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# Mothers' Worries/Awareness, Feelings, and Thoughts

## (1) Mothers' worries and concerns

About 60% of mothers are worried that children have no chance to exercise

We asked the participants about their anxieties and concerns following the outbreak of COVID-19. Both mothers with preschool children and those with elementary school children are worried that children have no space to play, no chance to exercise, no opportunity to meet friends because they need to stay at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. About 40% of mothers with elementary school children are also worried that their child might be left behind academically. They also feel burdened by having to support homework. Concerning the state of emergency, there is a large gap between the areas where the state of emergency has been extended and the areas where the state of emergency has been lifted. More mothers (both preschool children and elementary school children) living in the areas under the state of emergency are worried that it is hard to predict when preschools, schools, cram schools, etc., will reopen.

Q. Do you have the following worries and concerns about your child(ren) or yourself along with the spread of COVID-19? (multiple answers allowed)

**Table 6-1-1: Mothers' worries and concerns**

	By effectiveness of State of Emergency				Total
	Areas in effect (358)		Areas out of effect (672)	(%)	
No play space available	62.3	>>	55.5	57.9	
No chance for children to exercise	66.2	>>	52.1	57.0	
Reduced opportunities to see friends	60.1	>>	50.6	53.9	
Increased screen time*1	53.0	>>	47.0	49.1	
There is nothing for my child to do at home.	51.1	>>	41.2	44.7	
Reduced frequency of clinic and hospital visits due to the fear of COVID-19 infection.	40.5		41.2	41.0	
My child doesn't have any connection with teachers, community members, etc.	38.0	>>	25.9	30.1	
My child's lifestyle habits are unhealthy.	34.6	>>	27.1	29.7	
My child is spending more time using video game consoles and digital media.	26.3	>>	19.2	21.7	
We cannot receive infant health checks and vaccinations (or they are difficult to access).	21.2		21.3	21.3	
I myself don't have a connection with the school or community.	22.3		18.3	19.7	
It's hard to predict when preschools, schools, cram schools, etc. will reopen.	31.0	>>	9.8	17.2	
My child's eating habits have been disrupted.	18.2		15.6	16.5	
I'm worried about noise complaints from my neighbors (as we spend more time at home).	18.7	>>	12.1	14.4	
My child won't wear masks or wash his/her hands.	10.1		12.1	11.4	
Other	2.2		0.9	1.4	
Nothing in particular	4.5		7.6	6.5	

- \* Multiple answers allowed.
- \* Overall results are displayed in descending order.
- \* \*1. Percentage of those who only watch TV/DVD
- \* Items with a discrepancy of more than 5 points are marked with >>.
- \* We obtained answers from the participants living in the areas under the state of emergency at the time of implementing this survey, namely, Hokkaido, Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, Tokyo, and Kanagawa Prefecture.

(1) Preschool children (overall; by areas under the state of emergency)

	By effectiveness of State of Emergency				Total
	Areas in effect (443)		Areas out of effect (793)	(%)	
No chance for children to exercise	71.7	>>	65.9	68.0	
Reduced opportunities to see friends	69.5	>>	59.6	63.1	
No play space available	53.6	>>	47.9	49.9	
My child is spending more time using video game consoles and digital media.	52.0	>>	44.7	47.3	
Increased screen time*1	45.5		47.2	46.6	
My child might be left behind academically	41.4		44.8	43.6	
I feel burdened from having to check and support homework and tasks from schools	42.8		39.2	40.5	
My child's lifestyle habits are unhealthy.	43.0		38.7	40.2	
Reduced frequency of clinic and hospital visits due to the fear of COVID-19 infection.	33.7		28.8	30.6	
There is nothing for my child to do at home.	29.2		30.1	29.8	
My child doesn't have any connection with teachers, community members, etc.	34.8	>>	25.2	28.6	
My child cannot get on track studying at home	25.6		26.2	26.0	
It's hard to predict when preschools, schools, cram schools, etc. will reopen.	38.9	>>	15.4	23.8	
I feel that homework and tasks from school are not enough	21.9		22.9	22.6	
My child's eating habits have been disrupted.	19.5		19.9	19.7	
I myself don't have a connection with the school or community.	13.1		8.3	10.0	
I'm worried about noise complaints from my neighbors (as we spend more time at home).	11.1		7.2	8.6	
My child won't wear masks or wash his/her hands.	3.2		4.7	4.1	
Other	1.4		0.5	0.8	
Nothing in particular	2.5		3.3	3.0	

- \* Multiple answers allowed.
- \* Overall results are displayed in descending order.
- \* \*1. Percentage of those who only watch TV/DVD
- \* Items with a discrepancy of more than 5 points are marked with >>.
- \* We obtained answers from the participants living in the areas under the state of emergency at the time of implementing this survey, namely, Hokkaido, Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, Tokyo, and Kanagawa Prefecture.

(2) Elementary school children (overall; by areas under the state of emergency)

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## Mothers' Worries/Awareness, Feelings, and Thoughts

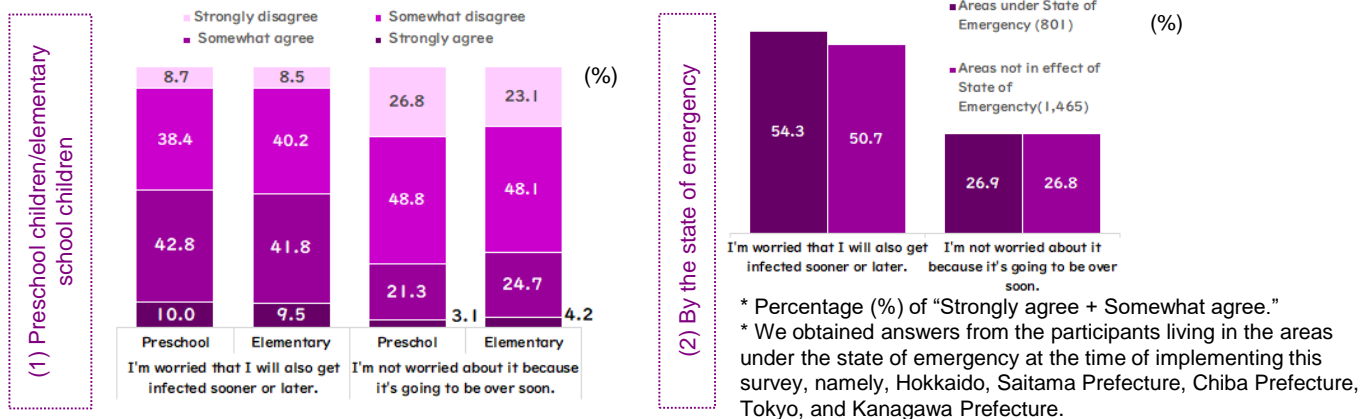
### (2) Mothers' feelings about the COVID-19 pandemic, home education, and children's restricted participation in preschool/school

About 80% of mothers think that children cannot properly learn and develop skills only at home

We asked the participants how they feel about the COVID-19 pandemic, home education, and children's restricted participation in preschool/school. About 50% of mothers with both preschool/elementary school children are worried that they would get infected (strongly agree + somewhat agree). In comparison, only 20% of mothers optimistically think it would be over soon. With respect to home education and children's restricted participation in preschool/school, about 80% of mothers answered "I don't think my child can properly learn and develop skills only at home" and "I feel unduly burdened as a parent if my child does not attend preschool/school" (strongly agree + somewhat agree).

Q: How do you feel about the COVID-19 pandemic?

Figure 6-2-1: How mothers feel about the COVID-19 pandemic



Q: We want to ask you about your lifestyle, childrearing, and education. Do you agree more strongly with the following opinions compared to before the outbreak of COVID-19?

Figure 6-2-2: How mothers feel about home education and children's restricted participation in preschool/school (preschool children/elementary school children)

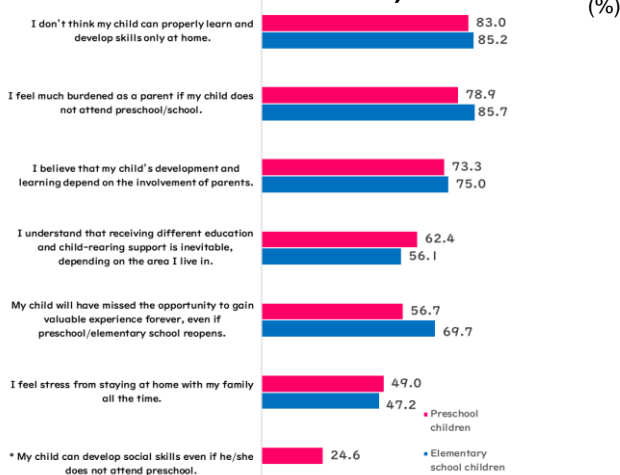
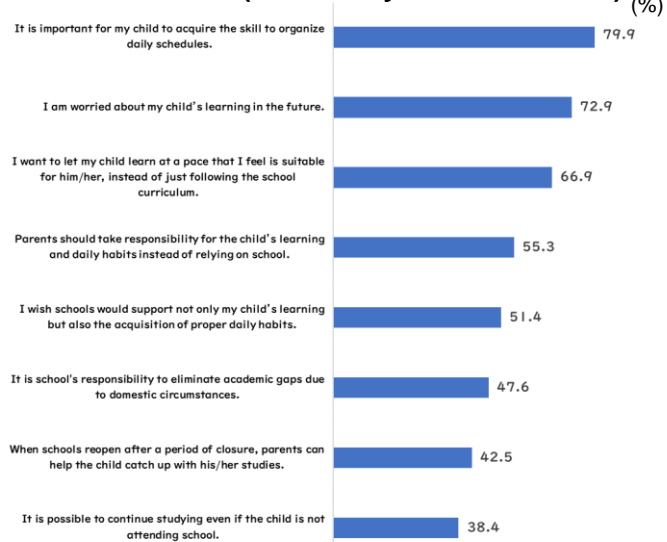


Figure 6-2-3: How mothers feel about children's learning (elementary school children)



\* Percentage (%) of "Strongly agree + Somewhat agree."

\* The item with \* is used for preschool children only.

\* Percentage (%) of "Strongly agree + Somewhat agree."

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## Mothers' Worries/Awareness, Feelings, and Thoughts

### (3) Mothers' feelings about childrearing and education (open-ended questions)



#### Mothers of preschool children



#### Mothers of elementary school children

● Interactions with preschools, schools, and local communities

I recognize that, for the development of my child, it is important to have interactions not only with my family but with other adults and peers at preschool and local communities.

I feel that my child will grow up by interacting with people other than my family.

I strongly feel that home education is not enough to encourage my child to learn.

I feel that group learning at school is necessary for my child. It is difficult to allow my child, who is in the lower grade, to study by himself at home.

● Involvement of parents

To avoid disparities in education, the involvement of parents in the child's education is necessary to some extent.

The degree of parents' involvement in child-rearing differs depending on the circumstances of each family. Children who cannot attend preschool may be left behind.

I recognized that children acquire learning habits not only at school but through interactions with parents at home, largely depending on the learning environment at home.

Parents have to encourage children to acquire learning habits, otherwise they would never start studying by themselves. I recognize that parents cannot rely on schools all the time.

● Parents' feeling of being burdened

I feel stress and get upset easily because I have to stay with my family all the time from morning to night.

I often feel burdened as a parent when trying to ensure home education for my three children.

My child received education through school/private-tutoring school, but once they closed under the COVID-19 pandemic, it was hard for me to have to take all responsibilities for children's education.

I never imagined that it would be so burdensome for parents to be entirely involved in the child's learning in the new academic year.

● Children's growth at preschool

I feel that it is very important for my child to grow up by interacting with numerous peers and teachers.

I think that there are various things my child can learn only from group activities, such as human relationships and daily habits.

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● Children's self-management skills

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Under the COVID-19 pandemic, children need to stay at home and parents had the chance to closely assess children's self-management skills. My son, who is a sixth grader, is not good at self-management, which is a major issue.

I wish my child would acquire the skills to manage his time schedule and think and determine what to do by himself.

● Worries about children's study

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There have already been certain educational disparities even before the outbreak of COVID-19. I am worried about the progress of the school curriculum during the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am worried that my child would be left behind academically. His academic scores were not good even before the closure of his school.

\* We summarized mothers' answers to the open questions such as "Have your perspectives or feelings about child-rearing and education changed following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic?" and "Do you have any expectations for child-rearing and education through your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic?"

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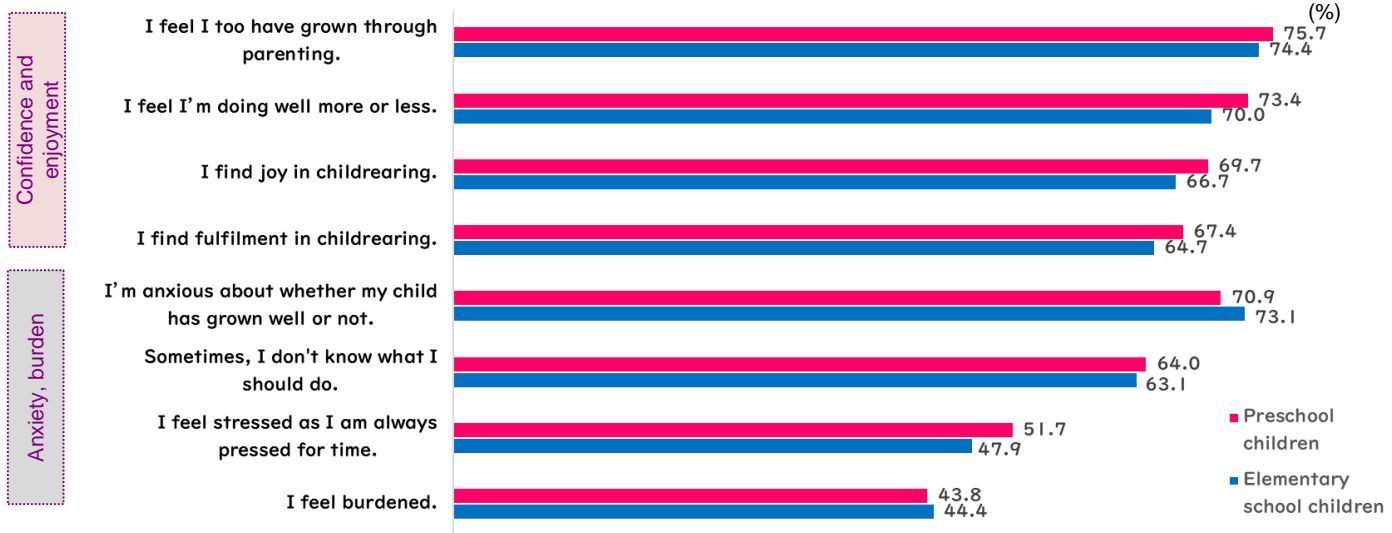
### (4) Mothers' thoughts about childrearing

#### Mothers who fear infection of COVID-19 feel more burdened and worry about childrearing

We asked the participants what they think about childrearing. About 70% of mothers with both preschool children and elementary school children gave answers such as "I feel I too have grown through parenting," "I feel I am doing well more or less," "I find joy in childrearing," and "I find fulfillment in childrearing" (strongly agree + somewhat agree). However, about 70% of mothers also answered that "I am anxious about whether my child has grown well or not." It is also revealed that mothers who fear the infection of COVID-19 feel more burdened and worry about childrearing.

Q. For each of the following, please indicate the degree to which they apply to you.

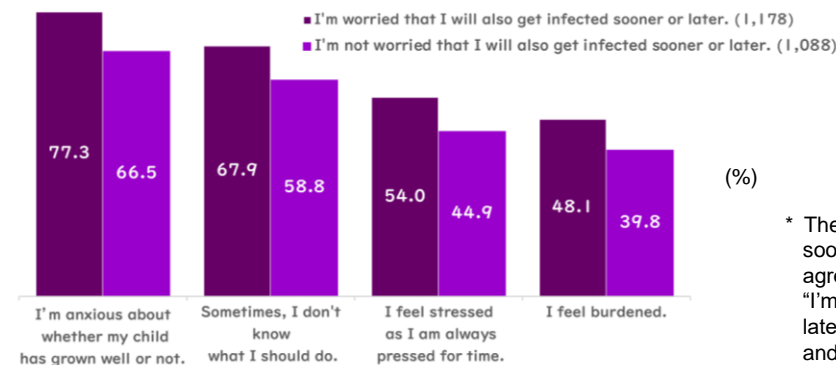
**Figure 6-4-1: Mothers' thoughts about childrearing (preschool children/elementary school children)**



\* Percentage (%) of "Strongly agree + Somewhat agree."

\* For the survey items, we referred to "Japanese Longitudinal Study of Early Childhood Development and Parenting 2017-2018" (Cedep at the University of Tokyo; BERD)

**Figure 6-4-2: Mothers' thoughts about childrearing (worries, burdens) (according to the degree of fear about infection of COVID-19)**



\* The results of "I'm worried that I will also get infected sooner or later" is a total of the answers of "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree." Likewise, the results of "I'm not worried that I will also get infected sooner or later" is a total of the answers of "somewhat disagree" and "strongly disagree."