

CHILD OF THE NEW CENTURY UPDATE 2011



Child of the new Century

SOME FINDINGS FROM THE AGE 7 SURVEY

As you may remember, the most recent survey took place in 2008 when the children were aged 7. We were delighted to speak to more than 13,800 families with over 14,000 study children. This year's update provides a summary of some of the findings. We hope you find them interesting!

SCHOOL

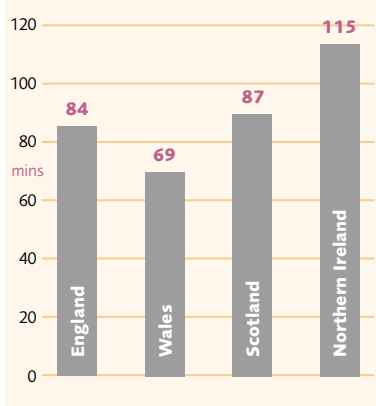
Type of school

- Most children attended state schools but 1 in 25 (4%) attended a fee-paying school. Rates of attending fee-paying schools were higher in England (5%) than in Scotland (3%), Northern Ireland (2%) or Wales (1%).
- Around 9 in 10 children (89%) were still at the same school they were attending at age 5. Just over 1 in 10 (11%) had changed school at least once.

Homework

- Nearly all children received homework (98%). On average, 7-year-olds spent 86 minutes per week doing homework. Children in Northern Ireland spent the most time on homework (115 minutes per week) and children in Wales spent the least (69 minutes per week) (Graph 1).
- Around 8 in 10 (79%) received help from someone at home with their homework. Amongst these children around a third received help every day and a further third several times a week.
- 1 in 20 children (5%) received tutoring or extra lessons outside of school in reading, writing or maths.

Graph 1: Average minutes of homework per week at age 7 by UK country



Out-of-school clubs

- Just over a quarter (28%) attended either a breakfast or after-school club at age 7. Amongst those attending a club around three quarters (77%) went to an after-school club and 4 in 10 (39%) to a breakfast club. Around 1 in 6 children (16%) went to both.
- Children who went to both breakfast and after-school clubs typically attended for around 9 hours a week. Those who attended just one type of club were there for 3 to 4 hours a week on average.

Parent's satisfaction with school and educational aspirations

- The vast majority of parents were satisfied with their child's current school (94% of both mothers and fathers). Mothers were more likely to be 'very satisfied' (62% compared with 55% of fathers) but were also more likely to be 'dissatisfied' (6% compared with 3%).
- Almost all parents said they would like their child to stay on in school past the minimum leaving age (98% of mothers and 97% of fathers) and amongst these parents almost all wanted their child to go to university (97%).



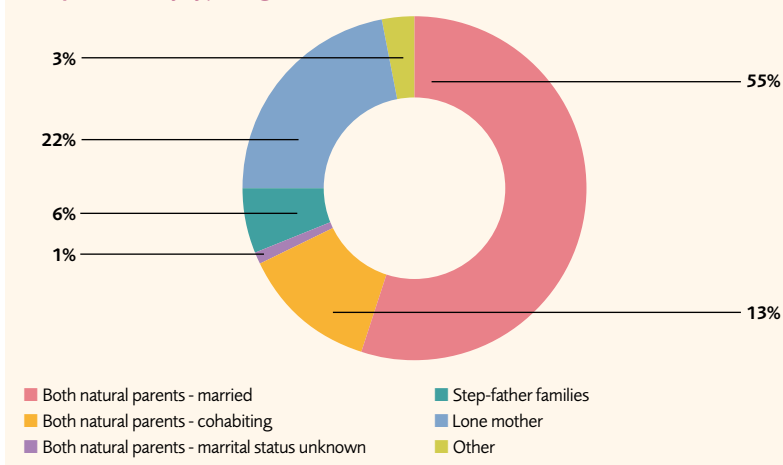
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FAMILY LIFE

- In total just under 7 in 10 children lived with both of their natural parents. Over half (55%) lived with married natural parents and 1 in 8 (13%) lived with cohabiting natural parents (Graph 2).
- Just over 1 in 5 lived in families with a lone-mother (22%) and just over 1 in 20 lived in a family with a step-father (6%) (Graph 2).
- The proportion living with both natural parents has been falling steadily from just under 9 in 10 when children were aged 9 months.
- Up to age 5 the decline was mainly caused by a reduction in the number of children living with cohabiting parents (from 24% to 14%) but between ages 5 and 7 the decrease was largely explained by a fall in the number of children living with married parents (from 63% to 55%).
- Between ages 5 and 7 the proportion of children who had at least one natural sibling (with whom they shared both natural parents) remained largely unchanged at just over three quarters (77%). The proportion living with a half-sibling (with whom they shared one natural parent) increased from 12% to 16%.



Graph 2: Family type - age 7



- Over 1 in 4 7-year-olds did not live with their natural father but 7 in 10 of these children were in contact with their fathers. Over half of non-resident fathers were said to make no maintenance payments.
- 1 in 5 (20%) families had moved house since the age 5 survey. The most common reasons given were to move to a larger home (37%), a better home (21%) or a better area (20%).

PARENTING

- Fathers were more likely than mothers to feel that they were not able to spend as much time as they would like with their children (56% compared with 30%). Unsurprisingly, mothers in paid employment were more likely to feel this way than those who were not (38% compared with 17%).
- Over 6 in 10 (62%) mothers viewed themselves as either 'very good' or 'better than average' parents. Those aged over 30 were more likely to see themselves as good parents than those under 30 (64% compared with 55%). Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and black mothers were more likely to feel they were good parents than were white mothers.
- As found at ages 3 and 5, mothers were more likely to read to their 7-year-olds every day than fathers (42% compared with 16%). However, the proportion doing so had fallen from 62% at age 3 and 53% at age 5, possibly because their children were spending more time at school and learning to read on their own. At age 3 just under a quarter (23%) of fathers read to their child every day, this fell to 1 in 6 (16%) by age 5 and remained unchanged at age 7.
- Almost three quarters (73%) of fathers played physically active games with their children at least once a week, compared with around half of mothers (51%).



HEALTH

Exercise

- Around two thirds of children (68%) participated in some form of organised sport or physical activity (outside of school hours) at least once a week. Amongst the remaining third almost all (95%) did no sport at all.
- Children with a television in their bedroom were much less likely to participate in a sporting activity at least twice a week (34% compared with 48% of those with no TV in their room). Similarly, those who watched 3-5 hours of television per day were much less likely to do sports than those who watched TV for less than an hour (30% compared with 51%).

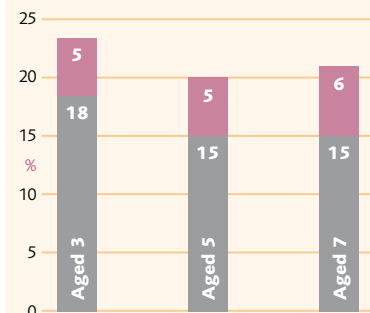
Diet

- Just over half of 7-year-olds ate three or more pieces of fruit per day although there some big variations between different groups. The greatest variation was by parental qualifications – those whose parents had degrees were almost twice as likely to eat three or more pieces of fruit a day as those whose parents had no qualifications (61% compared with 33%).

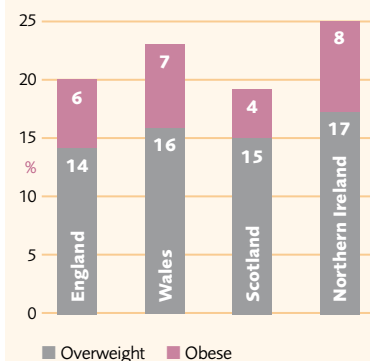
Obesity

- At age 7, just over 1 in 5 children (21%) were classified as being overweight or obese, compared with 23% at age 3 and 20% at age 5 (Graph 3.1).
- Around 1 in 16 (6%) was obese and just over 1 in 7 (15%) were overweight (but not obese).
- As was also the case at age 5, 7-year-old girls were more likely than boys to be classified as overweight (16% compared with 13%) or obese (7% compared with 5%).
- Children in Wales and Northern Ireland were slightly more likely to be overweight or obese than children in England or Scotland (Graph 3.2).
- Children whose parents had no qualifications were twice as likely to be obese as those whose parents had degree-level qualifications (8% compared with 4%).

Graph 3.1: Overweight and obese children (age 3,5 and 7)



Graph 3.2: Overweight and obese children age 7 by UK country



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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ABOUT THE FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

This research would not be possible without the help of the children and families in the study. Thank you very much for taking part in the Child of the New Century study. The next survey will take place in 2012 when the children will be aged 11. We hope we can count on you to take part.

How can I find out more?

The majority of the findings in this leaflet are taken from a report called 'Millennium Cohort Study Fourth Survey: A User's Guide to Initial Findings', which was published in October 2010. The full version of this report is available on the CLS website, alongside reports based on the earlier surveys: www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/mcs4.

How can you interpret the findings in this leaflet in relation to your own family?

These results we have reported are averages for all of the families and children in the study. Family life is very diverse and the experiences described here may not be typical of your family or the other families you know with children of this age. This is inevitable when information from so many families is summarised in this way.

You should also bear in mind that these are initial findings. Researchers will be able to examine, in much more detail, the differences between families and children and the reasons for these differences. For example, the extent to which individual parents engage in activities with their children will depend on many things including whether or not they are in work, how many other children they have, the area in which they live and the time of year that they were interviewed. The effects of these factors have not been explored in these initial results.

What can you do if you are concerned about your child or if you would like advice and guidance on bringing up children?

If you are concerned about your child's health, behaviour or physical development, speak to your GP.

If you have concerns about your child's educational development, speak to their teacher or headteacher or your local

education authority or board. Parents Centre (www.parentscentre.gov.uk) provides information and support for parents on how to help with their child's learning. You can also get advice about educational issues from the government departments responsible for education in the UK country in which you live:

- England: Department for Education (www.education.gov.uk)
- Wales: Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (www.wales.gov.uk)
- Scotland: Schools Directorate (www.scotland.gov.uk)
- Northern Ireland: Department for Education (www.deni.gov.uk)

Family Lives (www.familylives.org.uk or 0808 800 222) provides advice and support on parenting issues while the Citizens Advice Bureau (www.citizensadvice.org.uk or local office) offers help with a wide range of other issues.

Keeping in touch

If you change your address or phone number, please let us know so that we can contact you in the future.

You can notify us by:

- Calling us free (from a UK landline) on 0800 092 1250
- Emailing us at childnc@ioe.ac.uk
- Completing the contact form on the study website: www.childnc.net
- Or writing to us at Child of the New Century, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Freepost LON20095, London, WC1H 0BR (you won't need a stamp if you post your letter in the UK).

