

Barnardos Childhood 2007 Poll: Happiness and Relationships

Childhood then and now (slide 10)

- Eight out of ten parents think their children's childhood is better than their own/ with just over half (54%) thinking it's a lot better
- Three out of four children think their childhood is better than their parents

Why? (slide 11)

- All Parents (top 3) : More money/ "more toys/ games stuff"/ opportunities
- All Children (top 3): Money/ "more toys/ games stuff"/ opportunities
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Over one third of children (37%) have television in their own room (slide 8)

- 28% of 5 to 9-year-olds have TV in their own room
- 43% of 10 to 14-year-olds have TV in their own room

Happiness (slide 12)

- 85% of parents rate their children's happiness 8 or more on scale of 1 to 10
- 73% of young people rate their own happiness 8 or more on scale of 1 to 10

Happiness with parental/ child relationships (slides 14 and 15)

- Nine out of ten parents think their relationship with their child is very good to excellent
- Eight out of ten children think their relationship with their parents is very good to excellent
- Over half of parents (56%) think their relationship with their children is better than they had with their own parents

Factors influencing positive relationships with children: top 5 responses... (slide 20)

Listening to children, providing safe environment, spending time together doing something children enjoy, being consistent, setting rules

Barnardos Childhood 2007 Poll: What makes a good childhood? Are we spending enough time with children?

Parents (top 5): Loving family/ access to education/ safe community/ quality time parents/ friends (slide 18)

Children (top 5): Loving family/ friends/ safe community/ access education/ family income (slide 19)

Children, like their parents, put "loving family" in the number one spot, they put friends, as the second biggest factor contributing to a good childhood. With both parents and children, "safe community" is in their top three.

Spending enough time with children...

- Six out of ten (62%) parents think parents in Ireland generally do not spend enough time with children (slide 22)
- Three out of four (76%) parents think they personally do spend enough time with children (slide 23)
- Eight out of ten (79%) children feel their parents spend enough time with them (slide 23)

- Half of parents (52%) are very satisfied with the time spent with their children (slide 24) However...

Where both parents are working full time, 36% said they were very satisfied with the amount of time they spent with their children vs 52% of parents where both parents work but one is part-time and 59% of parents where one parent stays at home (slide 24)

What do we think of work impacting on our families...

- Seven out of ten (72%) parents think Irish work patterns are impacting negatively on children. Figure drops to 18% when parents were asked if work patterns are having a negative impact in their own lives (slide 25)

Views, however, are influenced by work arrangements whether both parents are working full-time, one parent is full-time and the other part-time, or one parent is working full-time and the other is staying at home

- 26% of parents working full time are more likely to think that their personal work patterns are impacting negatively on children compared to 13% of parents where one parent is working full time and one part-time and 14%, where one parent full time work and the other at home (slide 26)

Implication is parents who both work full time are twice as likely to consider their personal work patterns are impacting negatively on children

Barnardos Childhood 2007 Poll: How healthy are our children?

Nine out of ten parents rated their children's health as excellent while 77% of children rated their own health as excellent. Eight out of ten children (79%) play organised sports once a week but that could be mandatory PE classes...

Areas of concern to parents about children in Ireland generally...

- Bullying is top concern (82% of parents), followed by overweight (64% of parents), self harm including suicide at 57% (slide 29)

However, being overweight drops to fifth place when parents are asked if it is a concern for their own children (slide 30)

Areas of concern to parents about their own children...

- Bullying is top concern (23%), anxiety/ stress (12%), depression (9%) (slide 30)
- Six out of ten parents (59%) said they had no concerns about their children in any of the following: bullying, anxiety/stress, depression, unfit, overweight self-harm including suicide, eating disorders parental conflict or undernourished (slide 30)
- Parents are a little more likely to be concerned about how their daughters are faring psychologically with the exception of bullying which is the top parental worry for both sons and daughters (slide 32)
- Parents are twice as likely to be concerned about a girl having an eating disorder than a boy and at the same time, they are significantly more worried about a girl being overweight than a boy but more worried about boys being 'unfit' than girls (slide 32)

Children participating in this poll were asked what issues impacted on their close friends.

- General for all teenagers: Bullying (39%), parental conflict in the home (19%), overweight (19%), unfit (19%), anxiety/ stress and depression (16%), eating disorders (15%) *(slide 34)*
- By the time teenagers reach 16-17 the figures have shifted: bullying is still top of the list at 29% but has fallen from 47% for the early to mid-teens. Parental conflict and eating disorders have risen to joint second place at 24% with depression at 23% *(slide 34)*

Three out of ten teenagers say their close friends have experienced none of the above – implication is seven out of ten have *(slide 34)*

Sources of advice on health:

The GP is still the main source of advice for parents on physical and mental health (92%) while three out of four children would talk to their parents if the needed advice on physical or mental health with the other 25% looking to their GP *(slide 36 and 37)*

Barnardos Childhood 2007 Poll: What behaviours worry parents... alcohol, drugs, smoking, sex

Parents of teenagers said they were aware of their children being involved in the following *(slide 39):*

- 34% drinking alcohol, 18% smoking cigarettes, 7% having sex, 2% gambling, 1% smoking cannabis
- 56% say they are not aware of their children being involved in any of this behaviour and 5% said they did not know

Nine out of ten parents surveyed said listening to their children was the key factor influencing a positive relationship with their children *(slide 20)*. Children participating in this survey were asked what, if any, activities they had discussed with their parents *(slide 40):*

- Alcohol (80%), cigarettes (71%), drugs (66%), sex (48%), serious relationship (42%), cannabis (39%), gambling (28%)
- Parents more likely to talk to their daughters about sex and relationships than their sons (54% vs 42% in relation to sex) (49% vs 36% for relationships) *(slide 41)*
- Working class parents more likely to have discussed serious relationships than middle class parents (59% vs 46%) *(slide 41)*
- Half of all parents had not had a conversation about sex by the time their children were 15 *(slide 41)*

When asked which activities their parents have set rules on, children said:

- Two out of three had been given rules about alcohol, six out of ten had been given rules about drugs, six out of ten had been given rules about smoking and four out of ten has been given rules about cannabis while four out of ten had been given rules about sex *(slide 42)*
- Parents are more likely to set rules with their sons about drugs (71% vs 55%) and rules with their daughters about sex (43% vs 31%) *(slide 43)*

Children themselves think that u-18s should not take part in *(slide 44)...*

- 64% think they should not drink alcohol – 73% of 12-13-year-olds drops to 50% at 16 to 17
- 54% think they should not have sex – which drops to 49% for 16 to 17-year-olds

- 45% think they should not smoke cigarettes which drops to 40% by the time they reach 16

Alcohol is the big attitude change as children move through their teens

Parental attitudes to all of the above...

- One in four of parents consider between the ages of 16 and 17 as acceptable ages to start drinking, with 11% saying alcohol was acceptable from age 16 on. The legal age for drinking alcohol is 18 (*slide 45*)
- Seven out of ten parents said alcohol advertising should be banned before 9pm (*slide 46*)
- 83% of parents thought age 18 and over was an acceptable age to start having sex (42% said age 18 and 41% said age 19); 7% thought it was acceptable at age 16 to have sex; 9% of parents thought it was acceptable to have sex at 17. The legal age to have sex in Ireland is 17 (*slide 45*)

Barnardos Childhood 2007 Poll: Balancing children's freedom and protection

Almost four out of five parents (79%) feel their children are less safe today compared to their own childhood. At the same time six out of ten parents think their children have more freedom than they had (*slide 49*). For example, of the children surveyed 47% go to town/city once a week without their parents (*slide 7*)

Nine out of ten parents said they believed that changes in society were contributing to the early sexualisation of children with 87% saying they were uncomfortable with this fact (*slide 56*)

Parents have an ambivalent attitude to new technology, for example, mobile phones. On the one hand they believe mobiles help them to 'keep tabs' on their children and on the other they are worried that their children are engaging in or have access to a form of communication outside of parental control. Parents were aware in qualitative research of the potential of mobile phones to be used in bullying children.

- One in three parents said they monitored their children's mobile messages with mothers doing it more than fathers (38% vs 26%) (*slides 52 and 53*)

The internet was seen to be a bigger danger since it opened children to communication from outside their local relationship network. Of the children surveyed in this poll:

- 52% go on Bebo/ My Space/ You Tube once a week (*slide 7*)
- 59% browse the internet on a weekly basis (*slide 7*)

Two out of three parents in this poll monitored their children's internet use - with mothers again doing it more than fathers (76% vs 61%) (*slides 50 and 51*). Of the parents surveyed, however, only one in three knew (correctly) that sites such as Bebo and MySpace were not responsible for their content – the other 66% either did not know or presumed incorrectly that the sites were responsible (*slide 54*).

The figures were similar for children themselves with almost two out of three either not knowing or presuming incorrectly that the sites were responsible for content. (*slide 54*) Three out of four parents said these sites should be responsible for their content while almost six out of ten young people also agreed (22% said no and 20% said 'don't know') (*slide 55*)