

BLACK
BOX

*Great research
is about
more than data*

Inclusive Attitudes Survey Part 1

Views of The General Public

Prepared for Lien Foundation

May 2016

About the Survey

The Lien Foundation commissioned the Inclusive Attitudes Survey to examine how truly inclusive Singapore is, and to explore the views and attitudes of Singaporeans towards children with special needs. Blackbox Research polled over 1,000 respondents in April 2016 for the survey, focusing its questions on the experience of inclusion in early childhood, education and daily life.

Key Findings

Inclusive Society

- The survey revealed that only a third (30%) of those surveyed agree that Singapore is an inclusive society when it comes to children with special needs. One in four Singaporeans do not think that Singapore is an inclusive society.
- A majority of respondents (64%) expressed the belief that Singaporeans are willing to share public spaces with special needs children, but are not willing to interact with them. Approximately one in ten respondents (11%) believed that Singaporeans were not willing to share public spaces with children with special needs.
- Most respondents believe that Singaporeans tend to adopt a matter-of-fact attitude (40%) in interacting with children with special needs – neither accepting or unaccepting. Only 8% of those surveyed believed that Singaporeans were ready to go the extra mile to make children with special needs feel welcome.
- The survey showed that respondents expressed support for new laws to better promote the rights of children with special needs, with close to half of the respondents (49%) believing that new legislations are necessary.

Interaction with children with special needs

- For over a third of Singaporeans, children with special needs do not form a part of their social circle. Even among those whose social circle includes children with special needs, one in four come across children with special needs once a year or less.
- The survey also revealed that only 1 in 10 Singaporeans are sure about how to interact with children with special needs.

- 3 in 4 (75%) agreed that being informed about the child's special needs in advance would help them be more understanding and less judgemental if disruptive behaviours arise.
- 2 in 3 (65%) worry that children with special needs are at risk of being bullied by other typically developing children.
- There is less certainty about how typically developing children interact with children with special needs. Only 1 in 3 respondents (32%) believe that typically developing children are comfortable interacting with children with special needs.

Inclusive Education

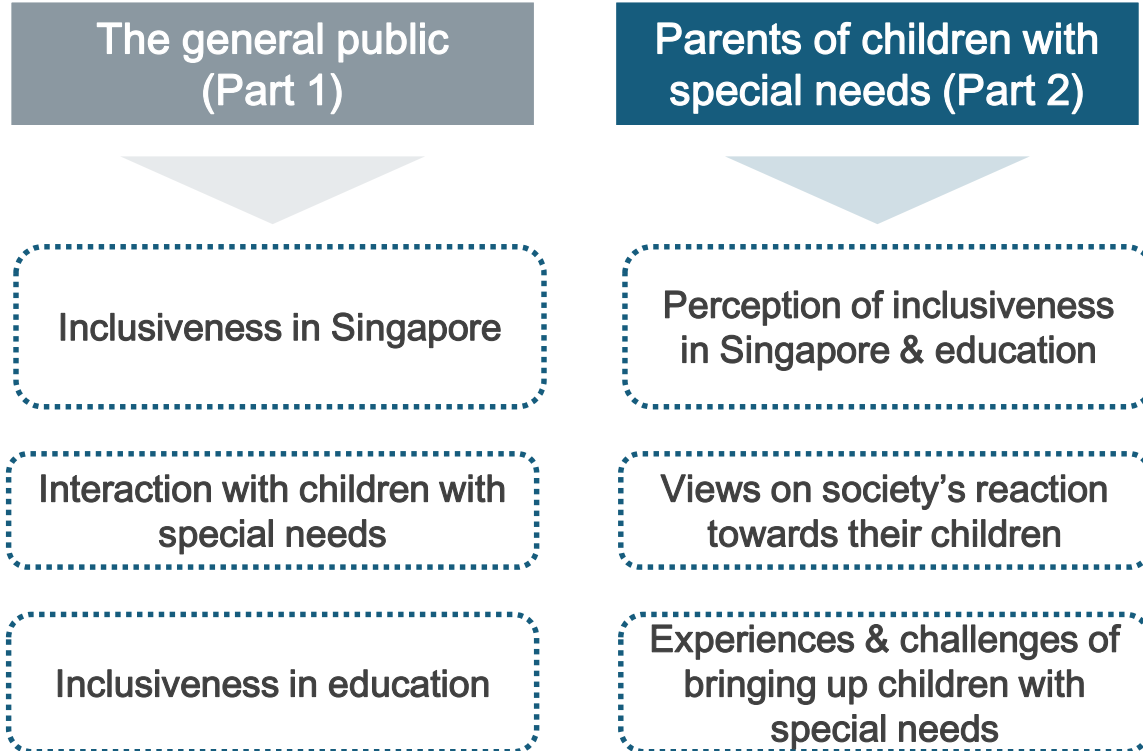
- Approximately 7 in 10 Singaporeans (71%) are supportive of the idea of inclusive education, with close to 78% of them acknowledging that the education of children with special needs should be made compulsory as every child has the right to be educated. Furthermore, 69% of Singaporeans surveyed believe that the presence of children with special needs would help typically developing children learn to be more accepting of diversity.
- In the same fashion, the survey found that more than half of the Singaporeans surveyed (52%) believed that both groups of children (typically developing children as well as children with special needs) would benefit equally from attending the same classroom.
- However, only 58% of parents with typically developing children would be comfortable with their child attending the same school as a child with special needs. This comfort level drops to 53% for having their child attending the same class as a child with special needs. Finally, only 50% of parents surveyed would be comfortable with their child seating next to a child with special needs in the same class.
- On evaluating their children's interaction, only 1 in 4 parents surveyed report that their child/children are friends with children with special needs. Primarily, the lack of conducive opportunities (64%) was cited as the main barrier to interaction.

About the Survey

Lien Foundation commissioned Blackbox Research to conduct a survey to examine how **truly inclusive** Singapore society is, by listening to the voices of 2 groups of audiences:

1. The general public (including parents of typically developing children), and
2. Parents of children with special needs

The fieldwork was conducted from January to May 2016 to look into:



For this presentation, we will be focusing on the views of the general public (part 1).

Research Design

Phase 1 Conceptualization

Multiple consultations with the steering committee comprising:

- Associate Prof Kenneth Poon, *Assistant Dean (Research Translation), Office of Education Research and Early Childhood & Special Needs Education Department at NIE*
- Mr. Tim Oei, *CEO of AWWA*
- Mr. Tang Hui Nee, *Educational Psychologist, Assistant Director and Head of Community Service at KK Hospital*
- Ms. Peggy Zee, *Founder of The Experiential Learning Centre & former owner of Zee School (a preschool that works with children with special needs)*
- Mr. Daniel Koh, *Psychologist, Insights Mind Centre*

5 in-depth interviews with parents of children with special needs from different family background and disability

Phase 2 Data collection

N1 = 1086

respondents forming a fairly representative sample of the general public with a good spread on gender, race, age, income, and housing type quotas surveyed online

N2 = 750*

parents of children with special needs from 20 SPED schools & EIPIC Centres were surveyed both offline and offline

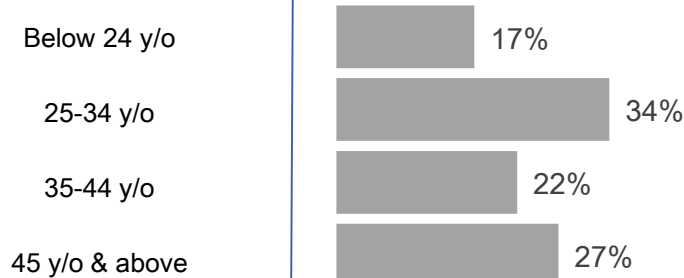
Note: It is currently not possible to obtain a representative sample of parents with children with special needs in Singapore as there is insufficient publicly-available data.

* Blackbox is still in the process of collating the responses from the SPED Schools & EIPIC Centres

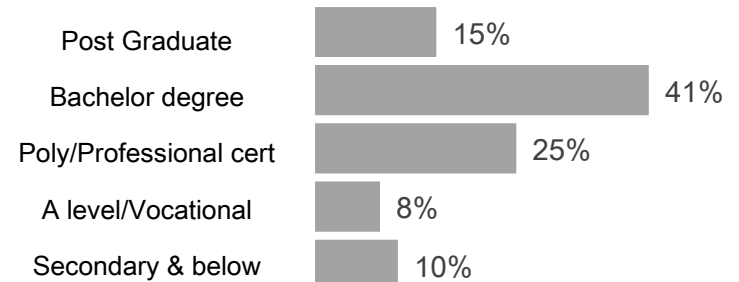
Respondent Profile

General Public
Base: 1086

Age



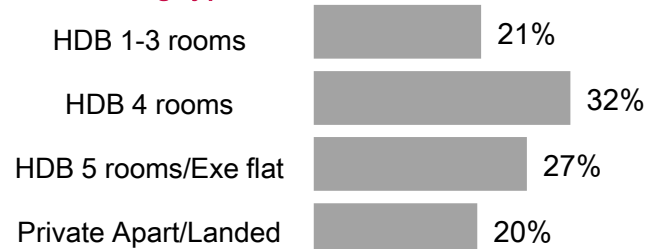
Education



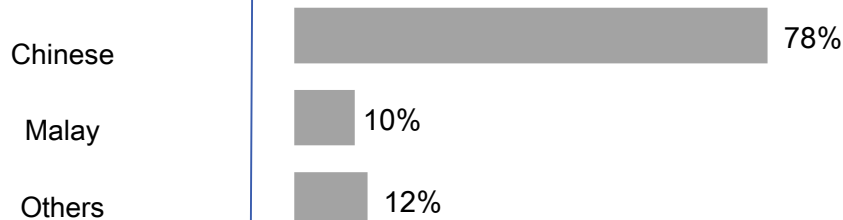
Income



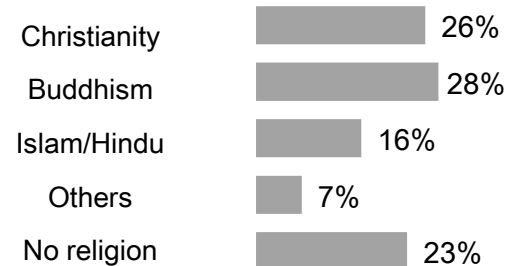
Housing type




Race



Religion

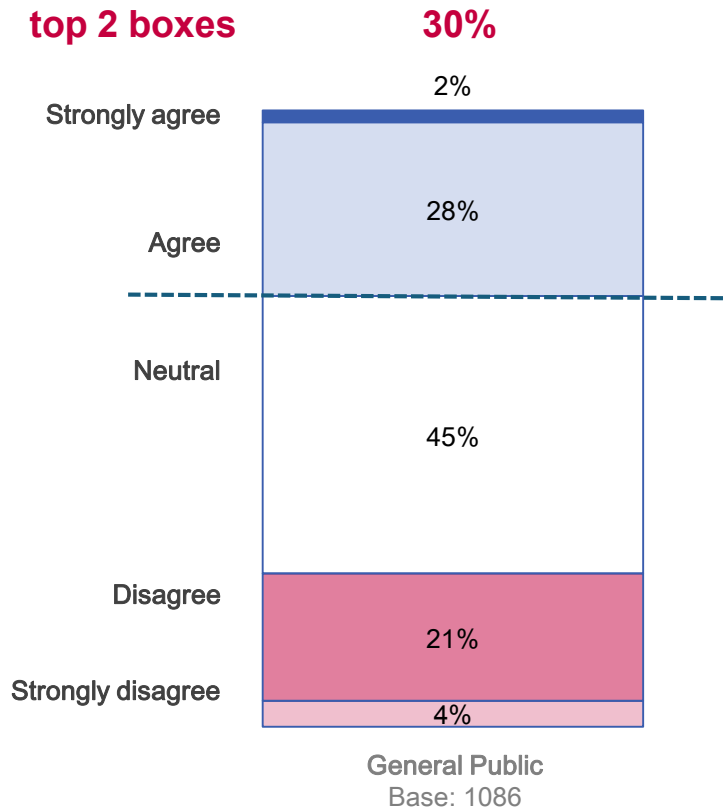


Note: To ensure a fairly representative sample of general public respondents, we have set soft quotas on key demographics parameters including gender, age, income, race, and housing type. However, the age profile is slightly skewed due to the limitation of online panel.



Singapore may not be as inclusive as we think it is

Only one third of Singaporeans agree that Singapore is an inclusive society



Comments

"People with intellectual disabilities, along with their caregivers remain as a "hidden group" in society. There is a lack of understanding and acceptance. There is also xenophobia. Awareness needs to be improved on."

"Singaporeans tend to keep to themselves. Can be more proactive when faced with situations where they can help others."

"Increasing emphasis on the needs of the disabled. More volunteers are needed."

"There are a lot of non-profit organizations doing a great job and many people volunteer with them too. But there should be a bit more awareness in local neighbourhoods"

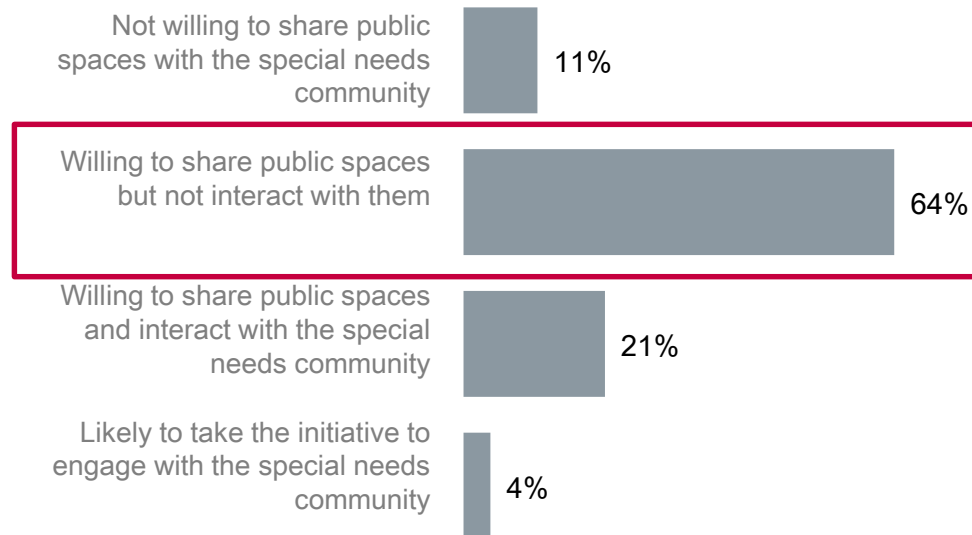
B22a. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Singapore is an inclusive society"

B22b: Can you explain why? What has Singapore done well and what can be improved?

Inclusion is hampered by the “NIMBY” syndrome

They believe that in general, Singaporeans are

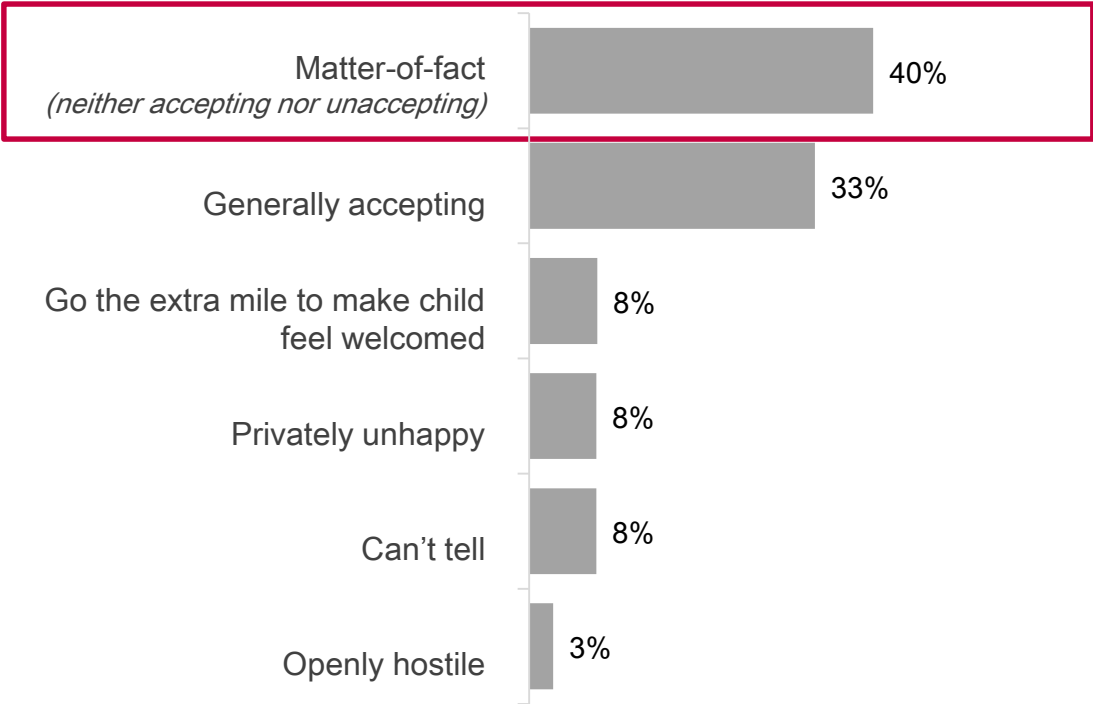


General Public
Base: 1086

B24a. In general, Singaporeans are...

Perception is that Singaporeans adopt a matter-of-fact attitude towards children with special needs

Attitude of Singaporeans towards children with special needs

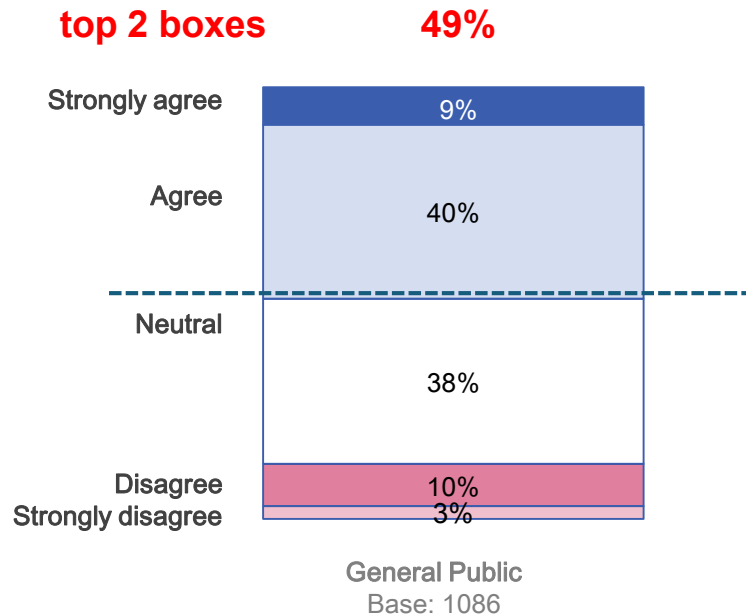


General Public
Base: 1086

B23a. In your opinion, which of these best describes the attitude of Singaporeans towards children with special needs?

Almost half believe that new laws are needed to promote the rights of children with special needs

“Do you think new laws are necessary to better promote the rights of children with special needs?”



Comments

“Singaporeans although kind in general are not proactive and need laws to guide them.”


“With law, they can interact without any worry.”

“They deserve more care and privileges than the average healthy people.”

“Not familiar with the law.”

“Don't know if laws can help.”

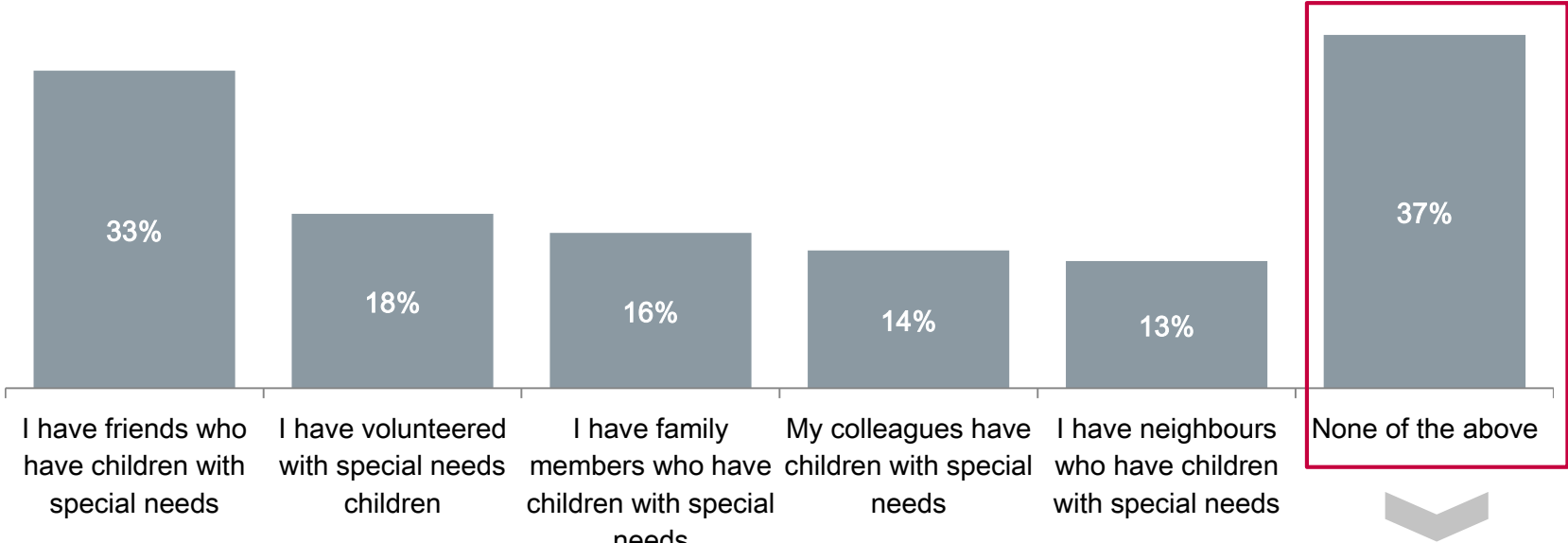
B25. Do you think new laws are necessary to better promote the rights of children with special needs?
B25b: Why?



Lack of interaction leads to uncertainty in the behavior of the general public with regards to children with special needs

For over a third of Singaporeans, children with special needs are not part of their social circle

Level of exposure with children with special needs



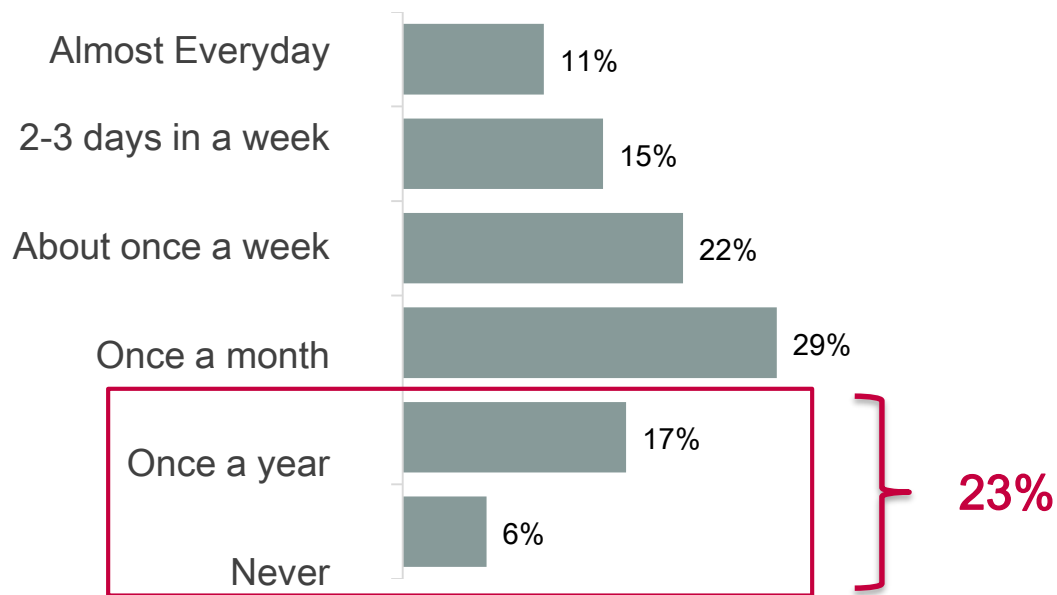
General Public
Base: 1086

The situation is similar for parents of typically developing children, with 35% choosing 'None of the above'

B16. Which of the following applies to you?

Even amongst those whose social circle includes children with special needs, interactions are infrequent

Frequency of Casual everyday Interactions with children with special needs (*public transport, streets etc*)

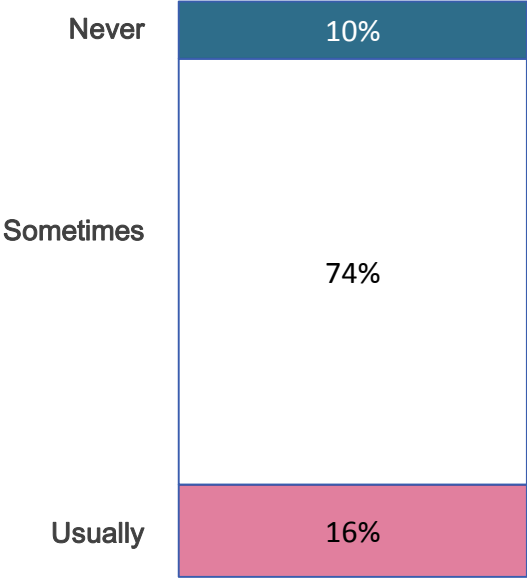


General Public who have some level of exposure with special needs children
Base: 683

B17. How often do you interact with children with special needs? We are referring to casual everyday interactions such as passing by the children on the street, sitting next to them on the bus, etc.

Only 1 in 10 Singaporeans is sure about how to interact with children with special needs

“I am...unsure of how to interact with children with special needs”



General Public
Base: 1086

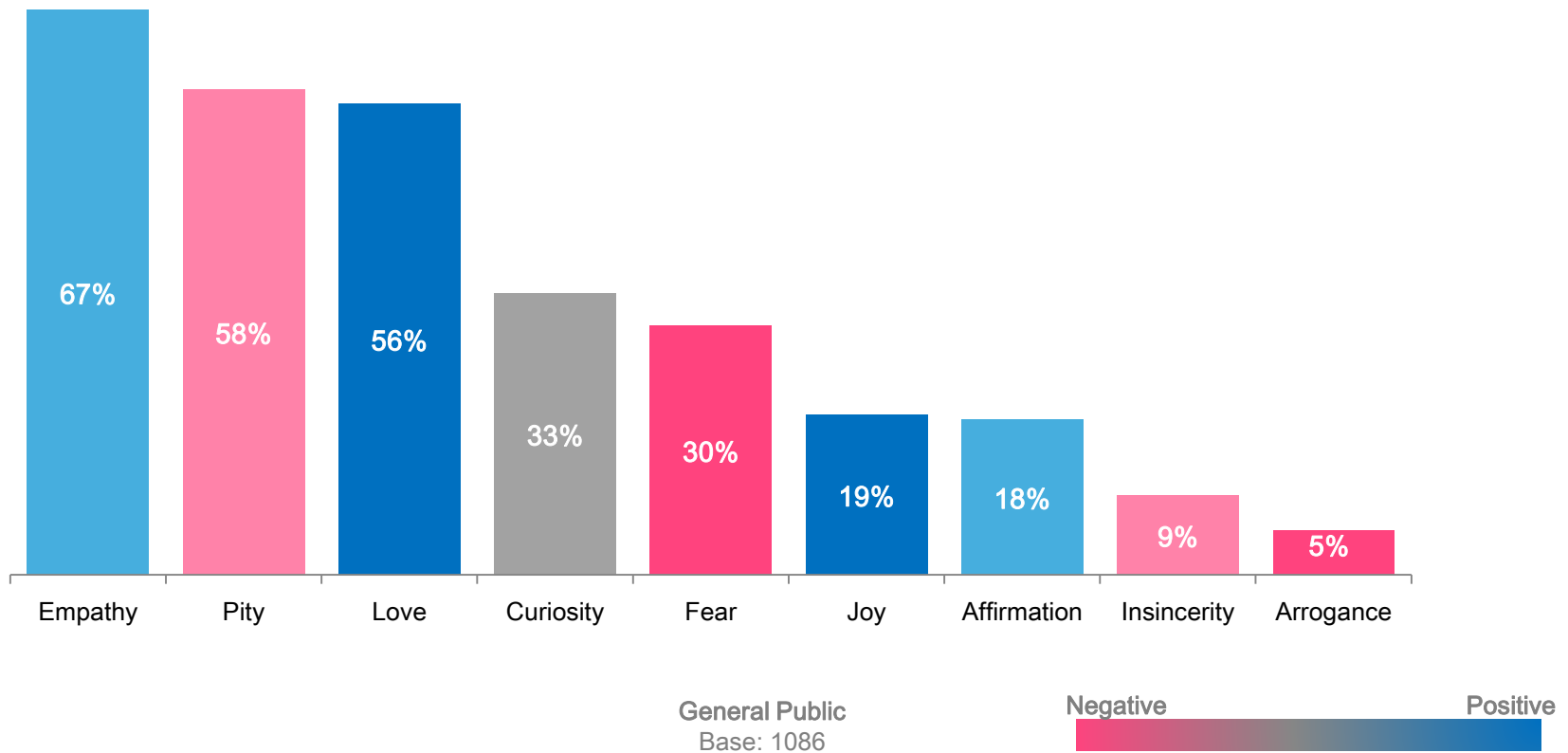
B20. I am unsure how to interact with children with special needs.



Uncertainty influences the views of
Singaporeans towards children with special
needs

Their interactions are characterized by a complex mix of emotions

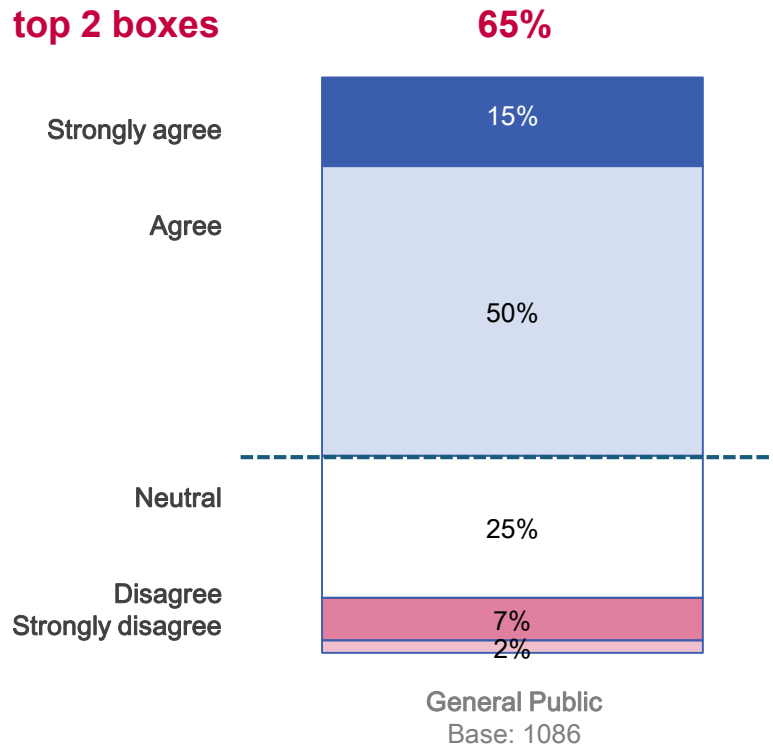
Top 3 most common emotions you have seen when adults interact with children with special needs



B18. What are the 3 most common emotions you have seen, when adults interact with your child/children with special needs?

2 in 3 worry that children with special needs will be bullied

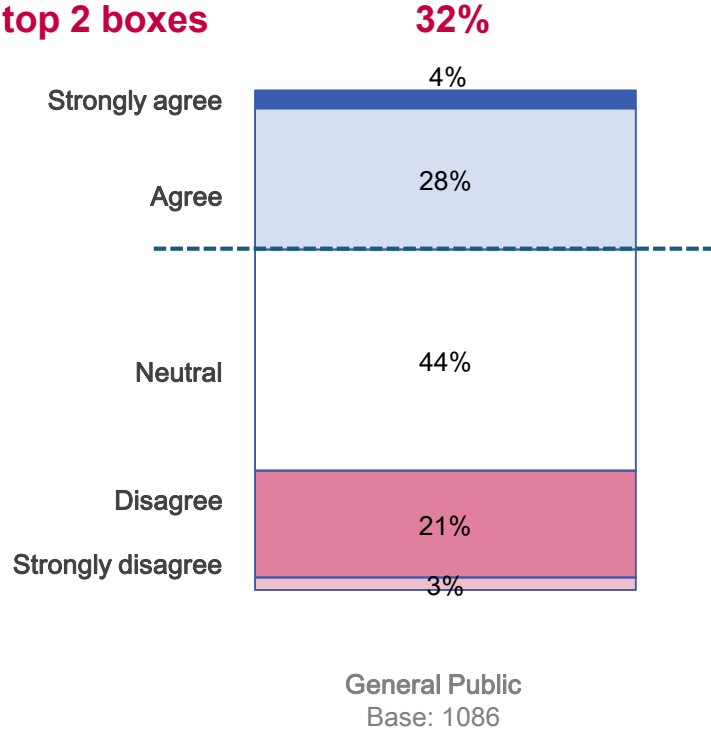
“Children with special needs are at risk of bullying by other children”



B19. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement
“Children with special needs are at risk of bullying by other children”

Only a third thinks that typically developing and special needs children can comfortably interact

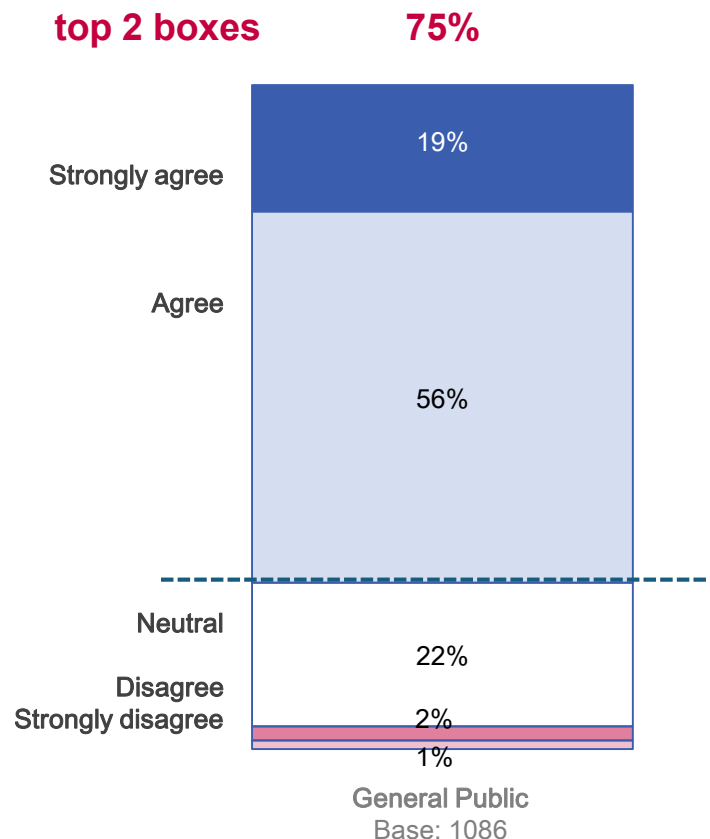
“Typically developing children are generally comfortable interacting with children with special needs”




B19. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement:
“Children are generally comfortable interacting with children with special needs”

Most people believe that being informed in advance about the special needs of a child would make them more understanding when disruptive behavior occurs

"I am more understanding and less judgmental ...when I know in advance..."

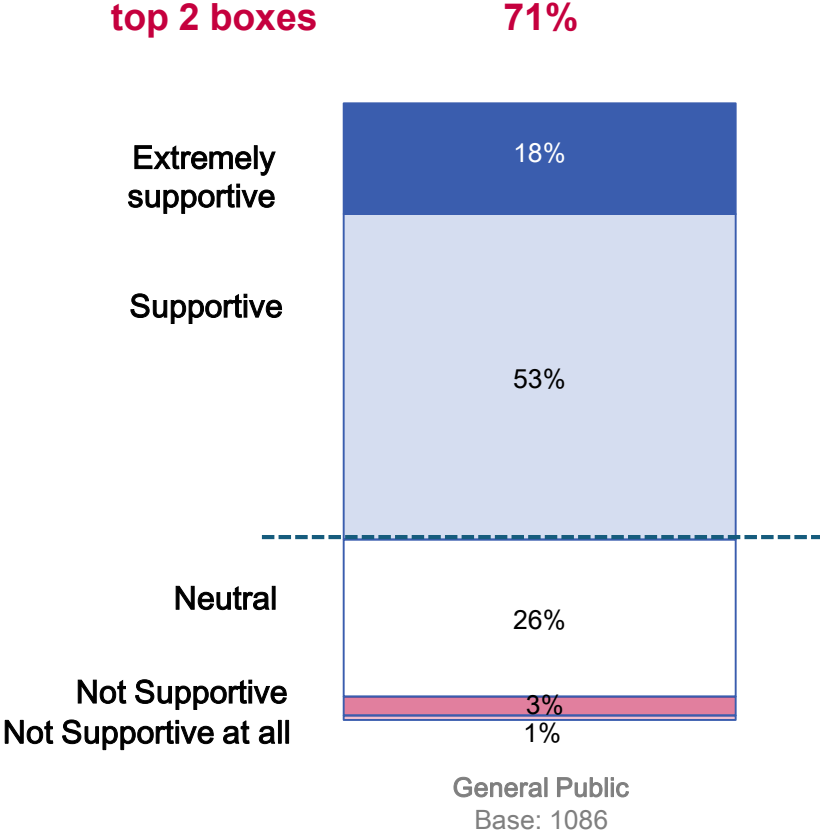


B19. For each statement, please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with it.
"I am more understanding and less judgemental about the disruptive behaviour of a child with special needs, when I know in advance that it is due to his or her special needs, and not other factors."



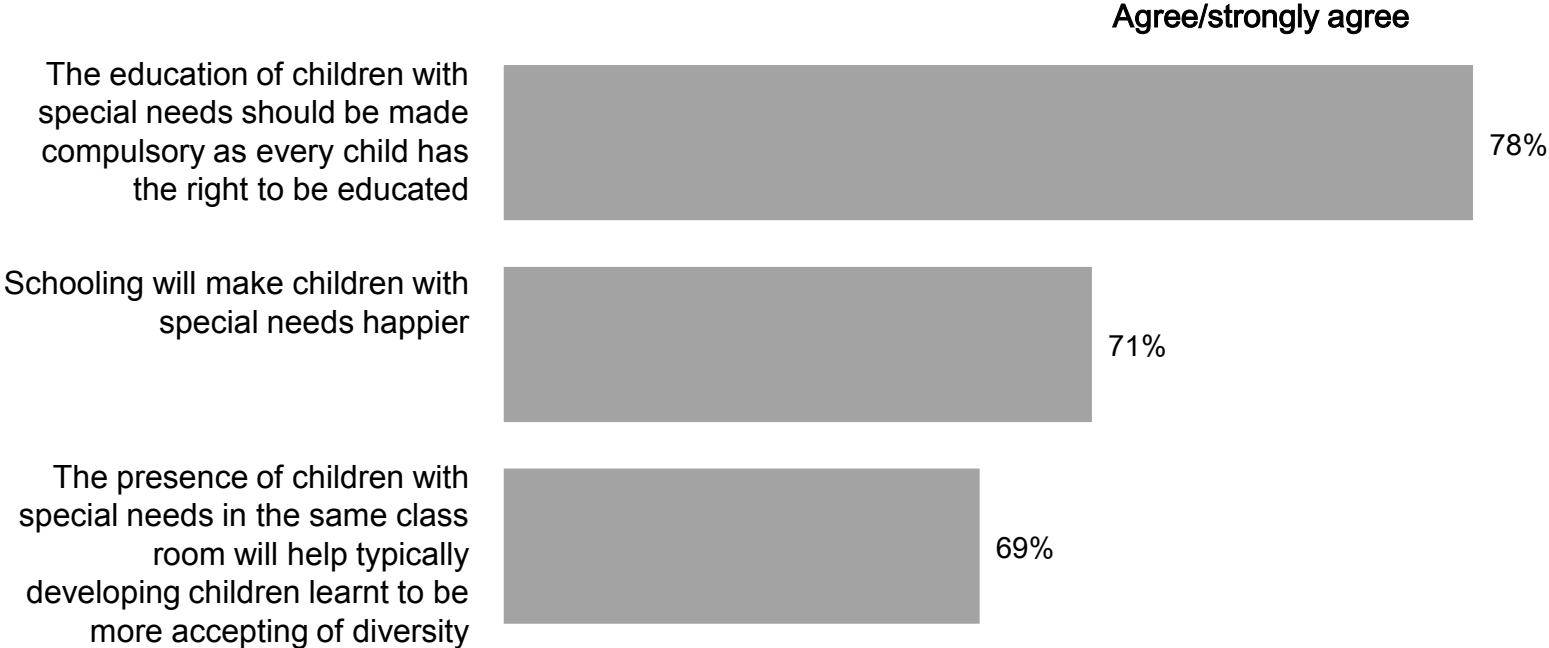
There is broad-based support for inclusive education

71% of Singaporeans support the idea of inclusive education



C30. How supportive are you of the idea of inclusive education?

The majority believe in the benefits of inclusive education



General Public
Base: 1086

C31. For each statement, please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with it.

More than half agree that it will create mutual benefits for both groups of children

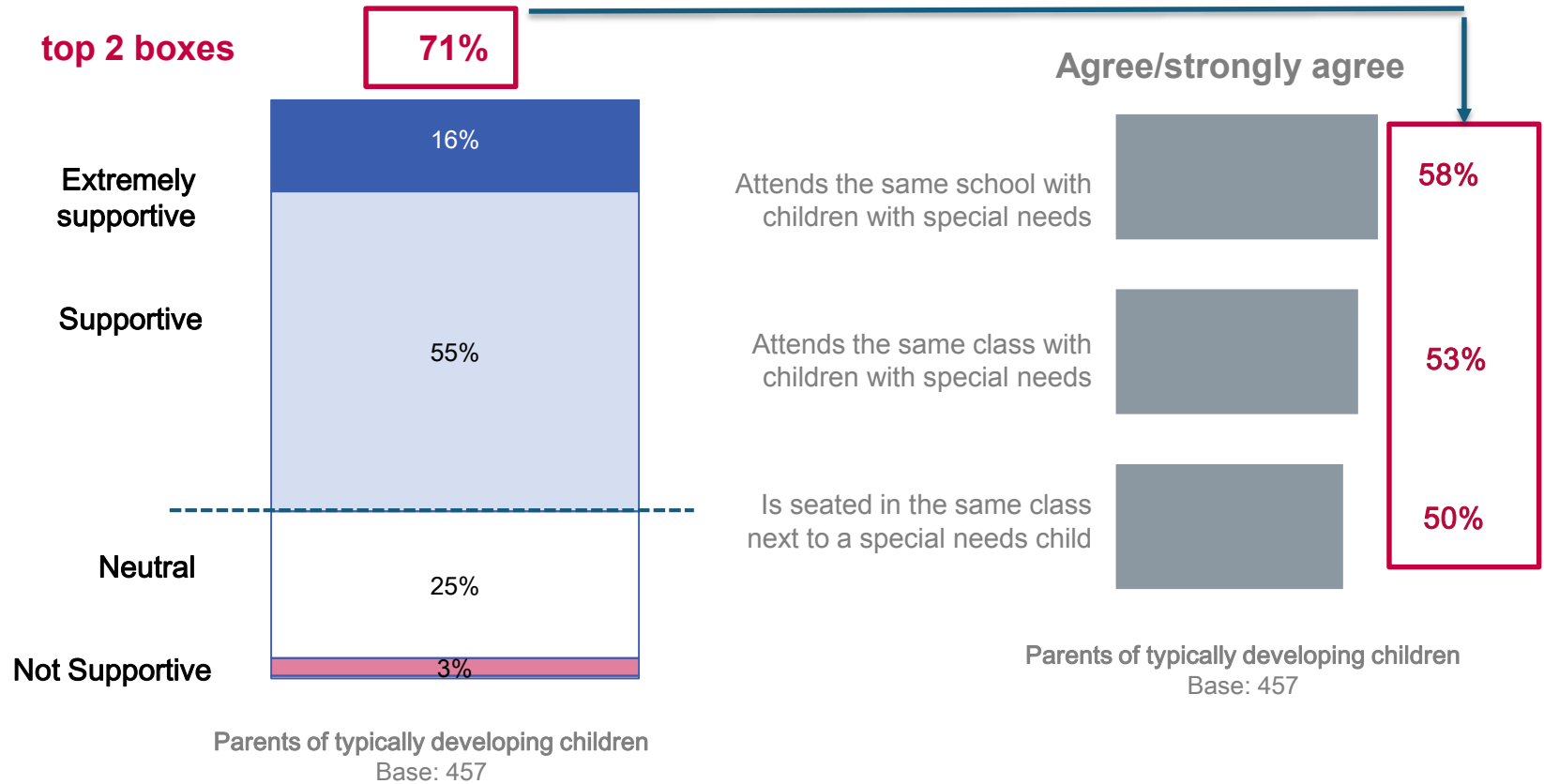
“When typically-developing children and children with special needs attend the same class...”



General Public
Base: 1086

C32. When typically-developing children and children with special needs attend the same class...

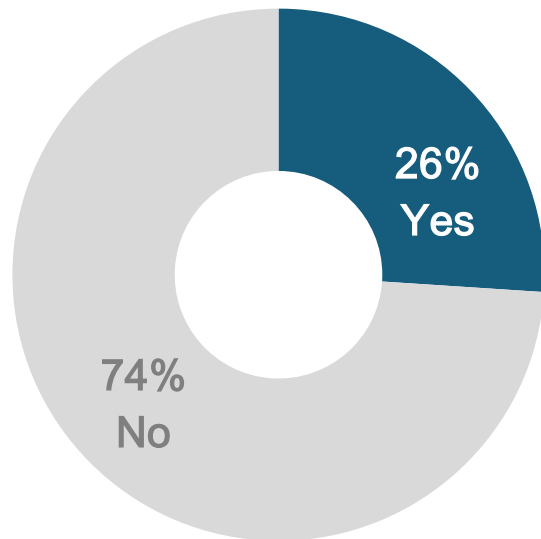
However, there is a significant gap between being supportive v/s comfortably involved among the parents



C30. How supportive are you of the idea of inclusive education?
C33. How comfortable would you be if your child...

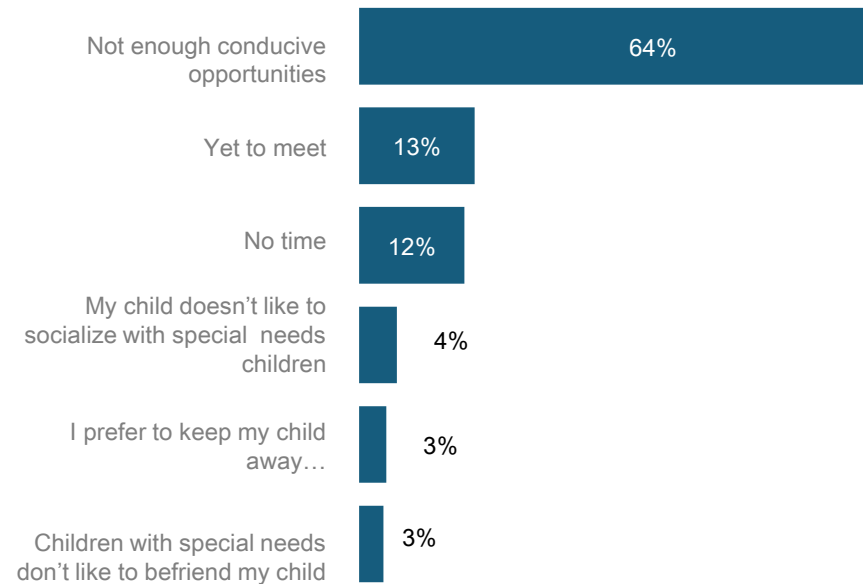
Only 1 in 4 typically developing children has friends with special needs

“Does your children have friends who have special needs?”



Parents of typically developing children
Base: 457

Lack of conducive opportunities stated as the main barrier



Parents of typically developing children
Base: 338

Among parents with preschool kids (n=133):

- **14%** said their children “**share the same school/class with children with special needs**”
- 19% were uncertain
- 68% said no

C27. Does your child share the same school/class with special needs children?

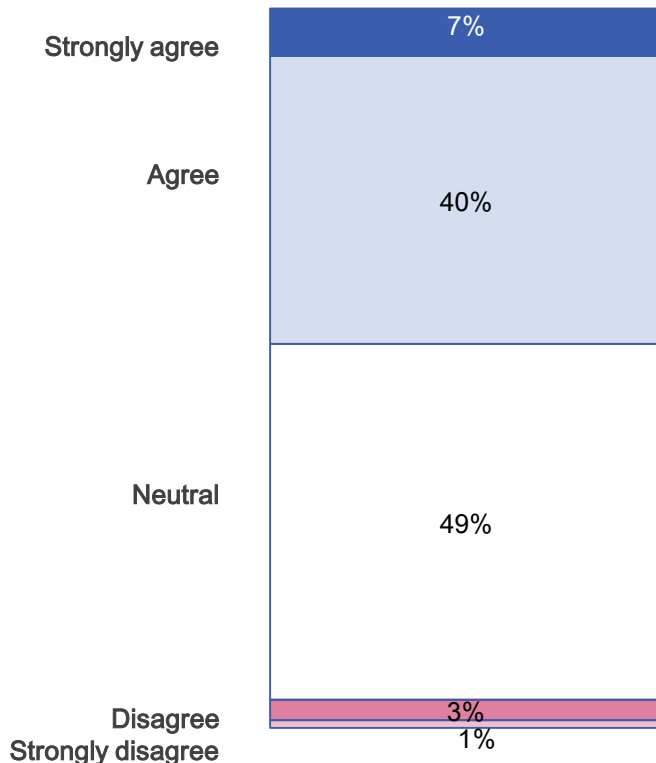
C34a. Does your children have friends who have special needs?

C34b. Why?

Nearly half of parents want more avenues for their children to interact with children with special needs

"I want my child to have more avenues to interact and spend time with children with special needs"

top 2 boxes 47%



Parents of TDC
Base: 457

Comments

"Hopefully, 90% preschools and child cares could provide the avenues. Strengthen our parent support groups in the community."

"Let the normal children visit the children with special needs at their school."

"More opportunity to buddy with children with special needs in organised activities."

"Sports carnival that can cultivate team work, make it fun for the kids at the same time."

"More inter-school relationship and learning journeys to visit the special schools in Singapore."

C35a. For each statement please indicate the extent of your agreement/disagreement with it
C35b. What are the examples of such avenues that you hope to see

Executive Summary

Inclusiveness in Society

- 30%** Only a third agree that Singapore is an inclusive society when it comes to children with special needs
- 49%** Almost half of the population think that new laws are necessary to better promote the rights of children with special needs
- 64%** Of the public are willing to share public spaces but not interact with the special needs community
- 10%** Very few say they are never uncertain how to interact with children with special needs

Interaction with Children with Special Needs

- 37%** For over a third of Singaporeans, children with special needs are not part of their social circle
- 23%** Even amongst those whose social circle includes children with special needs, 1 in 4 rarely come across them (once a year or less) casually
- 26%** Only 1 in 4 parents of typically developing children said that their child has friends with special needs.
- 65%** 2 in 3 worry that children with special needs are at risk of being bullied
- 75%** However, most people say that knowing that a child has special needs would make them more tolerant

Inclusiveness in Education

- 71%** 7 out of 10 Singaporeans are supportive of the idea of inclusive education
- 78%** Most people agree that the education of children with special needs should be made compulsory as every child has the right to be educated
- 53%** However, amongst parents, only half are comfortable with the idea of having their children sitting next to a child with special needs in the classroom