

Local News

Most Quebec parents feel pandemic taking a toll on kids' mental health: poll

Presse Canadienne

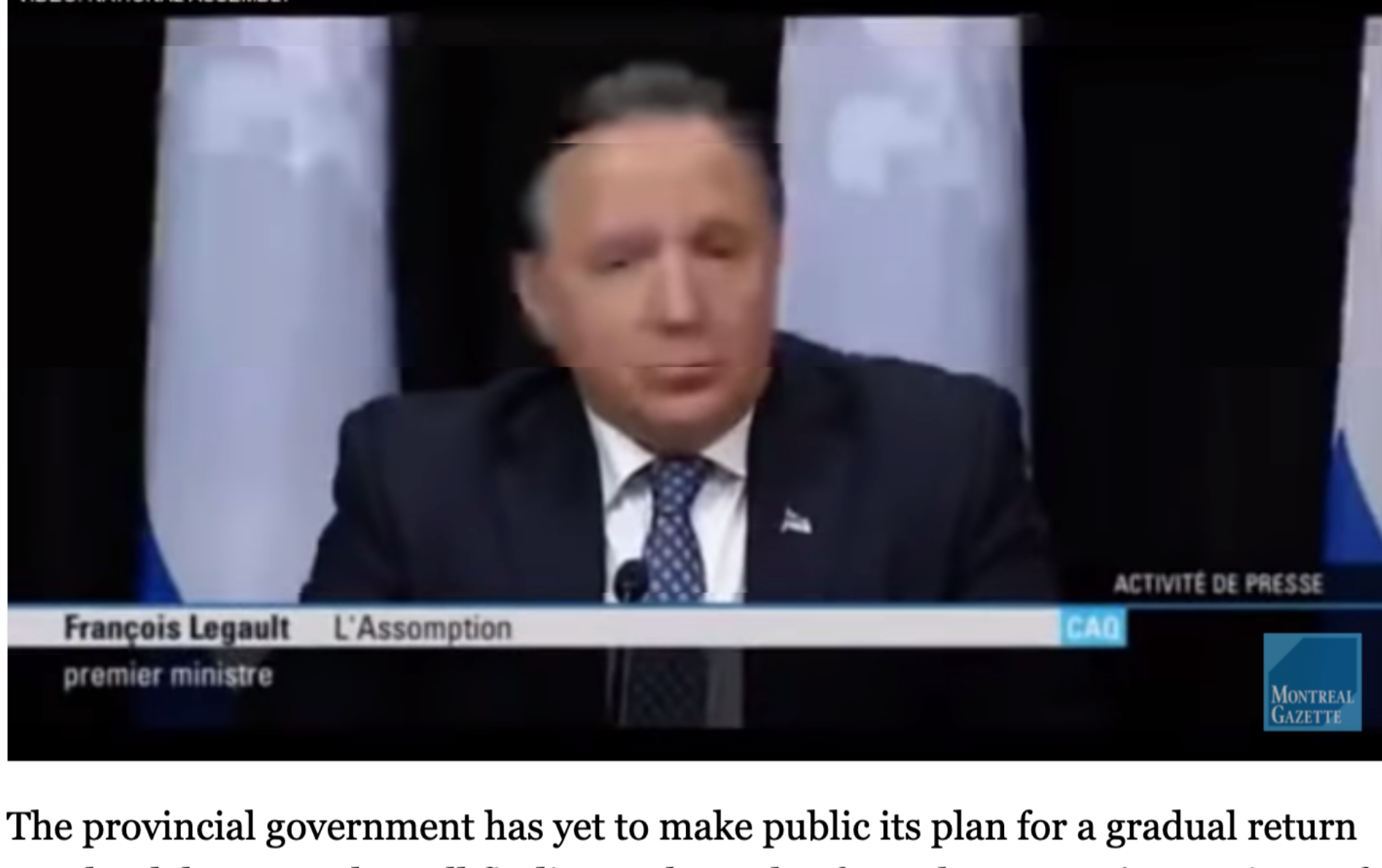
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Forty-two per cent of parents found the most profound psychological impact on their children was the feeling of being alone CHRISTINNE MUSCHI / MONTREAL GAZETTE

Saying they have detected a deterioration in their children's mental health since the start of the [coronavirus pandemic](#), most parents in Quebec don't want schools to reopen before September, a new survey suggests.

The CROP poll, conducted for the Fondation Jasmin Roy Sophie Desmarais and examining the "physical, behavioural, psychological and emotional deterioration" of Quebecers since the start of the pandemic, found 56 per cent of respondents felt their children's mental health had suffered while 57 per cent don't want classes to resume before the autumn.



The provincial government has yet to make public its plan for a gradual return to school, however the poll findings echo [a plea from the parents' committee](#) of the English Montreal School Board that classes remain closed until September.

The survey also found that the prospect of any return to school over the next few weeks causes anxiety among 67 per cent of parents.

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Only 27 per cent of parents said their children should return to school May 4.

The poll also painted a grim picture of the psychological toll taken on Quebecers since the outbreak, with 83 per cent of respondents saying they felt worried or unsafe, 77 per cent dealing with feelings of sadness and 71 per cent saying they had trouble sleeping.

A total of 56 per cent of parents said they had noticed a deterioration in their children's psychological and emotional state since the start of the pandemic.

The poll found that 42 per cent of parents found the most profound psychological impact on their children was the feeling of being alone, while 31 per cent said feelings of frustration, worry and insecurity had the largest impact on their child's mental health.

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One out of two respondents said their child's behaviour had worsened since the outbreak while one in four had noticed their children developing a "negative vision of things or daily events."

"If children are living with anxiety and don't feel like learning it will be very difficult to send them back to school without a strategy to manage that anxiety," said Jasmin Roy, president of the foundation that bears his name.

Roy thinks an approach is needed that will be aimed "as much at parents, teachers, teenagers and children on emotional management during the periods of confinement and (eventual return)," an effort his foundation is prepared to undertake.

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The CROP online survey, which has no margin of error, was conducted April 17-20 with 1,408 Quebec adults.

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