

Bye-Bye Bus, Hello Minivan: Cars Overtake School Buses as the Primary Mode of Back-to-School Transport, a Cars.com Survey Reveals

55% of parents buckle up for long carpool lines, while the school bus sees a 31% drop since pre-pandemic

CHICAGO, Aug. 13, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- [Cars.com](#) (NYSE: CARS), a leading digital automotive marketplace and solutions provider, shares new data revealing parents' decisions on safe back-to-school transportation this year. While 39% of parents say they will send their kids back for an in-person education in the fall, 53% are opting for virtual learning. For those returning to the classroom, school buses and public transit will take a backseat as many parents opt to drive themselves¹.

"As parents and local officials make the decision on how the school year will look, it's clear that back-to-school routines will change. We found that the majority of parents will opt for their family vehicle as the primary mode of back-to-school transport, nearly double the number of parents sending their kids on the bus. Interestingly, we're seeing a significant increase in the number of families planning to carpool with friends or neighbors, which may mean parents feel it's still a safer alternative to the school bus," said Jenni Newman, editor-in-chief for Cars.com. "It's not entirely surprising to see that parents want to drive their kids themselves. Americans have used their cars as a safe, reliable escape throughout the pandemic, and the value in personal car ownership will only increase as we continue to feel the impact of this crisis into the second half of the year."

Of those kids returning for in-person learning, it won't be on the school bus.

- 55% of parents plan to use their car to take their children to school, and parents planning to carpool with other families is up 22% from pre-pandemic.
- 30% of parents will have their kids take the school bus, a 31% drop compared to pre-pandemic.
- 3% of parents will have their kids take public transit, a 25% decrease from before the pandemic.
- 73% of parents are planning for longer drop-off lines this year as more people drive.

For those planning to carpool, cleanliness is a top priority.

- 79% will require masks for all passengers in their car.
- 68% will sanitize their car regularly.
- 50% will travel with fewer people in the car.

"For families planning to return to school, recent [CDC guidelines](#) on ridesharing recommend that every child in the carpool, as well as the driver, wear cloth face coverings for the entire ride and high-touch surfaces be frequently sanitized," Newman said. "Parents should try to safely distance passengers as much as possible while in the car, and consider rolling down the windows to increase airflow."

With more time spent in the car, [Cars.com](#) has found that for [68% of consumers the pandemic](#) has sped up their purchase timeline for a new or upgraded vehicle². Furthermore, the number of people searching online for features such as moonroofs and sunroofs to allow for more airflow has increased since before the pandemic. Cars.com recommends the following top five family-friendly vehicles for the upcoming school year that allow for more distancing within the vehicle.

- **Subaru Outback:** The Outback has a loyal following for adventure-seeking families due to its quiet, spacious interior, excellent visibility and affordable pricing. With comfortable seats in the front and back for a family of five, this popular wagon has plenty of legroom and a backseat that sits slightly raised, providing stadium-style seating to help passengers see out the front windshield. MSRP: \$26,645-\$39,695
- **Chrysler Pacifica:** The Pacifica is popular among minivan fans because of its roomy interior, optional captain's chairs or bench seating in select models, and quiet, comfortable ride. Seating seven to eight people, ample legroom and storage make it a perfect fit for busy families. The rear-seat Uconnect Theater system and optional panoramic moonroof offer all riders an escape. MSRP: \$34,045-\$44,795
- **Volkswagen Atlas:** Cars.com's 2020 Family Car of the Year boasts a spacious interior and a comfortable, quiet ride. A roomy third row provides enough space even for adults to enjoy the ride, while the bench-style second row easily allows three child seats to fit across. A moonroof option is available. MSRP: \$31,545-\$49,195
- **Hyundai Palisade:** Cars.com's Best of 2020 carries seven to eight people comfortably depending on its roomy second- and third-row seating configuration. The luxury-grade interior provides riders with a relaxing, quiet ride, and large side windows and an optional moonroof are great for a lively game of I Spy or car bingo. MSRP: \$31,975-\$46,825
- **Ford Expedition:** Large outside and in, the Expedition is one of the few full-size SUVs that provides the spacious interior suggested by its exterior bulk, with the hands-down roomiest third row even if you don't

opt for the extended Expedition Max. With a maximum seating capacity of eight, it easily accommodates your kids and other carpoolers with plenty of room. MSRP: \$52,810-\$77,085

For more information about car cleanliness and other buying tips and tricks, visit [Cars.com](https://www.cars.com) for more details.

¹ *Cars.com survey results July 22-Aug. 4; 1,035 respondents*

² *Cars.com survey results June 23-24; 934 respondents*

About CARS

CARS is a leading digital marketplace and solutions provider for the automotive industry that connects car shoppers with sellers. Launched in 1998 with the flagship marketplace [Cars.com](https://www.cars.com) and headquartered in Chicago, the Company empowers shoppers with the data, resources and digital tools needed to make informed buying decisions and seamlessly connect with automotive retailers. In a rapidly changing market, CARS enables dealerships and OEMs with innovative technical solutions and data-driven intelligence to better reach and influence ready-to-buy shoppers, increase inventory turn and gain market share. In 2018, CARS acquired Dealer Inspire, an innovative technology company building solutions that future-proof dealerships with more efficient operations, a faster and easier car buying process, and connected digital experiences that sell and service more vehicles.

CARS properties include [Cars.com](https://www.cars.com)™, DealerRater®, Dealer Inspire®, [Auto.com](https://www.auto.com)™, [PickupTrucks.com](https://www.pickuptrucks.com)™ and [NewCars.com](https://www.newcars.com)®. For more information, visit [www.Cars.com](https://www.cars.com).

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