



## NewsWorthy Analysis

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**Kelton**  
RESEARCH



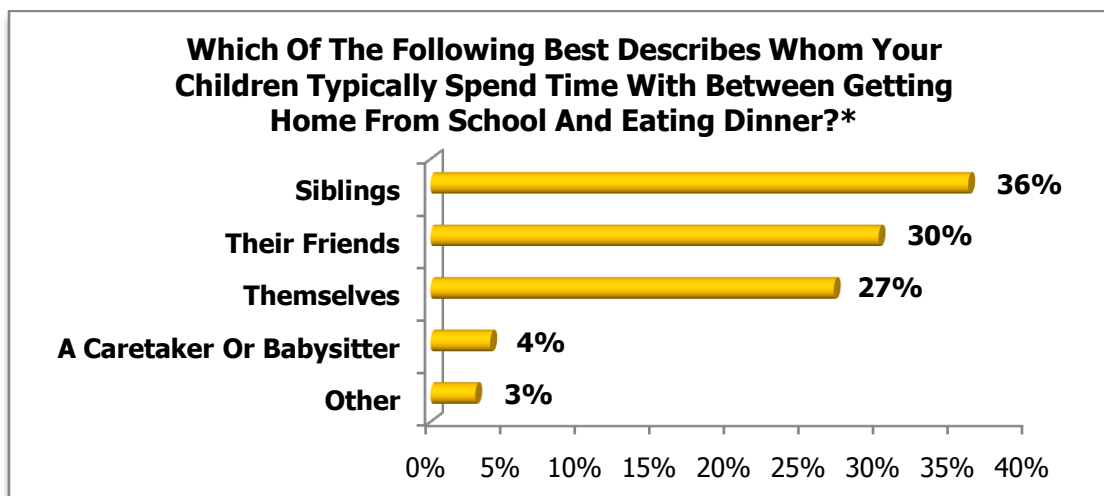
## The State Of After-School Snacking Parents Hunger For Consistently Wholesome Options

Bridging the long gap between lunch and dinner, an after-school snack is a critical part of the day for most American children. According to a new survey of parents of school-aged children by Farm Rich, the average child eats one every day. Further, almost all (95%) parents whose kids have eaten after-school snacks agree they provide a needed boost of energy for afternoon activities, from sports to music lessons to homework. Yet keeping kids interested in healthy options is a daily struggle. Parents stock up on nutritious options and seek to provide snacks that will satisfy their children without spoiling their dinner. Unfortunately, time is often limited and adult supervision isn't always possible. This can leave kids to opt for less-than-ideal snacks instead of the wholesome choices their parents strive to provide.

### 1) LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES

Busy lives and full activity schedules mean lots of kids are on their own after school, often with little time to prepare and eat healthy snacks.

- **Parents Keep Out!** Nearly half (47%) of parents say they aren't typically with their children during the time between school and dinner. This group reports that siblings (36%) and friends (30%) are more likely after-school companions, if kids aren't spending that time alone (27%).

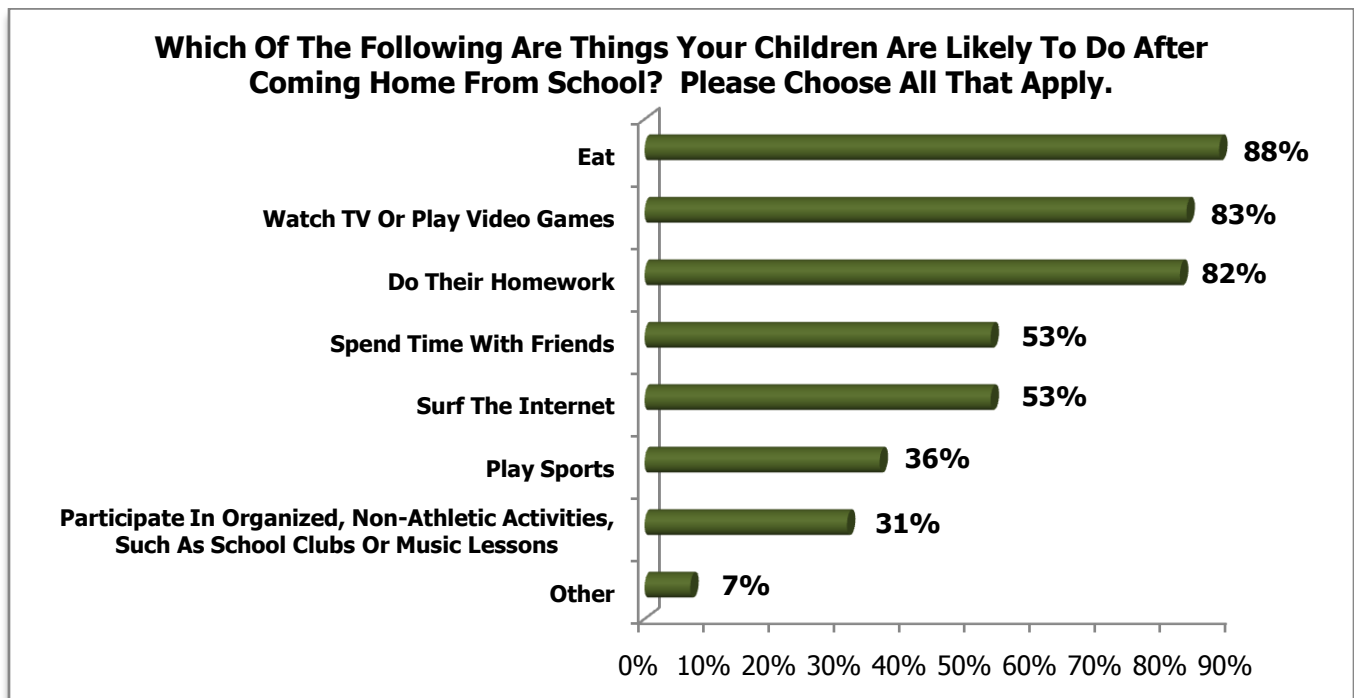


\*Among Respondents Whose Children Do Not Typically Spend Time With Parents Or Other Adult Family Members

- **Kid Chefs.** Perhaps this is why more than a third (34%) of parents admit their kids are in charge of choosing and preparing their own snacks when they get home from school.
- **Only One Cook In The Kitchen.** Parents also admit that when it comes to snacking, their children are left to prepare their own three times each week on average.
- **On The Clock.** More than half (54%) of parents say their kids typically head out for activities after coming home from school. Among this group, two-thirds (66%) report their children are only home for an hour at most before running out the door again, which doesn't always leave ample time for preparing and eating healthy snacks.
- **Long Afternoons.** Yet the importance of an after-school snack is clear: The average amount of time between lunch and dinner for American children is 5 hours, and nearly half (49%) of parents admit it's actually six or more.

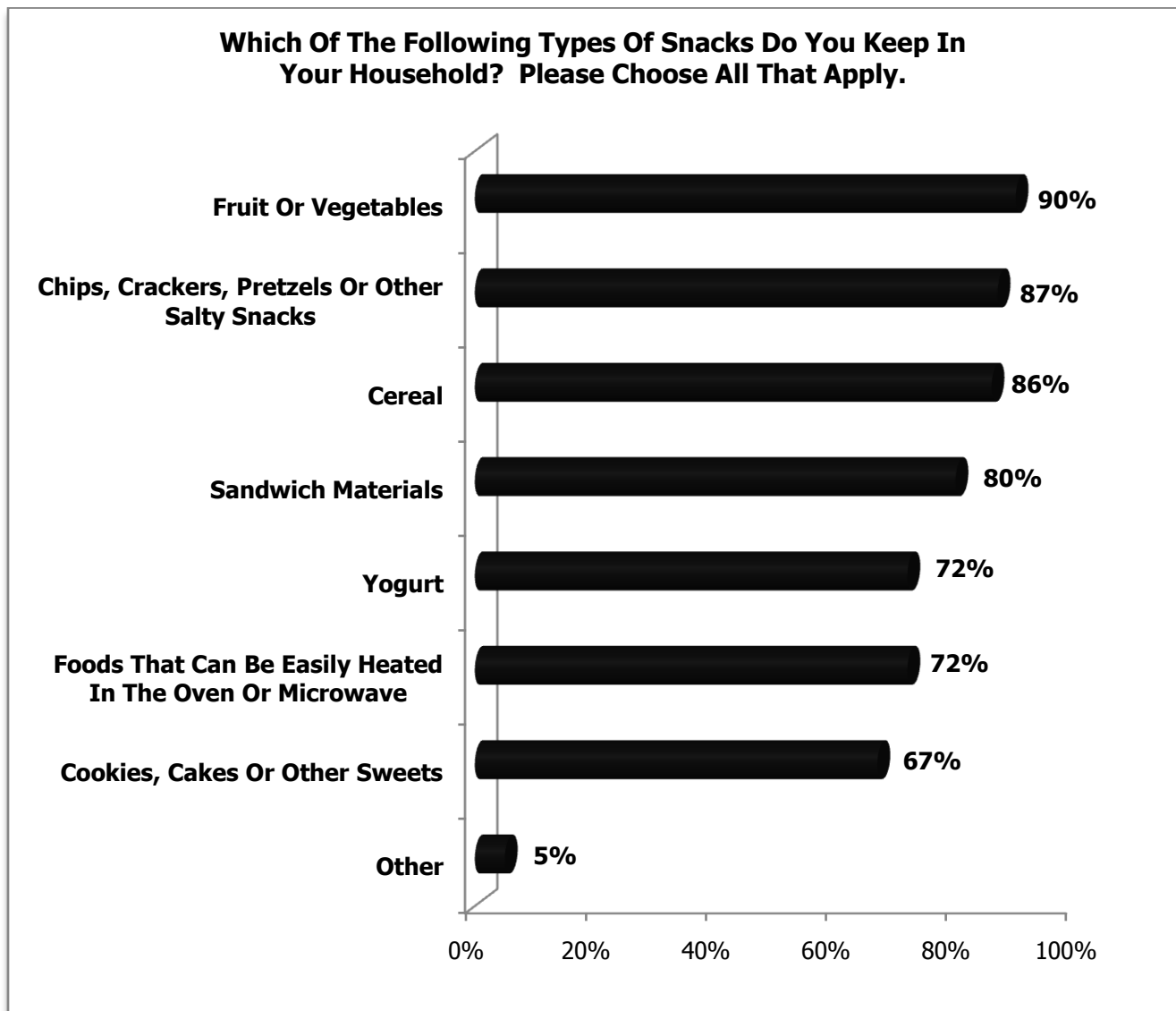
## 2) A DAILY OPPORTUNITY

- **Leading Activity.** Almost nine in ten (88%) American parents say their children are likely to eat when they come home from school, even more than those who say they're likely to watch TV or play video games (83%). With snacking so widespread at this time of day, parents have a unique opportunity to get something wholesome into kids' hands – before the remote control.



- **Coming Home Hungry.** Additionally, nearly two-thirds (63%) of parents whose children have eaten after-school snacks say their kids come home from school hungry and in need of fuel for activities. Twelve percent report that their children find snacking an exciting part of their day.

- **Snacks On Hand.** Most parents make the effort to keep their kitchens full of a wide range of snacking options, from fruits and vegetables (90%) to chips, crackers and pretzels (87%), cereal (86%) or sandwich materials (80%).

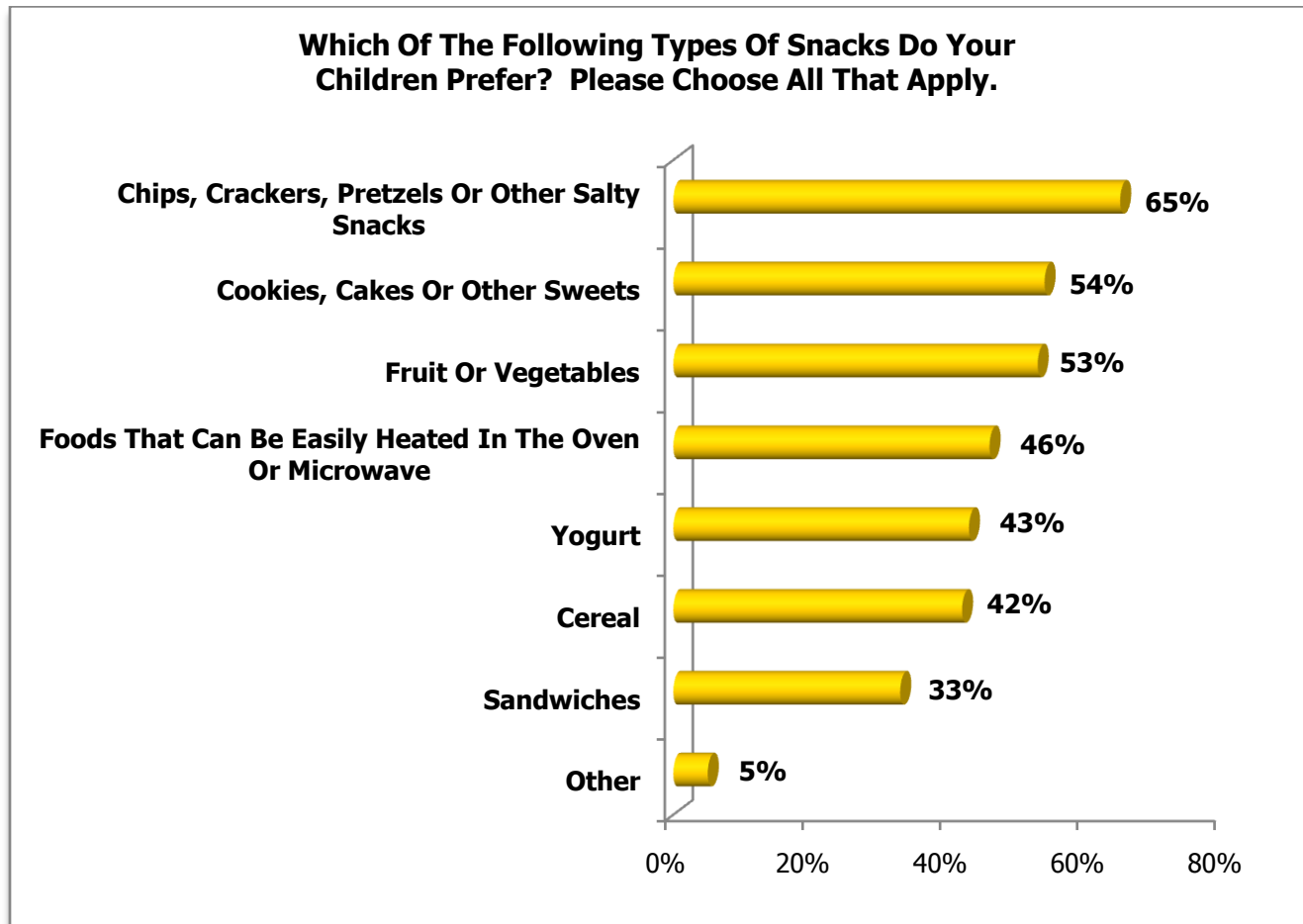


- **Easily Heated.** Over seven in ten (72%) parents say they also like to keep snacks that can be easily heated in an oven or microwave.
- **Keeping Them Warm.** More parents whose kids prepare their own snacks three days per week or more say they keep easy-to-heat snacks available, compared to those whose kids fend for themselves less often (78% vs. 64%).
- **What Parents Look For.** Aside from satisfying their hunger (75%), parents say that providing snacks high in nutrients like protein or calcium (56%) and in appropriately sized portions (54%) is important. Qualities like being low in fat and calories (36%) and able to be served warm (16%) are also on their healthy-snacking radar.

### 3) SNACK REALITIES

Despite parents' efforts to select healthy snacking options for their children, whether or not their kids take advantage of them is another story.

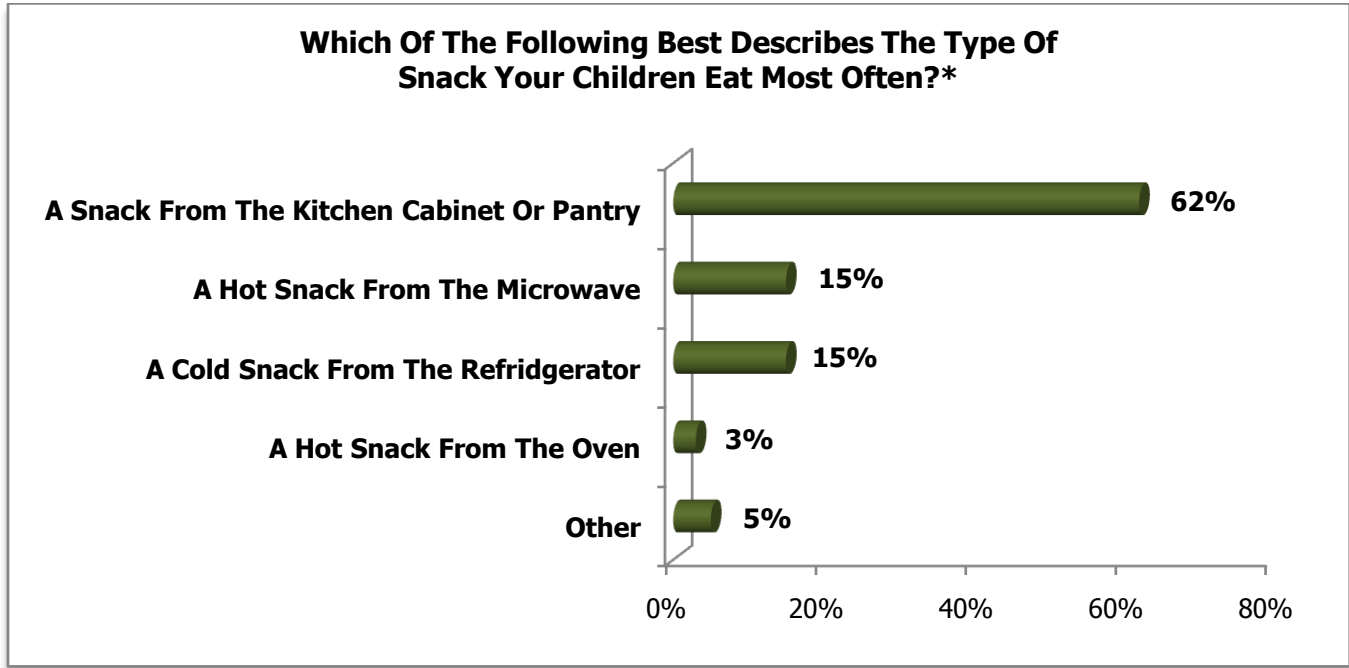
- **Kids' Likely Choices.** Salty snacks (65%) top the list of what parents say they go for, followed by cookies, cakes and sweets (54%).



- **Not Better With Age.** Nor are children necessarily learning as they grow. A third (33%) of parents think their snacking habits get worse as they get older, compared to 26 percent who think they improve.
- **Snacking Red Flags.** Not spoiling their children's appetites for dinner is a concern for nearly half (46%) of American parents when choosing snacks for their school-age kids. Other worries include whether the snacks they're providing can tempt their children away from junk food (27%) and offer enough variety to keep them interested (14%).
- **Out Of Reach.** Yet parents don't always know what their kids are nibbling on. When they aren't snacking at home, four in ten (40%) parents say their kids are most likely to be given after-school snacks at friends' houses. Many others count convenience stores (33%), supermarkets (27%) and fast-food chains (27%) as likely places where their children might buy their own snacks.

#### 4) OLD ROUTINES

- **The Dominance Of The Snack Cabinet.** Most parents whose kids have eaten after-school snacks (62%) say the kitchen cabinet or pantry is the most likely source for the majority of what their kids eat when they come home. Hot snacks from the microwave are a distant second, at 15 percent.



\*Among Respondents Whose Children Have Eaten After-School Snacks

- **Lacking In Warmth.** In fact, four in ten (40%) parents whose children have eaten after-school snacks say a hot snack from the microwave or oven is something their kids have once a week or less.
- **Liking It Hotter.** Yet nearly a third (31%) of all parents say they'd prefer their children eat a hot snack from the microwave or oven after school, rather than one from the cabinet or the refrigerator.
- **Searching For Interest.** Parents and children will try almost anything to make snack-time more compelling. Among those who report their children resorting to out-of-the-ordinary choices, 22 percent say leftovers are the most unusual after-school snack any of their kids has ever eaten. One in five (20%) count breakfast items as an offbeat after-school choice, while eighteen percent say strange combinations, or foods not usually intended for snacking, have been on the menu.