



THE GOOD CHILDHOOD REPORT



Youth Summary

December 2018

**The
Children's
Society**

**No child
should feel
alone**

WHAT IS WELL-BEING?

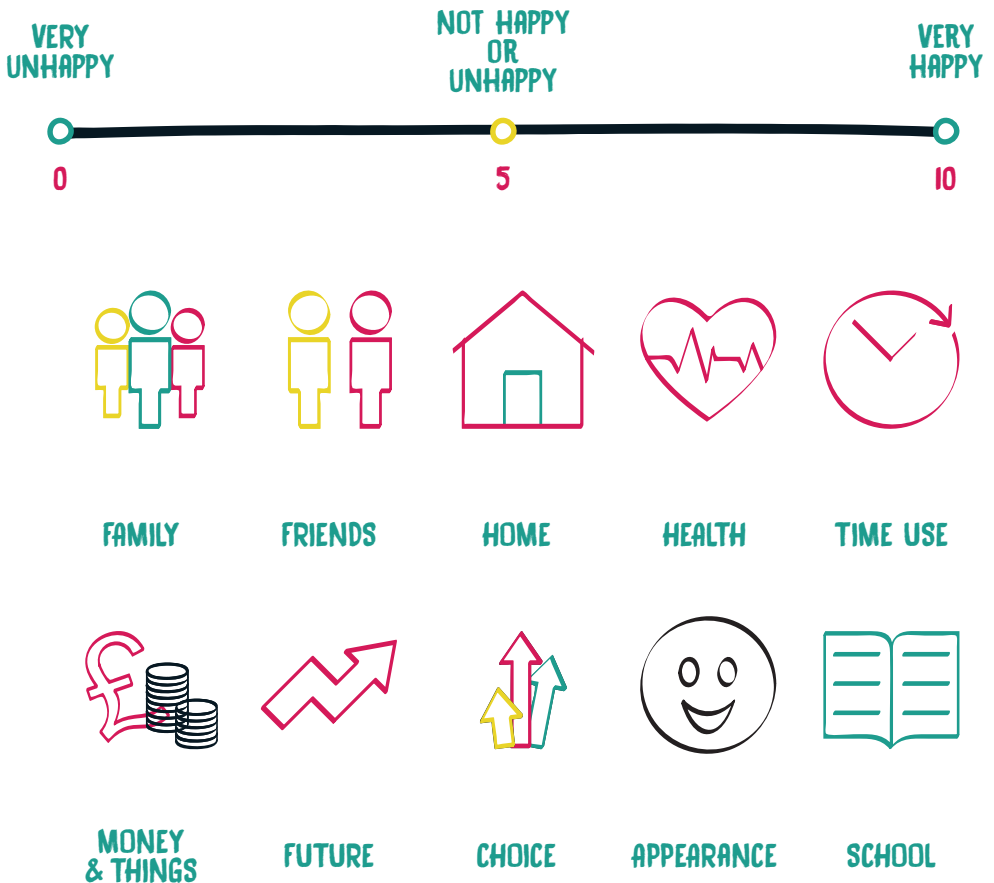
The Children's Society has been researching young people's well-being for more than 10 years, and we have surveyed over 65,000 young people about how they feel about their lives. Only by hearing directly from young people like you can we actually know what's going on, and work out how best to support those of you who might be struggling.

Happiness, relaxation, health, having enough money, doing well at school, getting on well with friends and family, or getting a good job are some examples of what well-being might mean to you. Hopefully you feel like your life is going pretty well, but it's important to remember that life is full of ups and downs, and everyone's well-being changes over time.

We measure young people's happiness by **ASKING THEM**.

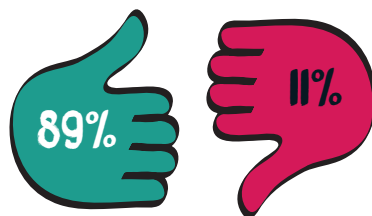
We ask questions about their life overall and about 10 different aspects of life.

We ask young people to score how happy they are with these ten different aspects of their life using the scale below:



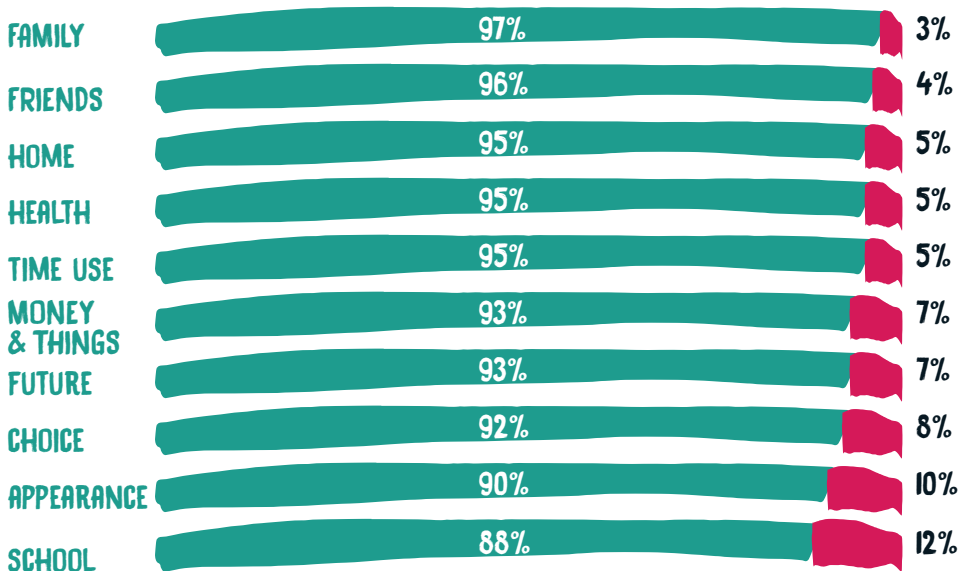
AND HERE'S WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US:

Nine out of 10 young people aged 10–17 score five or more, so overall most young are happy with their lives.



But about 1 in 10 score themselves as less than five. It's important to know which young people are unhappy with their lives – and why – as it helps us to think about ways we might be able to support you.

Percentage of young people who were happy and unhappy with each area of life:



LOOKING BACK OVER TIME

There's some good news and some bad news.

Young people became happier with their lives in the 15 years from 1995 to 2010...but then things got worse again and now young people's happiness with their lives is as low as it was 20 years ago.

It is important we find out why this happened so we can understand what might need to change to improve young people's well-being again.

Children's happiness with life as a whole from 1994 to 2016:

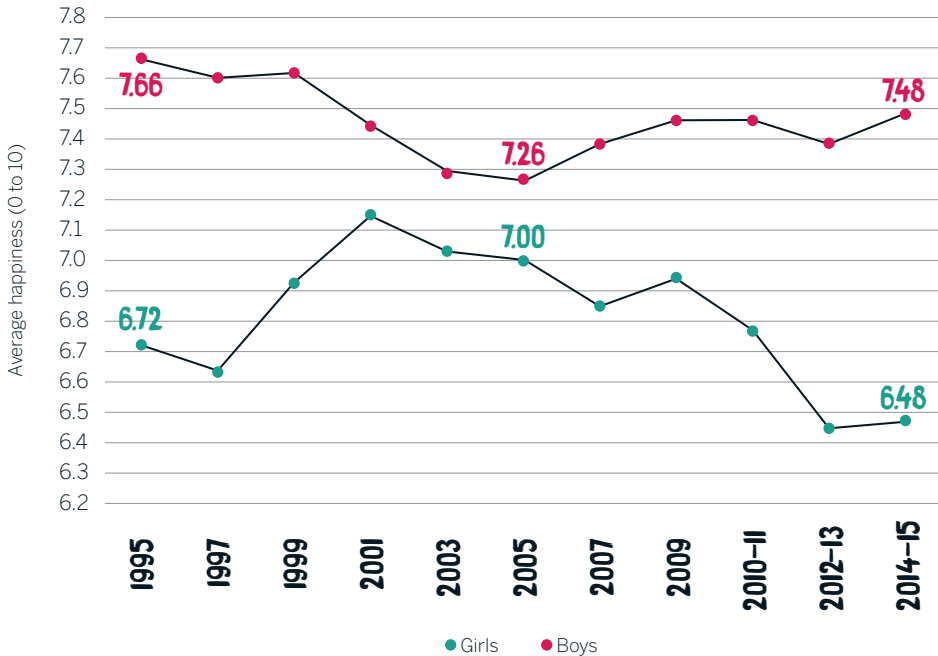


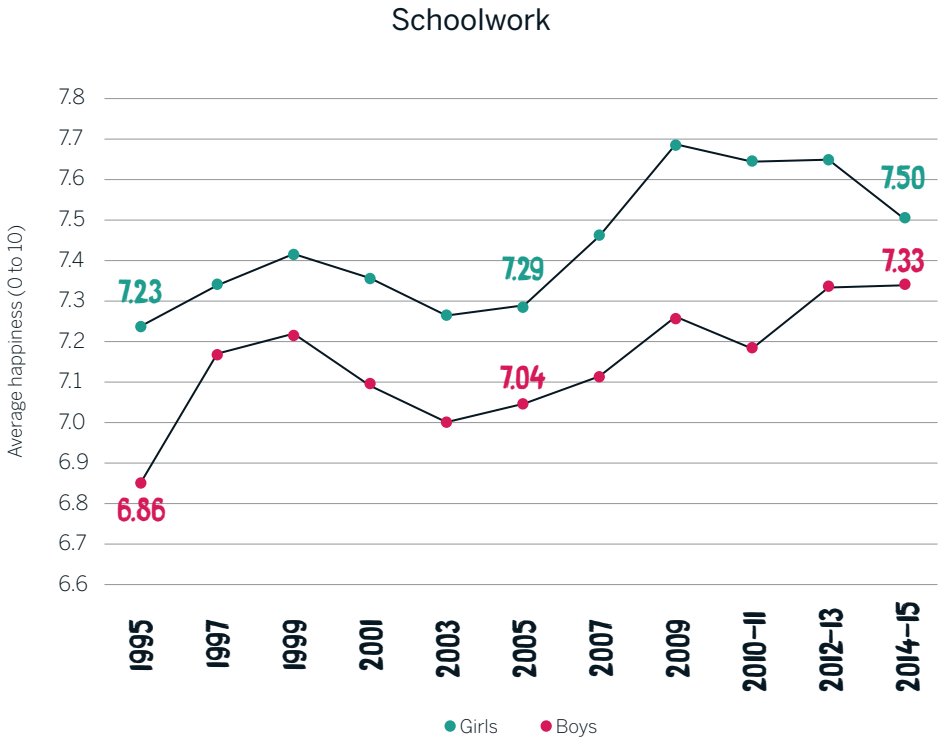
WHAT DO GIRLS AND BOYS TELL US?

Everybody worries about different things and each person's worries are unique. When we look at what young people across England tell us, girls and boys tend to worry more about some things more than others.

Girls tell us they are more unhappy with their appearance, and boys tell us they are more worried about their schoolwork. It's been this way since at least 1995 – as you can see in these graphs.

Appearance





For both girls and boys their relationships with people around them, like friends and family, are important for their well-being.

There are some slight differences. Girls' well-being is damaged more than boys if they argue with their parents a lot. Boys well-being is damaged more than girls if they do not spend enough time outside of school with their friends.

UNHAPPY WITH YOUR APPEARANCE? YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

One of the most common things boys and girls tell us they are unhappy about is their appearance.

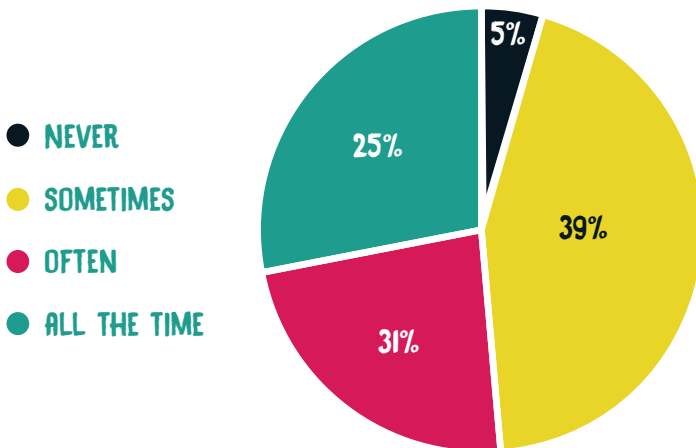
'Some girls wear make-up to fit in, if you don't wear it you get insulted. If you do, you get called a slag and get told off by teachers.'

Girl, Secondary school

'You have to act cool to fit in at first, then once you're good friends you kind of form groups and different people have different groups based on how they act and appearance.'

Boy, Secondary school

That is why we asked young people how often they hear comments and jokes about other students' appearance at school.



GENDER STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are ideas we have about people where we judge them without even knowing them. People often base these judgements on whether the person is male or female – these are gender stereotypes.

We asked young people what their friends would say was the most important quality for boys and girls to have:



GOOD LOOKING



CARING



FUNNY



TOUGH



HAVING GOOD CLOTHES



WORKING HARD AT SCHOOL

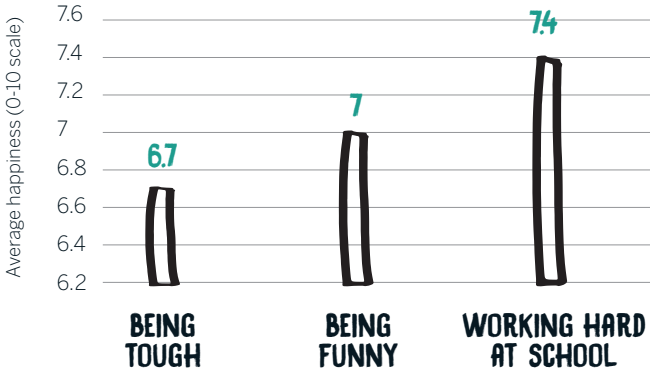
So what do young people say?

Young people thought their friends would say that being good-looking is the most important quality for both boys and girls, and working hard at school is the least important.

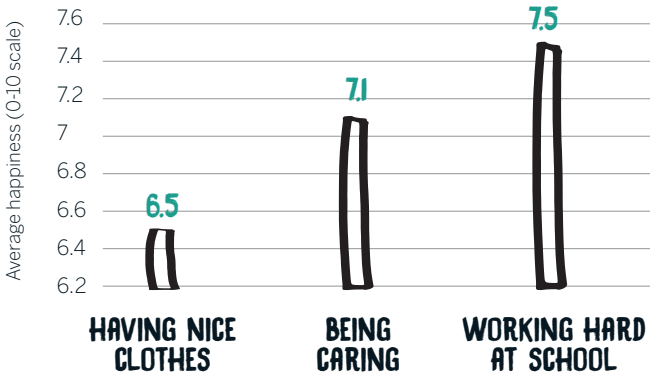
Boys	Girls
Good looking 32%	Good looking 44%
Funny 23%	Caring 28%
Caring 18%	Funny 9%
Tough 14%	Having good clothes 9%
Working hard at school 9%	Working hard at school 8%
Having good clothes 5%	Tough 3%

What we really wanted to know was if trying to live up to these stereotypes was making boys and girls unhappy with their lives.

Children's well-being based on the qualities they thought their friends most valued in a boy



Well-being of children based on the qualities they thought their friends most valued in a girl



Children who thought their friends valued boys or girls who worked hard at school were happiest.

Children who thought their friends valued boys who were tough or girls who had nice clothes were least happy.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

True or false?

1. Children are happier with their lives now than they were twenty years ago.
 True False
2. Boys are less happy with their schoolwork than girls.
 True False
3. Children think being funny is the quality most valued by their friends.
 True False
4. Girls worry about their appearance more than boys.
 True False
5. Spending time with friends outside school is more important for girls than boys.
 True False

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

If there's a mental or emotional health issue you're worried about, you can find information and advice here for yourself or someone you know: childrenssociety.org.uk/resource-vault

WANT TO HELP MAKE THINGS CHANGE?

If you are aged 14 or over you can sign up to get involved in making a change for young people in your local community or school. We'll give you all the tools and support you need to meet with people in power and make a difference. If you're interested, visit childrenssociety.org.uk/make-change

