



# Mott Poll Report

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## Used But Still Safe? Parent Views on Pre-Owned Child Equipment

Infants and children require a variety of health and safety equipment. Some families use equipment that was loaned or donated by family or friends, or that was purchased from a yard sale or resale shop. The C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health asked a national sample of parents of children 0-7 years about using pre-owned health and safety equipment.

Most parents agree that children use health and safety equipment for such a short time that it seems wasteful (78%) and too expensive (82%) to buy everything new. About half of parents (51%) say they are comfortable using pre-owned equipment from family or close friends only, while 45% also are comfortable with equipment bought at resale shops and/or yard sales. Four percent of parents are not comfortable using any pre-owned equipment.

About half of parents (53%) say they have used pre-owned equipment for their child, most commonly cribs (28%) and highchairs (24%), outdoor play structures (18%), strollers (17%), playpens (15%) and bath seats (13%). Parents are least likely to report using pre-owned infant car seats (7%) or booster seats (8%). Parents with household incomes under \$100,000 are more likely to say they have used pre-owned equipment compared to those over \$100,000 (58% vs 48%).

Three-quarters of parents (74%) say they would prefer to buy new equipment to make sure it is safe for their child, and two-thirds (63%) feel it is hard to tell whether pre-owned equipment is safe for their child. Most parents say that when they receive or buy pre-owned equipment, they are *very likely* to inspect the equipment for signs of damage (90%) and sanitize it (88%). Fewer parents say they are *very likely* to do an Internet search for instructions on how to set up and use the equipment (55%) or for information about product recalls on the equipment (49%).

Most parents say they have donated or sold child health and safety equipment, most often to a family member or friend (74%) or a charitable organization (52%), as well as at a garage sale (35%) or to a children's resale shop (33%). Nineteen percent say they have never shared or sold pre-owned equipment.

### Sorting out second-hand supplies

Percent of parents who are *very likely* to do the following when they receive or buy pre-owned child equipment

Inspect for signs of damage	90%
Sanitize it	88%
Look up how to use/set it up online	55%
Look up info on product recalls	49%

### Report Highlights

Half of parents have used pre-owned equipment for their child, while 4 in 5 have donated or sold pre-owned equipment.

2 in 3 parents feel it is hard to tell whether pre-owned equipment is safe for their child.

Half of parents are comfortable only with pre-owned equipment shared by family or close friends.

Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2023

Yard Sale



## Data Source & Methods

This report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by Ipsos Public Affairs, LLC (Ipsos) for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. The survey was administered in February 2023 to a randomly selected, stratified group of adults who were parents of at least one child age 0-18 years living in their household (n=2,100). Adults were selected from Ipsos's web-enabled KnowledgePanel® that closely resembles the U.S. population. The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the Census Bureau. The survey completion rate was 62% among panel members contacted to participate. This report is based on responses from 932 parents with at least one child age 0-7. The margin of error for results presented in this report is ±1 to 5 percentage points.

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## C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health

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## Implications

Through the early years of a child's life, most families require a variety of equipment to keep their child safe and to support the child's sleep, transportation, and other daily activities. Many families want duplicate pieces of equipment to keep at grandparents' or babysitters' homes. Because some equipment is used for only a short time, and the cost can be substantial, using pre-owned equipment makes sense for many families.

About half of the parents in this Mott Poll indicated they would be comfortable using pre-owned child health and safety equipment only if it came from family or close friends. However, some parents do not have the option of receiving equipment from people they know. Instead, they may consider purchasing pre-owned products at garage sales, second-hand stores, or online marketplaces. Regardless of the source, parents should take steps to make sure the equipment is safe for their child.

An important step to ensure equipment is safe for a child is correct assembly and installation. Equipment can collapse or malfunction, potentially causing injuries to the child, if assembled or installed incorrectly. Often pre-owned equipment is received without the original packaging and package insert. A good strategy in this situation is to search the website of the product's manufacturer to find online instructions. However, only half of the parents in this Mott Poll said they looked for instructions when using pre-owned equipment for their child.

Car seats present a unique challenge, as their safety considerations vary based on the child's age, height and weight. It is particularly important for parents to obtain the product-specific information to ensure the car seat meets safety guidelines for their child, and to guide installation. If parents have difficulty, many fire stations or other community organizations offer assistance with installation.

Another step to ensure the safety of pre-owned equipment is to check for product recalls, which is a request by a manufacturer to return or stop using the product due to a discovered malfunction or safety hazard. Parents can search for recall information from the US Consumer Product Safety Commission ([cpsc.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov)). Another CPSC website, [saferproducts.gov](https://www.saferproducts.gov), is a comprehensive search engine for all recalled products and a portal to report any products that have malfunctioned.

Parents should keep in mind that safety standards and regulations are constantly evolving as research identifies features that pose a risk of injury. This is particularly important with regard to cribs, one of the most common types of pre-owned equipment. Current standards specify that cribs should not have a drop-side rail; that crib rails should be less than 6 centimeters apart; and that the headboard have no decorative cut-out that can trap a child's body. It is likely that some parents using pre-owned cribs may not be aware of how safety standards have changed. Before accepting or buying a pre-owned crib, parents should consider whether it meets current safety standards.

Delicate situations can arise when parents bring young children to visit family or friends and those hosts offer to supply pre-owned equipment for the child. To the extent possible, parents will want to test equipment to make sure it is sturdy and assembled correctly; if they have any concerns, parents should avoid having the child use the equipment. Traveling with any necessary equipment is an option to avoid this risk.

This Mott Poll found that most parents have donated or sold their child's health and safety equipment. Before doing so, parents should ensure the equipment is in good working order; if not, parents should dispose of the equipment to avoid risking injury of another child. When possible, parents should attach the product instructions to the equipment so that the new owners can assemble and install it correctly.