

How America Saves for College

Sallie Mae's national study of parents with children under age 18



2018

SallieMae®



Conducted by
Ipsos Public
Affairs

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About this study

Introduced in 2009, *How America Saves for College* is Sallie Mae's national study conducted by Ipsos that surveys American parents with children under the age of 18 about how they are preparing financially for college. The 2018 study is the seventh in the series.

This primary research captures data on parents' saving-for-college behaviors and habits, their attitudes and feelings about saving, planning, and paying for college, and how much they have saved.

Dollar and proportional amounts are reported on a composite basis as well as on a frequency basis.

- The composite view illustrates how the typical American parent saves for college. Composite data are computed using a formula that spreads individual responses across all parents in the survey sample who report saving for college. Results of these calculations are in Tables 1a – 1e.
- The frequency view presents the usage rate of each savings instrument, and the average amounts contributed by users of each instrument, detailed in Tables 15a – 15e.

Ipsos conducted online interviews with 2,003 parents between January 18, 2018, and February 15, 2018. Parents were asked to report the total amount saved for college and the amount they had saved during the last year. The survey sample reflected a cross-section of key demographic variables in the United States. Respondents were able to take the survey in English or Spanish.

In this report, low-income households are defined as those with annual income of less than \$35,000; middle-income as those with annual income from \$35,000 to less than \$100,000; and high-income as those with annual income of \$100,000 or more. Geographic regions discussed mirror those used by the US Census Bureau.

This report includes a full set of response tables associated with each itemized question. For details on methodology, including sampling, weighting, and margin of error, see the technical notes section at the end of this report.

Percentage amounts may not sum to 100 percent and dollar amount breakdowns may not sum to the total reported, due to rounding.

Summary of findings

How America Saves for College 2018 finds the same proportion of parents are saving for college this year as in 2016, but the average amount saved has increased and the proportion of total college savings in dedicated college savings accounts has also increased.

Commitment to saving

Two-thirds of parents are preparing financially for college by saving, or by creating a plan for how to pay for college, or both. These parents—planners and savers—have a more aspirational outlook on college for their children than parents who are neither planning nor saving. For example, 9 in 10 planners and savers believe college is part of the American Dream, compared to 7 in 10 non-planners and non-savers. Eight in 10 planners and savers want to give their child the ideal college experience, regardless of cost, compared to fewer than 6 in 10 non-planners and non-savers. Parents who are planning and saving also have a more positive outlook on saving for college: they are more likely to feel motivated and less likely to feel overwhelmed than their non-planning and non-saving counterparts.

Among parents of children under the age of 18, saving for college ranks high in the hierarchy of savings goals. Multi-purpose funds, such as an emergency fund or a general savings fund, top the list of saving fund types parents have established. After those priorities, more parents are saving for college than for any other specific purpose. Fifty-six percent of parents are saving for college in 2018, a similar proportion to the 57 percent who were saving in 2016. Both years, the proportion saving for college edged out those saving for retirement (54% in 2018 and 56% in 2016).

This year, parents report saving more for college. The average amount saved, \$18,135, is 11 percent higher than the amount reported in 2016. In fact, it is the highest amount reported in this study since 2013. The amount saved is, on average, one-third of the goal amount parents expect to save for college. Nearly 9 in 10 who have set a savings goal feel confident they will meet that goal.

College saver differences

Parents with greater means and those with their own experience of attending a four-year college are more likely than those without to be saving for college for their children. High-income parents are about 30 percent more likely to be saving than middle-income parents, and 50 percent more so than low-income parents. Parents with a bachelor's degree or higher are nearly 40 percent more likely to be saving for college than those with an associate's degree and those with no degree.

There are no significant differences in the proportion of parents saving for college by race or ethnicity, by age of oldest child, by parent generation, or by geographic region.

Saving choices

Parents continue to use a wide array of vehicles to save for college, but a greater concentration of savings is held in dedicated college-savings plans. Forty percent of college-savings dollars are held in dedicated college fund types comprising three components: 529 college savings plans, which hold 30 percent of college savings, prepaid state plans, which hold 8 percent of savings, and Coverdell Education Savings Accounts, which hold 2 percent.

Parents use general savings accounts for college funds more frequently than other vehicles, but they retain fewer dollars in them. Forty-five percent of parents use a general account to save for college, more than the 29 percent who use the next most-used vehicle, 529 plans. The proportion of college savings in general accounts, 22 percent, however, is lower than 529 plans.

Making saving a habit is a core strategy for three-fifths of college savers. Thirty-eight percent of parents report contributing a set amount to the college fund on a regular basis using automatic debit, and another 23 percent make regular deposits manually. Interestingly, 7 percent of parents set their regular deposit amount by transferring a percentage of their former student loan payment to their child's college fund.

Attitudes toward resources

Parents are shifting their attitudes about paying-for-college resources, taking some of the financial responsibility off their shoulders. More parents believe the child should contribute to paying for his or her own education. Fifty-nine percent say paying for college should be a shared responsibility between the parent and child, compared to 51 percent in 2016. More parents seem to be hearing the message that they need to consider their own financial future as well as their children's. This year, 69 percent say they will not use their retirement fund to help pay for college, up from 60 percent in 2016. While parents are still optimistic about the proportion of college costs that will come from their savings compared to how much parents of enrolled college students reported paying from their savings in 2017-18, they have reduced their college savings goal. The average amount parents would like to save by the time their child starts college is \$55,342, 11 percent lower than the goal in 2016, \$61,902.

Saving-for-college personality types

Saving-for-college personas reveal the variations in parent outlook and saving-for-college behavior. *How America Saves for College 2018* distinguishes four such personality types: Resolute, Cautious, Uncertain, and Dispassionate. Parents in three of four persona groups enthusiastically embrace college as an opportunity with tremendous value as determined by college value questions, including "college is an investment in my child's future" and "I would send my child to college for the intellectual and social benefits, regardless of whether he or she earned more money with a college degree." Among these three personas, attitudes toward money rather than toward the value of college influence their saving-for-college behavior.

The Resolute persona is more likely to agree that children who know savings have been set aside for college are more likely to attend college, and having a plan to pay for college will improve their child's likelihood of attending. Their behavior runs parallel to that attitude. The Resolute persona is more likely than other personas to have a plan to pay for college. More of them are saving for college, and they have saved a higher amount of money, on average, than the other personas.

The Cautious persona is uncomfortable with debt and feels he or she must pay it off as quickly as possible. In tandem with that attitude is an outlook that puts limits on spending or expects a financial return on investment. While a high proportion of the

Cautious persona type is saving for college, this type is less likely to send their child to college for the intellectual and social experience, regardless of whether he or she will earn more money with a degree, and fewer agree they would give their child the ideal college experience regardless of cost.

The Uncertain persona defines him or herself as needing help financially. This persona typically purchases big-ticket items without a plan or budget. Uncertains are the persona most likely to say it is more difficult for today's parents to save and pay for their children's college than it was for their parents' generation, and that creating a plan to pay for college is difficult. Indeed, Uncertains have a below-average likelihood to have a plan to pay for college, and, on average, they have saved less money for college than the other personas.

The Dispassionate persona, on the other hand, does not share the same level of enthusiasm for college as the other three. Correspondingly, Dispassionates are less likely to agree with the importance of preparing financially for college, and they are the persona least likely to be saving for college.

Saving information sources needed

Some parents have challenges saving for college that may be difficult to overcome, such as a lack of funds or inexperience managing money. *How America Saves for College 2018* finds that these and other parents, however, could benefit from additional information and tools, including help with

- Finding information resources on planning and saving for college
- Setting goals based on their income and projected college costs
- Evaluating the most effective savings vehicles for their circumstances
- Figuring out ways to minimize the cost of college
- Understanding the current paying-for-college picture and resources other parents use
- Creating an ongoing dialogue with their child on the cost of college and their expectations concerning how it will be funded and who will pay for it.



Discussion of findings

Introduction

Parents strive to give their children experiences that will result in increased opportunity. More than 8 in 10 parents say they are willing to stretch themselves financially to obtain the best opportunity for their child. An even greater number, nearly 9 in 10, agree college is an investment in their child's future and expect their child will attend some form of higher education someday. Close to 6 in 10 parents are saving for college, stretching financially to bridge the dream of providing the opportunity of college long before their children reach college age.

How parents approach saving

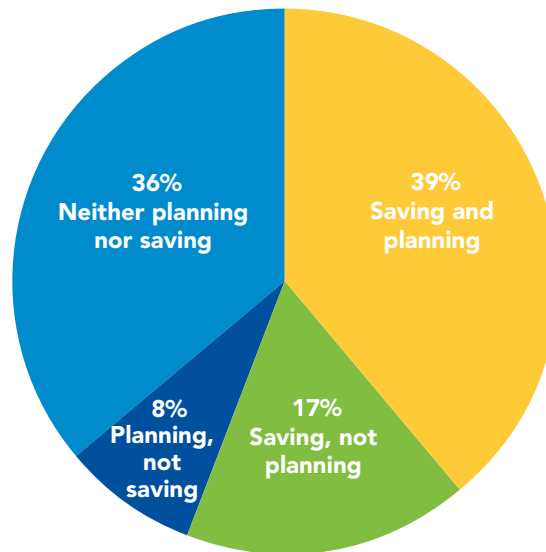
Two-thirds of parents are preparing financially for college.

Nearly two-thirds of parents with a child younger than 18 whom they expect will attend college someday are saving or planning for how to meet its costs.¹ In total, 56 percent of parents who expect their child to attend college have started saving for college and 47 percent have created a plan for how to pay for college, with 4 in 10 parents doing both. Surprisingly, parents of young children ages 0 – 6 are as equally

likely to be saving and planning for college as parents of older children. Parents who are preparing for college costs are much more likely to feel confident they will be able to meet the costs of college than parents who are not preparing. Seventy-three percent of parents who are saving and/or planning for college feel confident, compared with 27 percent who are not saving or planning.

Figure 1

Preparing Financially for College



¹ Five percent of parents interviewed said their child was somewhat or extremely unlikely to attend college.

Only half of parents consider themselves “savers,” yet 9 in 10 report actually saving for some purpose.

About half of parents see themselves as “savers” in general. Fifty-two percent say they always have a minimum amount of money saved, compared with one-quarter who say they never have money saved, and one-quarter who fall somewhere in the middle. Yet, even parents who don’t see themselves as savers frequently report having some money set aside as savings. When asked whether they are saving for any goals such as retirement, buying a home, or their children’s college education, 91 percent of all parents report having some funds allocated to at least one savings goal.

Among savings designated for a specific priority, children’s college (56%) and retirement (54%) top the list. Seventy

percent of parents who consider themselves savers are saving for their children’s college education, and nearly one-third of those who don’t consider themselves savers concede they have something saved for college. The proportion of parents saving for college hasn’t changed from 2016 (57%), which was a marked increase from that reported in the three previous studies, 2013, 2014, and 2015 (50%, 51%, and 48%, respectively). The proportion of parents saving for retirement is consistent with 2014, 2015, and 2016 (55%, 52%, and 56%, respectively), after declining from 60 percent in 2013.



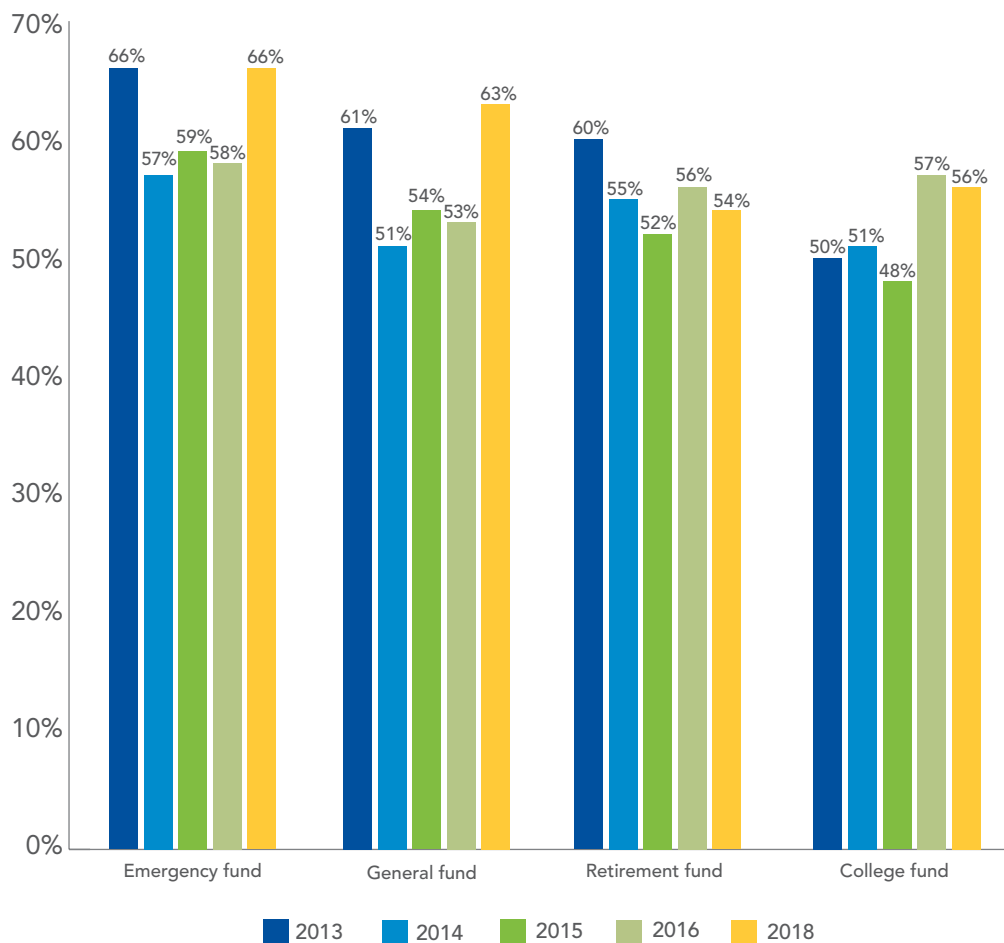
Compared to college and retirement, fewer parents are currently saving for other specific priorities, such as

- House/home (30%)
- Car (29%)
- Healthcare (28%)
- Home remodel/landscaping (23%)
- Holidays/gifts (24%)
- Furniture/appliances/electronics (19%)
- College for the parent (18%)
- Wedding (6%)

Overall, more parents save for less specific goals, such as an emergency (66%) or general needs (63%) than for any specific goal. Parents with an emergency fund or general savings increased in 2018 to similar levels as in 2013 (66% and 61%, respectively) after declining in 2014, and remaining at that lower level in 2015 and 2016.

Figure 2

Parents Saving for Each Category, over Time



The average amount parents have saved for college has increased.

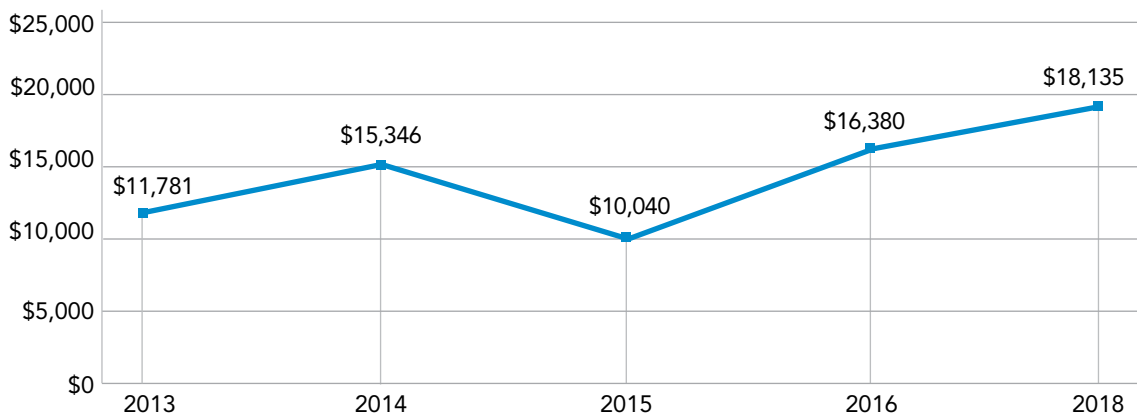
The average amount saved for children’s college in America increased to \$18,135 from \$16,380 in 2016. When college savers were asked whether they were saving the same amount, more, or less compared to the year before, more than half (55%) said they were saving the same amount for college this year as they had been saving the year before. Nearly one-third

(31%) said they were saving more, while only 8 percent said they were saving less, and 5 percent weren’t sure.

More parents without a college degree (37%) say they are saving more this year than parents with an associate’s degree (24%) or bachelor’s degree (28%). Millennials (41%) are more

Figure 3

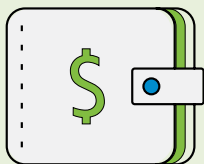
Average College Savings over Time



likely than Gen Xers (27%) or Baby Boomers (25%) to say they are saving more this year. The top reason parents give for saving more for college—cited by 39 percent—is that their household income increased. Thirty percent of those who have increased their savings say they are doing so because their child is closer to college age. Parents of teens, however, are not more likely than parents of younger children to say they increased their savings.

Other reasons given for saving more include

- Evaluated savings and realized need to increase (27%)
- Learned about the cost of college (21%)
- Reduced expenses (20%)
- Had an additional child (9%)



39% of parents who have increased their savings contributions are saving more because their household income increased

Parents who are saving and planning for the cost of college typically have greater means to do so.

Parents who have earned a four-year college degree or higher are more likely than those who haven't to be saving or planning for their children's college. Seventy-three percent of families in which at least one parent has a bachelor's degree or higher are saving for their children's college and 63 percent have created a plan for how to pay for it. By comparison, 53 percent of those with an associate's degree are saving for their children's college and 44 percent have a plan; among those without a college degree, 46 percent are saving and 36 percent have a plan.

More high-income parents² are saving for college (69%) and more of them have a plan (59%) than middle-income parents (saving, 52%; planning, 45%) or low-income parents (saving, 46%; planning, 33%).

More than half of parents who haven't begun saving for college cite lack of money as the reason why they haven't started. Not surprisingly, parents without a plan for how to pay for college also cite lack of funds to save—named by 47 percent of non-planners—as the primary reason they don't have a plan.

Those without a plan (58%) are more likely than those with a plan (24%) to say they haven't saved for college because they don't have any money to save, as are low- and middle-income parents (59% and 55%, respectively), compared to high-income parents (38%).

The amount parents save varies by population groups.

The gap in college savings is widest between high- and low-income parents. High-income parents have saved, on average, \$29,890 for their children's college, about seven times more than the amount saved by low-income parents, \$4,052. Middle-income parents have saved about three times more than low-income parents, \$12,839. Differences in parent education levels correspond to differences in amounts saved for children's education.³ Families in which at least one parent has attained a bachelor's degree or higher have saved \$26,300, two-and-one-half times the amount saved by families in which neither parent has a college degree (\$10,031). Families in which a parent has an associate's degree have saved \$12,820, an amount only slightly higher than that of families in which

neither parent has a college degree. Hispanic parents have saved \$12,821, less than African-American and White parents (\$15,633 and \$18,804, respectively).

Parents whose child is closer to college age have saved more than parents with younger children. Parents with children ages 13 – 17 have saved \$22,985, while those with children ages 7 – 12 have saved \$14,032, and those with children ages 0 – 6 have saved \$6,108. Parents with a plan to pay for college have saved \$22,169, about two-and-one-half times more than parents without a plan (\$9,208).

² For the purposes of this study, low income is defined as households with an annual income of less than \$35,000, middle income from \$35,000 to less than \$100,000, and high income of \$100,000 or more.

³ In this study, college degree and income correlate: 58 percent of families in which a parent has a bachelor's degree or higher are high income, 39 percent middle income, and 4 percent low income; among families in which a parent has an associate's degree, 27 percent are high income, 59 percent middle income, and 14 percent low income; among those with no degree, 17 percent are high income, 46 percent middle income, and 36 percent low income.



Damian L. (center)
High school class of '18,
with his mentors

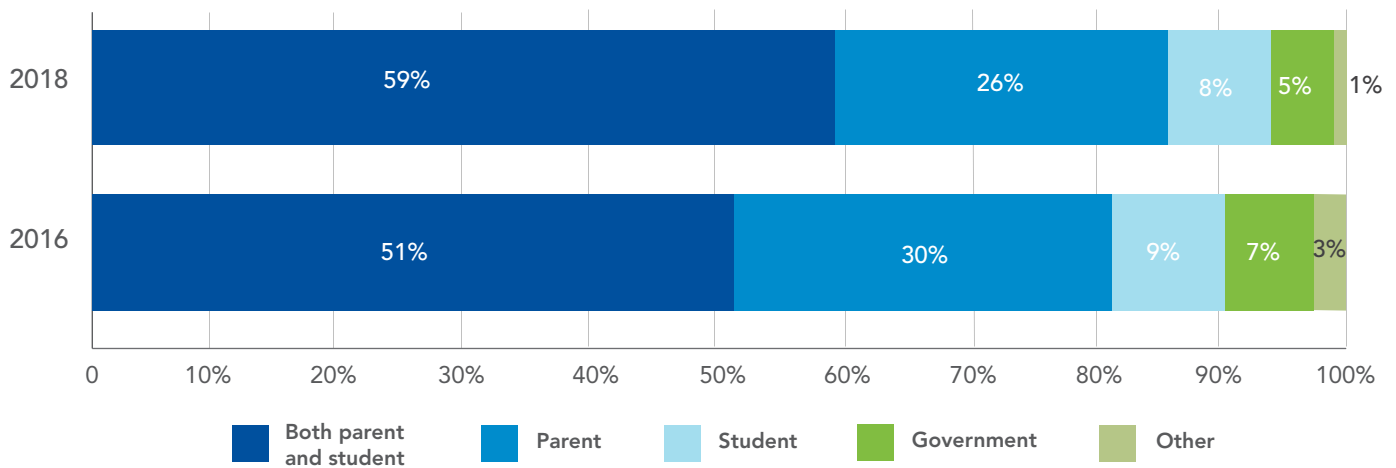
While the same proportion of parents are saving for college in 2018 as in 2016, a greater share believe the child has some responsibility for paying for his or her college education.

More parents in 2018 than 2016 think children should take at least some responsibility for paying for their own college education. Fifty-nine percent of parents say both the parent and student should be responsible for paying for college, up from 51 percent in 2016. At the same time, those who say the parent should be solely responsible for paying for college declined slightly, to 26 percent from 30 percent in 2016, while those who say the student should be solely responsible remains about the same: 8 percent in 2018, compared to 9 percent in 2016.

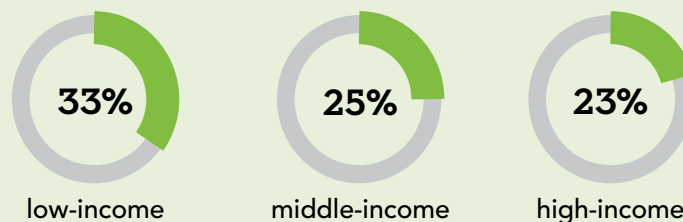
Millennial parents (32%) are more likely than Gen X (26%) or Baby Boomer parents (16%) to believe the parent should be solely responsible for paying for college, but fewer of them feel solely responsible this year than in 2016 (38%). Interestingly, low-income parents are less likely than middle- or high-income parents to expect their child to take some responsibility for paying for college: 33 percent of low-income parents feel it is the parent's sole responsibility to pay for college, compared with 25 percent of middle-income and 23 percent of high-income parents.

Figure 4

Responsible Party for Paying for College, Year-over-Year



Parents who believe it's their sole responsibility to pay for college, by income

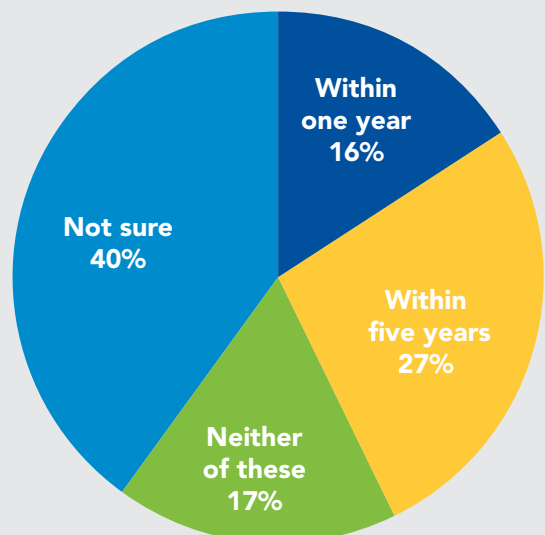




When non-saving parents plan to begin

Fewer than half of non-savers have concrete plans to begin saving for college. Twenty-seven percent say they will begin saving within the next five years and an additional 16 percent within the next year. Among college-saving families, the average age of the child when parents began to save was seven; therefore it is not surprising that parents of younger children are more likely to say they have plans to begin saving in the future. Parents of children ages 0 – 6 (61%) and 7 – 12 (54%) are more likely to say they will begin saving within either one or five years, compared with parents of teens (32%).

Figure 5
When Non-savers Expect to Begin Saving for College



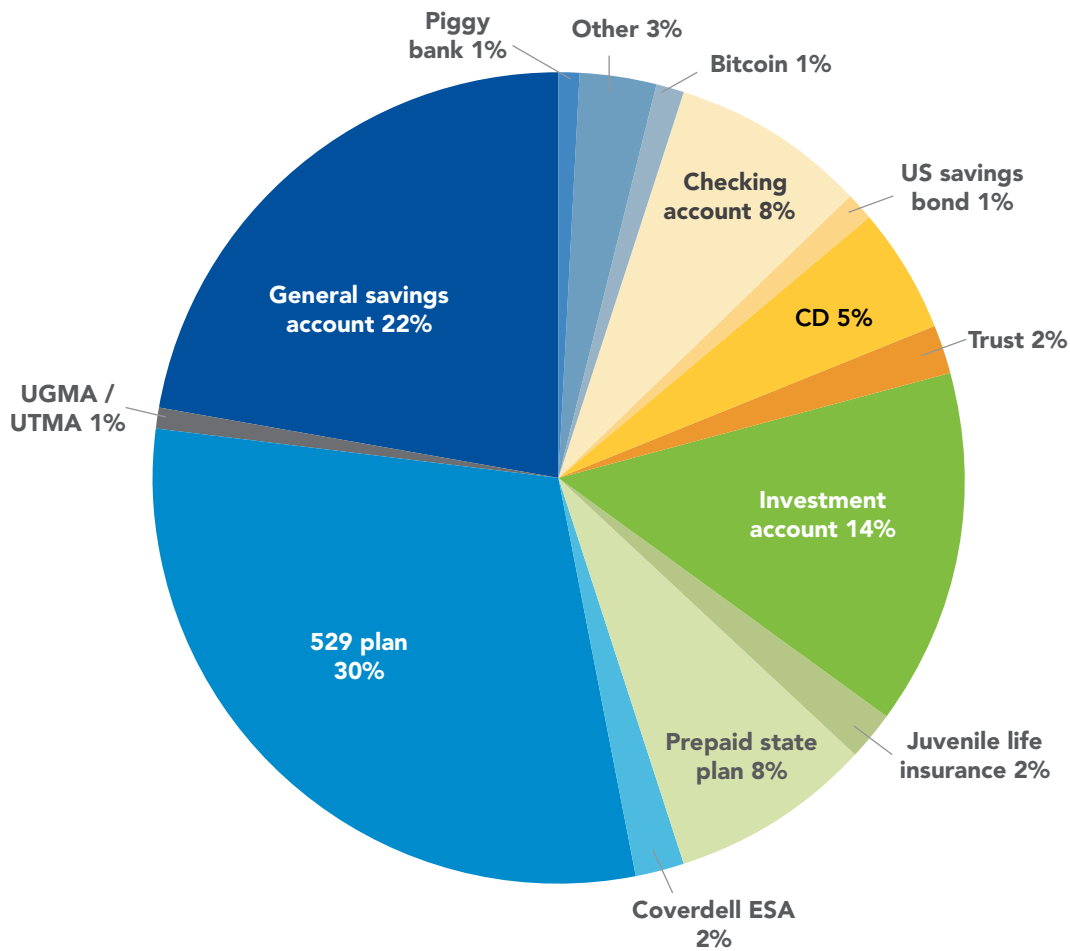
General savings accounts are still the most commonly used account type for saving for college, but 529 college savings plan accounts hold the largest share of college savings.

Forty-five percent of college-saving parents continue to use a general savings account to save for college. The second most frequently used account type, used by 29 percent of college savers, is a 529 college savings plan. The next most-used account types are a checking account (20%), an investment account (13%), and a certificate of deposit (10%). All other vehicles are used by fewer than 10 percent of college savers each.

Although 529 plans are not the most frequently used savings vehicle, more money is being saved in 529 plans in 2018 than in 2016. This year, the average amount reported as saved in 529 plans, \$5,441, is nearly double the amount reported in 2016, \$2,820. As a result, 529 plans now hold 30 percent of all college savings, more than any other savings instrument

Figure 6

Proportion of College Funds Held in Each Account Type



Forty percent of all college savings in America are held in three account types specifically designed to be used for saving for college: 529 plans (30%), prepaid or guaranteed state college savings plans (8%), and Coverdell Education Savings Accounts (2%).

The next biggest cache of college savings, 22 percent, is held in general savings accounts, which typically do not yield a high return but can be easy to establish and maintain. The average

amount saved in general savings accounts increased by 7 percent, to \$3,902 from \$3,663 in 2016. Fourteen percent of funds earmarked for college are held in investment accounts, which can yield a high return but may be less accessible to the average saver. The average college savings reported in investment accounts increased by 14 percent, to \$2,616 from \$2,302 in 2016. All other vehicles each hold less than 10 percent of America's college savings.

As with savings amounts, the instruments parents use to save for college vary by population groups.

Low-income parents are much less likely than middle- and high-income parents to use college-specific savings vehicles, with only 4 percent of their savings in 529 plans and 2 percent in prepaid state plans. By contrast, 37 percent of high-income parents' college savings are in 529s and 11 percent are in prepaid state plans. Middle-income parents save 17 percent of their college funds in 529 plans, but only 2 percent in prepaid plans. Low-income parents are more likely to save in general savings accounts (43%) than middle- and high-income parents (25% and 18%, respectively). They are also more likely to have savings in a juvenile life insurance policy (9%) than middle- and high-income parents (2% and 1%, respectively).

As with low-income parents, families in which neither parent has a college degree are saving less in 529 plans (9% of savings, vs 13% among associate's degree holders and 38% among bachelor's degree holders). Unlike low-income parents, however, those without a degree are more likely to have invested in prepaid state plans: 26 percent of their college savings are in this type of vehicle, much higher than the 2 percent of funds from families in which parents have a college degree.

Black and Hispanic parents each have 17 percent of their college savings in 529 plans, about half the proportion White parents have (31%). They also have less in prepaid state plans (2% and 3%, respectively) than White parents (10%). Hispanic parents are more likely to put their savings into general savings accounts (30%) than Black and White parents (17% and 22%, respectively). Black parents save more of their college funds in investment accounts (29%) than White and Hispanic parents (13% and 15%, respectively). Black parents also save more in certificates of deposit (9%) than White and Hispanic parents (3% and 5%, respectively).

The proportion of college savings held in 529 plans does not differ by age of child, but there are other differences. Parents of children ages 0 – 6 are slightly different than parents of older children in that more of their savings is in general savings accounts (37%) and less is in investment accounts (2%), compared to parents with children ages 7 – 12 (18% and 15%, respectively) and 13 – 17 (23% and 19%, respectively).

Parents without a plan to pay for college have a smaller share of college savings in 529 plans (23%) than parents with a plan (31%), and they have a larger share of college savings in a checking account (23%, vs 5% of those with a pay-for-college plan).

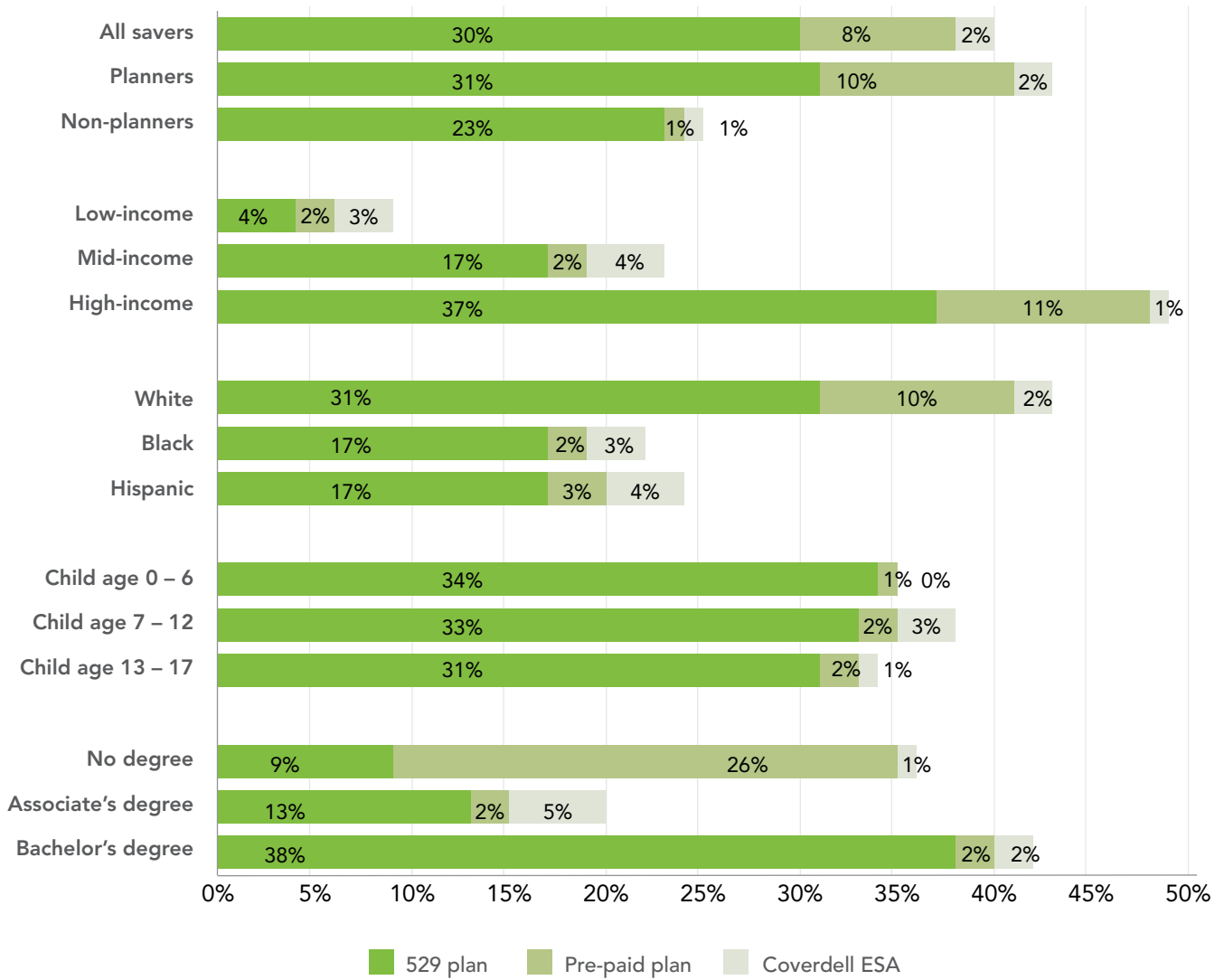
Savings in 529 plans nearly doubled



\$5,441 vs \$2,820
2018 2016

Figure 7

Proportion of Funds in Vehicles Designed for College Savings, by Population Groups



One risk associated with using savings vehicles that are not designed for college savings is that parents might use the money for expenses other than college, perhaps before college begins. When asked whether “college savings” in certain account types would be used wholly for college, more than half say, “Yes.” Conversely, more than 2 in 5 say they may use the funds for college, if needed. Those using U.S. savings bonds are most likely to commit funds they report as “college savings” to college (68%) and those using cryptocurrency are least likely to do so (24%).

Whether “college savings” in non-dedicated accounts will be used wholly for college

	Will be used for college	May be used for college
General savings account	63%	36%
Checking account	50%	50%
Investment account	54%	46%
CD	59%	39%
U.S. savings bond	68%	32%
Trust	57%	43%
Piggy bank/non-institutional	50%	50%
GoFundMe/crowdsourcing	49%	51%
Bitcoin/cryptocurrency	24%	76%



Fewer parents plan to use retirement savings for college.

Another source of savings some parents dip into to pay for college is their retirement account, although this practice is generally discouraged by financial advisors. Ten percent of parents are specifically planning to use retirement savings for college, half as many as the 20 percent who said this in 2016.

A higher proportion (69%) than in 2016 (60%) say they will not use retirement money for college. Twenty-one percent say they would use some portion of retirement money for college as a last resort, similar to 2016 (19%).

A college savings balancing act between parents and children

Eighteen percent of parents are saving for college for themselves or their spouses, with most simultaneously saving for their children's college. Among parents saving for their children's college, 28 percent are juggling that priority with saving for their own education.

On average, these parents report having saved \$5,090 toward their continued education and \$16,366 toward their children's education. They typically use a general savings account (43%) or a checking account (32%) for their own saving, but 28 percent are using a 529 plan. Note that nearly three-quarters of those who say they are using a 529 plan to save for their own college are also using one to save for their children's college. Other savings vehicles used for their college include savings bonds (18%), investment accounts (17%), and retirement accounts (9%). A few use non-institutional savings (8%) and crowdfunding (5%).

The proportion who plan to use their retirement funds for their own education is about the same as those who plan to use retirement funds for their children's education (13%).

African American parents—at 24%—are more likely to be saving for their own college than White parents (16%) or Hispanic parents (21%). Millennials (25%) are more likely to save for their own education than older generations (Gen X, 15%, and Baby Boomers, 14%). Parents in the Midwest (10%) are less likely to save for their own college than parents from other regions (Northeast 21%, South 23%, and West 17%). Seventeen percent of parents without a college degree are saving for their own education. Interestingly, parents who have a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree are saving for their own additional education at a similar rate as parents without a degree (20% and 19%, respectively).

Creating goals and measuring saving-for-college success

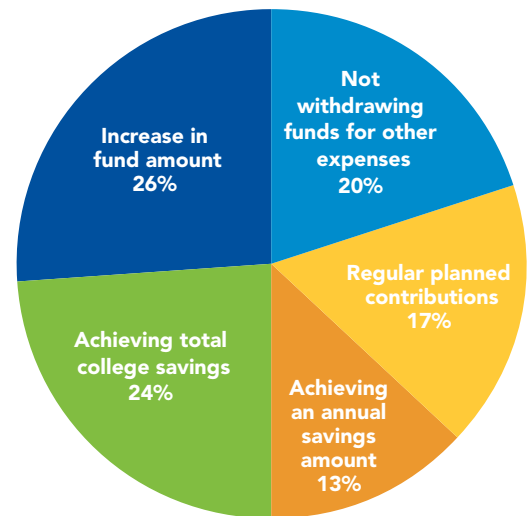
Parents use different markers to measure the success of their college savings.

About one-quarter of savers (24%) say they will feel successful if they achieve the total amount they plan to have saved by the time their child starts college. On the other hand, one-quarter (26%) say just seeing the college fund grow, regardless by how much, is a measure of success. Shorter durational milestones—contributing a set amount to the college fund on a per-paycheck basis or achieving a specified amount of savings annually—are each tracked by about one-sixth of parents as success measures (17% and 13%, respectively). One-fifth of parents (20%) say not spending college savings on other household expenses is their main measure of success.

Low- and middle-income parents (both 25%) are more likely than high-income parents (14%) to rely on the no-spend rule as a measure of success, as are families in which neither parent has a college degree (27%) or a parent has an associate’s degree (25%), compared to those with a bachelor’s degree or higher (14%).

Figure 8

Success Metrics



26% of savers say seeing the college fund grow, regardless by how much, is a measure of success

Parents would like to save three times more than the average saved to date.

Parents who have set a college-savings goal are targeting, on average, \$55,342, an amount about 11 percent lower than the average amount stated in 2016, \$61,902. Notwithstanding a slightly lower goal and higher savings this year, parents have saved only one-third the amount they would like to have saved by the time their child enrolls in college. This is an improvement from 2016, however, when parents had saved one-fourth their goal.

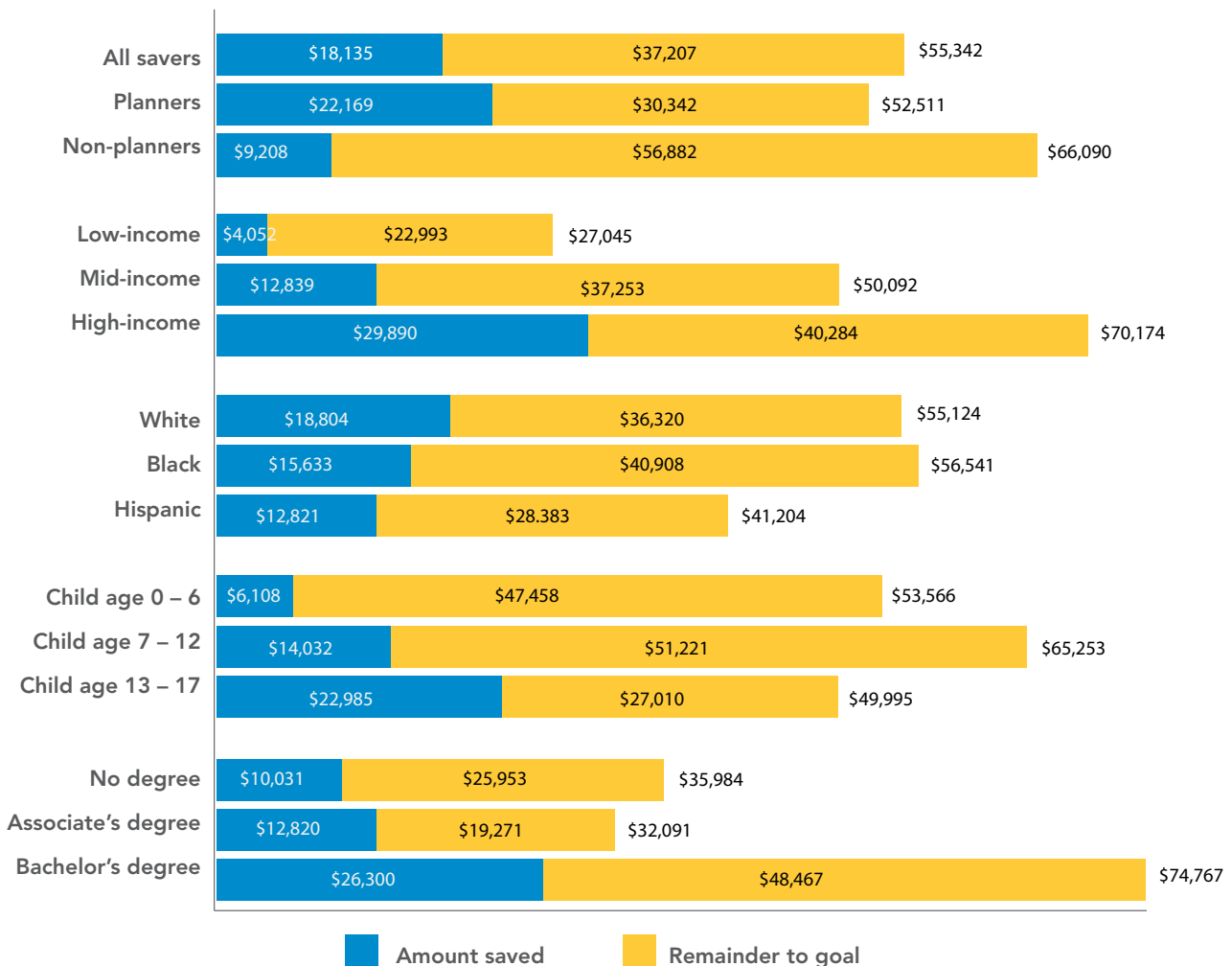
Goal amounts vary by population groups. Among all parent groups, those who have a bachelor’s degree or higher have set

the highest goal amount, \$74,767, and those with the lowest income have set the lowest goal, \$27,045.

Several groups of parents are closer than others to reaching their savings goals: parents of teens have saved 46 percent of their goal amount; high-income parents have saved 43 percent of their goal; planners have saved 42 percent of their goal; and parents with an associate’s degree have saved 40 percent of their goal. Parents of children ages 0–6 have saved the smallest portion relative to their goal, 11 percent.

Figure 9

Amount Saved and Amount Remaining to Goal, and Goal Amount, by Population Groups



Parents do not typically rely on experts for savings advice.

The most widely used type of resource parents use for information about saving for college is non-professional guidance, such as friends, family, or peer groups, cited by 36 percent. Parents turn to a variety of other, expert sources of information with less frequency:

- Financial advisor (25%)
- Bank or financial services partner (24%)
- Articles or content by financial experts (22%)
- Child's school/counselor (18%)
- Community or state education programs (15%)
- Federal government guidelines (13%)

More than one-quarter of parents (26%) who are saving for college say they haven't used any information sources to help guide college savings.



Kate G. (left)
High school class of '18,
with her parents

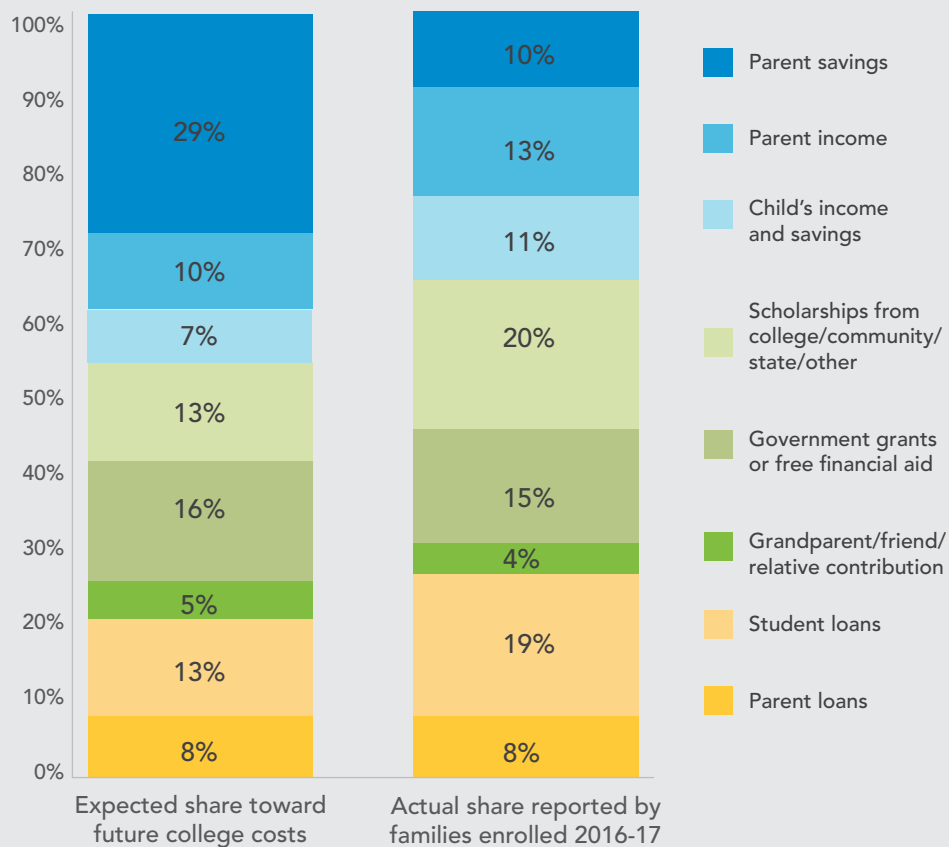
Are parents overestimating how much they will save?

Parents are highly confident they will reach their goal, despite having saved, on average, only one-third of their goal amount. Among parents who set a savings goal, 86 percent are confident they will meet that goal: 42 percent are extremely confident and 44 percent are somewhat confident. Nine percent feel neutral and only 5 percent lack confidence.

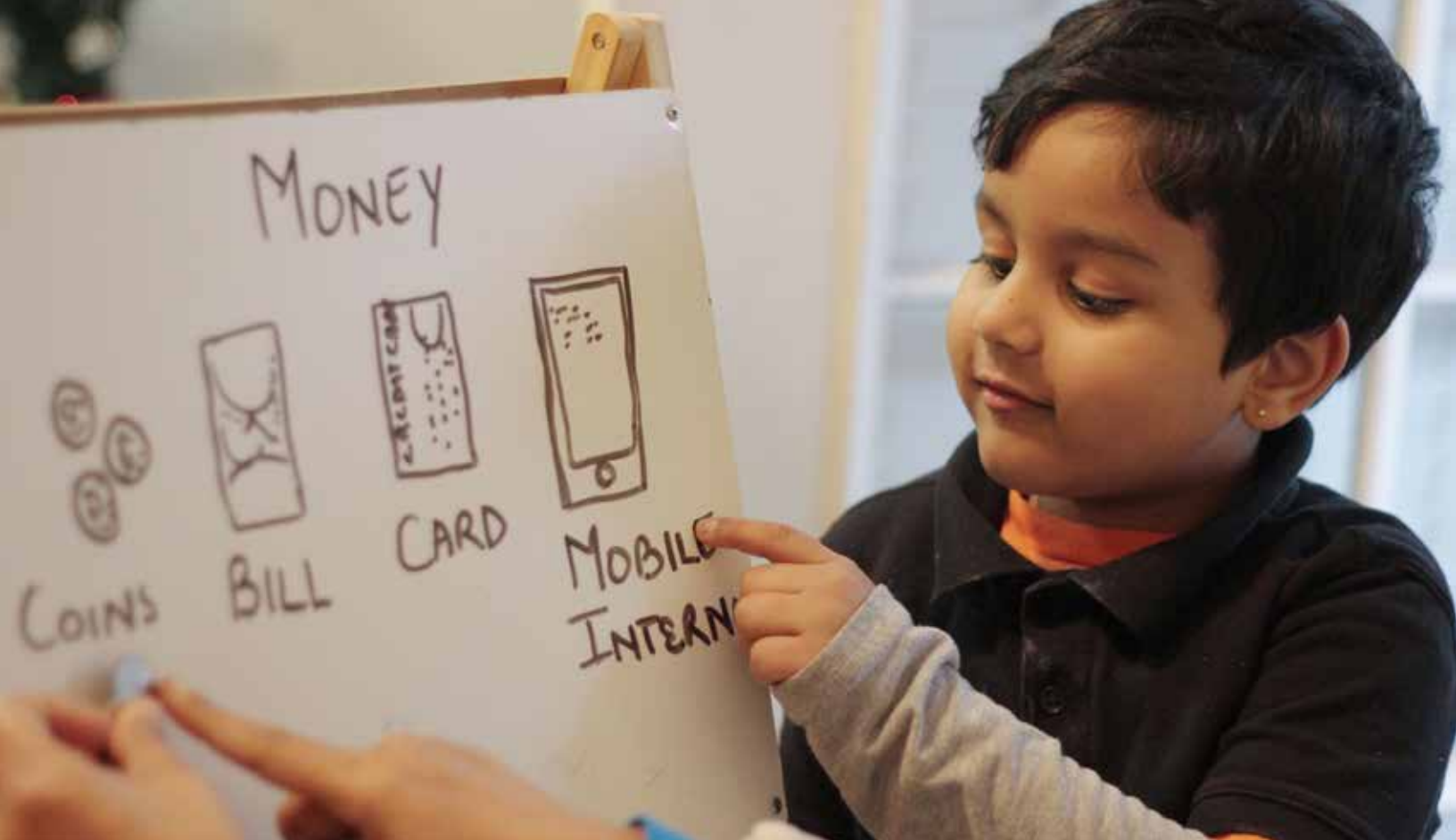
When asked to project the proportion of funding that will come from the various paying-for-college resources, parents predict, on average, that 29 percent of future college expenses will be paid with their savings. Among those already saving for college, the expected portion to be paid from savings is even higher, 37 percent. A comparison to the actual proportion of expenses parents reported paying from their savings in 2016-17⁴, however, shows that only 10 percent of college costs were paid with parent savings. Even parents who have not yet started saving for college predict 19 percent of future costs will be paid with their savings, a portion almost twice that reported by families whose student is currently enrolled.

Figure 10

Share of Each Resource to Pay for College, Expected vs Actual



⁴ Sallie Mae and Ipsos, *How America Pays for College 2017*, <https://www.salliemae.com/assets/Research/HAP/HowAmericaPaysforCollege2017.pdf> (July 2017)



Successful savers make regular deposits to the college fund and are resourceful in finding extra money to contribute to savings.

Six in 10 parents make regular contributions to their college savings accounts to keep their saving on track. Thirty-eight percent contribute a set amount on a regular basis using automatic deposit, and 29 percent make regular deposits manually, including 6 percent who do both. Aside from regular deposits, 18 percent of parents commit a percentage of bonus earnings to the college fund.

To find extra money to contribute to college savings, parents cut back on other spending or take steps to increase their income. Thirty percent of parents reduced personal spending, 27 percent reduced their household expenses, and after paying off their student loans, 7 percent transferred some percentage of their former student loan payment to their child's college fund. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of parents saving for college reported working more hours or a second job.

Parents are also resourceful in finding additional sources of money for college savings outside their typical earnings: 13

percent use a shopping rewards program and deposit rewards into college savings, and 9 percent have requested friends and family contribute to the college fund in lieu of gifts.

Differences in savings strategies are most apparent among income groups. High-income parents (44%) are more likely than middle- (38%) and low-income parents (23%) to use automatic deposit. High-income parents (15%) are also more likely than middle- (6%) and low-income parents (4%) to ask friends and family to contribute to the college fund. Low-income parents are more likely to focus on reducing expenses: 41 percent reduced personal expenses, compared with 33 percent of middle-income and 22 percent of high-income parents; and 39 percent reduced household expenses, compared with 30 percent of middle-income and 20 percent of high-income parents. Low- (27%) and middle-income parents (26%) are more likely than high-income parents (18%) to say they work extra hours.

Attitudes, values, and communication

Most parents don't communicate with their children about the child's paying-for-college responsibilities.

Among parents who believe the child should have some responsibility for paying for their own college costs, fewer than half (44%) have discussed this expectation with their child. Parents who have earned a college degree are more likely than those without a degree (39%) to have discussed these expectations, with associate's degree holders more likely to have done so than bachelor's degree holders (58% and 48%, respectively). As their child grows closer to college age, more parents have had these discussions, yet up to one-quarter of students heading off to college may not be fully aware of their parents' expectations.

The proportions of parents with children in each of the following age brackets who have had these discussions are

- age 18 or older (75%)
- teens (63%)
- pre-teens (28%)
- ages 0 – 6 (9%)

High- (47%) and middle-income parents (45%) are more likely than low-income parents (34%) to discuss with their child the child's role in paying for college.

Parents discuss the importance of earning scholarships with their children more than any other topic (69%). Two-thirds of parents (67%) have discussed the price of college. Topics that focus on the student's direct contributions through working (47%), loans (49%), or use of their own savings (31%) are discussed less frequently.



Converting assumptions about student responsibility into action is scarce.

Ninety percent of parents say they encourage their children to save money generally, but in families in which parents expect their child to take some responsibility for paying for college, only 19 percent of children are contributing to their college fund. In families where the parent is saving for the child’s college, the proportion of children who contribute to their college fund increases to 29 percent.

Seventy-seven percent of parents say minimizing the cost of college is important to them, yet one-third have never discussed

cost-reduction strategies with their children, even though most of these strategies are driven by decisions the child will be making. Only 39 percent, for example, have talked with their child about how cost might affect the type of college he or she may choose. Other practical, cost-saving measures—such as living at home or graduating on time—are discussed even less. More parents of teens than those of younger children have had cost-saving conversations with their kids, but, even so, fewer than half of parents of teens have discussed any given topic.

Minimizing-college-costs topics discussed

	All parents	Parents of teens
The type of college (i.e., public vs private, 2-year vs 4-year) the student would be able to choose based on saving amount or cost	39%	48%
Whether student will live at home or at school based on cost	30%	38%
The importance of graduating on time	26%	32%
Choice of major/career based on future earnings/employment potential	23%	27%
Whether student will sacrifice extras to pay for college	15%	16%
Delaying the start of college to work and save money for college	9%	9%
None	37%	26%



90% of parents say they encourage their children to save money

Parents are more likely to discuss the actions they have taken to prepare for college than to discuss expectations they have of their children.

Overall, 67 percent of parents agree that a child is more likely to attend college when he or she knows some savings have been set aside for college. Accordingly, parents who save seem to be letting their children know they have college savings accounts. Among parents saving for college, two-thirds (66%) say their child is aware of the savings account, a much higher rate than parents who have had discussions related to student actions and responsibility. Parents of children closest to college age—teens—are more likely (82%) than those of pre-teens (62%) and children ages 0 – 6 (22%) to say their child is aware parents are saving for college.

Among parents with a plan to pay for college, three-quarters say their children are at least aware of the plan. Within that group, 19 percent of students proactively contribute ideas to the plan, 29 percent are engaged with their parents in discussing the plan, and 27 percent are aware but do not participate in planning. Among parents of teens, overall awareness of the plan rises to nearly 9 in 10.



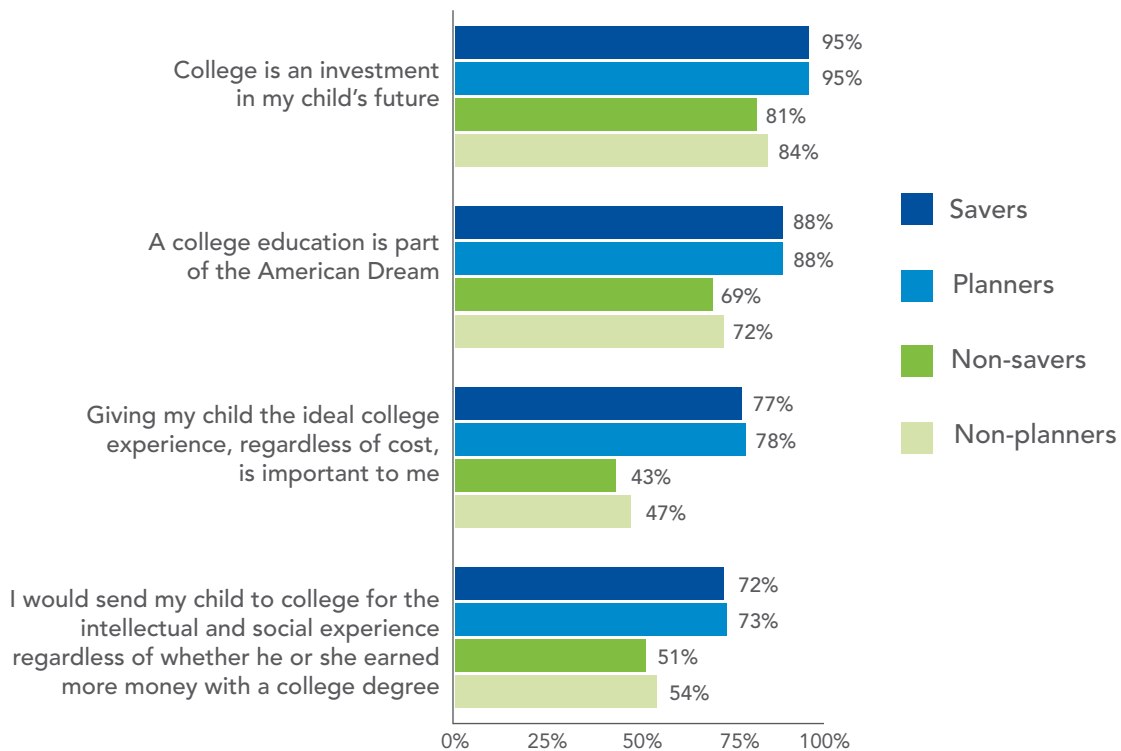
Savers and planners have a more aspirational outlook than parents who aren't preparing financially for college.

While parents who plan or save for their children's college often have more resources to help them prepare financially, they also seem to have a more idealistic attitude about the prospect of college for their children. Parents who are saving or planning for their children's college are much more likely to say they want to give their child the ideal college experience, regardless of cost, (77% and 78%, respectively) than parents who are not saving or planning (53% and 57%, respectively). More savers and planners (both 88%) than non-savers (69%) and non-planners (72%) agree that attending college is part of the American Dream.

Parents who are saving or planning for college (both 95%) are more likely than those who aren't saving (81%) or planning (84%) to believe college is an investment in their child's future. They are also more likely to agree they would send their child to college for the intellectual and social experience, regardless of future earnings: savers and planners, 72 percent and 73 percent, respectively, vs 51 percent of non-savers and 54 percent of non-planners.

Figure 11

Agreement with College Value Perceptions, by Financial Preparedness Status

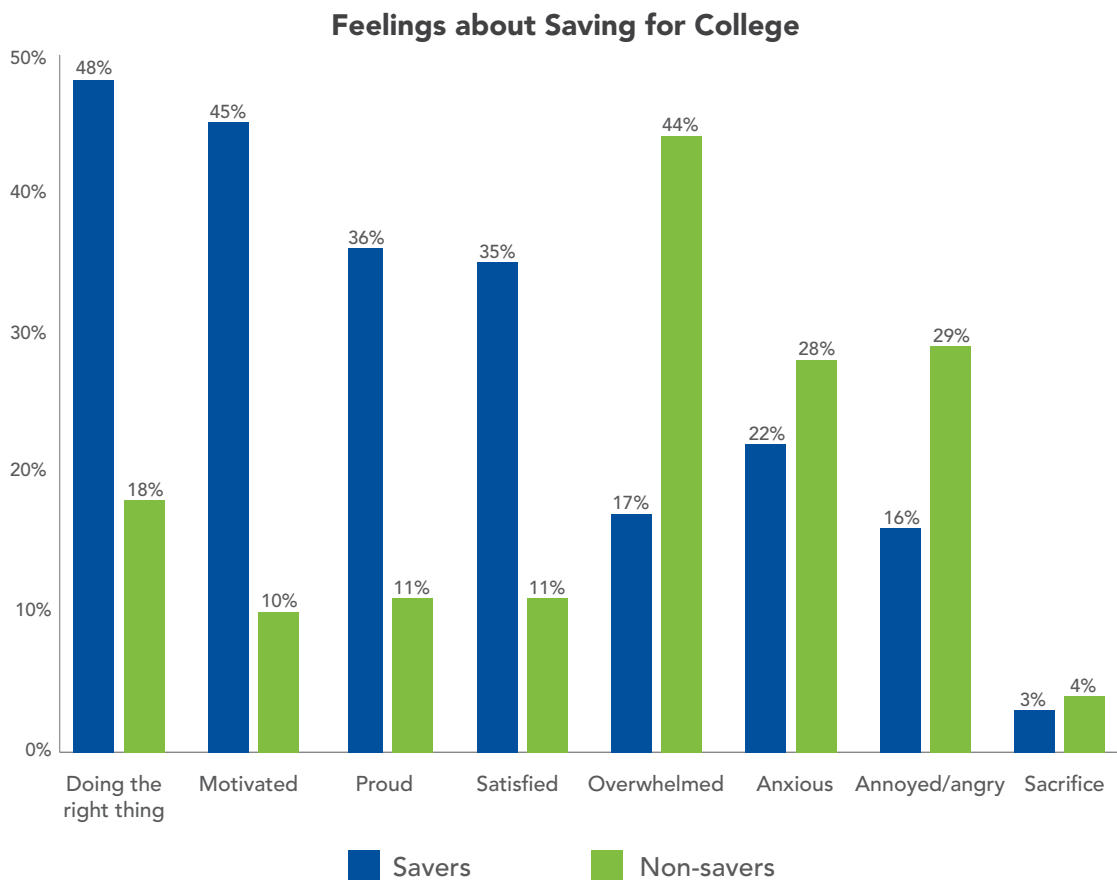


Parents who are saving or planning may be more committed to preparing for college because they can envision their child in college. About twice as many parents who are not saving (30%) or not planning (28%) for college than parents who are saving or planning (15% and 16%, respectively) say they are unsure of the type of college their child will attend.

While many parents who are not saving for college have good reasons for not saving, they feel significantly more negative about saving for college than savers. Parents who have begun saving for college are more likely to express positive emotions,

while non-savers are less likely to have positive associations. For example, 48 percent of savers said they felt they were “doing the right thing” and 45 percent felt “motivated,” compared to 18 and 10 percent, respectively, of non-savers. Those who aren’t saving are more likely to express negative emotions: 44 percent of non-savers said they felt overwhelmed when thinking about saving for college, compared to 17 percent of savers.

Figure 12



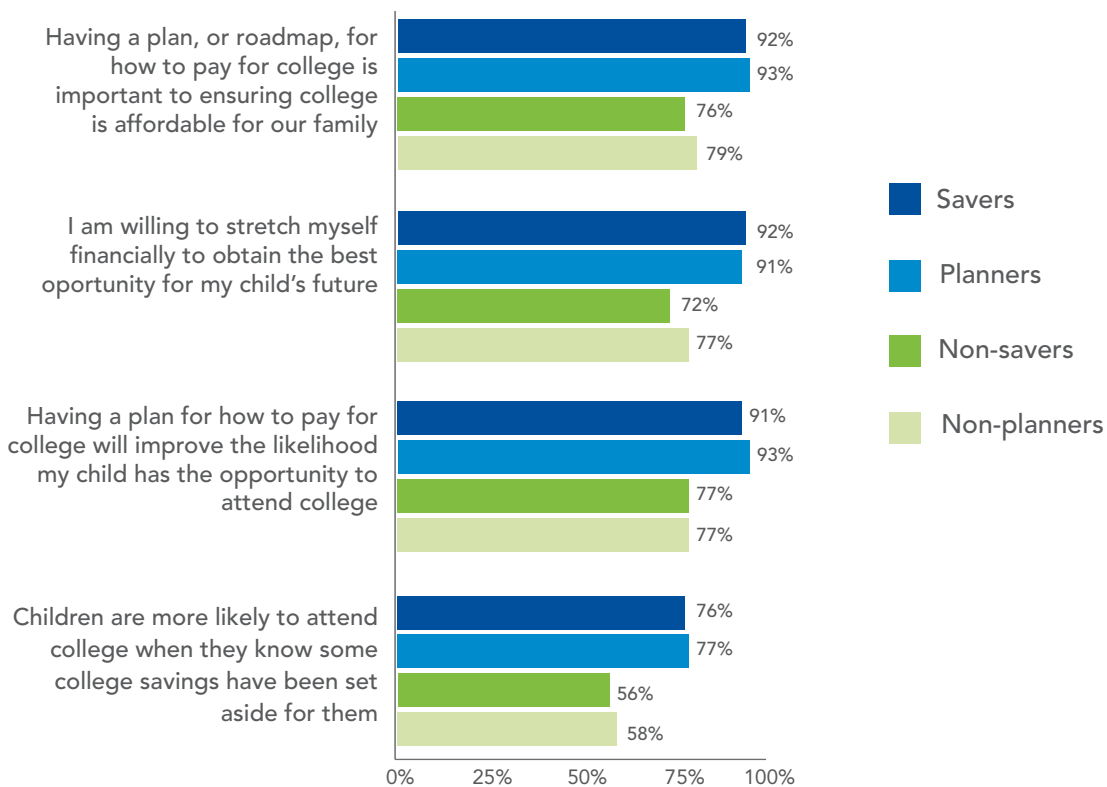
In addition to their idealism, savers and planners believe more strongly that preparation contributes to success.

More parents who are saving (76%) or planning (77%) for their children’s college than parents who are not saving (56%) or not planning (58%) agree children are more likely to attend college when they know savings have been set aside for them. They agree at a higher rate (savers, 92%, and planners, 93%) that having a roadmap for how to pay is important to ensuring college is affordable for their family (non-savers, 76%, and non-

planners, 79%). They also agree at a higher rate that having a plan for how to pay will improve the likelihood their child will have the opportunity to attend college (savers, 91%, and planners, 93%; non-savers and non-planners, both 77%). And more savers (92%) and planners (91%) are willing to stretch financially to give their child the opportunity of college than non-savers (72%) or non-planners (77%).

Figure 13

Agreement with Preparing to Pay for College Perceptions, by Financial Preparedness Status



Lower levels of agreement among non-planners and non-savers with the importance of preparing financially for college might be linked to attitudes about college cost and payment. Many non-saving parents cite reasons for not having a college fund that presume savings won't be needed, such as

- Child will qualify for scholarships/aid (27%)
- Child will attend school that is not expensive (12%)
- It is the child's responsibility to pay for college (11%)
- Savings will negatively affect financial aid eligibility (9%)
- Financial advisor told me not to (1%)

What does it mean to have a plan to pay for college?

For most parents, planning and saving are inextricably linked: three-quarters of parents say one aspect of their plan is to save money, and one-quarter of parents (26%) have consulted a financial planner about establishing a college fund. Saving, however, is not the only component that constitutes a paying-for-college plan. Understanding more about the "product" of college being purchased—benefits, costs, and potential return on investment—and the options available to secure that purchase are also important.

Many parents have taken steps to understand the cost and the trade-off value associated with college generally, or with specific colleges. These steps include

- Researching college costs and estimating the rate of increase over time (32%)
- Researching colleges that have excellent employment rates for graduates so child can afford to borrow (23%)
- Obtaining information from child's school or consulting with a school counselor (21%)
- Discussing with peers (21%)
- Setting limits on colleges child may choose to attend based on cost (14%)
- Enrolling child in Advanced Placement courses in high school or dual enrollment at community college to earn college credits at no or reduced cost (4%)

Other parents have pursued information and/or acted on strategies related to ways to pay for college. These steps include

- Creating college-savings guidelines and/or a budget with estimated amounts from savings, loans, and financial aid to be used to pay for college (31%)
- Researching current financial aid eligibility guidelines (31%)
- Investing in child's skills/talents to increase likelihood of obtaining scholarships (30%)
- Purchasing life insurance on self/spouse to cover college as well as other expenses (22%)
- Paying down/off mortgage so home equity funds will be available for college in the future (14%)
- Taking employment at a college so child can attend tuition-free (7%)
- Having child apply for scholarships (4%)

26% of parents with a plan to pay for college have consulted a financial planner about establishing a college fund





Jobany Q. (center)
High school class of '18,
with his friends

Saving for college personality types

Based on several key measures about attitudes and behaviors, parents of college bound children divide into four distinct financial personas:

- Resolute
- Uncertain
- Cautious
- Dispassionate

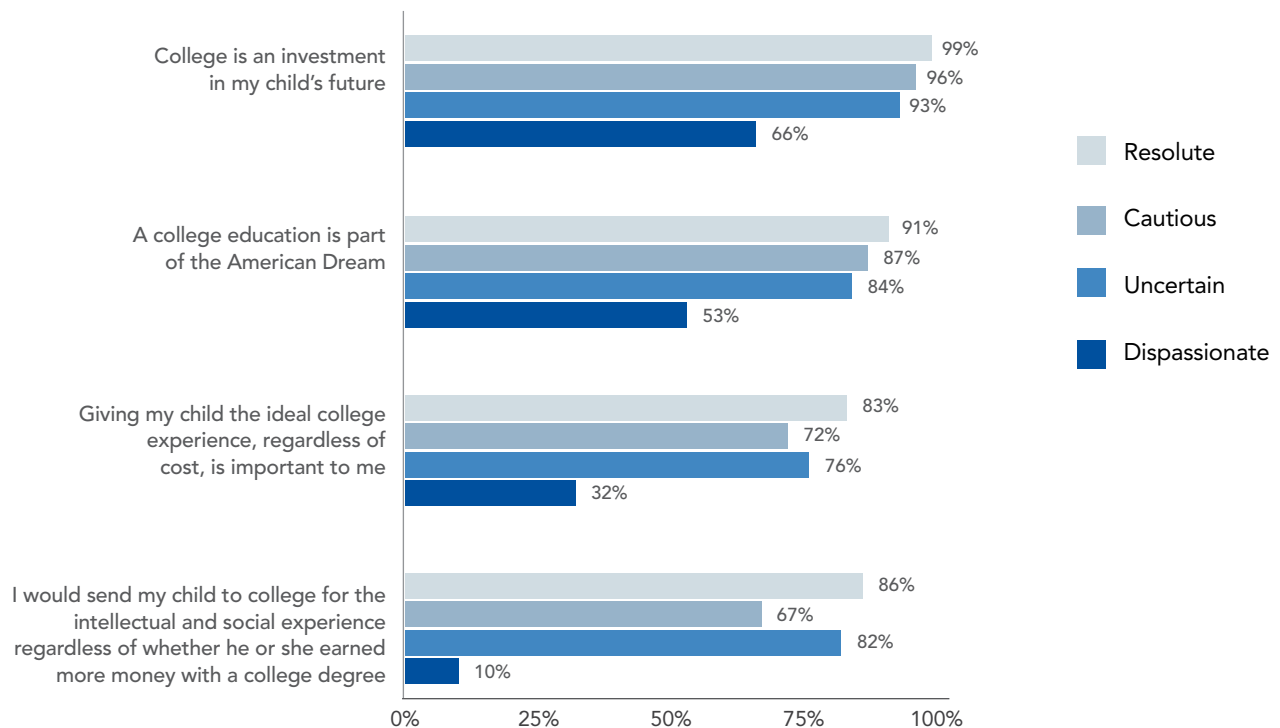
Resolute parents are sure of the value of college, and the value of saving and planning for its cost. They manage their finances with assurance. They are highly likely to say they always have some money saved (84%) and they typically plan for large purchases before buying them (82%). They believe they are savvy with finances (78%) and they are comfortable carrying a manageable amount of debt (71%). Seventy percent of them feel confident they will be able to meet the future costs of college. Resolute parents almost universally believe college is an investment in their child’s future (99%) and they are willing to stretch themselves financially to give their child the opportunity of college (97%). They are more likely than

other personas to say giving their child the ideal college experience, regardless of cost, is important to them (83%).

Resolute parents are significantly more likely than other personas to save for college (79%) and to have created a plan to pay for college (71%). They agree at a higher rate than others that children are more likely to attend college when they know savings have been set aside for them (81%) and having a plan for how to pay for college will improve their child’s likelihood of attending (92%). They have saved \$23,024, on average, a higher amount than other personas.

Figure 14

Agreement with College Value Perceptions, by Persona



Cautious parents believe in their financial acumen, but they are uncomfortable with debt and are wary about spending for college without a financial return on their investment.

In some respects, Cautious parents are similar to Resolutes. Cautious parents say they always have some money saved (90%), they typically plan for large purchases before buying them (89%), and they are savvy with finances (84%). Nearly the same proportion as Resolutes feel confident they will be able to meet the future costs of college (66%). Attitudinally, they are almost as likely as Resolutes to say college is an investment in their child's future (96%) and they are willing to stretch themselves financially to give their child the opportunity of college (91%).

Cautious parents are decidedly different from Resolutes in that 98 percent of them are uncomfortable with debt and feel they must pay it off as quickly as possible. They are less likely than Resolute parents to agree their child will attend college at any cost: 67 percent would send their child to college for the intellectual and social experience regardless of whether or not he or she earned more money with a degree, vs 86 percent of Resolutes, and 72 percent would give their child the ideal college experience regardless of cost, vs 83 percent of Resolutes.

A high proportion of Cautious parents is saving for college (76%). Compared to Resolutes, fewer agree children are more likely to attend college when they know savings have been set aside for them (70%), and fewer have a plan to pay for college (60%). They have saved, on average, \$19,984.

Uncertain parents have a positive outlook on the value of college; they struggle, however, more than other personas with finances, which is reflected in their below-average college savings and planning rates. Half of them (51%) say they never have any savings and half (52%) say they need help with finances. Two in 5 (42%) are uncomfortable with debt and 2 in 5 (39%)—more than twice as many as other personas—say they purchase big ticket items impulsively.

Uncertain and Cautious parents have similar perspectives on the value of college, with one exception: Uncertain parents are less likely to expect a financial return on their college investment. They are much more likely than Cautious parents to agree they would send their child to college for the intellectual and social experience regardless of whether he or she earned more money with a degree (82% vs 67%, respectively).

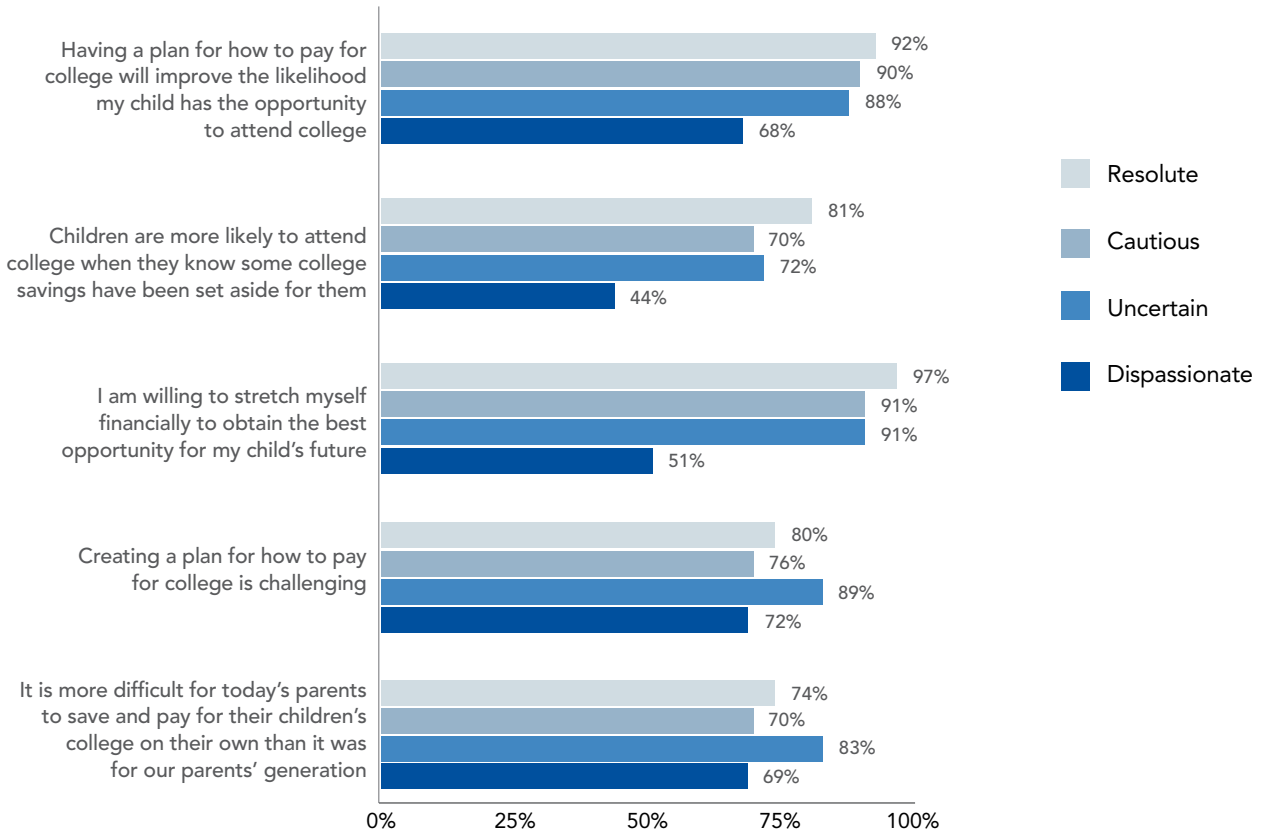
This group of parents is much more likely to say it is more difficult for today's parents to save and pay for their children's college than it was for their parents' generation (83%), and that creating a plan to pay for college is difficult (89%). Only one-third (33%) of Uncertain parents have a plan to pay for college.

Although they agree to the same extent as Cautious parents that children are more likely to attend college when they know savings have been set aside for them (72%), far fewer Uncertain parents are saving for their child's college (44%), and far fewer (41%) feel confident they can meet the future cost of college. On average, they have saved the least compared to other personas, \$10,940.



Figure 15

Agreement with Preparing to Pay for College Perceptions, by Persona



Dispassionate parents do not display high levels of enthusiasm for the value of college or preparing for its costs. While other personas lean decisively in either a positive or negative direction, Dispassionate parents are more divided in their financial habits as a group than other personas. One-third always have savings (37%), one-third never have savings (34%), and one-third sometimes have savings (29%). Nearly half (47%) have a neutral attitude toward debt, while 16 percent are comfortable and 37 percent are uncomfortable with debt. Two in 5 (39%) consider themselves savvy with finances, 2 in 5

feel neutral (42%), and 1 in 5 (19%) say they need help with their finances. Half (52%) typically plan for large purchases, one-third are neutral, and 17 percent buy impulsively.

Dispassionate parents' differentiation from other personas continues in their attitudes. They have significantly lower levels of agreement than other personas—often half the rate—about the value of college, including: 66 percent believe college is an investment in their child's future, 51 percent are willing to stretch themselves financially to afford their child

the opportunity of college, and only 10 percent would send their child to college for the intellectual and social experience regardless of whether they earned more money with a degree.

Their levels of agreement on many aspects of preparing for college, while closer to other personas than their agreement on the value of college, also trend lower. A significantly lower portion agree they would give their child the ideal college experience regardless of cost (32%) and agree students are

more likely to attend college when they know some savings have been set aside for them (44%).

Fewer Dispassionate parents are saving for college (33%), although, on average, they have saved \$13,872, more than Uncertain parents. Fewer also have a plan to pay for college (27%). They are the least likely persona to feel confident they can meet the future costs of college (27%).



Conclusion

Parents of future college students embrace the attitude that college has value. Overall, 9 in 10 parents agree college is an investment in their children, they aspire to provide their children the opportunity to attend college, and the majority are taking action to make college a reality.

Parents are prioritizing saving for college as they set aside funds for the future. While more parents contribute to broad-use savings accounts, such as emergency funds or general savings, money for college ranks at the top of earmarked savings, alongside retirement. On average, college savings have increased. This year, parents report saving \$18,135, an 11 percent increase over 2016, and the highest amount reported since 2013. A higher proportion of college savings than in previous years is held in dedicated college savings vehicles, increasing the likelihood this money will be spent on college.

Two-thirds of parents are investing time or money in preparing for the costs of college. More than half of parents are saving for college and nearly half say they have created a plan to pay for it, with 4 in 10 doing both.

Parents' commitment to making college happen for their child is tempered by a realistic perspective. Just half of parents feel confident they will be able to meet the future costs of college. Eight in 10 agree that planning for college is challenging. Compared to 2016, savers have reduced their target savings goal by 11 percent. At the same time, more parents believe their children should help foot the bill for college.

That said, parents expect to pay a much higher proportion of future college costs from their savings and income than the proportion paid by parents who currently have children in college. Counter to that, they expect their children will borrow a lower proportion of costs than today's college students. The mismatch in expectation and reality could be a result of limited information. *How America Saves for College 2018* identifies areas where parents could benefit from tools and resources to help them plan and save more effectively.

Evidence of the benefits of planning and saving for college include access to more options, such as school type, location, and housing situation, and students needing to borrow less¹. Further, the majority of parents agree that having a plan to pay for college and children knowing some savings have been set aside for college both improve the likelihood their child will attend college.

Significantly, parents who are taking action to prepare financially for college are nearly three times more likely than parents who are neither planning nor saving to feel confident they will be able to meet the costs of college. Concerningly, not having a plan or savings, coupled with a lack of confidence in being able to pay for college, may intimidate parents without a plan or savings to the point where the chances their children will attend college are sizably diminished.

¹ Sallie Mae and Ipsos, *How America Pays for College 2017*

Data tables

Q. How much money have you saved in total and in the last year for the education of your child/children in each of the following types of savings or investment accounts?

- a. A 529 college savings plan
- b. A pre-paid or guaranteed state college savings plan (a guaranteed plan that allows you to lock in today's tuition price)
- c. Coverdell Education Savings Account, formerly known as an Education IRA
- d. Investments such as stocks, mutual funds, money market accounts, or bonds that are not part of your 529 or 401(k) plan
- e. A juvenile life insurance policy (one that acts as a college savings plan as well)
- f. UGMA/UTMA account (Uniform Gift to Minors Act/Uniform Transfers to Minors Act)
- g. A trust (funds managed by one person for a specific beneficiary)
- h. US savings bond
- i. General savings account at your local bank (one with a physical branch building) or at an online bank
- j. CD (Certificate of Deposit) through your local bank (one with a physical branch building) or through an online bank
- k. A checking account
- l. GoFundMe or other crowd sourcing fund
- m. Bitcoin or other cryptocurrency account
- n. Non-institutional savings (e.g., piggy bank or other at-home fund, safe or safety deposit box, or other non-interest bearing stash)
- o. Some other way

Table 1a: Composite of College Savings Vehicles: Proportion of Total College Savings Stored in Each Vehicle*, by Planning Status

N	College saver			Pay-for-college planner			Non-planner		
	1130			778			352		
	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings
General savings account	\$1,085	\$3,902	22%	\$1,274	\$4,700	21%	\$665	\$2,136	23%
529 plan	\$1,471	\$5,441	30%	\$2,005	\$6,946	31%	\$290	\$2,111	23%
Checking account	\$478	\$1,458	8%	\$409	\$1,167	5%	\$630	\$2,102	23%
Investment account	\$426	\$2,616	14%	\$463	\$3,304	15%	\$343	\$1,094	12%
CD	\$251	\$887	5%	\$311	\$1,177	5%	\$117	\$244	3%
US savings bond	\$80	\$227	1%	\$106	\$303	1%	\$22	\$59	1%
Prepaid state plan	\$1,167	\$1,494	8%	\$1,689	\$2,141	10%	\$13	\$63	1%
Coverdell/Education IRA	\$228	\$352	2%	\$321	\$462	2%	\$21	\$109	1%
Juvenile life insurance	\$47	\$272	1%	\$46	\$301	1%	\$49	\$206	2%
Trust	\$160	\$404	2%	\$147	\$389	2%	\$190	\$437	5%
UGMA/UTMA	\$36	\$176	1%	\$31	\$215	1%	\$46	\$89	1%
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	\$27	\$115	1%	\$39	\$158	1%	\$-	\$23	0%
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	\$40	\$74	0%	\$59	\$107	0%	\$-	\$-	0%
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	\$56	\$120	1%	\$49	\$113	1%	\$70	\$136	1%
Some other way	\$143	\$597	3%	\$107	\$686	3%	\$223	\$399	4%
Total average savings	\$5,694	\$18,135	100%	\$7,057	\$22,169	100%	\$2,679	\$9,208	100%

*Average amounts saved per vehicle across all college savers
 Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 1b: Composite of College Savings Vehicles: Proportion of Total College Savings Stored in Each Vehicle*, by Race and Ethnicity

N	White			Black			Hispanic		
	843			138			237		
	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings
General savings account	\$1,116	\$4,175	22%	\$635	\$2,700	17%	\$911	\$3,846	30%
529 plan	\$1,501	\$5,768	31%	\$665	\$2,689	17%	\$1,017	\$2,235	17%
Checking account	\$554	\$1,559	8%	\$450	\$1,553	10%	\$262	\$1,194	9%
Investment account	\$396	\$2,418	13%	\$1,016	\$4,551	29%	\$485	\$1,871	15%
CD	\$204	\$624	3%	\$159	\$1,330	9%	\$285	\$666	5%
US savings bond	\$96	\$256	1%	\$63	\$226	1%	\$46	\$257	2%
Prepaid state plan	\$1,557	\$1,908	10%	\$55	\$270	2%	\$77	\$357	3%
Coverdell/Education IRA	\$262	\$387	2%	\$262	\$524	3%	\$332	\$537	4%
Juvenile life insurance	\$49	\$298	2%	\$91	\$266	2%	\$77	\$491	4%
Trust	\$126	\$408	2%	\$545	\$826	5%	\$149	\$594	5%
UGMA/UTMA	\$45	\$209	1%	\$13	\$64	0%	\$17	\$217	2%
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	\$31	\$131	1%	\$23	\$134	1%	\$13	\$89	1%
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	\$53	\$97	1%	\$6	\$15	0%	\$11	\$23	0%
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	\$61	\$128	1%	\$75	\$191	1%	\$62	\$129	1%
Some other way	\$160	\$438	2%	\$20	\$294	2%	\$186	\$315	2%
Total average savings	\$6,211	\$18,804	100%	\$4,079	\$15,633	100%	\$3,930	\$12,821	100%

*Average amounts saved per vehicle across all college savers
 Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 1c: Composite of College Savings Vehicles: Proportion of Total College Savings Stored in Each Vehicle*, by Income

N	<\$35k			\$35 – <\$100k			\$100k+		
	208			463			458		
	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings
General savings account	\$506	\$1,757	43%	\$1,003	\$3,272	25%	\$1,431	\$5,514	18%
529 plan	\$52	\$150	4%	\$424	\$2,195	17%	\$3,176	\$11,128	37%
Checking account	\$75	\$498	12%	\$587	\$1,320	10%	\$550	\$2,035	7%
Investment account	\$248	\$399	10%	\$302	\$1,316	10%	\$633	\$4,938	17%
CD	\$22	\$73	2%	\$367	\$1,020	8%	\$237	\$1,121	4%
US savings bond	\$20	\$74	2%	\$144	\$370	3%	\$41	\$152	1%
Prepaid state plan	\$10	\$62	2%	\$66	\$247	2%	\$2,808	\$3,406	11%
Coverdell/ Education IRA	\$76	\$141	3%	\$351	\$530	4%	\$172	\$268	1%
Juvenile life insurance	\$74	\$353	9%	\$53	\$313	2%	\$28	\$193	1%
Trust	\$30	\$178	4%	\$165	\$414	3%	\$214	\$497	2%
UGMA/UTMA	\$-	\$-	0%	\$73	\$268	2%	\$14	\$162	1%
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	\$-	\$1	0%	\$54	\$227	2%	\$11	\$55	0%
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	\$-	\$1	0%	\$14	\$89	1%	\$85	\$92	0%
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	\$71	\$161	4%	\$72	\$156	1%	\$33	\$65	0%
Some other way	\$148	\$204	5%	\$110	\$1,102	9%	\$174	\$264	1%
Total average savings	\$1,334	\$4,052	100%	\$3,786	\$12,839	100%	\$9,606	\$29,890	100%

*Average amounts saved per vehicle across all college savers
 Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 1d: Composite of College Savings Vehicles: Proportion of Total College Savings Stored in Each Vehicle*, by Age of Oldest Child

N	Age 0 – 6			Age 7 – 12			Age 13 – 17			Age 18+		
	194			326			476			103		
	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings
General savings account	\$497	\$2,243	37%	\$634	\$2,495	18%	\$1,513	\$5,265	23%	\$825	\$4,900	23%
529 plan	\$511	\$2,053	34%	\$1,280	\$4,642	33%	\$1,451	\$7,096	31%	\$4,421	\$8,284	39%
Checking account	\$239	\$621	10%	\$354	\$1,041	7%	\$698	\$2,135	9%	\$86	\$1,160	5%
Investment account	\$43	\$104	2%	\$356	\$2,129	15%	\$648	\$4,329	19%	\$465	\$1,622	8%
CD	\$68	\$267	4%	\$97	\$304	2%	\$381	\$1,134	5%	\$333	\$2,425	11%
US savings bond	\$8	\$97	2%	\$21	\$190	1%	\$153	\$332	1%	\$71	\$127	1%
Prepaid state plan	\$33	\$90	1%	\$74	\$227	2%	\$121	\$448	2%	\$7	\$1,166	5%
Coverdell/ Education IRA	\$8	\$18	0%	\$245	\$430	3%	\$281	\$438	2%	\$196	\$229	1%
Juvenile life insurance	\$77	\$296	5%	\$67	\$332	2%	\$25	\$180	1%	\$36	\$535	2%
Trust	\$19	\$80	1%	\$173	\$477	3%	\$230	\$452	2%	\$86	\$662	3%
UGMA/UTMA	\$-	\$2	0%	\$105	\$383	3%	\$12	\$152	1%	\$-	\$-	0%
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	\$5	\$17	0%	\$55	\$278	2%	\$19	\$70	0%	\$-	\$-	0%
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	\$-	\$7	0%	\$21	\$129	1%	\$80	\$82	0%	\$2	\$3	0%
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	\$18	\$43	1%	\$78	\$157	1%	\$51	\$130	1%	\$85	\$114	1%
Some other way	\$113	\$170	3%	\$253	\$818	6%	\$80	\$742	3%	\$176	\$192	1%
Total average savings	\$1,638	\$6,108	100%	\$3,812	\$14,032	100%	\$5,742	\$22,985	100%	\$6,787	\$21,419	100%

*Average amounts saved per vehicle across all college savers
Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 1e: Composite of College Savings Vehicles: Proportion of Total College Savings Stored in Each Vehicle*, by Parent College Degree Type

N	No degree			Associate's			Bachelor's		
	512			66			551		
	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings	Avg amount saved last year, all savers	Avg amount saved total, all savers	Portion of total college savings
General savings account	\$676	\$2,786	28%	\$949	\$2,107	16%	\$1,480	\$5,154	20%
529 plan	\$218	\$892	9%	\$731	\$1,633	13%	\$2,725	\$10,124	38%
Checking account	\$209	\$805	8%	\$442	\$611	5%	\$731	\$2,167	8%
Investment account	\$234	\$1,542	15%	\$536	\$3,261	25%	\$591	\$3,536	13%
CD	\$101	\$410	4%	\$694	\$1,746	14%	\$336	\$1,226	5%
US savings bond	\$32	\$59	1%	\$59	\$105	1%	\$126	\$397	2%
Prepaid state plan	\$2,483	\$2,585	26%	\$132	\$264	2%	\$70	\$629	2%
Coverdell/ Education IRA	\$62	\$97	1%	\$505	\$613	5%	\$348	\$558	2%
Juvenile life insurance	\$48	\$260	3%	\$27	\$270	2%	\$48	\$283	1%
Trust	\$49	\$181	2%	\$22	\$22	0%	\$280	\$657	2%
UGMA/UTMA	\$1	\$1	0%	\$-	\$-	0%	\$72	\$359	1%
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	\$1	\$76	1%	\$-	\$10	0%	\$54	\$80	0%
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	\$73	\$4	0%	\$6	\$130	1%	\$14	\$217	1%
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	\$63	\$129	1%	\$205	\$461	4%	\$31	\$71	0%
Some other way	\$86	\$204	2%	\$1,191	\$1,587	12%	\$71	\$842	3%
Total average savings	\$4,338	\$10,031	100%	\$5,499	\$12,820	100%	\$6,978	\$26,300	100%

*Average amounts saved per vehicle across all college savers
Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. How confident do you feel about being able to meet the costs of your child/children's college education?

Table 2: Confidence in Ability to Meet Future College Costs

	N	Extremely confident	Somewhat confident	Neither confident nor unconfident	Somewhat unconfident	Extremely unconfident
Total	2003	17%	34%	23%	17%	10%
Saving status						
College saver	1130	24%	45%	16%	12%	3%
Non-college saver	873	8%	19%	31%	24%	19%
Planning status						
Pay-for-college planner	940	29%	48%	13%	8%	2%
Non-planner	1063	6%	21%	32%	25%	17%
Income						
<\$35k	452	13%	26%	25%	20%	15%
\$35k–\$100k	884	17%	31%	24%	17%	11%
\$100k+	667	19%	42%	20%	14%	4%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	1539	16%	33%	23%	17%	11%
Black	254	21%	34%	25%	10%	10%
Hispanic	415	20%	35%	20%	14%	10%
Age of oldest child						
Age 0–6	352	20%	36%	22%	14%	8%
Age 7–12	596	18%	33%	25%	16%	9%
Age 13–17	816	16%	33%	22%	19%	11%
Age 18+	195	14%	33%	19%	22%	13%
Parent college education						
No degree	1117	14%	27%	28%	19%	12%
Associate's degree	125	15%	29%	27%	19%	10%
Bachelor's degree	761	22%	44%	14%	14%	7%

Base: All parents

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that your family has created a plan to pay for the costs of the undergraduate college education of your child/all your children who are planning to attend?

Table 3: Created a Plan to Pay for College

	N	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Total	2003	19%	28%	25%	16%	13%
Saving status						
College saver	1130	28%	41%	17%	11%	4%
Non-college saver	873	7%	12%	35%	22%	24%
Income						
<\$35k	452	12%	22%	33%	18%	16%
\$35k–\$100k	884	15%	30%	23%	17%	15%
\$100k+	667	29%	30%	21%	12%	8%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	1539	20%	26%	24%	16%	14%
Black	254	13%	34%	26%	17%	10%
Hispanic	415	20%	23%	27%	16%	14%
Age of oldest child						
Age 0–6	352	17%	28%	27%	16%	12%
Age 7–12	596	18%	26%	24%	19%	13%
Age 13–17	816	20%	29%	25%	13%	14%
Age 18+	195	12%	34%	26%	17%	11%
Parent college education						
No degree	1117	13%	23%	33%	16%	15%
Associate's degree	125	15%	29%	17%	24%	15%
Bachelor's degree	761	28%	35%	14%	13%	10%

Base: All parents

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- a. Having a plan, or roadmap, for how to pay for college is important to ensuring college is affordable for our family.
 - b. Creating a plan for how to pay for college is challenging.
 - c. It is more difficult for today's parents to save and pay for their children's college on their own than it was for our parents' generation.
 - d. Students are more likely to attend college when they know some college savings have been set aside for them.
 - e. Minimizing college costs is important to our family.
 - f. Giving my child the ideal college experience, regardless of cost, is important to me.
 - g. Having a plan for how to pay for college will improve the likelihood my child has the opportunity to attend college.

Table 4: Attitudes toward Planning to Pay for College, Rated "Agree"*

	N	Roadmap ensures affordability	Challenging	More difficult today	Savings influence attendance	Minimize costs	Ideal experience	Improves likelihood
Total	2003	85%	80%	75%	67%	77%	67%	85%
Saving status								
College saver	1130	92%	80%	75%	76%	77%	77%	91%
Non-college saver	873	76%	81%	75%	56%	78%	53%	77%
Planning status								
Pay-for-college planner	940	93%	79%	74%	77%	78%	78%	93%
Non-planner	1063	79%	81%	75%	58%	77%	57%	77%
Income								
<\$35k	452	82%	82%	73%	66%	76%	64%	84%
\$35k-\$100k	884	84%	82%	75%	67%	79%	69%	84%
\$100k+	667	89%	77%	76%	68%	76%	66%	86%
Race/Ethnicity								
White	1539	86%	82%	75%	68%	78%	64%	85%
Black	254	84%	76%	72%	67%	82%	72%	87%
Hispanic	415	90%	84%	78%	68%	77%	77%	88%
Age of oldest child								
Age 0-6	352	89%	77%	79%	70%	77%	70%	87%
Age 7-12	596	87%	81%	75%	64%	78%	67%	86%
Age 13-17	816	84%	81%	74%	68%	78%	67%	85%
Age 18+	195	80%	80%	75%	64%	80%	53%	81%
Parent college education								
No degree	1117	81%	82%	73%	65%	76%	66%	84%
Associate's degree	125	86%	82%	79%	64%	86%	63%	84%
Bachelor's degree	761	91%	78%	76%	72%	78%	68%	86%

*1 or 2 on five point scale
Base: All parents

Table 5: Attitudes toward Planning to Pay for College, Scale 1-5

	N	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
A roadmap ensures affordability	2003	49%	37%	13%	1%	1%
Creating a plan is challenging	2003	46%	34%	14%	4%	2%
More difficult for today's parents to save and plan	2003	48%	27%	18%	5%	3%
Savings awareness influences college attendance	2003	36%	31%	27%	4%	2%
Minimizing cost is important	2003	45%	33%	16%	4%	3%
Give ideal experience, regardless of cost	2003	35%	32%	20%	8%	5%
A plan improves likelihood to attend	2003	49%	36%	13%	2%	1%

Base: All parents

Q. How much did you save in total for each of the following?

Table 6a: Proportion of Parents Saving for Each Goal and Average Amounts Saved*, by College Saving Status

N	Total		College saver		Non-college saver	
	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total
Emergencies/Rainy day	66%	\$8,621	79%	\$11,060	48%	\$3,347
Retirement	54%	\$147,397	68%	\$167,864	35%	\$95,064
General savings fund (not specified)	63%	\$25,064	74%	\$34,396	49%	\$6,381
College for my child/children	56%	\$21,297	100%	\$21,297	0%	\$-
Holidays/Gifts	24%	\$963	33%	\$1,091	12%	\$538
Vacation	40%	\$3,148	53%	\$3,826	25%	\$1,250
Healthcare	28%	\$7,837	38%	\$9,255	14%	\$2,528
House/Home	30%	\$13,959	38%	\$16,303	21%	\$7,990
Car	29%	\$5,153	37%	\$5,945	19%	\$3,142
Furniture/Appliance/Electronics	19%	\$1,327	24%	\$1,432	12%	\$1,036
Home remodeling/Landscaping	24%	\$3,226	32%	\$2,996	14%	\$3,991
College for parent	18%	\$7,313	28%	\$7,756	6%	\$5,306
Wedding	6%	\$7,770	8%	\$9,520	3%	\$2,030
Average total savings		\$253,075		\$292,741		\$132,603

*Average amounts saved among savers in each goal category

Base: All parents

Table 6b: Proportion of Parents Saving for Each Goal and Average Amounts Saved*, by Race and Ethnicity

N	White		Black		Hispanic	
	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total
Emergencies/Rainy day	64%	\$9,815	69%	\$3,017	62%	\$3,879
Retirement	54%	\$162,223	49%	\$46,080	42%	\$112,104
General savings fund (not specified)	61%	\$29,949	65%	\$8,387	58%	\$10,185
College for my child/children	55%	\$23,460	54%	\$10,702	57%	\$13,802
Holidays/Gifts	23%	\$968	25%	\$1,274	23%	\$881
Vacation	40%	\$3,459	39%	\$2,470	38%	\$2,105
Healthcare	27%	\$8,760	29%	\$3,685	24%	\$4,399
House/Home	27%	\$13,354	40%	\$7,329	38%	\$10,717
Car	28%	\$5,588	31%	\$3,395	33%	\$3,251
Furniture/Appliance/Electronics	18%	\$1,249	20%	\$1,726	22%	\$1,105
Home remodeling/Landscaping	24%	\$2,911	17%	\$7,249	19%	\$3,646
College for parent	16%	\$7,074	24%	\$9,235	21%	\$4,107
Wedding	5%	\$5,395	8%	\$1,423	8%	\$4,058
Average total savings		\$274,205		\$105,972		\$174,239

*Average amounts saved among savers in each goal category
Base: All parents

Table 6c: Proportion of Parents Saving for Each Goal and Average Amounts Saved*, by Income

N	<\$35k		\$35k – <\$100k		\$100k+	
	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total
Emergencies/Rainy day	56%	\$1,116	65%	\$4,196	72%	\$17,624
Retirement	25%	\$11,706	53%	\$70,035	75%	\$246,219
General savings fund (not specified)	49%	\$3,755	62%	\$9,048	73%	\$52,127
College for my child/children	46%	\$4,136	52%	\$11,885	69%	\$37,828
Holidays/Gifts	19%	\$283	27%	\$932	22%	\$1,396
Vacation	27%	\$822	40%	\$1,880	50%	\$5,396
Healthcare	18%	\$1,079	30%	\$4,772	31%	\$14,025
House/Home	32%	\$1,763	31%	\$18,722	29%	\$15,721
Car	28%	\$1,290	31%	\$4,942	28%	\$7,908
Furniture/Appliance/Electronics	17%	\$470	21%	\$1,338	18%	\$1,819
Home remodeling/Landscaping	15%	\$818	26%	\$2,721	27%	\$4,681
College for parent	18%	\$3,961	19%	\$5,082	18%	\$13,265
Wedding	9%	\$854	5%	\$11,598	5%	\$8,437
Average total savings		\$32,053		\$147,151		\$426,446

*Average amounts saved among savers in each goal category
Base: All parents

Table 6d: Proportion of Parents Saving for Each Goal and Average Amounts Saved*, by Age of Oldest Child

N	Age 0 – 6		Age 7 – 12		Age 13 – 17		Age 18+	
	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total
Emergencies/Rainy day	70%	\$4,370	65%	\$5,435	64%	\$13,374	66%	\$5,066
Retirement	47%	\$77,836	53%	\$98,842	57%	\$200,835	57%	\$170,362
General savings fund (not specified)	70%	\$7,170	61%	\$14,130	62%	\$38,468	60%	\$40,651
College for my child/children	55%	\$7,929	55%	\$15,359	58%	\$27,559	53%	\$27,788
Holidays/Gifts	25%	\$435	25%	\$1,013	22%	\$1,318	22%	\$422
Vacation	42%	\$1,191	41%	\$2,754	38%	\$2,669	41%	\$2,009
Healthcare	27%	\$3,537	26%	\$3,819	27%	\$10,046	26%	\$4,185
House/Home	40%	\$11,956	33%	\$9,391	24%	\$21,573	26%	\$8,347
Car	35%	\$2,075	31%	\$5,557	27%	\$6,470	23%	\$4,475
Furniture/Appliance/Electronics	21%	\$677	20%	\$1,220	18%	\$1,621	18%	\$1,458
Home remodeling/Landscaping	28%	\$1,765	25%	\$3,821	22%	\$2,828	26%	\$3,796
College for parent	20%	\$1,007	17%	\$6,626	18%	\$7,224	13%	\$5,464
Wedding	12%	\$14,189	3%	\$3,875	6%	\$6,912	1%	\$12,078
Average total savings		\$134,137		\$171,842		\$340,897		\$286,101

*Average amounts saved among savers in each goal category
Base: All parents

Table 6e: Proportion of Parents Saving for Each Goal and Average Amounts Saved*, by Parent College Degree Type

N	No degree		Associate's degree		Bachelor's degree or higher	
	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total	% Saving	Avg amount saved total
Emergencies/Rainy day	60%	\$2,642	71%	\$3,971	72%	\$16,428
Retirement	40%	\$61,158	56%	\$72,314	75%	\$221,959
General savings fund (not specified)	58%	\$6,007	60%	\$2,763	70%	\$50,678
College for my child/children	46%	\$9,798	53%	\$13,531	73%	\$32,678
Holidays/Gifts	22%	\$588	24%	\$704	25%	\$1,506
Vacation	35%	\$2,967	43%	\$1,492	47%	\$3,584
Healthcare	20%	\$7,427	29%	\$4,276	39%	\$8,566
House/Home	30%	\$5,223	31%	\$4,401	31%	\$27,557
Car	27%	\$2,265	35%	\$4,764	32%	\$8,856
Furniture/Appliance/Electronics	17%	\$675	19%	\$1,028	22%	\$2,130
Home remodeling/Landscaping	18%	\$1,925	34%	\$1,630	30%	\$4,584
College for parent	17%	\$7,939	19%	\$2,662	20%	\$7,231
Wedding	7%	\$3,243	3%	\$2,063	5%	\$17,055
Average total savings		\$111,857		\$115,599		\$402,812

*Average amounts saved among savers in each goal category
Base: All parents

Q. With regard to the amount you are saving for the college education for your child/children, are you saving more, less or the same amount of money compared to this time last year?

Table 7: Savings Rate Compared to a Year Ago

	N	More	Less	Same	Not sure
Total	1130	31%	8%	55%	5%
Planning status					
Pay-for-college planner	778	34%	5%	57%	4%
Non-planner	352	27%	15%	50%	8%
Income					
<\$35k	208	31%	11%	46%	13%
\$35k–\$100k	463	34%	8%	54%	5%
\$100k+	458	29%	8%	60%	3%
Race/Ethnicity					
White	843	31%	10%	56%	4%
Black	138	40%	6%	51%	3%
Hispanic	237	38%	9%	48%	6%
Age of oldest child					
Age 0–6	194	35%	9%	51%	5%
Age 7–12	326	32%	9%	53%	6%
Age 13–17	476	28%	7%	59%	6%
Age 18+	103	24%	13%	58%	5%
Parent college education					
No degree	512	37%	10%	46%	7%
Associate's degree	66	24%	6%	63%	8%
Bachelor's degree	551	28%	7%	62%	3%

Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. What prompted you to save more? (Check all that apply.)

Table 8: Reasons for Saving More

N	354
My family has increased its earnings in the last year	39%
Reduced expenses/debt, have more to save	20%
My child is closer to college age	30%
Evaluated savings against goals and realized needed to save more	27%
Recently learned about how much college will cost	21%
My family had additional child	9%
Other	2%
Not sure	3%

Base: Parents who are saving for college and saving more than prior year

Q. Why are you saving less? (Check all that apply.)

Table 9: Reasons for Saving Less

N	94
Cost of living is higher this year	40%
There have been unexpected expenses this year	52%
Earnings are less this year	37%
Child will get a large scholarship or grant	7%
Have saved enough	5%
No longer expect one or more of my children to attend college	5%
Other	10%
Not sure	1%

Base: Parents who are saving for college and saving less than the prior year

Q. The following are reasons some people use to explain why they have not started saving for their child's college education. Which of the following are reasons you have not started saving for your child's college education?

- a. My children are too young to start thinking about it
- b. I don't have enough money to save for my children's college education
- c. I'm focusing on other saving priorities, such as retirement
- d. My financial planner told me not to save for college
- e. I'm concerned that having savings might prevent my child from getting financial aid
- f. I'm not sure which are the best options for college saving
- g. I haven't gotten around to starting a savings plan yet
- h. It is my child's responsibility to pay for college
- i. I expect my child to qualify for enough scholarship or financial aid to cover the costs
- j. My child will attend a school that is not very expensive
- k. My child is too old/it is too late to start saving

Table 10: Reasons Non-saving Parents Aren't Saving for College

	N	Child too young	Not enough money	Priority other savings	Advised not to save	Fear loss of financial aid	Not sure of best options	Haven't gotten to it	Child's responsibility	Financial aid will cover costs	School won't be expensive	Too late
Total	873	21%	52%	18%	1%	9%	21%	25%	11%	27%	12%	3%
Planning status												
Pay-for-college planner	162	22%	24%	15%	3%	16%	14%	16%	9%	28%	15%	4%
Non-planner	712	21%	58%	18%	1%	7%	22%	27%	12%	27%	11%	3%
Income												
<\$35k	244	23%	59%	10%	2%	8%	20%	21%	5%	26%	12%	2%
\$35k-\$100k	421	23%	55%	18%	0%	8%	17%	25%	15%	31%	11%	4%
\$100k+	209	17%	38%	26%	2%	11%	29%	30%	10%	21%	14%	3%
Race/Ethnicity												
White	696	19%	54%	18%	1%	9%	20%	25%	13%	27%	12%	4%
Black	116	31%	39%	17%	0%	6%	23%	26%	4%	27%	16%	2%
Hispanic	178	31%	53%	14%	2%	7%	25%	32%	4%	32%	17%	2%
Age of oldest child												
Age 0-6	159	54%	46%	15%	2%	10%	31%	27%	9%	23%	14%	0%
Age 7-12	270	24%	52%	20%	1%	10%	23%	33%	13%	27%	10%	1%
Age 13-17	340	9%	52%	19%	1%	9%	18%	25%	10%	29%	12%	3%
Age 18+	93	1%	63%	13%	2%	3%	7%	1%	10%	33%	13%	12%
Parent college education												
No degree	605	23%	55%	13%	1%	8%	22%	27%	8%	25%	12%	2%
Associate's degree	59	16%	54%	32%	3%	5%	19%	13%	19%	28%	18%	9%
Bachelor's degree	210	18%	44%	26%	2%	11%	18%	24%	18%	32%	11%	7%

Base: All parents who are not saving for college

Q. Paying for college is the responsibility of the...

Table 11: Responsibility for Paying for College

	N	Parent	Student	Both parent and student	Government	Other
Total	2003	26%	8%	59%	5%	1%
Saving status						
College saver	1130	32%	4%	58%	4%	1%
Non-college saver	873	19%	12%	61%	7%	2%
Planning status						
Pay-for-college planner	940	32%	6%	57%	5%	1%
Non-planner	1063	22%	10%	62%	6%	2%
Income						
<\$35k	452	33%	5%	53%	7%	3%
\$35k–\$100k	884	25%	10%	58%	6%	1%
\$100k+	667	23%	7%	66%	3%	1%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	1539	24%	9%	61%	5%	2%
Black	254	35%	4%	53%	8%	1%
Hispanic	415	32%	3%	58%	5%	1%
Age of oldest child						
Age 0–6	352	27%	5%	61%	5%	2%
Age 7–12	596	27%	7%	61%	4%	1%
Age 13–17	816	27%	8%	59%	6%	1%
Age 18+	195	20%	16%	58%	3%	3%
Parent college education						
No degree	1117	27%	7%	59%	5%	1%
Associate's degree	125	19%	8%	58%	9%	5%
Bachelor's degree	761	26%	9%	59%	5%	1%

Base: All parents

Q. Does your child/children actively contribute to his/her own college savings fund?

Table 12: College Savings Contributions from Child

	N	Yes	No
Total	1343	19%	81%
Saving status			
College saver	707	29%	71%
Non-college saver	636	8%	92%
Planning status			
Pay-for-college planner	586	31%	69%
Non-planner	757	11%	89%
Income			
<\$35k	259	13%	87%
\$35k–\$100k	599	19%	81%
\$100k+	484	23%	77%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	1074	19%	81%
Black	144	27%	73%
Hispanic	255	22%	79%
Age of oldest child			
Age 0–6	231	6%	94%
Age 7–12	404	12%	88%
Age 13–17	541	28%	73%
Age 18+	145	24%	76%
Parent college education			
No degree	744	15%	85%
Associate's degree	83	23%	77%
Bachelor's degree	516	25%	75%

Base: Parents who said the student has some or all responsibility for paying for college

Q. Do you plan to begin saving for college in the next year or within five years?

Table 13: Non-saving Parents' Plans to Begin Saving for College

	N	Within one year	Within five years	Neither	Not sure
Total	873	16%	27%	17%	40%
Planning status					
Pay-for-college planner	162	30%	23%	25%	23%
Non-planner	712	13%	28%	15%	44%
Income					
<\$35k	244	18%	28%	12%	42%
\$35k–\$100k	421	15%	27%	20%	39%
\$100k+	209	17%	27%	17%	40%
Race/Ethnicity					
White	696	15%	24%	18%	43%
Black	116	21%	36%	13%	30%
Hispanic	178	19%	31%	12%	38%
Age of oldest child					
Age 0–6	159	13%	49%	15%	23%
Age 7–12	270	15%	40%	10%	36%
Age 13–17	340	18%	14%	18%	51%
Age 18+	93	20%	4%	36%	41%
Parent college education					
No degree	605	13%	29%	15%	43%
Associate's degree	59	18%	20%	19%	43%
Bachelor's degree	210	24%	24%	21%	31%

Base: Parents who are not saving for college

Q. How old was your oldest child when you started saving for his/her college fund?

Table 14: Age of Child at Onset of Saving for College

	N	Prior to starting family	Age 0–5	Age 6–10	Age 11–15	Age 16–18	Not sure	Avg age
Total	1130	4%	52%	24%	15%	2%	5%	6.85
Planning status								
Pay-for-college planner	778	4%	52%	24%	15%	1%	4%	6.79
Non-planner	352	3%	50%	22%	15%	4%	6%	6.99
Income								
<\$35k	208	7%	53%	19%	13%	1%	7%	6.17
\$35k–\$100k	463	3%	47%	25%	18%	3%	4%	7.45
\$100k+	458	2%	55%	24%	13%	1%	4%	6.53
Race/Ethnicity								
White	843	3%	49%	26%	16%	2%	5%	7.14
Black	138	5%	56%	18%	14%	3%	3%	6.51
Hispanic	237	6%	57%	17%	15%	2%	3%	6.39
Age of oldest child								
Age 0–6	194	7%	83%	3%	3%	0%	4%	3.82
Age 7–12	326	6%	55%	29%	5%	0%	5%	5.75
Age 13–17	476	1%	40%	29%	23%	3%	5%	7.94
Age 18+	103	0%	43%	23%	23%	4%	6%	7.79
Parent college education								
No degree	512	5%	42%	21%	22%	2%	9%	7.59
Associate's degree	66	1%	51%	33%	14%	1%	1%	7.10
Bachelor's degree	551	3%	61%	25%	9%	1%	1%	6.10

Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. How much money have you saved in total for the education of your child/children in each of the following types of savings or investment accounts?

Table 15a: Frequency of College Savers Using Each Vehicle and Average Amounts Saved*, by Planning Status

N	College saver		Pay-for-college planner		Non-planner	
	1130		778		352	
	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved
General savings account	45%	\$8,732	45%	\$10,478	44%	\$4,822
529 plan	29%	\$18,944	34%	\$20,536	17%	\$12,110
Checking account	20%	\$7,384	20%	\$5,953	20%	\$10,479
Investment account	13%	\$20,790	14%	\$23,417	9%	\$11,884
CD	10%	\$9,082	11%	\$10,836	7%	\$3,329
US savings bond	6%	\$3,643	7%	\$4,176	4%	\$1,488
Prepaid state plan	8%	\$19,694	8%	\$26,612	7%	\$958
Coverdell/Education IRA	6%	\$5,528	8%	\$5,920	3%	\$3,409
Juvenile life insurance	5%	\$5,007	5%	\$5,814	6%	\$3,456
Trust	5%	\$8,909	5%	\$7,467	3%	\$14,379
UGMA/UTMA	2%	\$7,356	3%	\$7,273	1%	\$7,831
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	7%	\$1,635	7%	\$1,672	9%	\$1,571
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	3%	\$2,563	4%	\$2,880	1%	\$19
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	3%	\$3,745	4%	\$4,011	1%	\$1,865
Some other way	8%	\$7,747	7%	\$9,817	9%	\$4,298

*Average amounts saved among savers using the specific college savings vehicle
Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 15b: Frequency of College Savers Using Each Vehicle and Average Amounts Saved*, by Race and Ethnicity

N	White 843		Black 138		Hispanic 237	
	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved
General savings account	46%	\$9,106	46%	\$5,848	46%	\$8,402
529 plan	32%	\$18,338	17%	\$16,287	16%	\$13,841
Checking account	19%	\$8,447	27%	\$5,815	20%	\$5,917
Investment account	14%	\$17,622	10%	\$45,129	9%	\$21,034
CD	10%	\$6,372	9%	\$15,674	8%	\$7,948
US savings bond	6%	\$4,034	8%	\$2,862	7%	\$3,821
Prepaid state plan	8%	\$23,995	5%	\$5,226	9%	\$3,912
Coverdell/Education IRA	7%	\$5,718	9%	\$6,079	9%	\$6,023
Juvenile life insurance	6%	\$5,155	7%	\$4,096	7%	\$7,597
Trust	5%	\$8,587	7%	\$11,300	4%	\$13,902
UGMA/UTMA	2%	\$9,378	2%	\$3,104	2%	\$12,834
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	7%	\$1,717	11%	\$1,815	7%	\$1,799
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	3%	\$2,961	2%	\$599	3%	\$897
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	3%	\$4,253	4%	\$3,817	3%	\$3,209
Some other way	6%	\$6,917	8%	\$3,759	15%	\$2,074

*Average amounts saved among savers using the specific college savings vehicle
 Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 15c: Frequency of College Savers Using Each Vehicle and Average Amounts Saved*, by Income

N	<\$35k		\$35 – <\$100k		\$100k+	
	208		463		458	
	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved
General savings account	43%	\$4,065	53%	\$6,166	37%	\$14,954
529 plan	6%	\$2,531	25%	\$8,628	42%	\$26,244
Checking account	25%	\$2,019	25%	\$5,250	12%	\$16,864
Investment account	5%	\$8,069	14%	\$9,389	15%	\$33,812
CD	5%	\$1,569	12%	\$8,589	10%	\$11,267
US savings bond	4%	\$1,774	9%	\$4,123	4%	\$3,458
Prepaid state plan	7%	\$932	8%	\$3,247	8%	\$42,705
Coverdell/Education IRA	4%	\$3,406	9%	\$5,960	5%	\$5,551
Juvenile life insurance	6%	\$5,982	8%	\$4,170	3%	\$6,203
Trust	4%	\$4,002	6%	\$6,648	3%	\$17,323
UGMA/UTMA	1%	\$27	4%	\$7,280	2%	\$9,103
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	12%	\$1,314	9%	\$1,757	4%	\$1,829
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	1%	\$207	5%	\$1,931	2%	\$4,305
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	1%	\$54	5%	\$4,495	2%	\$2,881
Some other way	15%	\$1,409	10%	\$10,844	2%	\$12,454

*Average amounts saved among savers using the specific college savings vehicle
 Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 15d: Frequency of College Savers Using Each Vehicle and Average Amounts Saved*, by Age of Oldest Child

N	Age 0 – 6		Age 7 – 12		Age 13 – 17		Age 18+	
	194		326		476		103	
	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved
General savings account	39%	\$5,710	43%	\$5,844	47%	\$11,237	53%	\$9,331
529 plan	22%	\$9,196	31%	\$14,787	29%	\$24,618	32%	\$25,596
Checking account	22%	\$2,892	23%	\$4,621	18%	\$11,722	9%	\$12,754
Investment account	4%	\$2,776	14%	\$15,396	14%	\$29,983	12%	\$13,092
CD	5%	\$5,723	12%	\$2,552	9%	\$12,446	11%	\$21,596
US savings bond	4%	\$2,527	5%	\$3,549	6%	\$5,443	8%	\$1,620
Prepaid state plan	5%	\$1,656	7%	\$3,415	6%	\$7,354	4%	\$26,450
Coverdell/Education IRA	4%	\$506	7%	\$6,018	7%	\$6,578	2%	\$9,490
Juvenile life insurance	6%	\$4,650	7%	\$4,904	4%	\$5,019	1%	\$37,127
Trust	4%	\$2,237	5%	\$9,277	4%	\$12,662	4%	\$17,766
UGMA/UTMA	1%	\$128	3%	\$12,618	2%	\$9,454	0%	\$-
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	7%	\$614	8%	\$1,872	6%	\$2,012	4%	\$2,709
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	1%	\$513	3%	\$4,901	2%	\$3,528	4%	\$100
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	3%	\$536	4%	\$7,705	2%	\$4,301	0%	\$-
Some other way	10%	\$1,660	8%	\$10,803	7%	\$10,672	3%	\$7,395

*Average amounts saved among savers using the specific college savings vehicle
 Base: Parents who are saving for college

Table 15e: Frequency of College Savers Using Each Vehicle and Average Amounts Saved*, by Parent College Degree Type

N	No degree		Associate's degree		Bachelor's degree or higher	
	512		66		551	
	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved	% Using	Avg amount saved
General savings account	52%	\$5,319	52%	\$4,069	37%	\$14,049
529 plan	14%	\$6,272	22%	\$7,295	43%	\$23,571
Checking account	23%	\$3,556	22%	\$2,799	17%	\$12,886
Investment account	10%	\$15,612	11%	\$29,253	15%	\$23,156
CD	9%	\$4,336	13%	\$13,330	10%	\$12,704
US savings bond	6%	\$1,065	7%	\$1,571	7%	\$5,863
Prepaid state plan	8%	\$31,186	5%	\$5,528	7%	\$8,648
Coverdell/Education IRA	5%	\$1,896	10%	\$6,088	7%	\$7,853
Juvenile life insurance	6%	\$4,291	8%	\$3,209	5%	\$6,309
Trust	5%	\$3,753	6%	\$388	4%	\$15,897
UGMA/UTMA	2%	\$78	0%	\$-	3%	\$10,973
Bitcoin/other cryptocurrency	11%	\$1,160	11%	\$4,386	4%	\$2,046
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	4%	\$2,200	5%	\$204	2%	\$3,790
Piggy bank/other non-institutional	2%	\$176	2%	\$5,813	4%	\$5,473
Some other way	10%	\$2,004	6%	\$25,105	6%	\$15,076

*Average amounts saved among savers using the specific college savings vehicle
 Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. Have you heard of 529 college savings plans?

Table 16: Awareness of 529 Plans

	N	Yes	No	Not sure
Total	1680	38%	54%	8%
Saving status				
College saver	807	41%	51%	9%
Non-college saver	873	36%	57%	7%
Planning status				
Pay-for-college planner	678	48%	44%	8%
Non-planner	1002	32%	61%	7%
Income				
<\$35k	439	18%	74%	8%
\$35k–\$100k	768	37%	54%	9%
\$100k+	473	59%	35%	6%
Race/Ethnicity				
White	1275	39%	54%	7%
Black	232	36%	56%	8%
Hispanic	377	26%	68%	6%
Age of oldest child				
Age 0–6	309	26%	69%	6%
Age 7–12	494	38%	55%	7%
Age 13–17	679	43%	49%	8%
Age 18+	163	41%	48%	11%
Parent college education				
No degree	1044	29%	64%	7%
Associate's degree	111	43%	51%	6%
Bachelor's degree	525	56%	34%	10%

Base: All parents not using 529 plans

Q. What is the main reason why you are not using a 529 college savings plan?

- a. I am not comfortable investing in a state-government program.
- b. I don't know enough about them.
- c. I would rather save for college a different way.
- d. I fear I will lose my money if my child doesn't go to college.
- e. I'm afraid child won't be eligible for financial aid if we have a college savings account.
- f. They are too complicated.
- g. I don't have enough money to save in that type of account.
- h. They are intimidating for people who don't know a lot about investments.

Table 17: Reasons for Not Using 529 Plans

	N	Not comfortable with gov't program	I don't know enough about them	Prefer different method	Lose money if no college	Lose financial aid	Too complicated	Not enough money	Intimidating	Other	Not sure
Total	645	9%	19%	12%	6%	3%	7%	22%	3%	9%	9%
Saving status											
College saver	329	11%	27%	18%	6%	4%	11%	6%	3%	6%	8%
Non-college saver	317	8%	11%	6%	6%	3%	3%	38%	3%	12%	10%
Planning status											
Pay-for-college planner	327	12%	21%	16%	5%	4%	12%	8%	3%	11%	10%
Non-planner	319	7%	17%	9%	7%	3%	3%	37%	3%	7%	8%
Income											
<\$35k	80	16%	19%	11%	4%	2%	8%	32%	3%	2%	4%
\$35k-\$100k	285	9%	24%	11%	6%	4%	5%	23%	3%	5%	11%
\$100k+	281	8%	14%	14%	6%	3%	10%	18%	3%	15%	9%
Race/Ethnicity											
White	499	10%	18%	12%	5%	2%	7%	24%	3%	10%	10%
Black	84	6%	26%	19%	6%	9%	3%	12%	0%	6%	13%
Hispanic	98	8%	20%	22%	7%	7%	12%	16%	5%	2%	2%
Age of oldest child											
Age 0-6	80	13%	27%	10%	7%	0%	7%	16%	0%	13%	6%
Age 7-12	186	14%	19%	8%	8%	7%	4%	19%	5%	9%	7%
Age 13-17	292	5%	20%	15%	5%	2%	6%	23%	3%	9%	11%
Age 18+	67	12%	7%	17%	5%	4%	5%	32%	0%	6%	11%
Parent college education											
No degree	306	12%	24%	10%	4%	1%	9%	23%	2%	6%	9%
Associate's degree	48	7%	23%	5%	4%	3%	10%	29%	2%	6%	12%
Bachelor's degree	292	7%	14%	17%	9%	5%	6%	19%	3%	12%	9%

Base: Parents without 529 plans but who have heard of them

Q. Was this account created with the intention of being used to pay for your child's college education, or are you expecting that these funds could be used to pay for college if necessary?

Table 18: Intended Use of Savings in Non-college Specific Savings Vehicles

	N	Intended for College	Could Use if Needed/Not Sure
General saving account	501	63%	36%
Checking account	658	50%	50%
Investment account	149	54%	46%
CD	108	59%	39%
US savings bond	70	68%	32%
Trust	51	57%	43%
Cryptocurrency account	34	24%	76%
Crowd sourcing fund	33	49%	51%
Non-institutional savings	109	50%	50%

Base: Parents saving for college using these vehicle types

Q. Some parents deliberately contribute extra money to their retirement fund because they plan to use a portion of it to pay for their child/children's college education. What portion of your current retirement savings will you use for college?

Table 19: Use of Retirement Savings to Pay for College

	N	Will not use	Plan to use	Could use if needed
Total	1044	69%	10%	21%
Saving status				
College saver	748	64%	13%	23%
Non-college saver	295	82%	3%	15%
Income				
<\$35k	103	43%	17%	40%
\$35k-\$100k	452	68%	13%	19%
\$100k+	489	76%	6%	18%
Race/Ethnicity				
White	807	70%	9%	21%
Black	121	60%	15%	25%
Hispanic	162	59%	12%	29%
Age of oldest child				
Age 0-6	154	70%	9%	21%
Age 7-12	304	64%	12%	24%
Age 13-17	459	72%	8%	20%
Age 18+	105	72%	9%	19%
Parent college education				
No degree	421	67%	10%	23%
Associate's degree	69	57%	8%	35%
Bachelor's degree	554	72%	10%	18%

Base: Parents who are saving for retirement

Q. Is your family's college savings fund intended to be used only for an undergraduate education, or can it be used for graduate/post-undergraduate education as well?

Table 20: Undergraduate Only vs Graduate School Intent

	N	Undergrad only	Graduate as well as undergrad	Not sure
Total	1130	36%	37%	27%
Planning status				
Pay-for-college planner	778	37%	42%	20%
Non-planner	352	34%	24%	42%
Income				
<\$35k	208	18%	42%	40%
\$35k–\$100k	463	35%	38%	27%
\$100k+	458	46%	33%	21%
Race/Ethnicity				
White	842	37%	37%	26%
Black	138	35%	39%	26%
Hispanic	237	28%	45%	27%
Age of oldest child				
Age 0–6	194	27%	41%	32%
Age 7–12	326	31%	39%	30%
Age 13–17	476	41%	34%	25%
Age 18+	103	62%	15%	23%
Parent college education				
No degree	512	22%	40%	38%
Associate's degree	66	34%	42%	24%
Bachelor's degree	551	50%	33%	17%

Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. What savings methods are you using to save for you or your spouse's continued education? This does not include any accounts you plan to use for your children.

Table 21: Vehicles Used to Save for Parent Education

N	366
	% Using
General savings account	43%
529 plan	28%
Checking account	32%
Investment account	17%
Retirement fund	9%
US savings bond	18%
Piggy bank/other noninstitutional	8%
GoFundMe/other crowdsourcing	5%
Some other way	11%

Base: Parents who are saving for their own college

Q. Which of the following best describes how you think about being a successful college-fund saver?

- a. Contributing the amount you planned to save on a weekly or monthly or per paycheck basis
- b. Achieving the amount you planned to have in the college savings fund at the end of each year
- c. Achieving the amount you planned to have in the college savings fund by the time your child/children starts college
- d. Just seeing the college fund grow, regardless of the particular amount
- e. Not withdrawing money from the college savings fund to spend on other family expenses

Table 22: Successful Saving Perspective

	N	Achieving planned contributions	Achieving planned annual savings	Achieving planned amount at college start	College fund growth	Not spending on other expenses
Total	1130	17%	13%	24%	25%	20%
Planning status						
Pay-for-college planner	778	17%	15%	26%	24%	18%
Non-planner	352	17%	11%	18%	28%	26%
Income						
<\$35k	208	14%	17%	19%	25%	25%
\$35k–\$100k	463	17%	14%	21%	23%	25%
\$100k+	458	19%	11%	29%	28%	14%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	843	17%	12%	23%	28%	19%
Black	138	17%	18%	26%	17%	23%
Hispanic	237	18%	14%	26%	22%	20%
Age of oldest child						
Age 0–6	194	20%	19%	20%	24%	18%
Age 7–12	326	18%	14%	24%	24%	20%
Age 13–17	476	14%	11%	27%	26%	22%
Age 18+	103	21%	11%	22%	21%	24%
Parent college education						
No degree	512	16%	14%	15%	28%	27%
Associate's degree	66	23%	12%	16%	25%	25%
Bachelor's degree	551	18%	13%	33%	23%	14%

Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. What are some of the things you do to keep college savings on track? (Check all that apply.)

- a. Funds are automatically deposited on a regular set schedule
- b. Set aside a goal amount every pay period for college savings
- c. Reduce personal or discretionary spending to add to savings
- d. Work additional hours/second job to set aside savings
- e. Cut back on household expenses to add to savings
- f. Commit a certain percentage of any 'bonus' money or tax refund to college savings
- g. Participate in a shopping rewards program and sweep all of the earnings into college savings
- h. Revisit college savings amount and college savings goal at least annually and make adjustments as needed
- i. After paying off my own student loans, I started putting some or all of that monthly payment amount into my child's college savings
- j. Request family and friends contribute to the college savings fund in lieu of gifts

Table 23: How Parents Keep College Savings on Track

	N	Auto-deposit	Save each pay period	Reduce spending	Work more	Reduce household expenses	Commit bonus money	Shopping rewards program	Adjust goals regularly	Save paid student loan amount	Family and friends request	Other/None/Not sure
Total	1126	38%	29%	30%	23%	27%	18%	13%	13%	7%	9%	15%
Planning status												
Pay-for-college planner	774	45%	31%	31%	24%	27%	20%	13%	15%	8%	11%	10%
Non-planner	352	23%	24%	27%	19%	29%	15%	11%	9%	4%	6%	25%
Income												
<\$35k	208	23%	38%	41%	27%	39%	21%	9%	8%	7%	4%	13%
\$35k–\$100k	463	38%	30%	33%	26%	30%	17%	14%	10%	7%	6%	15%
\$100k+	455	44%	23%	22%	18%	20%	19%	13%	19%	8%	15%	16%
Race/Ethnicity												
White	840	38%	27%	31%	23%	27%	19%	13%	14%	7%	10%	15%
Black	137	45%	33%	32%	21%	34%	23%	18%	8%	7%	7%	10%
Hispanic	237	37%	30%	34%	21%	33%	15%	13%	11%	8%	4%	14%
Age of oldest child												
Age 0–6	192	39%	33%	31%	24%	27%	21%	8%	10%	8%	13%	11%
Age 7–12	326	36%	33%	31%	27%	26%	17%	15%	12%	11%	12%	14%
Age 13–17	474	39%	26%	25%	19%	26%	17%	12%	16%	5%	6%	17%
Age 18+	103	36%	28%	44%	26%	36%	17%	16%	14%	3%	4%	18%
Parent college education												
No degree	512	30%	33%	31%	24%	32%	20%	11%	6%	8%	6%	16%
Associate's degree	66	39%	28%	34%	27%	39%	19%	11%	9%	10%	7%	17%
Bachelor's degree	548	46%	25%	28%	21%	22%	17%	14%	21%	6%	12%	14%

Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. What is the total amount you plan to have saved for college for your child/all of your children by the time the last one goes to college?

Table 24: College Savers with a Savings Goal and the Average Amount They Plan to Save

	N	No set goal/ not sure	Have a goal	Avg goal amount among goal setters
Total	1130	53%	47%	\$55,342
Planning status				
Pay-for-college planner	778	46%	54%	\$52,511
Non-planner	352	67%	33%	\$66,090
Income				
<\$35k	208	58%	42%	\$27,045
\$35k–\$100k	463	56%	44%	\$50,092
\$100k+	458	48%	52%	\$70,174
Race/Ethnicity				
White	843	53%	47%	\$55,124
Black	138	46%	54%	\$56,541
Hispanic	237	55%	45%	\$41,204
Age of oldest child				
Age 0–6	194	52%	48%	\$53,566
Age 7–12	356	53%	47%	\$65,253
Age 13–17	476	55%	45%	\$49,995
Age 18+	103	57%	43%	\$45,584
Parent college education				
No degree	512	54%	46%	\$35,984
Associate's degree	66	57%	43%	\$32,091
Bachelor's degree	551	52%	48%	\$74,767

Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. On what did you base this goal?

Table 25: Basis for Setting Savings Goal Amount

N	525
How much my household can afford	22%
How much I think will be needed in total	25%
An amount I think is fair based on other support I have given my child/all of my children	10%
How much (each) child will need after receiving a combination of scholarships, loans, and contributions from other sources	14%
This is based on advice I received from a financial advisor	12%
An amount similar to the portion that was paid for my college education	9%
This is based on advice I received from friends and family	5%
Other	2%
Not sure	2%

Base: Parents who are saving for college and have set a goal amount

Q. How confident do you feel about your ability to save your goal amount for your child/children's education by the time they go to college?

Table 26: Confidence in Ability to Save Goal Amount

N	525
Extremely confident	42%
Somewhat confident	44%
Neither confident nor unconfident	9%
Somewhat unconfident	4%
Extremely unconfident	1%

Base: Parents who are saving for college and have set a goal amount

Q. Typically, parents today pay for approximately 10 percent of total college costs from their college savings funds. How confident do you feel about your ability to save 10 percent of the future total cost for your child/children's education by the time they go to college?

Table 27: Confidence in Ability to Save 10% of Future College Costs

N	605
Extremely confident	34%
Somewhat confident	45%
Neither confident nor unconfident	16%
Somewhat unconfident	3%
Extremely unconfident	3%

Base: Parents who are saving for college but have not set a goal amount

Q. Where have you gone for information on how to save for college?

Table 28: Sources of Information on Saving for College

		Friends, family, peers	Financial advisor	Content by financial experts	Federal gov't guidelines	Bank or financial partner	Public education programs	Child's school	Other	None
Total	1130	36%	25%	22%	13%	24%	15%	18%	2%	26%
Planning status										
Pay-for-college planner	778	41%	31%	27%	17%	30%	16%	21%	2%	17%
Non-planner	352	23%	11%	13%	6%	12%	14%	10%	1%	45%
Income										
<\$35k	208	32%	15%	16%	10%	15%	20%	14%	3%	31%
\$35k–\$100k	463	36%	23%	24%	18%	27%	14%	18%	1%	27%
\$100k+	458	37%	31%	24%	10%	25%	14%	19%	2%	21%
Race/Ethnicity										
White	843	38%	25%	21%	13%	25%	15%	19%	1%	26%
Black	138	24%	27%	25%	17%	30%	17%	21%	2%	22%
Hispanic	237	30%	24%	19%	19%	20%	13%	18%	2%	29%
Age of oldest child										
Age 0–6	194	36%	22%	22%	8%	22%	16%	5%	0%	27%
Age 7–12	326	39%	29%	26%	12%	29%	15%	11%	2%	21%
Age 13–17	476	30%	23%	22%	15%	23%	12%	23%	2%	29%
Age 18+	103	38%	28%	19%	22%	10%	26%	26%	2%	29%
Parent college education										
No degree	512	35%	16%	14%	11%	23%	13%	17%	1%	31%
Associate's degree	66	37%	22%	22%	24%	31%	19%	18%	1%	28%
Bachelor's degree	551	36%	33%	30%	14%	25%	16%	18%	2%	20%

Base: Parents who are saving for college

Q. What percentage of the total education costs for your child/children will come from, or do you expect to come from, the following sources?

- a. Parent savings
- b. Parent loans
- c. Parent income (or current earnings) at the time child is enrolled in college
- d. Children’s savings, or income
- e. Children’s (student) loans
- f. Grandparent or other friends or family members’ savings, loans, or contributions
- g. Federal or state government grants or financial aid programs (not including government loans)
- h. Scholarships from the college, your employer, non-profit group, or from other organizations

Table 29: Sources Parents Expect to Use to Pay for Child’s Future College
Average* Percent Each Source Will Contribute

	N	Parents savings	Parent loans	Parent income	Child savings or income	Student loans	Family	Grants, aid	Scholarships
Total	2003	29%	8%	10%	7%	13%	5%	16%	13%
Saving status									
College saver	1130	37%	7%	11%	7%	10%	6%	10%	12%
Non-college saver	873	19%	8%	9%	7%	16%	4%	23%	15%
Planning status									
Pay-for-college planner	940	38%	7%	11%	7%	9%	6%	11%	11%
Non-planner	1063	21%	8%	10%	6%	16%	4%	19%	15%
Income									
<\$35k	452	26%	7%	9%	7%	11%	4%	26%	11%
\$35k–\$100k	884	27%	8%	11%	7%	13%	5%	16%	14%
\$100k+	667	34%	7%	11%	6%	15%	5%	8%	14%
Race/Ethnicity									
White	1539	29%	8%	11%	7%	13%	5%	14%	13%
Black	254	26%	6%	10%	6%	12%	5%	23%	12%
Hispanic	415	31%	8%	10%	8%	11%	4%	15%	12%
Age of oldest child									
Age 0–6	352	34%	6%	9%	9%	10%	5%	14%	12%
Age 7–12	596	30%	7%	9%	7%	11%	5%	16%	14%
Age 13–17	816	28%	9%	12%	6%	14%	4%	15%	13%
Age 18+	195	22%	7%	8%	6%	20%	4%	21%	12%
Parent college education									
No degree	1117	26%	8%	10%	7%	13%	5%	19%	12%
Associate's degree	125	22%	8%	10%	7%	17%	3%	18%	14%
Bachelor's degree	761	34%	7%	11%	7%	12%	6%	10%	14%

*Mean calculation includes zeros
Base: All parents

Q. Which of the following statement pairs best describes you? (Paired statements are at either end of a five-point scale.)

- a. I always have a minimum amount of money saved/I never have money saved
- b. I feel comfortable having a manageable amount of debt/I have to pay off debt as quickly as possible
- c. I consider myself savvy with my finances/I need help managing my finances
- d. I make a plan for how I will pay for larger, non-emergency purchases before I buy/If I decide to make a large, non-emergency purchase, I will figure out how to pay for it after I buy

Table 30: Saver Identity, Rated "Agree"*

	N	Saver	Comfortable with debt	Financially Savvy	Plan purchases
Total	2003	52%	27%	49%	59%
Saving status					
College saver	1130	65%	29%	60%	66%
Non-college saver	873	35%	25%	36%	50%
Planning status					
Pay-for-college planner	940	66%	31%	61%	65%
Non-planner	1063	40%	23%	39%	54%
Income					
<\$35k	452	32%	22%	40%	49%
\$35k–\$100k	884	52%	30%	48%	59%
\$100k+	667	66%	26%	57%	66%
Race/Ethnicity					
White	1539	54%	27%	50%	60%
Black	254	49%	29%	47%	56%
Hispanic	415	50%	26%	47%	56%
Age of oldest child					
Age 0–6	352	51%	25%	50%	63%
Age 7–12	596	52%	29%	46%	56%
Age 13–17	816	52%	26%	50%	60%
Age 18+	195	50%	26%	49%	60%
Parent college education					
No degree	1117	43%	25%	42%	53%
Associate's degree	125	50%	23%	48%	59%
Bachelor's degree	761	66%	31%	60%	67%

*1 or 2 on a five-point scale
 Base: All parents

Table 31: Saver Identity, Scale 1-5

	N	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Saver/not a saver	2003	22%	30%	23%	16%	9%
Comfortable with debt/uncomfortable	2003	8%	19%	29%	24%	20%
Financially savvy/need help	2003	17%	32%	29%	15%	7%
Plan purchases/impulsive shopper	2003	24%	35%	24%	12%	5%

Base: All parents

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- a. I add to my savings each month even if it's a small amount.
 b. I will typically save for certain goals.
 c. I encourage my children to save money.

Table 32: Savings Habits of Those Who Self Identify as "Savers," Rated "Agree"*

	N	Add to savings monthly	Typically save for goals	Encourage child to save
Total	1045	84%	79%	90%
Saving status				
College saver	736	91%	79%	92%
Non-college saver	309	68%	79%	87%
Planning status				
Pay-for-college planner	623	92%	81%	93%
Non-planner	422	72%	76%	86%
Income				
<\$35k	146	85%	76%	92%
\$35k-\$100k	459	83%	78%	88%
\$100k+	440	86%	81%	93%
Race/Ethnicity				
White	826	83%	78%	91%
Black	124	92%	76%	89%
Hispanic	209	84%	76%	88%
Age of oldest child				
Age 0-6	181	87%	85%	83%
Age 7-12	311	81%	77%	91%
Age 13-17	425	86%	78%	94%
Age 18+	97	77%	73%	85%
Parent college education				
No degree	478	81%	76%	91%
Associate's degree	62	90%	74%	90%
Bachelor's degree	505	86%	82%	90%

*1 or 2 on a five-point scale
 Base: Parents who identify as "I always have a minimum amount of money saved"

Table 33: Savings Habits of Those Who Self Identify as "Savers," Scale 1-5

	N	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Add to savings monthly	1045	55%	29%	8%	6%	2%
Typically save for goals	1045	41%	38%	13%	6%	2%
Encourage child to save	1045	61%	29%	8%	2%	1%

Base: Parents who identify as "I always have a minimum amount of money saved"

Q. Have you discussed with your child/children his/her role in paying for college?

Table 34: Paying-for-College Discussion with Child

	N	Yes	No
Total	1343	44%	56%
Saving status			
College saver	707	54%	46%
Non-college saver	636	32%	68%
Planning status			
Pay-for-college planner	586	57%	43%
Non-planner	757	33%	67%
Income			
<\$35k	259	34%	66%
\$35k–\$100k	599	45%	55%
\$100k+	484	47%	53%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	1074	45%	55%
Black	144	45%	55%
Hispanic	255	41%	59%
Age of oldest child			
Age 0–6	231	9%	91%
Age 7–12	404	28%	72%
Age 13–17	541	63%	37%
Age 18+	145	75%	25%
Parent college education			
No degree	744	39%	61%
Associate's degree	83	58%	42%
Bachelor's degree	516	48%	52%

Base: Parents who said the student has some or all responsibility for paying for college

Q. Which of the following topics have you discussed? (Check all that apply.)

- a. The use of child/children’s savings
- b. The importance of earning scholarships
- c. The shared responsibility between students and parents for paying for college
- d. The use of student loans
- e. Whether parents would cosign a student loan and/or make any payments on the student’s loan
- f. Use of work-study or other employment while in college
- g. Additional savings or loans that might be needed for extra expenses (study abroad, living on campus, etc.)
- h. How much college costs including all additional costs
- i. Other

Table 35: Role of Child, Current Discussion Topics

	N	Child's savings	Scholarships	Shared responsibility	Student loans	Parent payment on student loans	Working	Funding for add-ons	College costs	Other
Total	585	31%	69%	50%	49%	19%	47%	30%	67%	0%
Saving status										
College saver	381	35%	69%	53%	47%	17%	43%	31%	64%	0%
Non-college saver	204	24%	68%	43%	52%	23%	53%	28%	73%	1%
Planning status										
Pay-for-college planner	334	37%	67%	52%	47%	16%	43%	33%	67%	0%
Non-planner	252	24%	71%	46%	52%	22%	52%	26%	67%	1%
Income										
<\$35k	87	19%	67%	44%	42%	18%	48%	27%	52%	2%
\$35k–\$100k	269	33%	72%	44%	46%	22%	52%	36%	68%	0%
\$100k+	229	34%	66%	59%	54%	15%	41%	23%	72%	0%
Race/Ethnicity										
White	480	32%	66%	51%	51%	20%	49%	30%	69%	1%
Black	65	18%	66%	52%	28%	12%	36%	27%	60%	0%
Hispanic	105	22%	57%	53%	45%	16%	54%	32%	58%	0%
Age of oldest child										
Age 0–6	20	39%	63%	40%	41%	25%	34%	28%	51%	0%
Age 7–12	115	24%	54%	41%	45%	11%	45%	34%	67%	0%
Age 13–17	339	33%	74%	53%	53%	17%	47%	27%	64%	0%
Age 18+	109	33%	69%	52%	42%	28%	53%	34%	79%	1%
Parent college education										
No degree	291	21%	64%	48%	47%	20%	42%	28%	63%	1%
Associate's degree	48	34%	69%	49%	47%	20%	66%	34%	77%	0%
Bachelor's degree	246	43%	74%	53%	51%	17%	48%	31%	69%	0%

Base: Parents who said “yes” they had discussed with child his/her role in paying for college

Q. Which of the following topics, if any, do you plan to discuss with your child/children about child/children's role in paying for college in the future? (Check all that apply.)

Table 36: Role of Child, Future Discussion Topics

	N	Child's savings	Scholarships	Shared responsibility	Student loans	Parent payment on student loans	Working	Funding for add-ons	College costs	Other
Total	757	27%	59%	42%	43%	20%	45%	24%	53%	1%
Saving status										
College saver	326	35%	60%	46%	46%	19%	45%	29%	56%	1%
Non-college saver	432	20%	57%	38%	40%	20%	44%	19%	50%	0%
Planning status										
Pay-for-college planner	252	33%	55%	41%	46%	23%	39%	29%	55%	1%
Non-planner	505	24%	60%	42%	42%	18%	47%	21%	51%	1%
Income										
<\$35k	172	23%	54%	40%	38%	19%	43%	25%	53%	0%
\$35k–\$100k	330	28%	61%	37%	39%	17%	44%	19%	50%	1%
\$100k+	255	28%	58%	49%	51%	24%	47%	28%	56%	1%
Race/Ethnicity										
White	594	26%	57%	42%	44%	19%	45%	23%	55%	0%
Black	79	32%	55%	37%	41%	21%	40%	27%	47%	1%
Hispanic	150	23%	63%	46%	33%	11%	41%	20%	55%	1%
Age of oldest child										
Age 0–6	211	35%	61%	51%	38%	22%	44%	28%	54%	0%
Age 7–12	289	32%	64%	45%	48%	17%	53%	24%	63%	0%
Age 13–17	203	17%	53%	33%	41%	16%	42%	15%	45%	1%
Age 18+	36	5%	60%	35%	28%	27%	14%	21%	37%	0%
Parent college education										
No degree	452	20%	55%	36%	38%	18%	41%	21%	46%	0%
Associate's degree	35	29%	73%	36%	49%	27%	42%	20%	52%	0%
Bachelor's degree	270	37%	63%	52%	50%	22%	51%	29%	64%	1%

Base: Parents who said "no" they had not discussed with child his/her role in paying for college

Q. Some families have considered how to cut down on the cost of a college education. Have you discussed any of the following with your child/children?

- a. The type of college (ie. public vs. private, 2-year vs. 4-year) the student would be able to choose based on saving amount or cost
- b. Whether student will sacrifice “extras” to pay for college
- c. Whether student will live at home based on cost
- d. Choice of major/career based on future earnings/employment potential
- e. The importance of graduating on time
- f. Delaying the start of college to work and save money for college
- g. Other
- h. None

Table 37: Minimizing College Costs Discussion Topics

	N	College choice	Sacrifice extras	Live at home	Choice of major	Graduate on time	Delay start	Other	None
Total	1551	39%	15%	30%	23%	26%	9%	1%	37%
Saving status									
College saver	870	42%	18%	31%	26%	31%	8%	2%	30%
Non-college saver	681	35%	11%	28%	19%	19%	9%	1%	46%
Planning status									
Pay-for-college planner	733	42%	18%	30%	28%	34%	8%	1%	29%
Non-planner	818	37%	13%	29%	18%	19%	9%	2%	44%
Income									
<\$35k	344	31%	14%	27%	20%	22%	11%	2%	42%
\$35k–\$100k	698	41%	16%	32%	21%	28%	9%	1%	34%
\$100k+	510	42%	14%	28%	27%	27%	7%	1%	37%
Race/Ethnicity									
White	1204	40%	14%	30%	24%	25%	8%	2%	37%
Black	209	39%	16%	28%	26%	31%	9%	1%	31%
Hispanic	319	38%	17%	27%	22%	28%	8%	0%	36%
Age of oldest child									
Age 0–6	271	18%	9%	15%	12%	14%	5%	1%	64%
Age 7–12	466	30%	16%	22%	19%	23%	8%	2%	45%
Age 13–17	635	48%	16%	38%	27%	32%	9%	1%	26%
Age 18+	156	62%	19%	42%	36%	32%	17%	3%	15%
Parent college education									
No degree	847	34%	14%	30%	19%	22%	10%	1%	41%
Associate's degree	108	54%	17%	36%	28%	32%	8%	3%	20%
Bachelor's degree	596	43%	16%	29%	28%	30%	7%	1%	34%

Base: Parents who agreed (1 or 2 on a five-point scale) that minimizing college costs was important to their family

Q. Is your child aware that you are saving for his/her college education?

Table 38: Child Awareness of College Savings

	N	Yes	No
Total	1130	66%	34%
Planning status			
Pay-for-college planner	778	76%	24%
Non-planner	352	44%	56%
Income			
<\$35k	208	51%	49%
\$35k–\$100k	463	65%	35%
\$100k+	458	74%	26%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	843	71%	29%
Black	138	59%	41%
Hispanic	237	60%	40%
Age of oldest child			
Age 0–6	194	22%	78%
Age 7–12	326	62%	38%
Age 13–17	476	82%	18%
Age 18+	103	83%	17%
Parent college education			
No degree	512	62%	38%
Associate's degree	66	70%	30%
Bachelor's degree	551	69%	31%

Base: All parents who are saving for college

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- a. I want my child(ren) to attend college because they will earn more money with a college degree.
 - b. A college education is part of the American Dream.
 - c. I am willing to stretch myself financially to obtain the best opportunity for my child/children’s future.
 - d. College is an investment in my child/children’s future.
 - e. I would send my child/children to college for the intellectual and social experience regardless of whether they earned more money with a college degree.
 - f. Having a college degree is more important now than it used to be.

Table 39: Reasons for Attending College, Rated “Agree”*

	N	Earn more money	American dream	Stretch financially	Invest in future	Experience	Degree more important
Total	2003	81%	80%	84%	89%	63%	72%
Saving status							
College saver	1130	88%	88%	92%	95%	72%	81%
Non-college saver	873	71%	69%	72%	81%	51%	61%
Planning status							
Pay-for-college planner	940	90%	88%	91%	95%	73%	82%
Non-planner	1063	73%	72%	77%	84%	54%	64%
Income							
<\$35k	452	81%	75%	81%	87%	65%	73%
\$35k–\$100k	884	79%	78%	81%	88%	62%	72%
\$100k+	667	84%	85%	88%	92%	63%	73%
Race/Ethnicity							
White	1539	81%	80%	84%	90%	62%	73%
Black	254	79%	74%	85%	86%	61%	69%
Hispanic	415	85%	81%	88%	92%	67%	80%
Age of oldest child							
Age 0–6	352	81%	76%	87%	88%	69%	72%
Age 7–12	596	80%	80%	84%	88%	61%	68%
Age 13–17	816	84%	83%	85%	92%	64%	75%
Age 18+	195	71%	74%	73%	82%	49%	71%
Parent college education							
No degree	1117	77%	75%	82%	85%	61%	70%
Associate's degree	125	85%	87%	79%	92%	53%	78%
Bachelor's degree	761	86%	86%	87%	94%	67%	75%

*1 or 2 on a five-point scale
Base: All parents

Table 40: Reasons for Attending College, Scale 1-5

	N	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Earn more money	2003	48%	33%	14%	3%	2%
American dream	2003	48%	32%	15%	4%	2%
Stretch financially	2003	52%	31%	12%	3%	2%
Investment in future	2003	62%	27%	8%	2%	1%
Experience regardless of earnings	2003	30%	33%	20%	11%	7%
Degree more important now	2003	46%	27%	16%	8%	3%

Base: All parents

Q. What type of college do you expect your child to attend?

Table 41: Type of College Parent Expects Child Will Attend

	N*	4-yr public in state	4-yr public out state	4-yr private	2-yr public	2-yr private	<2-yr trade/technical	Currently enrolled	Not sure	None
Total	3934	38%	6%	12%	10%	2%	4%	3%	22%	4%
Planning status										
Pay-for-college planner	1774	41%	8%	18%	8%	3%	2%	2%	16%	3%
Non-planner	2160	35%	5%	8%	12%	0%	5%	3%	28%	5%
Income										
<\$35k	833	30%	7%	6%	14%	0%	6%	2%	30%	6%
\$35k-\$100k	1763	36%	6%	11%	13%	2%	3%	3%	22%	4%
\$100k+	1338	44%	5%	19%	5%	2%	2%	4%	18%	1%
Race/Ethnicity										
White	3091	37%	5%	13%	11%	2%	4%	3%	23%	3%
Black	461	38%	13%	6%	10%	0%	3%	3%	20%	7%
Hispanic	753	38%	7%	12%	11%	2%	2%	5%	20%	3%
Age of oldest child										
Age 0-6	514	36%	6%	13%	6%	1%	2%	1%	34%	3%
Age 7-12	1187	36%	5%	12%	10%	2%	2%	3%	26%	3%
Age 13-17	1714	40%	6%	13%	11%	1%	4%	4%	18%	3%
Age 18+	425	36%	7%	8%	16%	1%	9%	1%	14%	9%
Parent college education										
No degree	610	33%	6%	6%	13%	1%	5%	3%	29%	5%
Associate's degree	906	39%	6%	8%	18%	2%	4%	2%	19%	2%
Bachelor's degree	1477	44%	6%	22%	5%	2%	2%	4%	13%	2%

Base: All parents for all children

*N is total number of children; average 1.86 children per respondent

Q. What best describes how you feel about saving for your children's college education? (Check all that apply.)

Table 42: Feelings about Saving for College

	N	Satisfied	Motivated	Doing the right thing	Proud	Overwhelmed	Annoyed/angry	Anxious	Too much sacrifice	Other/not sure
Total	2003	24%	30%	35%	25%	29%	22%	25%	4%	8%
Saving status										
College saver	1130	35%	45%	48%	36%	17%	16%	22%	3%	3%
Non-college saver	873	11%	10%	18%	11%	44%	29%	28%	4%	15%
Planning status										
Pay-for-college planner	940	38%	45%	44%	34%	15%	15%	22%	4%	4%
Non-planner	1063	12%	17%	27%	18%	41%	28%	28%	3%	12%
Income										
<\$35k	452	17%	26%	30%	29%	32%	21%	21%	3%	12%
\$35k–\$100k	884	25%	28%	33%	22%	34%	20%	26%	4%	8%
\$100k+	667	28%	35%	41%	27%	19%	25%	26%	3%	6%
Race/Ethnicity										
White	1539	24%	29%	34%	24%	30%	23%	26%	4%	8%
Black	254	31%	42%	39%	37%	20%	16%	15%	2%	8%
Hispanic	415	27%	34%	39%	28%	31%	16%	19%	4%	4%
Age of oldest child										
Age 0–6	352	24%	31%	40%	32%	28%	20%	22%	2%	8%
Age 7–12	596	24%	28%	33%	23%	28%	19%	24%	5%	7%
Age 13–17	816	25%	30%	35%	25%	30%	23%	25%	4%	9%
Age 18+	195	15%	27%	36%	23%	29%	26%	27%	3%	10%
Parent college education										
No degree	1117	19%	26%	31%	25%	34%	21%	25%	2%	10%
Associate's degree	125	24%	28%	28%	24%	25%	25%	26%	8%	11%
Bachelor's degree	761	32%	36%	41%	26%	22%	22%	25%	5%	5%

Base: All parents

Q. Which of the following have you done to help you plan for paying the costs of college?

- a. Consulted a financial planner about establishing a college fund
- b. Researched college costs and the estimated rate of increase in costs over time
- c. Invested in my child’s skills/talents to increase likelihood of his/her earning scholarships
- d. Purchased life insurance on myself/spouse to cover college as well as other expenses
- e. Paid down/off my mortgage so home equity funds will be available for college in the future
- f. Researched current financial aid eligibility guidelines
- g. Took employment at a college so child can attend tuition-free
- h. Set limits on colleges child may choose to attend based on cost
- i. Researched colleges that have excellent employment rates for graduates so my child can afford to take student loans
- j. Child is enrolled in Advanced Placement courses in high school or dual enrollment at community college to earn college credits at no or reduced cost
- k. Saved money
- l. Created college-savings guidelines and/or a budget with estimated amounts from savings, loans, and financial aid to be used to pay for college
- m. Obtained information from child’s school/consulted with school counselor
- n. Discussed with peers
- o. Child applied for scholarships
- p. Other

Table 43: Planning to Pay for College Actions

	N	Financial planner	Research costs	Invest in talent	Life insurance	Pay off mortgage	Research aid guidelines	Employed at college	Limit college choice	Research grads' employment rate	AP courses/ dual enroll	Saved money	Budget	Consult school counselor	Peer input	Apply scholarships
Total	940	26%	32%	30%	22%	14%	31%	7%	14%	23%	4%	75%	31%	21%	21%	4%
Saving status																
College saver	778	30%	33%	32%	25%	15%	33%	7%	14%	25%	4%	80%	34%	24%	21%	4%
Non-college saver	162	9%	27%	17%	6%	8%	24%	7%	12%	14%	4%	47%	17%	7%	18%	6%
Income																
<\$35k	150	14%	25%	23%	15%	13%	29%	8%	9%	20%	1%	68%	21%	20%	22%	1%
\$35k–\$100k	399	25%	30%	33%	18%	13%	31%	9%	14%	24%	3%	72%	28%	18%	19%	4%
\$100k+	391	33%	36%	29%	28%	15%	32%	5%	15%	23%	6%	80%	38%	24%	22%	6%
Race/Ethnicity																
White	703	28%	33%	30%	22%	15%	31%	7%	13%	24%	5%	74%	31%	21%	22%	5%
Black	120	18%	36%	30%	22%	11%	38%	10%	17%	19%	1%	73%	32%	18%	19%	6%
Hispanic	181	25%	31%	27%	18%	16%	34%	11%	16%	22%	1%	68%	35%	19%	19%	2%
Age of oldest child																
Age 0–6	158	19%	23%	19%	22%	12%	19%	4%	15%	16%	1%	73%	34%	10%	25%	1%
Age 7–12	264	31%	30%	31%	21%	14%	31%	9%	11%	22%	1%	74%	28%	14%	23%	1%
Age 13–17	396	23%	35%	33%	24%	14%	33%	7%	14%	23%	7%	76%	34%	24%	20%	6%
Age 18+	90	24%	51%	38%	18%	16%	38%	3%	20%	17%	7%	77%	34%	33%	17%	14%
Parent college education																
No degree	407	20%	25%	26%	12%	10%	31%	7%	12%	22%	3%	73%	25%	18%	19%	4%
Associate's degree	55	26%	37%	30%	22%	19%	37%	5%	16%	26%	5%	73%	32%	28%	28%	6%
Bachelor's degree	478	32%	37%	33%	30%	16%	31%	8%	15%	23%	5%	76%	37%	22%	21%	4%

Base: Parents who agree (1 or 2 on five point scale) that family has a plan to pay for college

Q. Why haven't you begun to plan for paying the costs of college?

- a. I haven't thought about it.
- b. Child is too young.
- c. I don't have time.
- d. I don't know how to do this or what to consider.
- e. I don't know where I can get free assistance with this.
- f. I don't think it's important.
- g. I can't afford to save money so there is no point in planning.
- h. It's overwhelming.
- i. I haven't gotten around to it yet.

Table 44: Reasons for Not Creating a Plan to Pay for College

	N	Haven't thought about it	Child too young	No time	Don't know how	Need information	Not important	Can't afford to save	Overwhelming	Putting off
Total	1063	11%	26%	5%	15%	15%	2%	48%	26%	12%
Saving status										
College saver	352	12%	24%	5%	17%	19%	2%	29%	32%	11%
Non-college saver	712	11%	27%	4%	13%	12%	2%	57%	23%	12%
Income										
<\$35k	302	11%	28%	6%	15%	19%	0%	51%	27%	7%
\$35k-\$100k	486	9%	28%	2%	15%	15%	2%	51%	26%	12%
\$100k+	275	16%	22%	7%	13%	10%	2%	37%	27%	17%
Race/Ethnicity										
White	836	11%	25%	4%	14%	15%	2%	50%	28%	12%
Black	135	14%	27%	11%	14%	15%	0%	35%	26%	16%
Hispanic	234	8%	36%	5%	16%	17%	1%	41%	30%	12%
Age of oldest child										
Age 0-6	194	13%	58%	7%	12%	14%	2%	35%	20%	9%
Age 7-12	332	10%	32%	5%	15%	14%	2%	42%	26%	15%
Age 13-17	420	12%	13%	3%	15%	15%	2%	51%	32%	13%
Age 18+	105	13%	3%	2%	17%	13%	0%	69%	21%	5%
Parent college education										
No degree	710	11%	26%	5%	15%	18%	1%	48%	26%	9%
Associate's degree	70	12%	38%	6%	11%	11%	4%	45%	23%	20%
Bachelor's degree	283	12%	24%	3%	13%	7%	4%	46%	28%	16%

Base: Parents who do not agree that family has a plan to pay for college (3, 4, 5 on five-point scale)

Technical notes

Target population

Ipsos conducted the *How America Saves for College 2018* survey online between Thursday, January 18, 2018, and Thursday, February 15, 2018. Ipsos interviewed 2,003 adult parents of children younger than age 18.

Sample design

The survey sample was drawn from two sources:

- Ipsos i-Say Panel, in which panelists opt in and are incented by receiving instant win opportunities, sweepstakes entries, and daily prize giveaways
- A purchased list of adults with children under age 18

The sample design was a disproportionate stratified sample of parents. The sample was designed to over-represent African Americans and Hispanics, with a minimum of 400 responses from each group. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

The sample was stratified by additional variables, such as household income, region, and age of the oldest child. The target set for each of these variables is shown in Table A.

Weighting

To correct for the disproportionate stratified sample, the survey was weighted using a statistical technique called raking, in which all of the population marginal profiles of interest are replicated in the sample. The sample was weighted by gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education, and by household income crossed by race. All of the demographic profiles used in the weights were sourced from the November 2012 U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), filtering in only adult parents with children younger than 18 years.

Table A: Sample Targets for Household Income by Race/Ethnicity, Region, and Age of Child

Household-total family income	White/others	Black	Hispanic	Total
<\$35k	238	186	197	621
\$35k – \$100k	578	167	164	908
\$100k+	384	47	39	470
Total	1,200	400	400	1,999

Region	
Northeast	346
Midwest	433
South	746
West	475
	2,000

Age of oldest child	
0 – 6	592
7 – 12	675
13 – 17	732
	1,999

Margin of Error (MoE)

The MoE is a measure of sampling error. It is used to quantify the range of possible values for an observed sample statistic taking into account the possible sample variation, i.e., the larger the MoE the greater the uncertainty in the survey results with respect to the statistic being analyzed. More specifically, the MoE can be defined as the maximum absolute difference between the statistic and the actual population parameter being estimated that would be expected from a simple random sample, with a pre-determined confidence level.

When estimating percentages from this survey using the whole sample (2,000), the MoE is estimated to be approximately +/- 2.2 percentage points, with a confidence level of 95 percent.

If percentages are being estimated from subdomains of the survey, i.e., not using the whole sample, then the MoE will be higher than the one stated above, and must be recalculated. Assuming that each domain being compared has a different sample size, the rule when estimating percentages from a base of n cases is $MoE(n) = 1/\sqrt{n}$. In this context, to judge whether the observed difference between two domains (groups) with different sample sizes, say n_1 and n_2 , is statistically significant, this difference should be compared to $(1/\sqrt{n_1}) + (1/\sqrt{n_2})$. If it is larger, then it's considered statistically significant.

Effective base sizes

As discussed in the previous section, the MoE depends on the sample size of the domain being analyzed. To serve as a guideline of the precision and confidence the reader should have for the survey estimates, Table B shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error around a single percentage estimate in the study.

Table B: Margin of Error for Different Domain Sizes

Sample size	Margin of Error
50	14.1%
100	10.0%
200	7.1%
300	5.8%
400	5.0%
500	4.5%
600	4.1%
700	3.8%
800	3.5%
900	3.3%
1000	3.2%
1100	3.0%
1200	2.9%
1300	2.8%
1400	2.7%
1500	2.6%
1600	2.5%
1700	2.4%
1800	2.4%
1900	2.3%
2000	2.2%



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