

Maternal Sleep Crisis: New National Surveys Show 86% of U.S. Mothers Lose Sleep Every Night

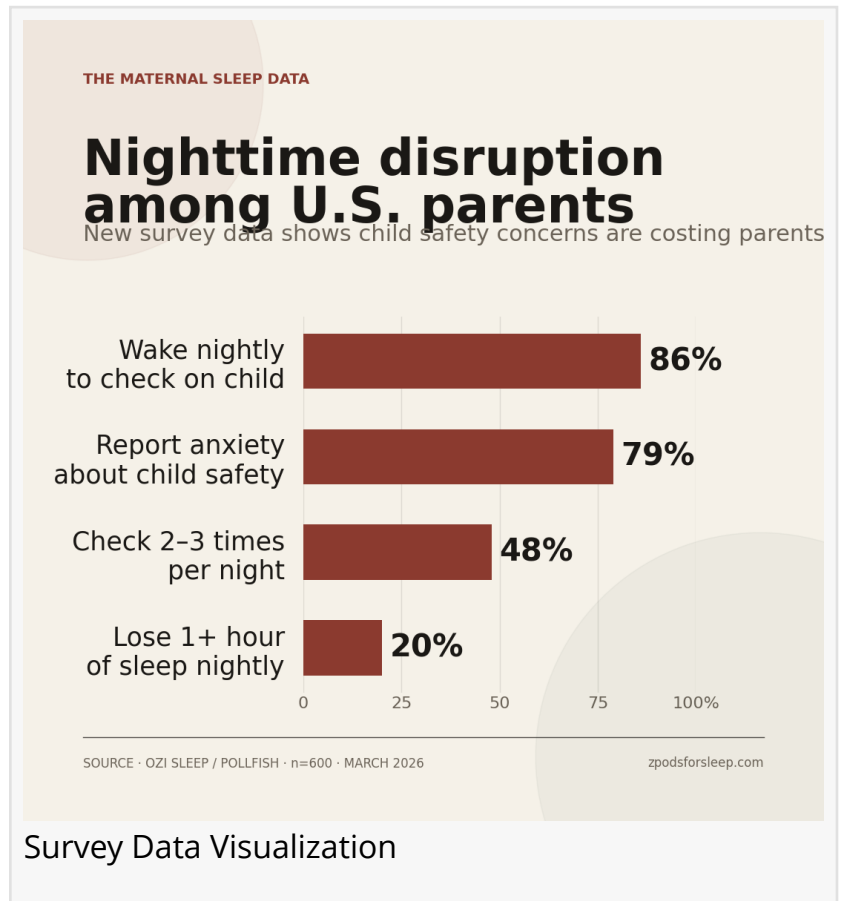
New Pollfish data highlights widespread nighttime anxiety among parents and elevated safety risks in autism households.

ST.CHARLES, MO, UNITED STATES, May 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the United States marks World Maternal Mental Health Day and approaches Mother's Day, two new national surveys reveal a widespread and persistent maternal sleep crisis, with the majority of U.S. mothers reporting nightly sleep disruption driven by concern for their children.

A March 2026 survey of 600 U.S. parents conducted by Pollfish and commissioned by OZI Sleep found that 86% of parents wake nightly to check on their child, with more than half reporting disruptions every single night. Nearly half (48%) check on their child two to three times per night, while 20% report losing more than one hour of sleep every night due to these interruptions.

Among families raising children with autism, the burden is significantly higher. An April 2026 survey of 200 U.S. caregivers, commissioned by zPods for Sleep, found that 92% experience nightly sleep disruption, and 77.5% describe themselves as frequently or severely exhausted. The data also identified a critical safety concern: 17.5% of children were reported to experience sleepwalking, requiring active nighttime supervision.

Across both surveys, 79% of parents reported anxiety about their child's safety during sleep.



The findings point to a consistent pattern of what researchers describe as nighttime “hyper-vigilance,” where parents repeatedly wake to monitor their child’s safety, preventing restorative sleep.

The results align with a 2025 review in Sleep Medicine Reviews, which identified poor maternal sleep as one of the strongest modifiable risk factors for postpartum mood disorders and long-term mental health challenges.

Survey responses highlight the emotional toll behind the data. One caregiver wrote:

“I’m afraid to fall asleep through the night. The exhaustion and the heartbreak — it’s tearing my body apart.”

Similar expressions of emotional and physical strain appeared in roughly 40% of responses among [autism caregivers](#).

While sleep disruption has traditionally been associated with infancy, the new data suggests the issue persists well beyond early childhood — particularly in families managing developmental and behavioral conditions.

Nearly half (49.5%) of autism caregivers identified sleep as their single most significant caregiving challenge, surpassing behavioral and educational concerns.

“When most parents are waking every night and reporting anxiety tied to their child’s safety, this is no longer an individual issue — it’s a population-level pattern,” said Gary Kellmann, CEO of zPods for Sleep and OZI Sleep. “Caregivers don’t need more optimization tools. They need solutions that reduce nighttime vigilance.”

In response, a growing segment of the sleep technology industry is shifting toward [passive](#)



“Autism Sleep Risk Graphic Two”



“Parental Sleep Disruption Chart”

[monitoring and safety-focused sleep environments.](#)

zPods for Sleep produces [enclosed sensory beds designed to reduce nighttime wandering](#) and improve safety for children with autism and sensory processing differences. Its sister company, OZI Sleep, develops contactless under-the bed sheets sleep monitoring technology that allows caregivers to monitor sleep patterns without cameras or wearable devices.

Both products are wellness tools and are not classified as medical devices.

Methodology

The general parent survey was conducted by Pollfish in March 2026 among 600 U.S. adults identifying as parents. The autism caregiver survey was conducted in April 2026 among 200 U.S. adults identifying as parents or primary caregivers of a child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Source: Pollfish surveys, March–April 2026

About zPods for Sleep

zPods is a U.S.-based company headquartered in St. Charles, Missouri, focused on improving sleep and safety for children with autism and special needs. Its sister company, OZI Sleep, develops contactless sleep monitoring technology for families. zPods is a Certified Autism Resource and a two-time Arch Grants winner. Learn more at zpodsforsleep.com and ozisleep.com.

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