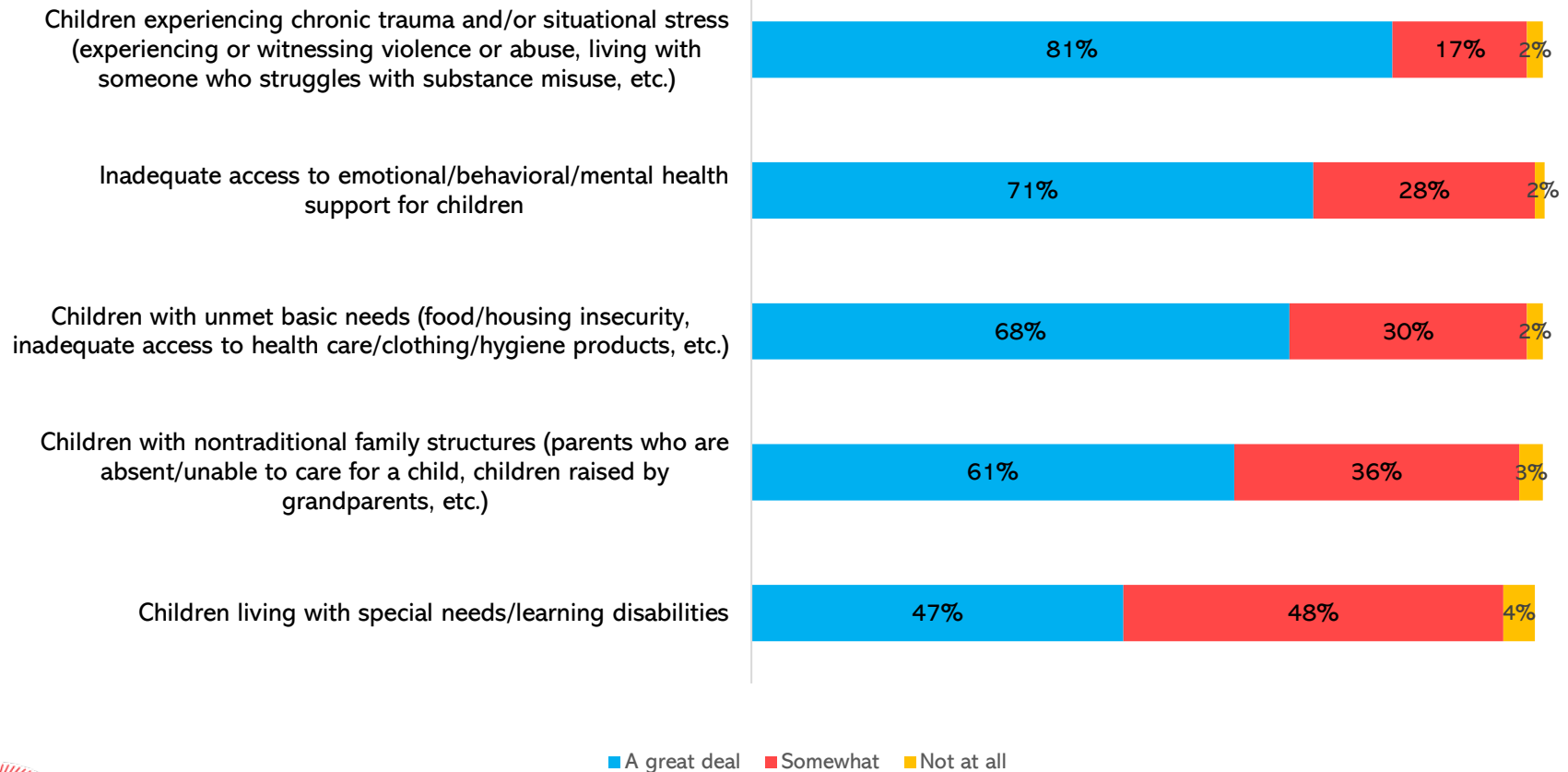| Situation	Very common	Somewhat common	Not at all common
Children with nontraditional family structures (parents who are absent/unable to care for a child, children raised by grandparents, etc.)	86%	13%	1%
Children experiencing chronic trauma and/or situational stress (experiencing or witnessing violence or abuse, living with someone who struggles with substance misuse, etc.)	77%	21%	2%
Children with unmet basic needs (food/housing insecurity, inadequate access to health care/clothing/hygiene products, etc.)	75%	22%	3%
Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children	70%	28%	2%
Children living with special needs/learning disabilities	56%	43%	1%

■ Very common   ■ Somewhat common   ■ Not at all common

Q- In 2019, First Book spent time learning about the unique challenges educators in your community face… - How common is this situation among the children you serve?

Children Experiencing Chronic Trauma/Situational Stress is the Life Circumstance that Affects Educators' Jobs the Most

How much do these situations impede your ability to help children reach their full learning potential?

Q2 – Part 2 response

(n = 116)

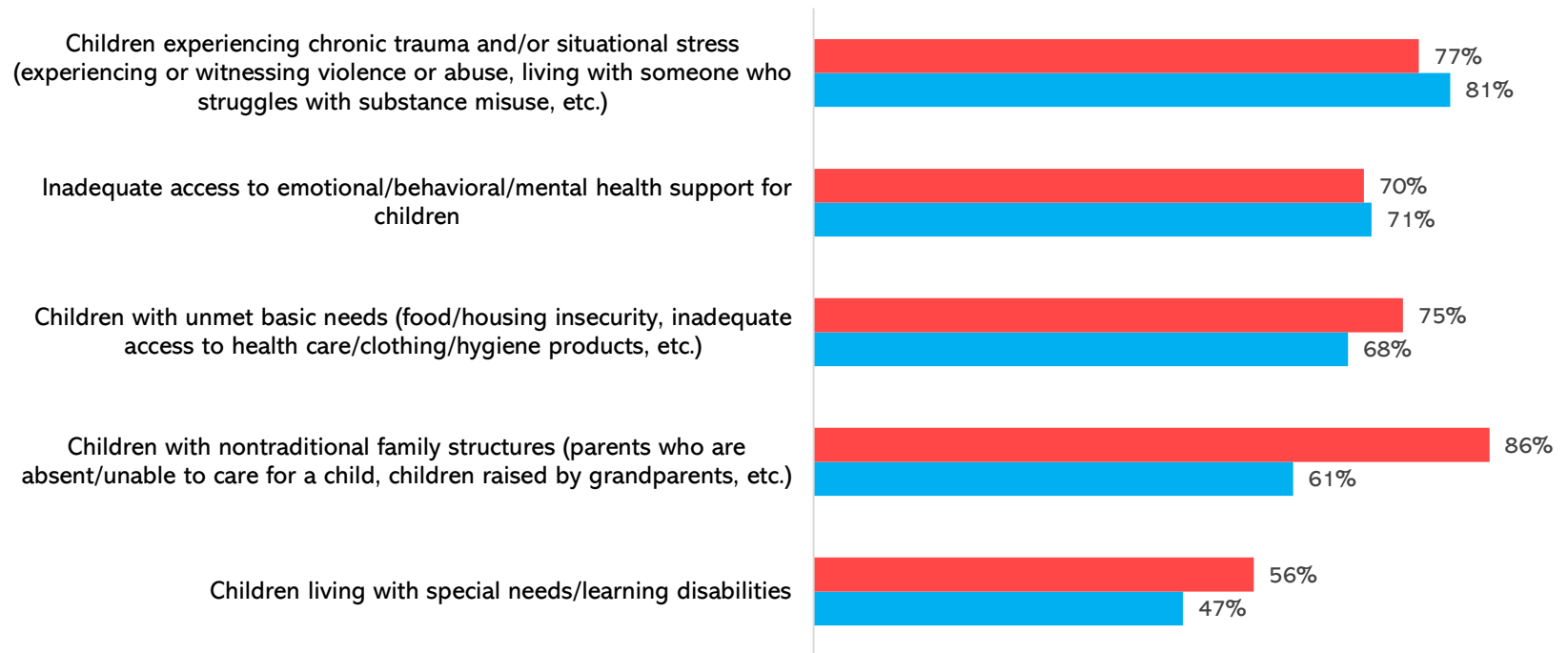| Situation	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all
Children experiencing chronic trauma and/or situational stress (experiencing or witnessing violence or abuse, living with someone who struggles with substance misuse, etc.)	81%	17%	2%
Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children	71%	28%	2%
Children with unmet basic needs (food/housing insecurity, inadequate access to health care/clothing/hygiene products, etc.)	68%	30%	2%
Children with nontraditional family structures (parents who are absent/unable to care for a child, children raised by grandparents, etc.)	61%	36%	3%
Children living with special needs/learning disabilities	47%	48%	4%

Legend: ■ A great deal   ■ Somewhat   ■ Not at all

Q- In 2019, First Book spent time learning about the unique challenges educators in your community f... - How much does this situation impede your ability to help your children reach their full learning potential?

Experiencing Chronic Trauma/Situational Stress is the #2 Most Common Educational Barrier Among Kids, and the #1 Situation that Impedes Educators' Work

Children with nontraditional family structures is the #1 most common barrier among kids, but it does not impede educators' work to the degree that other situations do

Common Educational Barriers vs. How Much They Impede Educators' Work
Q2 combined
(n = 116)

Children experiencing chronic trauma and/or situational stress (experiencing or witnessing violence or abuse, living with someone who struggles with substance misuse, etc.)
- 77%
- 81%

Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children
- 70%
- 71%

Children with unmet basic needs (food/housing insecurity, inadequate access to health care/clothing/hygiene products, etc.)
- 75%
- 68%

Children with nontraditional family structures (parents who are absent/unable to care for a child, children raised by grandparents, etc.)
- 86%
- 61%

Children living with special needs/learning disabilities
- 56%
- 47%

■ Situation is very common   ■ Situation impedes my work a great deal

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Primary and Secondary Effects of Adversity

Sometimes adversity faced by children in their personal lives can have a secondary traumatic effect on the other children and adults who interact with them regularly. We're interested in knowing whether the adverse situations we've discussed so far not only affect the children who directly experience them, but also have a secondary effect on you or the friends/peers in their lives.

Based on what you perceive among the kids you serve, please indicate whether each situation you've selected as common:
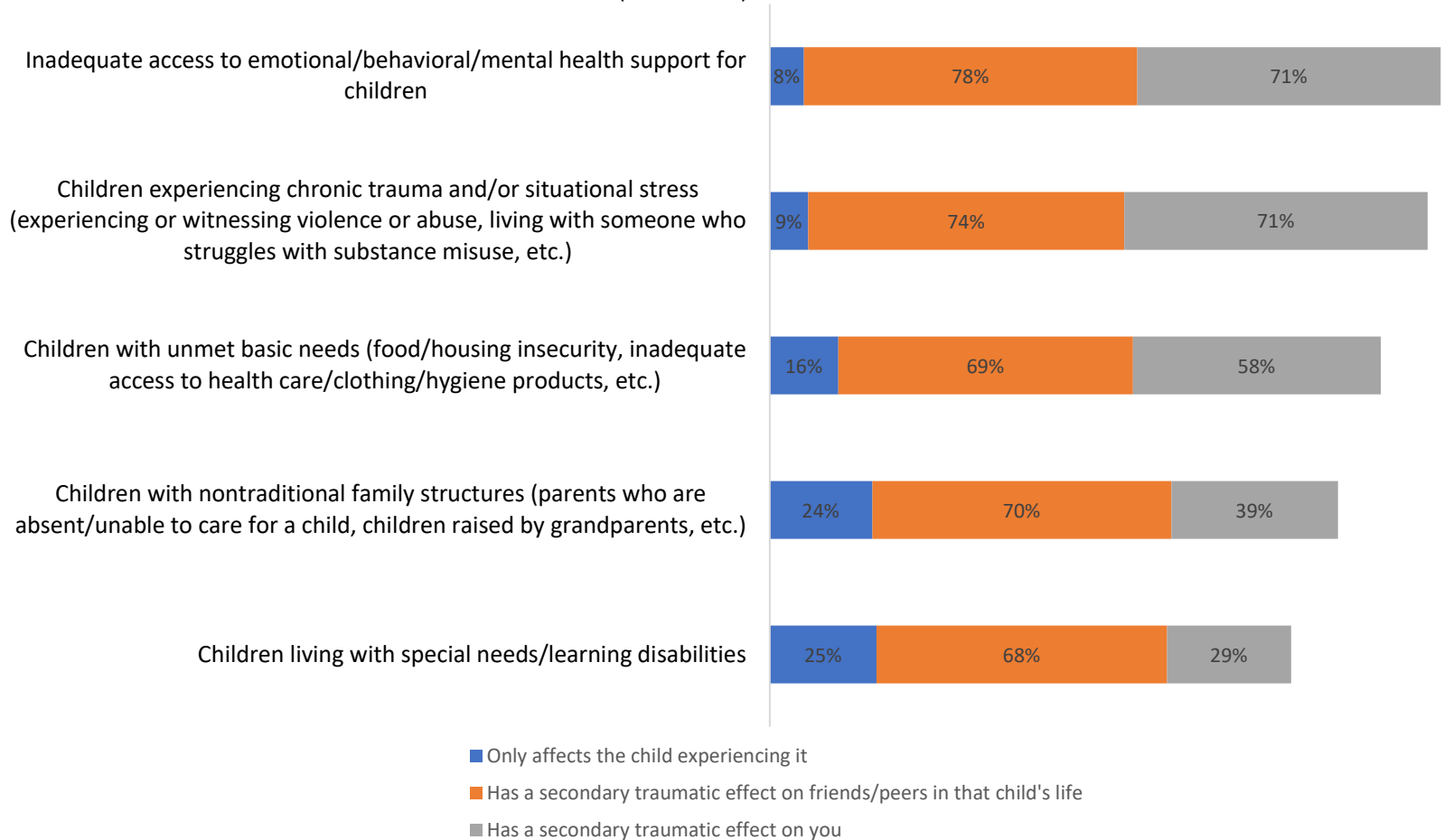- only affects the child experiencing it
- has a secondary traumatic effect on friends/peers in that child's life
- has a secondary traumatic effect on you

	Only affects the child experiencing it	Has a secondary traumatic effect on friends/peers in that child's life	Has a secondary traumatic effect on you
Children with nontraditional family structures (parents who are absent/unable to care for a child, children raised by grandparents, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children	☐	☐	☐
Children living with special needs/learning disabilities	☐	☐	☐
Children with unmet basic needs (food/housing insecurity, inadequate access to health care/clothing/hygiene products, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Children experiencing chronic trauma and/or situational stress (experiencing or witnessing violence or abuse, living with someone who struggles with substance misuse, etc.)	☐	☐	☐

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Barriers Related to Mental Health and Trauma Have the Highest Rate of Causing Secondary Trauma to Peers and Educators

Prevalence of Secondary Trauma by Barrier
(n = 105-107)

Barrier	Only affects the child experiencing it	Has a secondary traumatic effect on friends/peers in that child's life	Has a secondary traumatic effect on you
Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children	8%	78%	71%
Children experiencing chronic trauma and/or situational stress (experiencing or witnessing violence or abuse, living with someone who struggles with substance misuse, etc.)	9%	74%	71%
Children with unmet basic needs (food/housing insecurity, inadequate access to health care/clothing/hygiene products, etc.)	16%	69%	58%
Children with nontraditional family structures (parents who are absent/unable to care for a child, children raised by grandparents, etc.)	24%	70%	39%
Children living with special needs/learning disabilities	25%	68%	29%

■ Only affects the child experiencing it
■ Has a secondary traumatic effect on friends/peers in that child's life
■ Has a secondary traumatic effect on you

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Write-In Response, Text Analysis:
Disrupting Classmates' Learning and Compassion Fatigue are the Most Common Displays of Secondary Trauma

Q: In a few sentences, tell us more specifically how this situation impacts the children you serve and how it serves as a challenge for you in your daily work.

Most common write-in answer themes:

- Secondary trauma is most visible with the disruption of other students' learning when a child of trauma acts out in class.

- Compassion fatigue (it's hard for educators to "let go" of thoughts related to their students' well-being when they go home at the end of the day).

- The extra attention that students with behavioral issues (as a result of trauma) experience can a) make students jealous, and b) make educators feel guilty.

- Frustration that educators can only offer solutions within their classroom.

"When children express personal situations of trauma it is often at school. We become invested on many levels in assisting with the emotional and physical wellness of the student. Significantly, there are not services to provide any support beyond the immediate timeframe of within school hours. It is worrisome and devastating to be aware of students living with trauma and be helpless to provide or refer for long-term support. This is emotionally draining for teachers. The rise of severe behaviors in the school setting has a major impact on learning and the school climate. Physical and verbal aggression, as a result of the student's trauma, too often result in major disruptions and safety concerns for the student, classmates and school staff. Not only is this exhausting, it can be scary. Having to immediately return to the needs of the classroom gives teachers/staff no time to debrief or de-escalate their own emotions time and time again. At some level these incidents lead to a form of PTSD."
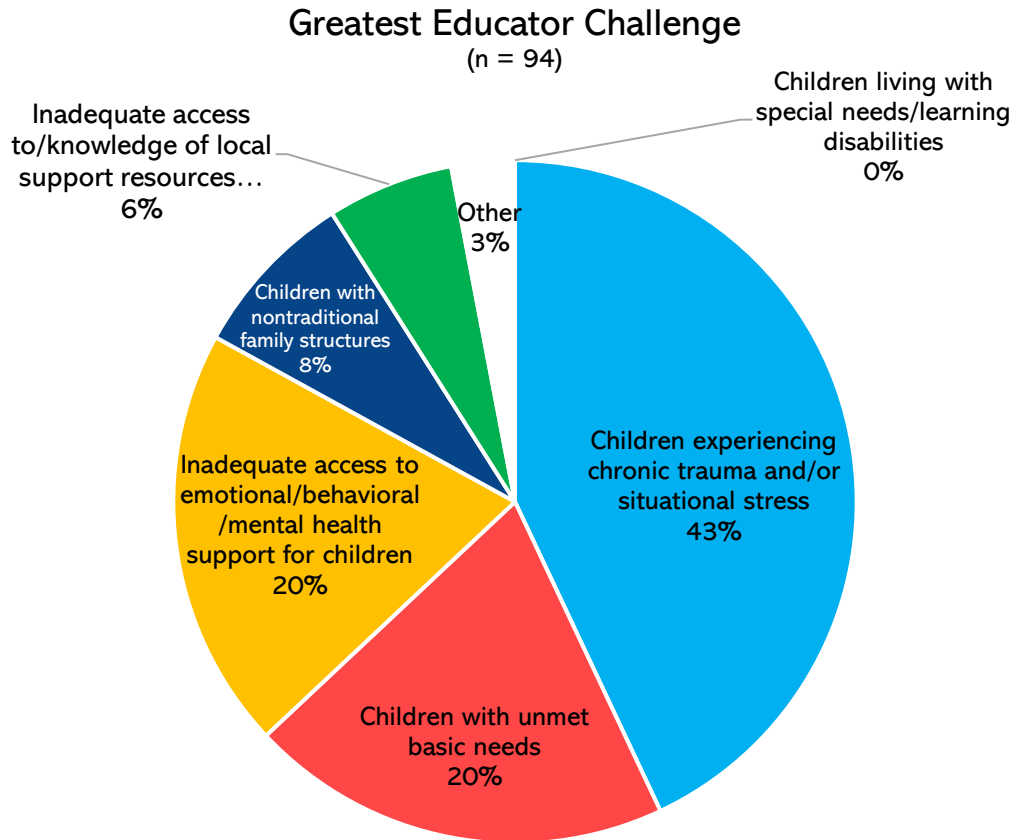
Educators Are Extremely Interested in Getting Connected with Local Support Resources that Can Help Them With Some of These Educational Barriers

Educator Interest in Getting Connected to Local Support Resources
(n = 99)

Probably not
1%

Might or might not
5%

Probably yes
18%

Definitely yes
76%
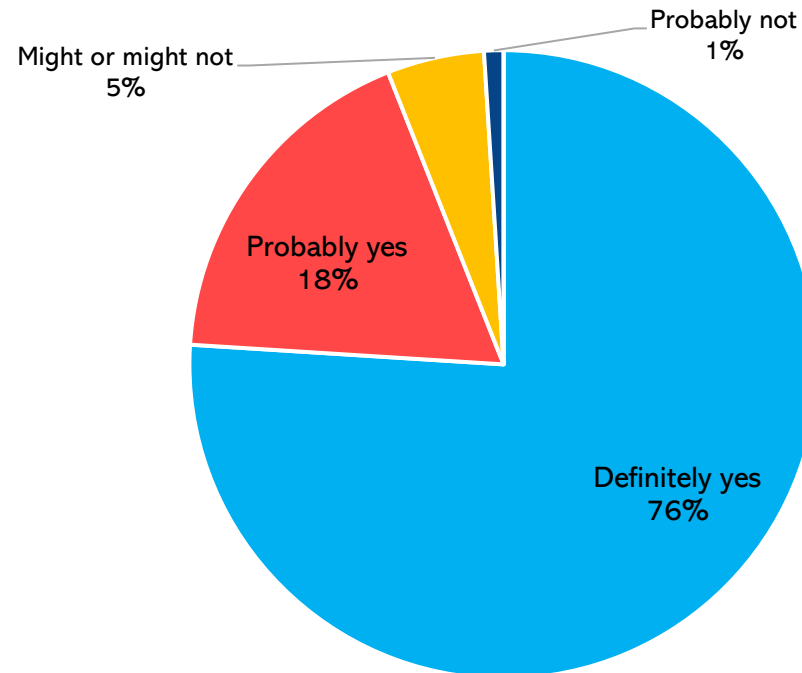
Q- Would it be helpful in your work to have access to strategically curated, digestible information about available local support resources that you could share with the children and families you serve?

The #1 Greatest Challenge Faced by Educators is Children Experiencing Trauma and/or Situational Stress

Greatest Educator Challenge
(n = 94)

Children living with special needs/learning disabilities
0%

Inadequate access to/knowledge of local support resources…
6%

Other
3%

Children with nontraditional family structures
8%

Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children
20%

Children experiencing chronic trauma and/or situational stress
43%

Children with unmet basic needs
20%

"Other" write-in responses:

Actually a combination of the non-traditional family structures made necessary by the substance abuse and related issues along with the fact that there isn't enough support for those children's emotional/mental/behavioral health.

Both chronic trauma and unmet needs.

Children with emotional/behavioral/mental and special needs that cannot be placed in the best environment because parents will not give permission for placement/treatment.

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Q - Which of the following adverse situations faced by children creates the greatest challenge for you in your daily work? Select one.

Write-In Response, Text Analysis:
Safety Needs to Come First In Order for Kids To Learn: When Basic Needs are Not Met, It is Traumatic and Feels Unsafe for Kids.
Kids Cannot Be Ready to Learn if They Feel Unsafe.

Q - In a few sentences, tell us more specifically how this situation impacts the children you serve and how it serves as a challenge for you in your daily work.

Most common write-in answer themes:

- Children's basic needs are not being met. They cannot be ready to learn if they are hungry, tired, or feel unsafe.
  - The idea of "safety first" comes up (in one form or another) often. Children's home lives don't just need to be stable with basic needs being met, they need to be stable with emotional needs being met. They need to feel safe to thrive.

- Children are generally experiencing difficult home lives that make it difficult for them to concentrate at school (because all they can think about is what happens at home.)

- Children are being raised by grandparents, and many grandparents are not equipped to raise children in current 2020 social environments

- Substance abuse in the home is very prevalent and results in the root of many traumatic themes (lack of basic needs, lack of safety, intergenerational rearing.)

"At least half, if not more, of the children we serve are living in non-traditional homes and have been through some sort of trauma due to drugs/alcohol/lack of jobs/lack of knowledge, the list goes on. We have a very high poverty rate and drug abuse rate in our county and the surrounding counties. Some of these children are living in situations that we can't even imagine allowing animals to live in, but they are. This trauma has caused behavior problems, withdrawn children, abused children, attention hungry children. It's a difficult battle every day."

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Resource Options for Educators to Address Educational Barriers

First Book is working closely with FAO to develop free resources/opportunities that will provide educators with the necessary knowledge and tools to address these educational barriers. Here are a few examples of support resources being considered:

A digital platform: This would connect educators and providers with each other and with content experts both locally, and beyond. The platform creates pathways for practitioners to access a professional network of experts through collaborative online training to facilitate the sharing of best practices and to build local capacity. The platform will seek to identify and promote critical, relevant services or programs - such as local parenting groups for grandparents, medical or therapeutic specialists, etc.

Downloadable/printable resources: This could include toolkits, handbooks or guides that could be downloaded from the First Book Marketplace, with information and concrete action steps to help children work through some of these barriers. These downloadable resources would be created in collaboration with locally-based and national experts in each subject area.

Virtual visits from local and national professionals: Educators and caregivers could tune in to online conversations with local and national experts on various subjects via webcam for a moderated discussion. As part of these discussions, you would have the opportunity to ask questions that address your individual experiences and issues.

Online collaborative forum: Educators across Appalachian Ohio could log into an online forum and share tips, post lesson plans, and pose questions to better share knowledge, instructional approaches, and resource recommendations across your community about topics that are relevant to your region.

Family Engagement/Home Visitation training: Training for anyone who is interested in exploring home-visits and/or strategies for building critical relationships with students' families. This training could take the form of a live training, an online training, or a printable training guide that you could download from the First Book Marketplace.
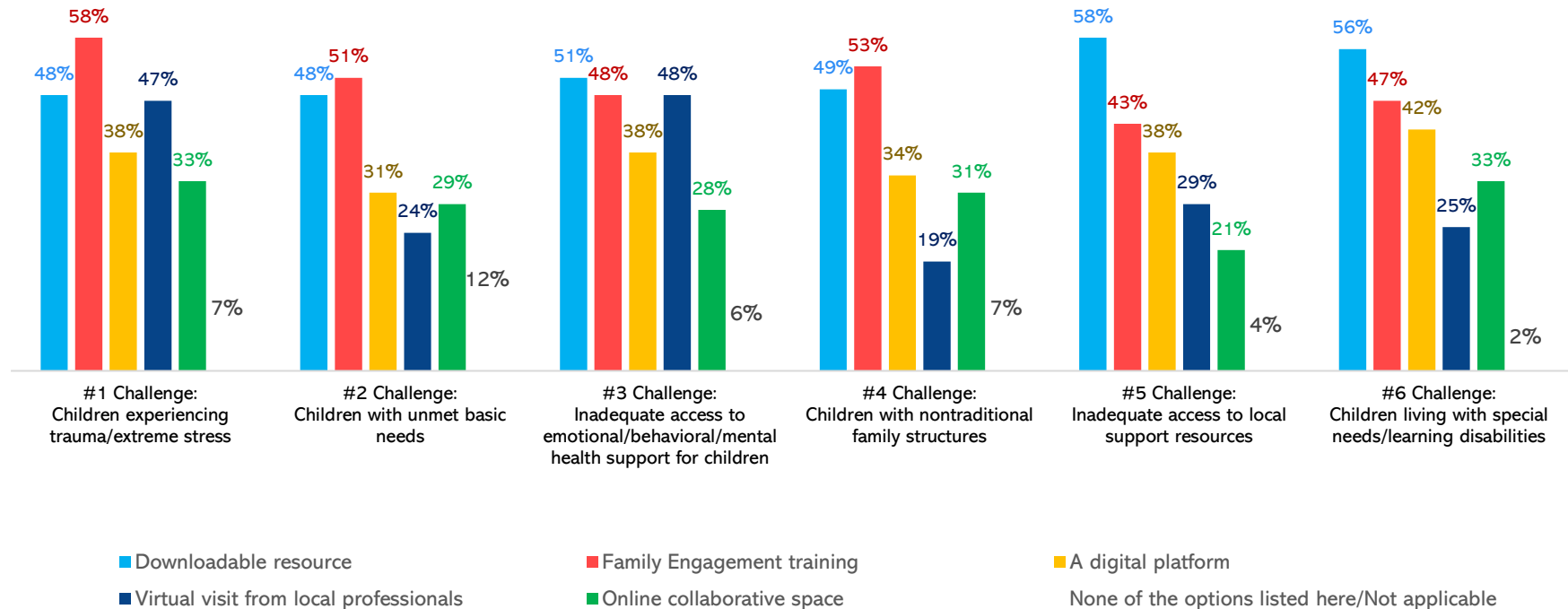
With those resource options in mind, please indicate which of these resources, if any, you think would be of the most interest to you, personally, to help address each educational barrier. (Respondents' input on next slide.)

Downloadable Resources and Family Engagement Training are the Support Resources of Most Interest to Address These Barriers

Virtual visits from local professionals are greatly desired when it comes to barriers of trauma and mental health

Best Resources to Support Each Barrier
(n = 89)

	#1 Challenge: Children experiencing trauma/extreme stress	#2 Challenge: Children with unmet basic needs	#3 Challenge: Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children	#4 Challenge: Children with nontraditional family structures	#5 Challenge: Inadequate access to local support resources	#6 Challenge: Children living with special needs/learning disabilities
Downloadable resource	48%	48%	51%	49%	58%	56%
Family Engagement training	58%	51%	48%	53%	43%	47%
A digital platform	38%	31%	38%	34%	38%	42%
Virtual visit from local professionals	47%	24%	48%	19%	29%	25%
Online collaborative space	33%	29%	28%	31%	21%	33%
None of the options listed here/Not applicable	7%	12%	6%	7%	4%	2%

Legend:
- ■ Downloadable resource
- ■ Family Engagement training
- ■ A digital platform
- ■ Virtual visit from local professionals
- ■ Online collaborative space
- None of the options listed here/Not applicable

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Q-...Which of these resources, if any, would be of the most interest to you, personally, to help address each educational barrier?

Across the Top 3 Greatest Challenges Faced by Educators, There are 2 Consistent Resources That Educators Want:
Family Engagement Training & Downloadable Resources

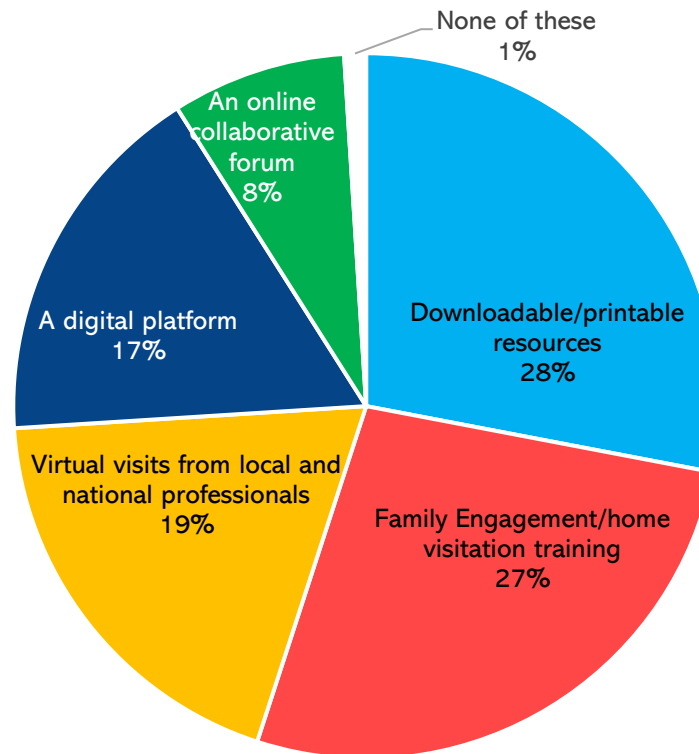| #1 Greatest Challenge: **Children experiencing trauma/extreme stress** (43%)	#2 Greatest Challenge: **Children with unmet basic needs** (20%)	#3 Greatest Challenge: **Inadequate access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support for children** (20%)
Top resources to address barrier 1. Family engagement training 2. Downloadable resource 3. Virtual visit from local professionals	**Top resources to address barrier** 1. Family engagement training 2. Downloadable resource 3. Digital platform	**Top resources to address barrier** 1. Downloadable resource 2. Virtual visit from local professionals 3. Family engagement training

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When Asked to Choose the Resources They Think Would be Most Helpful in Their Work, Educators Say:
Downloadable Resources and Family Engagement/Home Visitation Training

Members Select Their #1 Most Desired Resource

- None of these 1%
- An online collaborative forum 8%
- A digital platform 17%
- Virtual visits from local and national professionals 19%
- Downloadable/printable resources 28%
- Family Engagement/home visitation training 27%

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Q9 - Which of these potential free resources would you be most excited for?

Write-In Response, Text Analysis:
The Ability to Communicate With Parents Both In-Person and Not In-Person Hold Value

Q- Tell us a bit about why (*the resource you are most interested in*) sounds the most exciting for you and how you would use it!

Most common write-in answer themes (88 responses):

- **A Downloadable/Printable Resource**: The best way to share information with parents and other colleagues. Sometimes parents are adverse to personal interaction or there is not a situation where you can connect personally as needed. (25)

- **Family Engagement/Home Visitation Training**: The personal connection will engage educators and families in a more meaningful and sincere way. (24)

- **Virtual Visits from Professionals**: It's always best to learn from a professional, especially when it comes to the trauma of a child. (17)

- **A Digital Platform**: It would be an easily accessible, on-demand support resource. (15)

- **Online Collaborative Forum**: The ability to connect with others who bring more knowledge of a situation as well as others who have shared experiences. (7)

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Write-In Response, Text Analysis:
Promoting the Value of Education in the Home is the Most Commonly Cited Barrier that this Survey Did Not Address

Q- What other major barriers to learning do your children face that have not been raised in this survey that you would like to highlight? Please briefly describe in the space below. (Optional)

Most common write-in answer themes (42 responses):

- The value of education is not emphasized in the home
    - "Poverty mindset" - not having the drive to do more

- Lack of transportation to access local support resources
    - Leads to lack of life experiences and inability to access available resources/local activities

- Trauma from substance use disorder in the home

"A lot of my students have so many issues collectively that they cause major barriers in life now, academically, and even in the future. The sense of hopelessness and no control, work ethic, or desire to have better is very hard to watch even with supports put in place. There is a 'poverty mindset' which is not money, but not wanting to do more."

"Their families do not see the value in education. This is a cultural problem that is complex and not easily fixed. The importance of early learning like reading is not present in many families in the area. The parents did not like or succeed in school, so they don't encourage their kids."

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Write-In Response, Text Analysis:
Books and On-Demand Support Resources are Ways Educators Want Support from First Book

Q - What other types of support resources or opportunities do you think First Book should explore as a way to help educators like you address these barriers with their children? Please briefly describe in the space below. (Optional)

Most common write-in answer themes (30 responses):

- Books – specifically books that represent the lives and experiences of children in Appalachian Ohio

- Printable and/or virtual resources that are on demand

- Assistance connecting to local support resources

"Blogs, videos providing current/popular literature. Book talks, author videos and author school visits. Through books, students can identify with others in their own situation, grasp paths to overcome circumstances, and be exposed to a larger world beyond rural Ohio. If students don't identify other options to change their lives, why would they try?"

"Ways to encourage cross-community collaboration of existing groups all working to assist local children and families."

Program Demographics of Respondents

Job Titles represented	% of respondent base
Teacher/Teacher aide	57%
Other (please describe)	17%
Program Director/ Administrator	9%
Reading Specialist	4%
Librarian/Media Specialist	3%
School Administrator	3%
Health care provider	2%
Volunteer	1%
Principal/Vice Principal	1%
School Support Personnel	1%

Organization type	% of respondent base
School	74%
Early childhood program	13%
Health department/clinic	3%
Civic/community organization	2%
Out-of-school time program	2%
Other	2%
Library	1%
Faith-based organization	1%
Shelter	0%

County	Respondent Count
Pike	16
Guernsey	13
Meigs	9
Muskingum	8
Jackson	7
Athens	5
Gallia	5
Ashtabula	3
Brown	3
Columbiana	3
Mahoning	3
Morgan	3
Clermont	2
Hocking	2
Jefferson	2
Scioto	2
Belmont	1
Coshocton	1
Harrison	1
Perry	1
Trumbull	1
Tuscarawas	1
Vinton	1
Washington	1
Clinton	1
Fayette	1
Highland	1
Adams	1
Vinton	1
Ross	1

Grad Level	% of respondent base
Early Childhood	19%
Preschool	13%
Elementary School	46%
Middle School	25%
High School	18%
All of the above	9%

Geographic Setting	% of respondent base
Urban	12%
Suburban	9%
Rural	79%
Indian Reservation/ Tribal nation	0%
Military base	0%

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