



Children's Worlds National Report Germany

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Introduction

Though we are not able to cover all aspects of children's lives and childhood is constituted heterogeneously, we want to try to give an introduction to what it means to grow up in Germany these days. However, anyhow, the focus should remain on the findings of the Children's Worlds survey.

Luckily, we have a lot of surveys about children in general as well as particular groups of children or children growing up in different contexts that give us an idea about children and childhood in Germany. There is for example a governmental Children and Youth Report that has to be made in each legislative period, and several longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of different organizations and projects, which we can refer to.

1.1 Context and Population

External influences

The Federal Republic of Germany is about 360,000 km² and divided into 16 federal states. The national census of 2011 reports that Germany currently has a population of 80.2 million and is therefore the most populous country of the European Union with a population density of 226 inhabitants per km².

The survey was held in the new as well as in the old federal states of Germany, because these two regions differ demographically from each other in population and living standards. In the new federal states, which lie in the Eastern part of Germany, 19.8% of the total population live (including Berlin). Accordingly, 80.2% live in the old federal states. Germany's population is relatively old. 16.4% are younger than 18 years old, 14.2% are between 18 and 29. About half of the population (48.8%) is between 30 and 64, and 20.6% are senior citizens above 64 years. On average, the population is 43.3 years old. Comparing the federal states, it stands out that the average age in the new federal states is considerably older (45.7 years) than in the old states as well as in the whole of Germany. Besides this, it is notable that more senior citizens than children live in all federal states.

There is also a big difference between the new and old federal states when it comes to inhabitants without a German passport. In Germany as a whole 7.7% of the inhabitants are foreigners without German passport. Of foreigners in Germany, 4% live in the Eastern states, whereas 90% live in the Western states and 6% in Berlin. However, it should be mentioned that these numbers only include those inhabitants without German citizenship. Inhabitants with two citizenships, including German, are enlisted as Germans, as are children of foreign parents who are born in Germany and therefore have German citizenship as well as the citizenship of their parents. As a result, there are an additional 4.3 million inhabitants with two citizenships and including them the total number of foreigners account for 13% of Germany's inhabitants. Internationally, Germany has the third highest number of immigrants.

Germany is a multicultural society with a migration history that had its peak particularly in the 1960s with migrant workers from southern European countries. About one quarter of German children have a migration background, so either themselves or at least one of their parents was born abroad. But there are immense differences between the federal states of Germany. There are states with 6% of children with a migration background whereas in other states 48% of the children migrated by themselves or in second generation (LBS Kinderbarometer 2014: 37f). About one third of these

migrant children mostly speak their parents' mother tongue at home (World Vision 2013: 93), so grow up bilingually. Beside this, religious influence is stronger among migrant children. 44% of them pray at home, whereas only about one third among children with a German background do so (ibid: 91). This underlines that migrant children's childhood is as diverse as other children's (World Vision 2013, BAMF 2015).

As many other states, Germany is dealing with a growing number of refugees in recent years. About one third of refugees coming to Germany are children and youths, which means that more than 65,000 refugee children with an uncertain residence status are living in Germany, mainly with their families but also unaccompanied. Despite their difficult living situation and trauma they are suffering, these children and youths do not get sufficient support and help according to German institutions and children's rights (UNICEF 2014, Berthold 2014).

Since education became compulsory for all German children at the age of 6 and also to migrant and refugee children, school is a time-consuming and important part of every child's life. Besides school, youth of many middle and lower class families have small part-time jobs for their pocket money like delivering newspapers, baby- or pet-sitting or giving private tuition, but generally they do not contribute to the family's income. These days, childhood and the best type of up-bringing is a big issue in the public media and among parents. There is a huge market of parenting guides in form of books, magazines and TV shows from experts of different fields, pedagogues, psychologists, teachers, paediatricians or priests which leads to an increasing insecurity among parents. They are under big pressure to bring up their children to persist and be successful in the performance-oriented society. Authors who coined the term "helicopter parents" in the German discourse described especially today's upper and middle class parenting style as a mixture of cramped early education and compliant spoiling, which leads to overstrained and busy scheduled children. Opposing opinions attribute this behavior to the insecurity of parents, the fear of failure and not being able to offer the best education to their child. Reacting to this parenting development, there are different activities for children of all ages like language courses, sports, art or music classes. This puts lower class families under an even bigger pressure because those kinds of activities always cost membership fees, which they may not be able to afford. Though it is frequently assumed that children spend most of their free time watching TV or playing computers, spending their days in different institutions and their living spaces, current studies revise the theories that childhood takes place only at home, is institutionalized and socially impoverished. Not only parents are influenced by the media in their parenting style. Likewise, children are targeted by all kinds of media. German speaking countries have a big market of books and magazines for all age groups and therefore for children and youths, in addition to music, TV shows and channels. Decades ago, the toy industry identified children as a special target group because of parents following their children's wishes and because of children as purchasers by themselves. Social media like facebook has an increasing influence on today's children's and youth's lives. The latest KIM-Survey 2014 showed that 42% of 6- to 12-year-old boys and 43% of girls are members of online communities (ibid: 37). Despite all the advantages, there are also concerns about negative influences like cyber-bullying or content like violence, porn and extremism that 14% of children have experienced.

Germany is one of the founder members of the European Union and in the European as well as global context it is an influential state. Germany is Europe's biggest and the world's fourth largest

economy. Currently, in 2014, the GDP is 2609.90 billion Euros. According to the Human Development Index, Germany holds the 6th rank with an index of .911 and therefore belongs to the countries with “very high human development”.

The unemployment rate is currently (06/2014) 6.5%. Though Germany is one of the richest countries, in 2011 16.1% of the inhabitants were in risk of poverty (2005: 12.7%)⁴. Out of these, unemployed people and single-parent-households are at greatest risk of poverty.

Family and Child Policies

Germany has a Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth that is (amongst others) responsible for family support and the supervision of the Child and Youth Service Act, and Youth Protection Legislation. Basically, improvements of family services, child care and youth protection are always a matter of governmental debates and discussions.

The government supports families through different kinds of service, which cannot all be listed, because it depends on the individual circumstances of living. Hence, young mothers get maternity benefits and a paid leave from their job six weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth. Parents, who want to stay at home after childbirth can get parental benefits for up to 14 months. For up to three years parents are eligible for a parental leave. During this time their employment has to remain unchanged. There is a legal entitlement to a nursery school place for every child but the government is still working on the extension of places. Parents who do not want to or who are not able to use public day care facilities for their two-to three-year-old children are entitled to receive childcare supplements.

Child benefits are paid for every child below the age of 18 or, if still studying, until the age of 25. Families in poverty can claim a grant for their children besides welfare and child benefits. Since welfare benefit levels are very low, it is also possible to claim housing benefit.

A statutory health-insurance is obligatory for every citizen, which guarantees free health care and social services of high quality.

Though this may give the impression of an easy life for families, an increasing number of families experience high levels of poverty. The latest studies show that around 15.5% of German citizens live in poverty, whereas as many as 19% of children grow up in poverty (Der Paritätische Gesamtverband 2015). The current unemployment rate of 5% is one of the lowest in the European Union but shows that many families face poverty despite having a paid job.

Education system

Schooling is compulsory in Germany. Generally, children will go to school at the age of 6 or 7. After attending primary school for four years, they have to choose between three different types of school mostly depending on their previous school performance and recommendations of teachers. Either these types of schools are found in separate schools (Hauptschule, Realschule, Gymnasium) or in types of schools that combine two or three types. These combined schools have different names in different federal states. The only common label is the Gymnasium, which is the highest type of school. Depending on the federal state’s regulations, it is mandatory to attend school for 9 to 10

⁴ Poor are those whose income is less than 60% of the median income.

years. The type of graduation depends on the completed grades. It is possible to change school types after primary school at any time.

Compared to other OECD countries, classes in Germany are larger at secondary level. The average class size in the OECD is 23.3 students in secondary schools, whereas in Germany there are 24.5 students per class in secondary schools and in primary level there are, as in the OECD average, 21.2 students per class. Within recent years, big efforts have been made to establish inclusive schools. Diversity is perceived as an enrichment that enables the inclusion of all children irrespective of impairments or disabilities and to provide them the individual support they need. In our survey, we did not label or differentiate between inclusive or non-inclusive schools, where only students without physical or mental impairments are taught.

Family environment

From a normative point of view, family provides the best environment for children and adults to create strong emotional bonds with each other. Even though the concept of family may vary in who is included, a family may typically consist of parents with one or more children. Parents may be married or living together unmarried. They may live separated and bring up their children together or may be a lone parent. It can be the child's own parents or stepparents. Many forms of family structure are possible and found among German children. However, studies found that a two-child-nuclear family is still the most common form, and three-generation-families most seldom (World Vision 2013). Though about one quarter of children's parents are separated or divorced, most commonly in urban environments (LBS Kinderbarometer 2014). 73% of children in Germany still grow up in a "normal" family with their own married parents (World Vision 2013). 39% of children have one sibling, whereas one fifth has two or more.

Besides changing family structure, the conventional distribution of roles within the family is changing. Employment and therefore the insurance of subsistence is no longer men's concern only. About one third (32%) of children grow up in a nuclear family with only one employed parent, and this will usually be the father. In 35% of cases both parents are employed, wherein mostly the father is full-time and the mother part-time or marginally employed. 13% of the parents are both employed full-time and 12% of children grow up with a lone parent who is employed full-time (World Vision 2013).

Generally, children are satisfied about the support and care of their parents. The employment of parents does not necessary alter this perception. It depends much more on the quality of the time spent with each other than on the amount of time. In steady family constellations with secured financial backgrounds the opportunities to spend quality time with each other are more easily created than in financially and/or emotionally precarious situations, which are experienced as highly unsatisfactory and burdening.

Despite financial problems, living arrangements play an important role in German families' households, and families invest a great deal in housing. On average, families spend about 30% of their household income on accommodation, which varies greatly between different cities and districts. Poor families in Frankfurt, for example, spend up to 52% of their income for cheap housing.

In total, only 27% of urban housing is suitable for families whereas not more than 12% of the available housing is affordable to poor families (Bertelsmann 2013).

Though many families aim to live in private property, particularly in urban areas most of them live in rental accommodation. In rural areas, property is more affordable, so that a lot of families live in private residential houses.

Everyday life

German children spend much of their day at school. Usually it starts at 8 o'clock in the morning, five days a week. These days, a lot of efforts are made by schools to provide full-day care for all students. About 23% of them already benefit from this and this number is rising, however it is more common in urban than in rural areas and many children in all-day care are from lower class families (World Vision 2013: 120).

Unlike assumptions that children's lives become more and more institutionalized, studies show that they still spend most of the time at home or with friends. Most commonly, as reported in the World Vision study 2013, children spend their time after school or at weekends and on holidays playing with toys at home, doing sports, listening to music, watching TV or being with friends. Other activities include riding bicycles or skateboards, reading books, drawing or being creative, spending time with pets and playing outside on the streets. Less popular are activities like playing an instrument, videogames, Lego bricks or Playmobil, activities with the family, listening to audio dramas or stories. Very gender specific are theatre and dancing, which is mostly done by girls, and doing handicrafts with tools, which is a typical free time activity for boys.

The older children become the less priority is given to playing indoors, and their activity radius will be steadily extended. Besides this, their media equipment becomes more comprehensive.

Basically three groups of children can be identified according to their profile of how they spend their free time. First of all there are children who use their time in a multifaceted manner, who are overridingly girls from higher social classes. They spend their time with a lot of creative and cultural activities and spend less time watching TV or playing computer games. In general, these children gain a lot of attention, support and encouragement from their families. Secondly, we can identify "normal" children, who spend their time doing a little bit of everything. In contrast to the multifaceted children, there are thirdly media-oriented children who are overridingly boys from lower social classes. They spend most of their free time watching TV and playing computer games (ibid: 142 ff).

Unequal childhoods

Not all children in Germany have the same chances and opportunities in life. Children who grow up in poverty, children with migrant backgrounds or foreigners, and children from lower class families are examples of those who are often stigmatised in German society. These children have less chance of getting a higher school qualification and going to university. They are marginalised because of their background and do not have equal opportunities to live their life in a way they wish to live.

Particularly, poor children have low chances of breaking the cycle of poverty because they cannot participate in activities like other children do. This inequality is shown in numerous surveys that reveal the prevalence of children living in precarious or/and unequal conditions. About 19% of German children currently grow up in poverty. Though one quarter of children in Germany have a migrant background, 84% of them are born in Germany and therefore are second generation migrants.

Children's rights

Though Germany ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1992, children are not explicitly mentioned in the constitution. But there is an intensive debate on this topic as well as critics of the realisation of children's rights in all institutions. In 1968 the Federal Constitutional Law decided to acknowledge children as holder of fundamental rights and regard their right to inviolable human dignity and their right to self-fulfilment. Children have these rights against the state as well as against their parents. Yet, this is not sufficient to ensure their right to support them to their full potential and ensure their right on participation in decision-making.⁵

1.2 Sample Strategy and Final Sample

The sampling strategy was based on three levels of stratification. The first level stratification was a division of Germany into Eastern and Western federal states, because these areas differ from each other in living standards, settlement structure (type) as well as type of schools, which are our next levels of stratification. The second level is based on settlement structures. Here, we differentiate between "rural areas", "areas of urbanisation" and "areas of agglomeration" according the classification of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR). This data respects classifications on the county level. Since there may be counties which are generally classified as "Rural areas" but also include bigger cities, and likewise "areas of urbanisation", which include small villages, the number of inhabitants serve as a second criteria. Hence, places with less than 15,000 inhabitants are classified as "rural", places with more than 200,000 inhabitants are classified as "agglomeration", independent of the classification on county level. The third level of stratification is based on the type of schools. The children included in the 8 year-olds-sample are all going to primary school. The children included in the 10 and 12 year-old-sample either go to "Hauptschule", "Realschule", "Regelschule", "Gesamtschule" or "Gymnasium", which mainly differ from the level of graduation that can be achieved.

The participating schools were selected by random probability methods at every stage. Because of the generally low willingness of the schools to participate in the survey, the target sample could not be reached and weightings need to be used to guarantee the representativeness according to the stratifications described above.

⁵ For further information about children's rights in Germany: <http://www.kinderpolitik.de/kinderrechte/kinderrechte-in-deutschland> (06/10/14)

1. Results

2.1 The Participants

Age and Gender

The children were 7 to 14 years old. The children participating in the 8-year-olds age group were mainly 8 and 9 years old although ten of them were 7 years old and 29 children were 10 years old. The children participating in the survey for 10 year olds group were mainly 10 and 11 years old but 13 children were 9 years old and 69 were 12 years old. The children participating in the 12-year-olds age group were mainly 12 and 13 years old although 59 children were younger and 14 children were older than that. To maintain consistency across all country's reports we will use the terms of age group 8, 10 and 12 from here on. All children who participated in each of the surveys will be included.

48.6% of the children were boys and 51.4% were girls.

Table 1: Age by gender

	7 years old	8 years old	9 years old	10 years old	11 years old	12 years old	13 years old	14 years old	Total
Boys	5	202	292	230	299	211	199	11	1449
Girls	6	264	268	248	314	236	193	3	1532
Total	11	466	560	478	613	447	392	14	2981

Country of birth

Age groups 10 and 12 were asked if they were born in Germany or not though this item does not match with the German definition of the migration background. According to this, 4.9% of children were not born in Germany.

2.2 Your home and the people you live with

Most of the children (71.8%) usually live in the same home, 22.7% live always in the same home and 5.5% regularly sleep in two homes with different adults.

97.5% live with their family, 15 children live in a foster home, seven in a children's home and 25 children in another type of home.

Age groups 10 and 12 were asked about the people they live with.

Table 2 shows that about 76% live with both parents, whereas 12.8% live only with their mother. 10.6% are living with their father in a second home.

Table 2: Family type in First and Second Home (Age group 10 and 12)

First Home (%)		Second Home (%)	
Mother and Father	76.1	Only First Home	79.8
Mother and Partner	8.0	Mother and Father	1.5
Father and Partner	1.5	Mother and Partner	.7
Lone Mother	12.8	Father and Partner	5.4
Lone Father	1.3	Mother	1.0
-	-	Father	5.2
Other	.3	Other	6.4
Total	100	Total	100

21% do not live with siblings or other children in their first home. 7.2% children live with siblings and 3.1% with other children in their second household. 16.9% live with at least one grandparent in their first home and 7.2% of the children are living with at least one of their grandparents in their second household.

This domain includes five items about agreement with statements about their home and the people they live with. The findings are summarized in figure 1. The children’s highest agreement is about the item “I feel safe at home”, the lowest agreement with the item “I have a quiet place to study at home”.

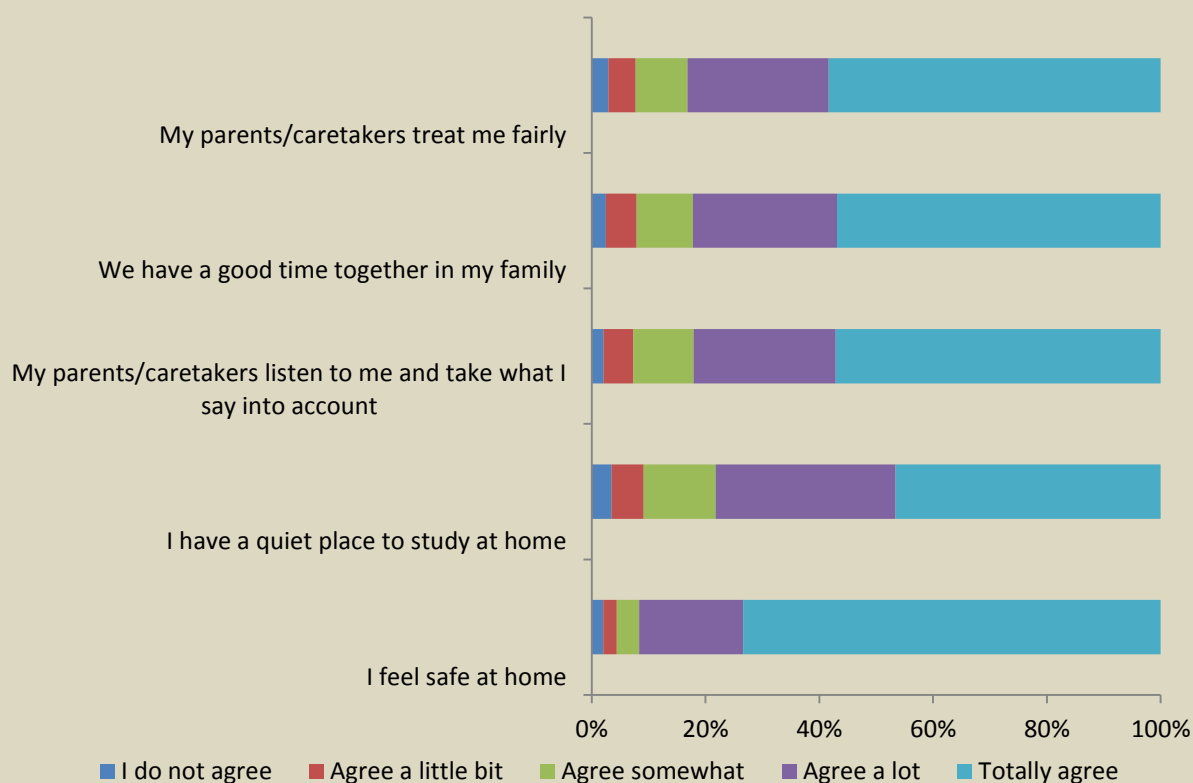


Figure 1: Home and Family (All age groups) (%)

Table 3 summarises differences between gender and age groups. Boys feel slightly safer at home than girls. It is notable that children of age group 12 have the lowest agreement in all items, whereas children of age group 10 have the highest agreement in each of the items.

Table 3: Variations in questions about home and the people you live with (All age groups) (Means)

	Feel safe	Place to study	Parents listen	Good time	Parents fair
Gender					
Boys	3.55	3.06	3.27	3.25	3.27
Girls	3.36	3.18	3.33	3.32	3.34
Age group					
8	3.55	3.01	3.27	3.32	3.27
10	3.71	3.26	3.45	3.39	3.48
12	3.47	3.08	3.13	3.11	3.13
Total	3.59	3.12	3.30	3.29	3.31

In this context, the children were asked about their satisfaction with their home and the people they live with. Age group 8 answered using a five-point emoticons scale, whereas age groups 10 and 12 answered on an 11 point scale. Table 4 summarizes the answers of age group 8. The children report a very high level of satisfaction for all of the items. There are no significant differences between boys and girls.

Table 4: Satisfaction with home and the people you live with (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
The house or flat you live in	.8	1.3	3.9	21.0	73.0
The people you live with	.7	1.0	7.2	21.8	69.2
All other people in your family	.5	1.1	5.0	25.5	67.8
Your family life	.9	1.4	5.2	17.9	74.6

Table 6 shows the age groups 10 and 12. The older age groups report very high satisfaction as well. Their satisfaction with 'The house or flat you live in' is the lowest among these items, whereas the item 'The people you live with' shows the highest level of satisfaction. In these age groups there are no significant differences between boys and girls.

Table 6: Satisfaction with home and the people you live with (Age group 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The house or flat you live in	.4	.1	.3	.7	1.4	3.0	2.6	4.8	11.0	17.4	58.3
The people you live with	.1	.1	.2	1.4	1.2	2.3	1.7	4.2	8.2	16.2	64.2
All other people in your family	.2	.2	.2	.7	.7	1.6	2.9	5.0	9.8	20.9	57.9
Your family life	.5	.5	.8	.5	1.4	2.5	2.0	3.7	8.0	19.9	60.2

Figure 2 summarises the questions about spending time with the family in the past week in three activities. Most often children talk with their family, less often they learn together.

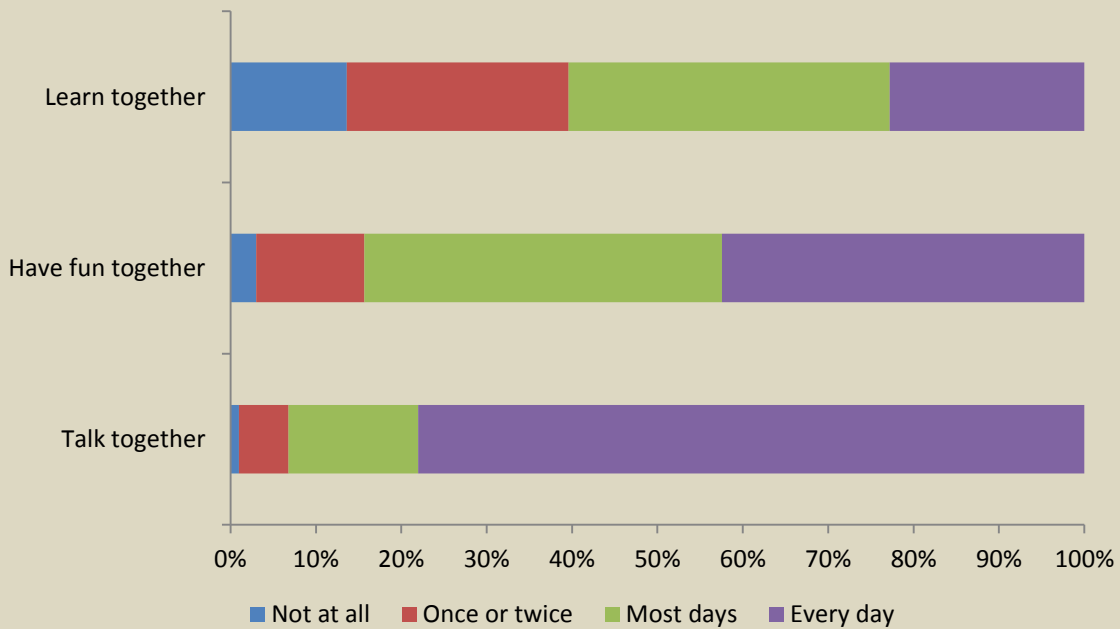


Figure 2: Quality time with family (All age groups) (%)

Table 5 shows differences between age groups, gender and family type. There are no significant gender differences. Children of age group 12 have less fun and learn more seldom with their family than the younger ones. Children living with both of their parents as well as those living only with their father, talk with their family most often. Most fun is had by children living with mother and father, least fun by those living with their father and his partner. Children living with their father and his partner learn together most often, children living with their mother and her partner learn less often.

Table 5: Quality time with family (All age groups) (Means)

	Talk together	Have fun together	Learn together
Gender			
Boys	2.67	2.22	1.75
Girls	2.75	2.27	1.65
Age group			
8	2.65	2.31	1.87
10	2.74	2.25	1.82
12	2.75	2.16	1.33
Family type			
Mother and Father	2.78	2.26	1.66
Mother and Partner	2.49	2.02	1.27
Father and Partner	2.34	1.67	1.84
Lone Mother	2.67	2.06	1.74
Lone Father	2.76	1.89	1.39
Total	2.71	2.24	1.70

2.3 Money and things you have

Children of age group 12 were asked about how often they get pocket money. Table 6 shows the results and differences by gender. Most of the children get pocket money monthly. There are more boys than girls who get pocket money weekly.

Table 6: Frequency of getting pocket money by gender (Age group 12) (%)

	Not at all	Not regularly	Every week	Every month
Boys	9.8	10.0	26.1	54.1
Girls	8.5	13.2	20.8	57.4
Total	9.1	11.7	23.3	55.9

Table 7 shows the amount of pocket money children get by frequency, gender and number of adults they live with having a paid job. Children who get their money weekly get more money per month (38.32 €) than children who get pocket money monthly (23.50 €). Children who live with more than two adults with a paid job get the highest amount weekly and monthly followed by those who live with one adult with a paid job, whereas children who do not live with any adult with a paid job get the lowest amount.

Table 7: Amount of pocket money by gender and number of adults with paid job (Age group 12) (Means in €)

	Children who get it weekly	Children who get it monthly
Gender		
Boys	8.72	24.36
Girls	10.56	22.25
Adults with paid job		
0	7.32	21.52
1	10.56	25.98
2	8.38	21.44
>2	14.23	27.38
Total	9.58	23.50

All children were asked a list of items about things they have or do not have. The list for age group 8 was shorter. Figure 3 summarises the findings.

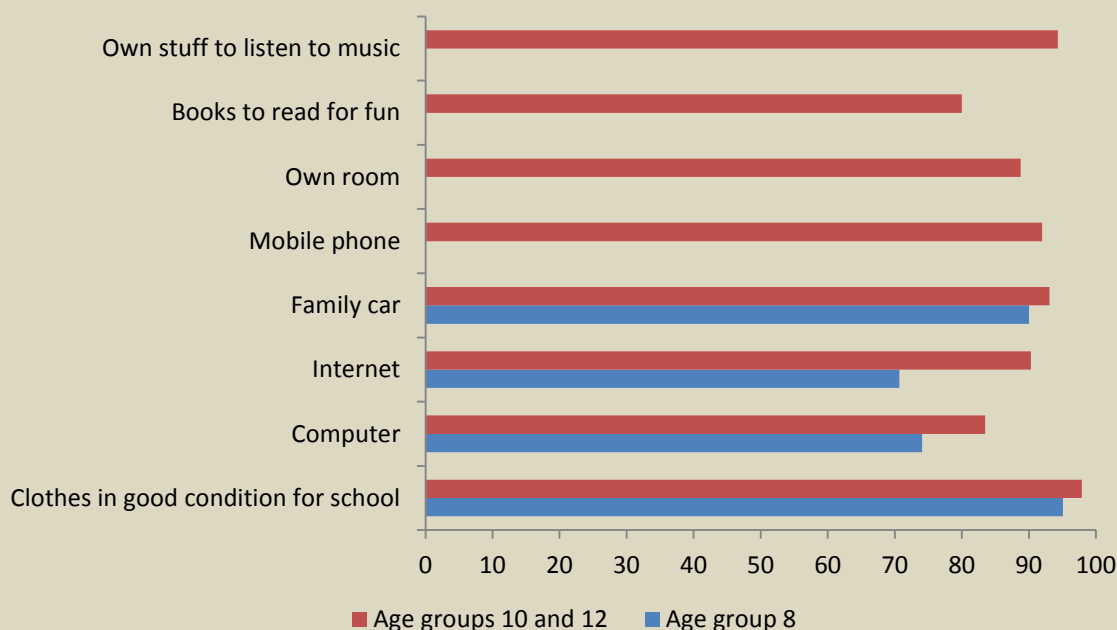


Figure 3: Things you have (All age groups) (%)

Most of the children are happy with the things they have. The children of age group 8 answered on a five-point emoticons scale, the age groups 10 and 12 on an 11-point-scale. There was no difference by gender. In age group 8 76.9% scored the highest level of satisfaction, whereas in group 10 the proportion was 63.1% (Mean: 9.35) and in group 12 48% (Mean: 9.03) scored the highest level.

Table 8: How happy are you with all the things you have? (All age groups) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Age group											
8	.1	.5	3.8	18.8	76.9						
10	0	.1	.1	.1	.2	1.6	.8	3.3	10.3	20.4	63.1
12	.4	0	.1	.7	.5	1.7	2.1	5.5	11.8	29.3	48.0

There are gender and age differences on the item ‘How often do you worry about how much money your family has’, which are shown in table 9. In addition, younger children tend to worry more than older ones and girls more than boys.

Table 9: Worries about money the family has (All age groups) (%)

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Age group				
8	39.5	40.1	11.2	9.1
10	43.7	39.5	12.1	4.6
12	39.6	45.2	12.2	3.0
Gender				
Boys	49.0	34.7	10.4	5.9
Girls	33.5	47.8	13.3	5.5
Total	41.1	41.4	11.8	5.7

2.4 Friends and other people

In general, children speak positively about their friends (figure 4). 84.6% agree a lot or totally that their friends are usually nice and 86.9% agree a lot or totally with the item ‘I have enough friends’. There were no significant gender differences.

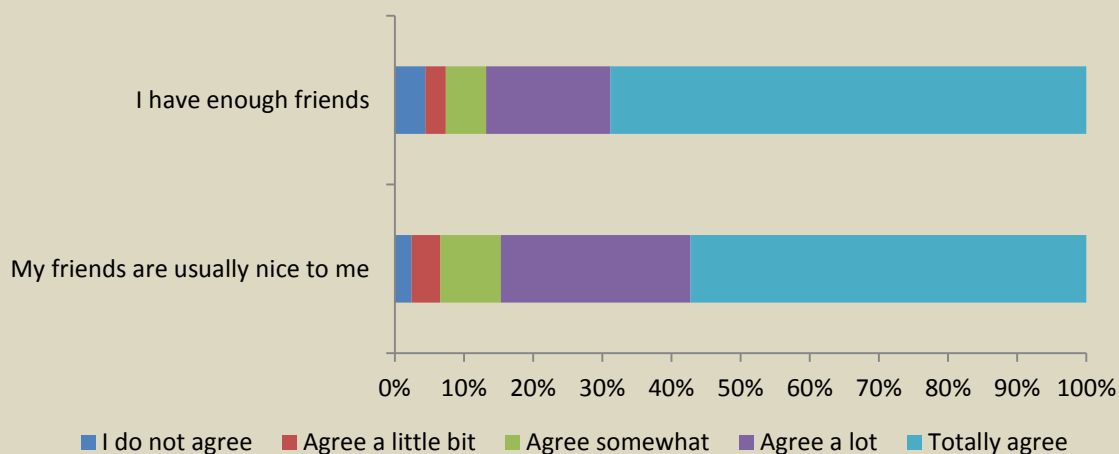


Figure 4: Friends (All age groups) (%)

Table 10 summarises how satisfied the children of age group 8 are with their friends and other people. Here it is also shown that the children are satisfied with their friends – 66.2% scored the maximum. Compared to this, the children are not as satisfied with the people living in their area – 41.3% scored the maximum. 52.5% scored the maximum for the item ‘Your relationships with other people’.

Table 10: Satisfaction with friends and relationships (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
Your friends	.5	1.2	6.8	25.4	66.2
The people in your area	4.9	3.9	15.4	34.4	41.3
Your relationships with other people	2.1	1.6	9.1	34.6	52.5

Table 11 compares the means of satisfaction for age groups 10 and 12. The older children were less satisfied for all of the items, and also boys are less satisfied than girls.

Table 11: Satisfaction with friends and relationships (Age groups 10, 12) (Means)

	Friends	People in your area	Relationships
Age group			
10	9.24	7.94	8.79
12	8.91	7.15	8.42
Gender			
Boys	9.02	7.49	8.54
Girls	9.17	7.71	8.71
Total	9.10	7.59	8.63

Figure 5 shows that it is not common to meet to study with friends. More than half of the children (52.6%) talk every day with their friends outside school time.

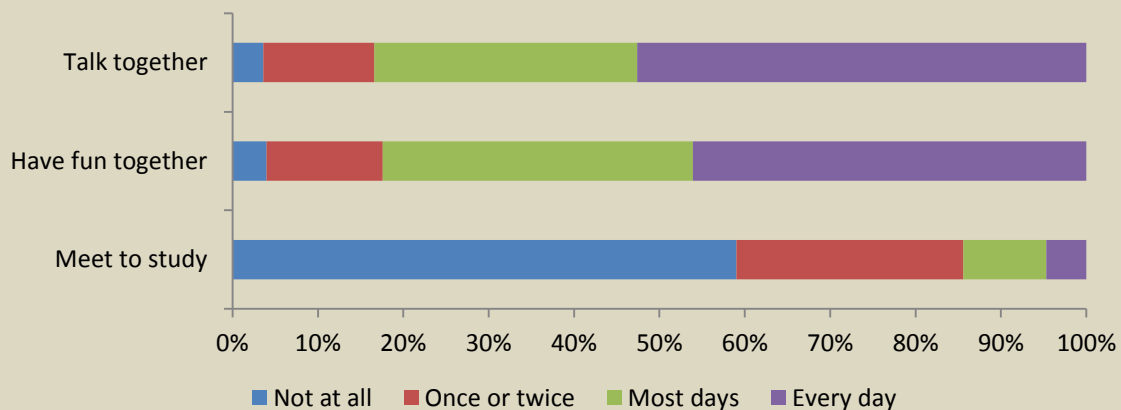


Figure 5: Frequency spending time with friends apart from at school (All age groups)

Comparing gender and age groups (Table 12) does not show significant gender differences. Age group 8 talks with their friends least often and the oldest children also talk most often with their friends, though having fun together and meeting to study have the lowest values among all age groups.

Table 12: Frequency spending time with friends apart from at school by gender and age group (All age groups) (Means)

	Talk together	Have fun together	Meet to study
Gender			
Boys	2.30	2.28	.58
Girls	2.35	2.21	.63
Age group			
8	2.19	2.29	.65
10	2.38	2.25	.69
12	2.42	2.19	.44
Total	2.32	2.24	.60

2.4 The area where you live

Table 19 shows that 24.3% of the children do not think that in the area they live there are enough places to play or have a good time and about one quarter (25.1%) do not feel safe walking in their neighbourhood. There are no significant differences by gender, age groups, or settlement structures (rural, urbanized or agglomeration). In addition, as shown in table 20, in the youngest age group the children’s satisfaction is the highest with their doctors and lowest with the outdoor areas they can use (Mean: 3.08). Table 21 summarises findings for the two older age groups. Though there are no significant differences in age and settlement structure, children of age group 12 tend to score lower than those of age group 10. In total, the children are least satisfied with the outdoor areas children can use.

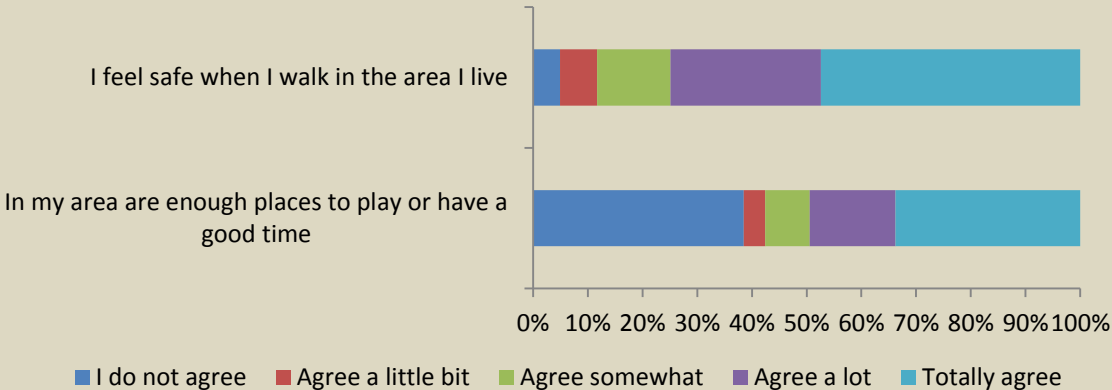


Figure 6: Local area (All age groups) (%)

Table 13: Satisfaction with local area (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
How you are dealt with at the doctors	1.7	2.1	9.9	29.5	56.8
The outdoor areas children can use	5.4	5.1	13.7	28.2	47.7
The area you live in general	3.7	3.9	16.5	30.8	45.1

Table 14: Satisfaction with local area (Age groups 10 and 12) (Means)

	How you are dealt with at the doctors	Outdoor areas for children	Area in general
<i>Age group</i>			
10	8.94	7.84	8.01
12	8.70	7.47	7.64
Total	8.84	7.68	7.85

Additionally, age group 12 was asked about their satisfaction with the local police. The mean is 7.29. This is the lowest value of satisfaction in this dimension. Comparing the means of satisfaction of boys and girls and children living in different settlement structures, Table 15 shows that girls are likely to be more satisfied with the local police and children living in urban areas are most satisfied, followed by those living in agglomeration and rural areas.

Table 15: Variances in satisfaction with the local police by gender and Settlement structure (age group 12) (Means)

	Satisfaction with local police
<i>Gender</i>	
Boys	7.14
Girls	7.42
<i>Settlement structure</i>	
Rural	7.05
Urban	7.60
Agglomeration	7.18
Total	7.28

2.5 School

Generally, the data shows that the children are not as satisfied with school as with other dimensions we have asked about. Figure 7 summarises this and shows that only 55.7% agreed a lot or totally with the statement 'I like going to school'.

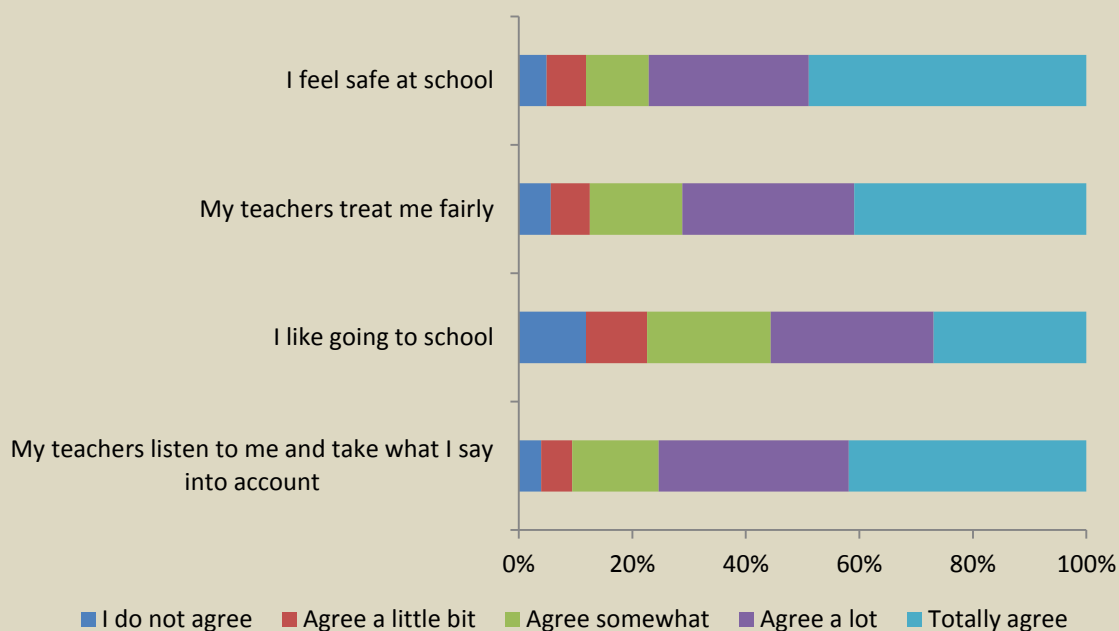


Figure 7: School (All age groups) (%)

Looking at variations (Table 16), findings show that girls are likely to have better relations with school than boys. In all matters the oldest age group is the least satisfied and age group 10 the most satisfied.

Table 16: Variations by gender and age groups in school agreement items (All age groups) (Means)

	Teachers listen to me	I like going to school	Teachers treat me fairly	I feel safe at school
Gender				
Boys	2.99	2.26	2.86	3.00
Girls	3.09	2.69	3.03	3.18
Age group				
8	3.21	2.61	3.12	3.16
10	3.19	2.63	3.14	3.20
12	2.64	2.13	2.47	2.88
Total	3.04	2.48	2.94	3.09

The satisfaction scales show a similar pattern. The youngest age group shows the highest satisfaction with their relationships to teachers, whereas they are not as happy with the other children in their class.

Table 17: Satisfaction with school (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
Other children in your class	2.6	3.1	13.8	38.3	42.1
Your school marks	3.3	2.2	13.9	32.4	48.3
Your school experience	2.8	3.5	12.8	32.6	48.3
Your relationship with teachers	2.2	2.1	8.1	31.4	56.3

Comparing the items above, the older age group shows the highest satisfaction with their relations with teachers and the lowest satisfaction with school marks. Additionally, the older age groups were asked two more items about their life as a student and the things they have learned. The children are relatively satisfied with both compared to other children in their class or their school marks.

Table 18: Satisfaction with school (Age group 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Other children in your class	.7	.7	1.2	1.9	2.8	7.7	6.8	13.1	19.7	22.0	23.5
Your school marks	2.0	1.0	1.4	2.7	3.8	7.8	7.1	12.2	19.4	20.2	22.5
Your school experience	.8	.9	1.0	1.7	1.9	6.4	6.1	10.2	18	24.8	28.0
Your relationship with teachers	1.7	.9	1.8	2.2	2.5	6.0	4.7	9.1	13.9	25.7	31.6
Your life as a student	1.9	.5	1.6	1.3	3.3	5.9	6.5	8.1	16.2	23.8	30.9
Things you have learned	.6	.2	.7	.9	1.3	4.0	4.3	7.5	16.6	25.7	38.1

Table 19 shows differences between age groups and genders. Between age groups satisfaction with school marks differs a lot. Generally, the older age groups are noticeably more dissatisfied with school matters. Between the gender groups the differences are not as large.

Table 19: Variation in Satisfaction with school (age groups 10, 12) (Means)

	Other children in class	School marks	School experience	Relationship with teachers	Life as a student	Things you have learned
Age group						
10	8.05	8.03	8.37	8.56	8.36	8.93
12	7.51	6.94	7.61	7.30	7.53	8.03
Gender						
Boys	7.84	7.49	7.94	7.79	7.87	8.52
Girls	7.78	7.61	8.13	8.22	8.10	8.55
Total	7.81	7.55	8.04	8.01	7.99	8.54

The following figure 8 shows children’s experiences of bullying at school. 37.6% of the children experienced being hit by other children and 29.9% experienced being left out by others in their class at least once.

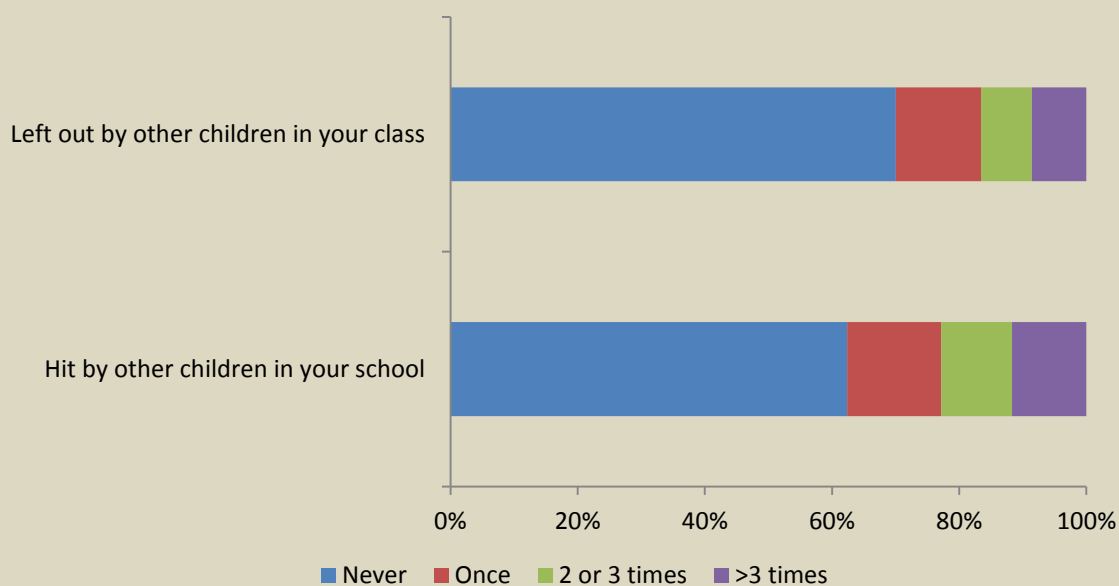


Figure 8: Frequency of experience of bullying at school (All age groups)

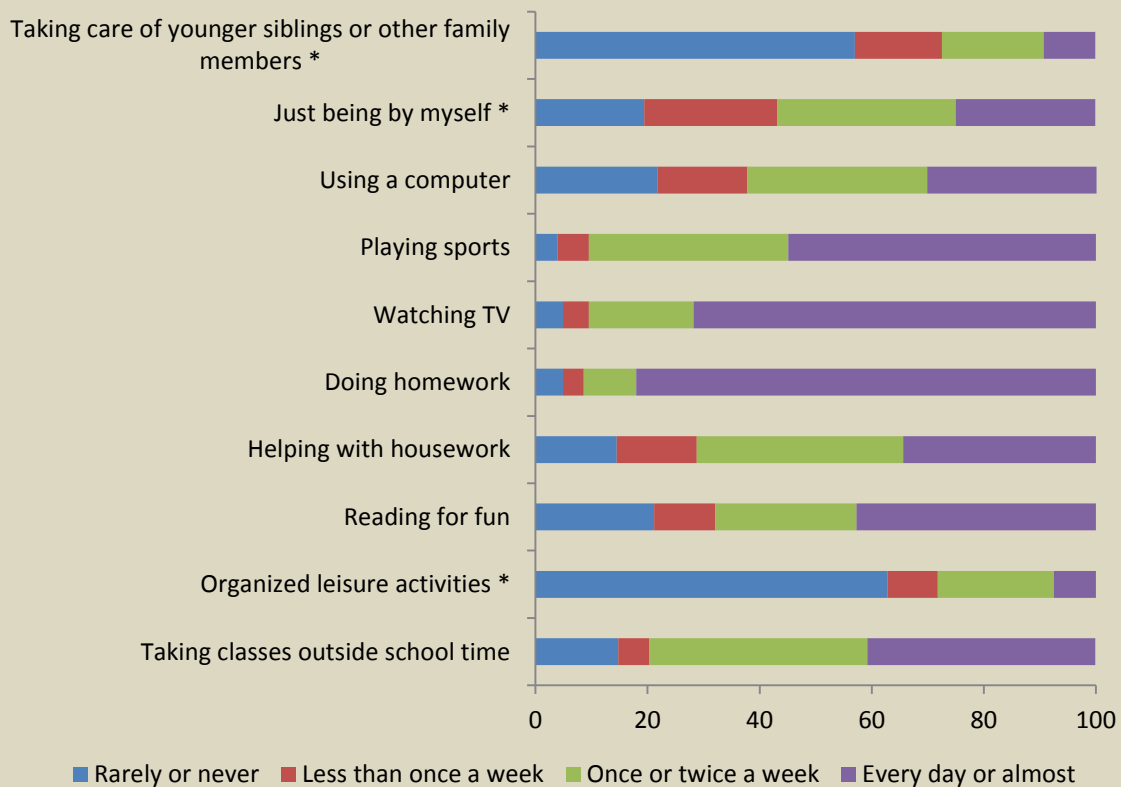
Variations can be found by age as well as gender (Table 20). Boys experience being hit more often than girls, but experience being left out less often. The younger the children the more often they have been hit or left out by others. 57.3% of the children of age group 8 experienced being hit by others, whereas 19.4% of age group 12 experienced this.

Table 20: Frequency of experience of bullying at school Variations by gender and age group (All age groups) (%)

	Hit by others	Left out by others
Gender		
Boys	45.3	28.9
Girls	30.2	31.1
Age group		
8	57.3	41.0
10	34.3	25.0
12	19.4	23.2
Total	37.6	29.9

2.6 Time use

Figure 9 shows that the third most common leisure time activity is playing sports, after watching TV and doing homework. Organised leisure time activities and taking care of younger siblings or other family members are not common (only asked in age group 12).



*only asked in age group 12

Figure 9: Time use frequency in a week (All age groups) (%)

Differences between boys and girls as well as between age groups can be seen in Table 21. Boys spend more time at the computer than girls, whereas girls are likely to read more often for fun and help with the housework. The biggest variation between age groups can be found regarding reading for fun. The younger the children the more time they spend reading and the less time they spend at the computer or TV.

Table 21: Variances by gender and age group in time use frequency in a week (All age groups) (Means)

	Classes outside school	Reading for fun	Housework	Homework	Watching TV	Sports	Computer
Gender							
Boys	2.02	1.72	1.82	2.64	2.60	2.48	2.11
Girls	2.09	2.06	2.00	2.73	2.56	2.35	1.13
Age group							
8	2.00	2.10	1.84	2.65	2.40	2.43	1.57
10	2.07	2.03	2.00	2.73	2.66	2.45	1.76
12	2.10	1.48	1.88	2.67	2.70	2.35	1.80
Total	2.06	1.89	1.91	2.69	2.58	2.41	1.71

Age group 8 was asked on a 5-point scale how satisfied they are with what they do in their free time (Table 22). The older children were asked this on an 11-point scale, and were additionally asked how satisfied they are with their time use (Table 23). Both of the tables show the children’s high satisfaction with their free time.

Table 22: Satisfaction with what you do in your free time (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
What you do in your free time	.4	.9	3.1	18.3	77.4

Table 23: Satisfaction with free time (Age group 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
What you do in your free time	.8	.2	.2	.5	1.1	1.9	2.7	4.5	11.4	18.6	58.3
How you use your time	.6	.5	.5	.9	1.2	3.3	4.1	9.2	16.8	22.7	40.3

2.6 Your life and your future

The older children were asked a set of eleven questions about how they feel about themselves and their future on an eleven-point scale. Age group 8 was asked a smaller set on a five-point scale. The youngest children were least satisfied with how they are listened to by adults and report the highest satisfaction about self-confidence (Table 24). No significant differences between boys and girls can be reported.

Table 24: Satisfaction with life and future (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
The freedom you have	1.3	1.3	6.0	26.9	64.5
Your health	1.3	1.8	8.0	21.7	67.1
The way you look	2.4	1.5	9.3	22.8	64.1
Your own body	2.0	2.4	7.4	22.4	65.8
How you are listened to by adults	1.6	3.6	11.1	30.3	53.3
Your self-confidence	1.1	1.7	6.9	23.7	66.6

Table 25 summarises satisfaction with life and future for age groups 10 and 12. 59.5% of the children scored the highest value for their satisfaction with health, whereas 33.2% scored the highest value for the things they want to be good at. The biggest differences were found within the item ‘The way you look` and ‘Your own body`.

Figure 10 summarises differences between gender and age groups. Generally, girls are less satisfied than boys. The highest variance can be found in ‘The way you look`, ‘Your own body`, ‘Your self-confidence`, and ‘Things you want to be good at`. In these matters girls are significant less satisfied. They are most satisfied with what may happen to them later in life and with their health and least satisfied with their self-confidence and things they want to be good at. Boys are most satisfied with their health and least satisfied with how they are listened to by adults in general. Comparing age groups, it is noticeable that children of age group 12 are less satisfied in all of the items. Both of the age groups are most satisfied with how they are listened to by adults and least satisfied with their body and the way they look.

Table 25: Satisfaction with life and future (Age group 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The freedom you have	1.0	.6	.5	1.1	2.3	3.2	3.3	5.8	10.5	20.5	51.1
The amount of opportunities you have*	.9	.3	.8	1.3	1.3	2.7	4.8	8.3	13.0	25.1	41.4
Your health	.5	.2	.3	.5	1.1	3.5	2.3	5.9	9.4	16.8	59.5
The way you look	2.0	.8	1.2	2.0	2.8	4.6	4.6	8.4	12.4	19.5	41.6
Your own body	2.0	1.1	1.9	3.1	3.1	4.2	3.7	7.9	11.9	19.9	41.0
How you are listened to by adults	.9	.8	.7	1.3	1.8	3.9	3.9	7.4	12.3	25.7	41.3
Your self-confidence	1.4	.5	1.0	1.1	1.6	3.6	4.5	7.3	13.7	21.5	43.9
How safe you feel	.4	.3	.3	1.0	1.4	3.0	2.8	6.7	14.5	23.7	46.0
The things you want to be good at	.7	.6	.4	.8	1.2	3.4	4.1	9.0	17.5	29.1	33.2
Doing things away from home	.5	.1	.1	.5	1.3	2.1	2.7	6.4	15.5	24.8	46.0
What may happen to you later in life	.4	.1	.3	.8	.7	2.3	2.2	5.5	12.4	24.6	50.8

* Only age group 12

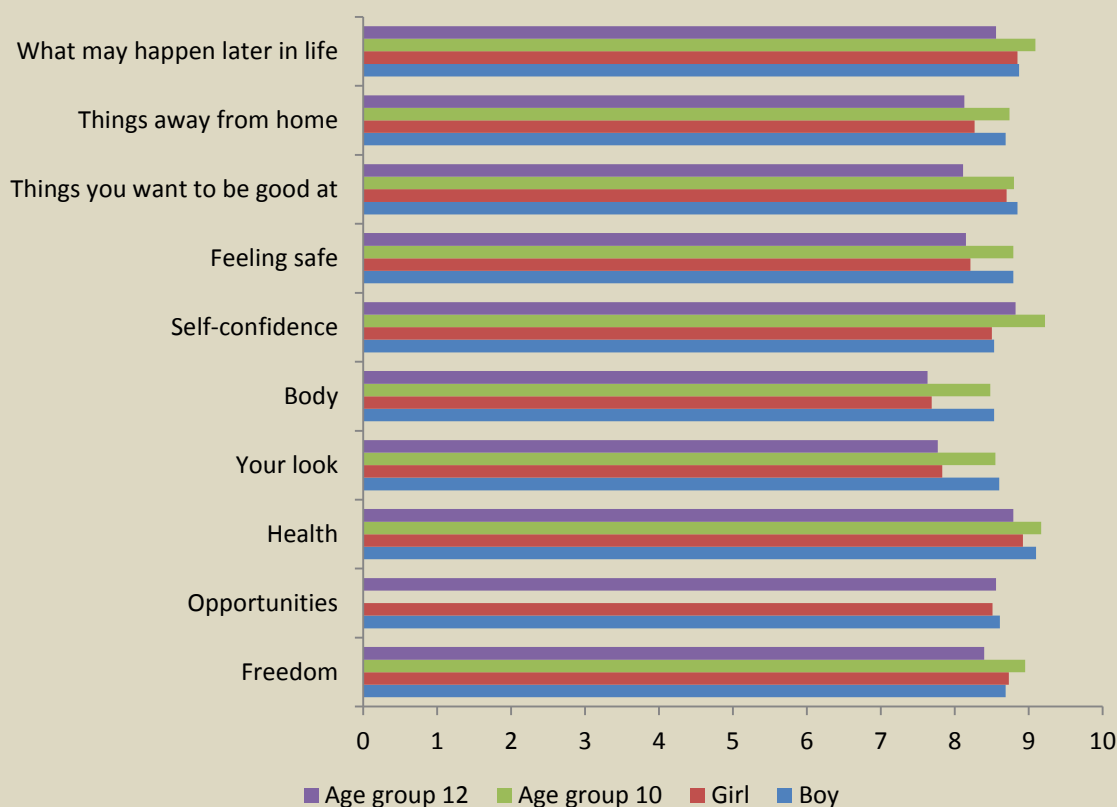


Figure 10: Variances of satisfaction with life and future (Age group 10, 12) (Means)

Though less than one half of the children know what rights children have, 55.1% think children’s rights are respected in Germany. Only 17.4% know about the children’s rights convention. No significant differences were found in age and gender groups.

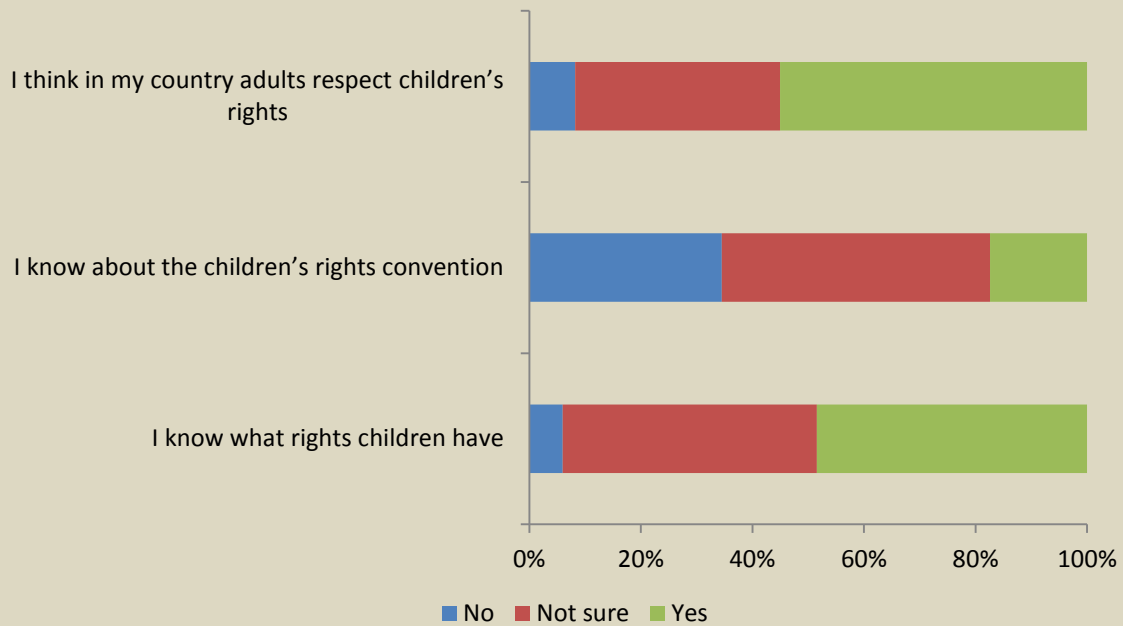


Figure 11: Children’s Rights (All age groups)

On average, about 9.5% of the children experienced changes in their lives. Most often the reason was moving (15.4%), the fewest children who had a change in their life lived abroad for more than a month (7.7%).

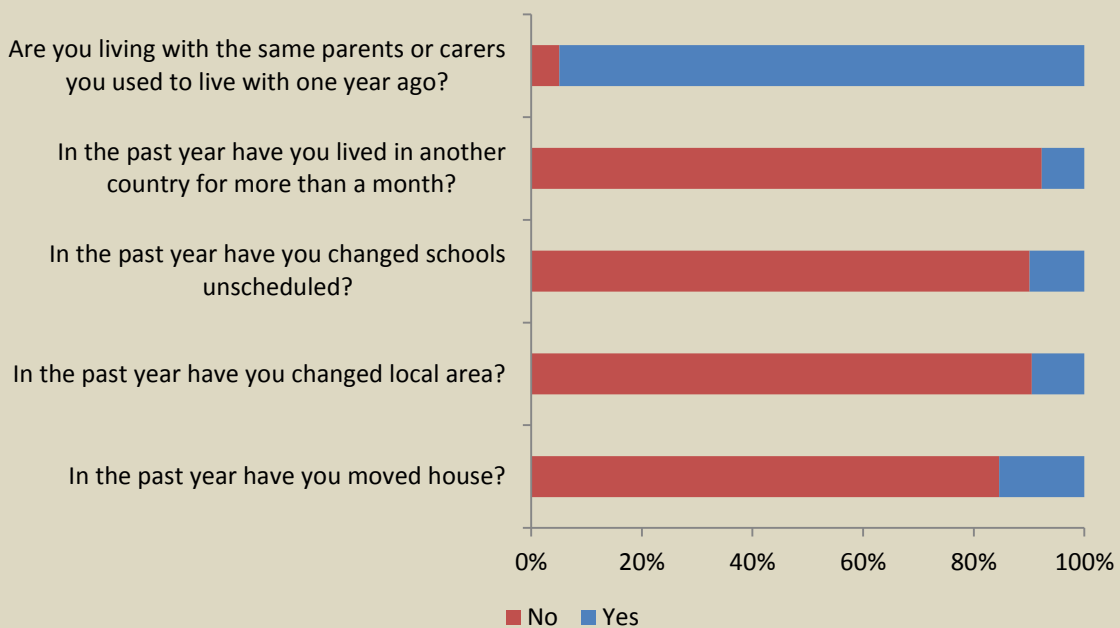


Figure 12: Changes in children’s lives (All age groups)

There are no differences by gender or age group, but Table 26 shows significant differences between children born in Germany and children born elsewhere. Children not born in Germany experienced many more changes within the last year.

Table 26: Variations in changes in children’s lives (Age groups 10, 12) (%)

	Born in Germany	Not born in Germany
Moved house	14.6	30.7
Changed local area	8.4	31.3
Changed schools unscheduled?	9.2	24.2
Lived in another country for more than a month last year?	5.5	48.0
Not living with the same parents or carers	5.0	6.1

2.7 Overall subjective well-being

The survey includes different measures about children’s subjective well-being. For more detailed information about these scales see the Method section (page X).

Age groups 10 and 12 were asked on an 11-point scale how happy they have been feeling during the last two weeks (Table 27).

Table 27: Happiness during the last two weeks (Age group 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How happy have you been feeling during the last two weeks?	1.2	.5	1.7	1.8	2.0	7.4	4.3	10.8	17.7	21.8	30.9

Figure 13 shows variations in age groups, gender and whether born in Germany or not. There are no differences between boys and girls, but children of age group 10 were happier, as were those who were born in Germany.

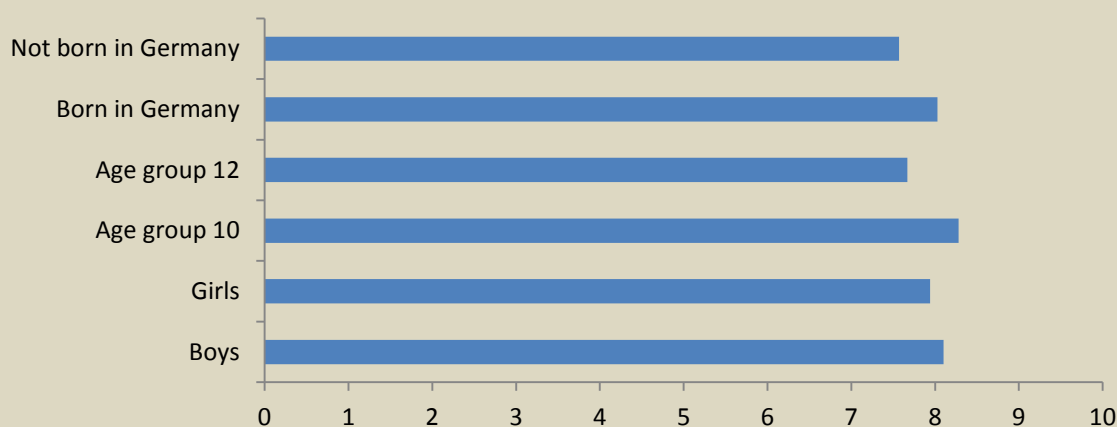


Figure 13: Variances in happiness during the last two weeks (Age groups 10, 12) (Means)

In the second measurement – the overall life satisfaction scale (OLS) – the year group 8 was asked on a five-point scale whereas year groups 10 and 12 were asked on an eleven-point scale. 72.7% of the youngest age group scored the highest satisfaction, whereas 54% of the older age groups did so.

Table 28: Overall life satisfaction (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
Your life as a whole	1.0	1.0	7.1	18.2	72.7

Table 29: Overall life satisfaction (Age groups 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your life as a whole	.7	.5	.7	1.0	1.1	2.9	2.7	5.9	11.0	19.5	54.0

To compare overall life satisfaction, the scales of all age groups were converted to a 0-100 scale. Figure 14 shows once more that children of year group 12 are less satisfied with their life than children of age group 10. Boys are likely to be more satisfied with their life than girls, but there is no difference between children born in Germany and those who are not among the older children.

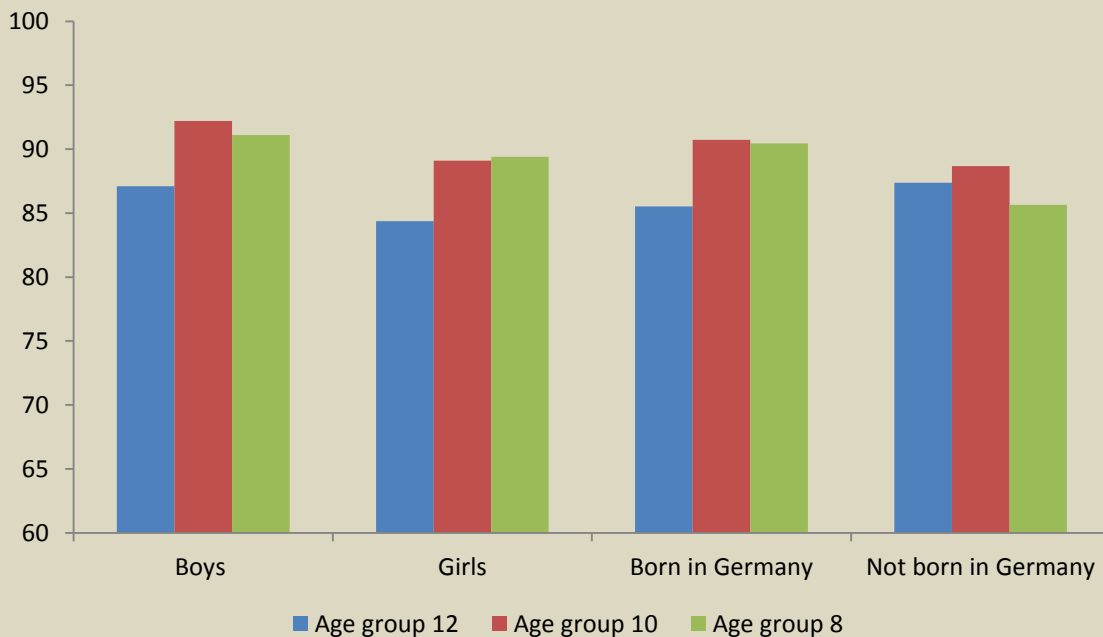


Figure 14: Variances in overall life satisfaction (All age groups) (Means)

Looking at the 3rd measurement, The Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS-5), age group 8 was asked the items on a five-point scale (Table 30), the older age groups on an eleven-point scale (Table 31). Both of the tables show high values of life satisfaction.

Table 30: SLSS-5 (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
My life is going well	1.6	2.6	9.3	25.1	61.4
My life is just right	3.0	3.5	10.3	22.5	60.7
The things in my life are excellent	2.4	5.8	7.8	25.8	58.2
I have a good life	1.8	3.6	6.5	19.2	69.0
I have what I want in life	4.8	5.9	13.9	29.3	46.1

Table 31: SLSS-5 (Age groups 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My life is going well	.6	.2	1.0	1.4	2.0	3.9	3.9	6.6	15.1	21.4	44.0
My life is just right	1.9	.7	1.2	1.3	2.5	5.1	3.7	7.4	14.7	21.4	40.0
The things in my life are excellent	1.6	.8	1.4	1.4	2.0	3.9	4.1	7.8	12.0	24.2	40.8
I have a good life	.9	.7	.9	1.2	1.6	2.9	2.8	4.7	11.3	17.3	55.8
I have what I want in life	2.2	.8	1.2	2.0	1.9	3.9	3.7	9.0	13.1	23.2	38.9

Here too the scales were converted into a 0-100 scale to facilitate comparison. As in previous results, the oldest age group shows the lowest, whereas age group 10 shows the highest life satisfaction (figure 15). In all of the age groups the boys report higher satisfaction, especially within the older age groups. The lowest life satisfaction was found in girls of age group 12. The highest life satisfaction was measured in boys of age group 10. Including all age groups, the SLSS-5 index for German children is 83.95.



Figure 15: Variances in SLSS-5 in Scale 0-100 (All age groups) (Means)

The Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) were also used to explore children's subjective well-being. Age group 8 was asked on a 5-point emoticons scale (Table 32), age groups 10 and 12 on an eleven point scale (Table 33).

Table 32: BMSLSS (Age group 8) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4
Your family life	.9	1.4	5.2	18.0	74.5
Your friends	.5	1.2	6.5	25.5	66.4
Your school experience	2.8	3.3	12.8	32.7	48.5
Your own body	2.1	2.4	7.1	22.5	66.0
The area where you live	3.7	3.9	16.5	30.9	45.1

Table 33: BMSLSS (Age groups 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your family life	.5	.5	.8	.5	1.4	2.5	2.0	3.7	8.0	19.9	60.2
Your friends	.2	.2	.2	.4	.9	2.1	2.1	4.9	10.5	22.2	56.4
Your school experience	.8	.9	1.0	1.7	1.9	6.4	6.1	10.2	18.0	24.8	28.0
Your own body	2.0	1.1	1.9	3.1	3.1	4.2	3.7	7.9	11.9	19.9	41.0
The area where you live	2.8	.9	1.1	2.2	3.1	7.4	6.2	9.2	13.4	20.0	33.7

For better comparison this scale was also transformed into a 0-100 scale. Figure 16 shows once more that children of age group 10 are the most satisfied and children of age group 12 the least satisfied. The BMSLSS does not show significant gender differences.



Figure 16: Variances in BMSLSS in Scale 0-100 (All age groups) (Means)

The Personal Well-being Index (PWI-SC) was only used with the 10 and 12 year old groups. Table 34 shows the distributions on an eleven point scale, as the students were asked.

Table 34: PWI-SC (Age groups 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
All the things you have	.1	.0	.1	.4	.3	1.6	1.4	4.3	10.9	24.4	56.5
Your health	.5	.2	.3	.5	1.1	3.5	2.3	5.9	9.4	16.8	59.5
The things you want to be good at	.7	.6	.4	.8	1.2	3.4	4.1	9.0	17.5	29.1	33.2
Your relationship with people in general	1.3	.3	.4	.8	1.2	4.2	2.4	6.2	14.9	25.7	42.5
How safe you feel	.4	.3	.3	1.0	1.4	3.0	2.8	6.7	14.5	23.7	46.0
Doing things away from home	.5	.1	.1	.5	1.3	2.1	2.7	6.4	15.5	24.8	46.0
What may happen to you later in life	.4	.1	.3	.8	.7	2.3	2.2	5.5	12.4	24.6	50.8

Figure 17 shows variations of the scale transformed into 0-100. The pattern is similar to the BMSLSS. The older children are less satisfied, but there are no significant gender differences.

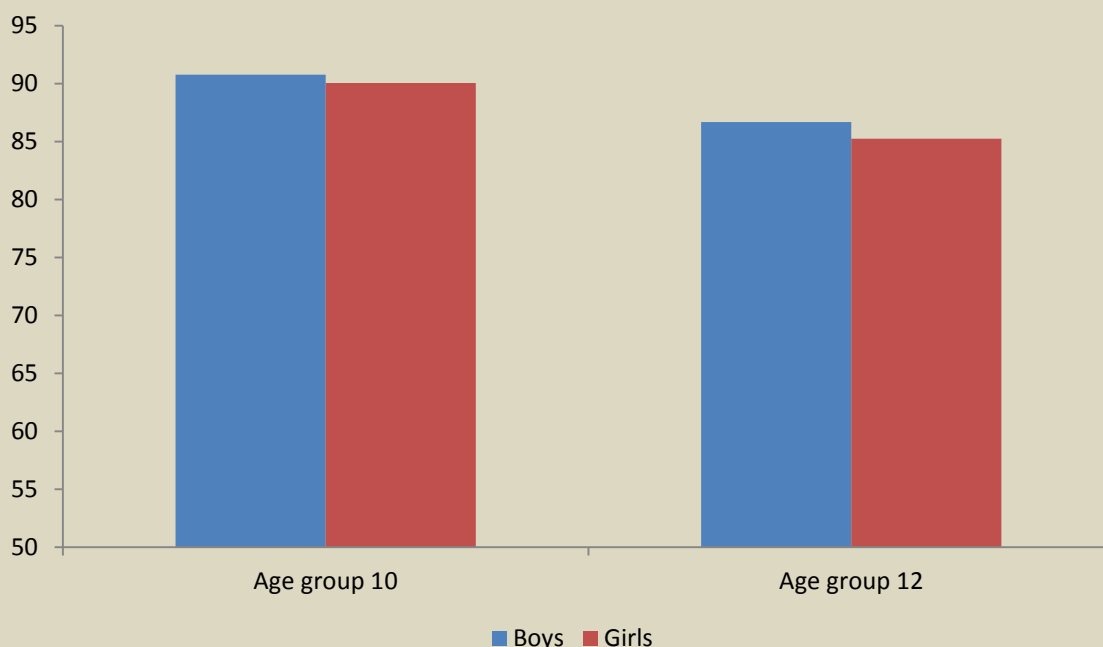


Figure 17: Variances in PWI-SC in Scale 0-100 (Age groups 10, 12) (Means)

The questionnaires for age groups 10 and 12 included a short version of a positive affect scale. The overall distribution is presented in Table 35.

Table 35: Positive Affect (Age groups 10, 12) (%)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Satisfied	.9	.6	1.1	1.8	1.8	5.7	4.7	8.9	16.2	18.3	40.0
Happy	1.0	.2	1.3	2.1	1.8	3.9	4.1	8.5	15.4	18.8	42.8
Relaxed	2.6	1.7	2.0	2.9	3.5	6.3	6.0	9.6	13.4	17.4	34.6
Active	1.3	.6	.8	1.7	1.8	3.7	4.7	7.2	13.4	17.3	47.5
Calm	5.4	2.2	3.2	3.5	4.6	7.9	7.5	10.2	13.7	16.1	25.8
Full of energy	2.2	.6	1.1	1.9	1.9	5.6	4.8	9.0	10.9	15.3	46.6

Figure 18 presents variations by gender and age group. Age group 10 scores higher than the older children and boys score higher than girls in both of the age groups.

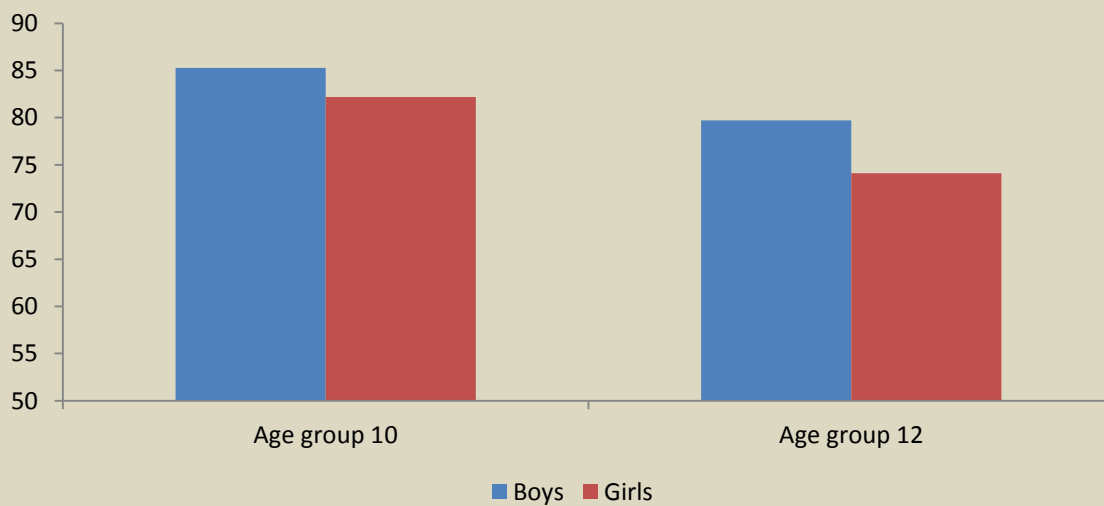


Figure 18: Variances in Positive Affect in Scale 0-100 (Age groups 10, 12) (Means)

2.8 National questions

A few items were added to the German questionnaire. Five items were added from the Material Deprivation Index (Main & Bradshaw 2012) to the question about things the children have. The overall results are presented in figure 19.

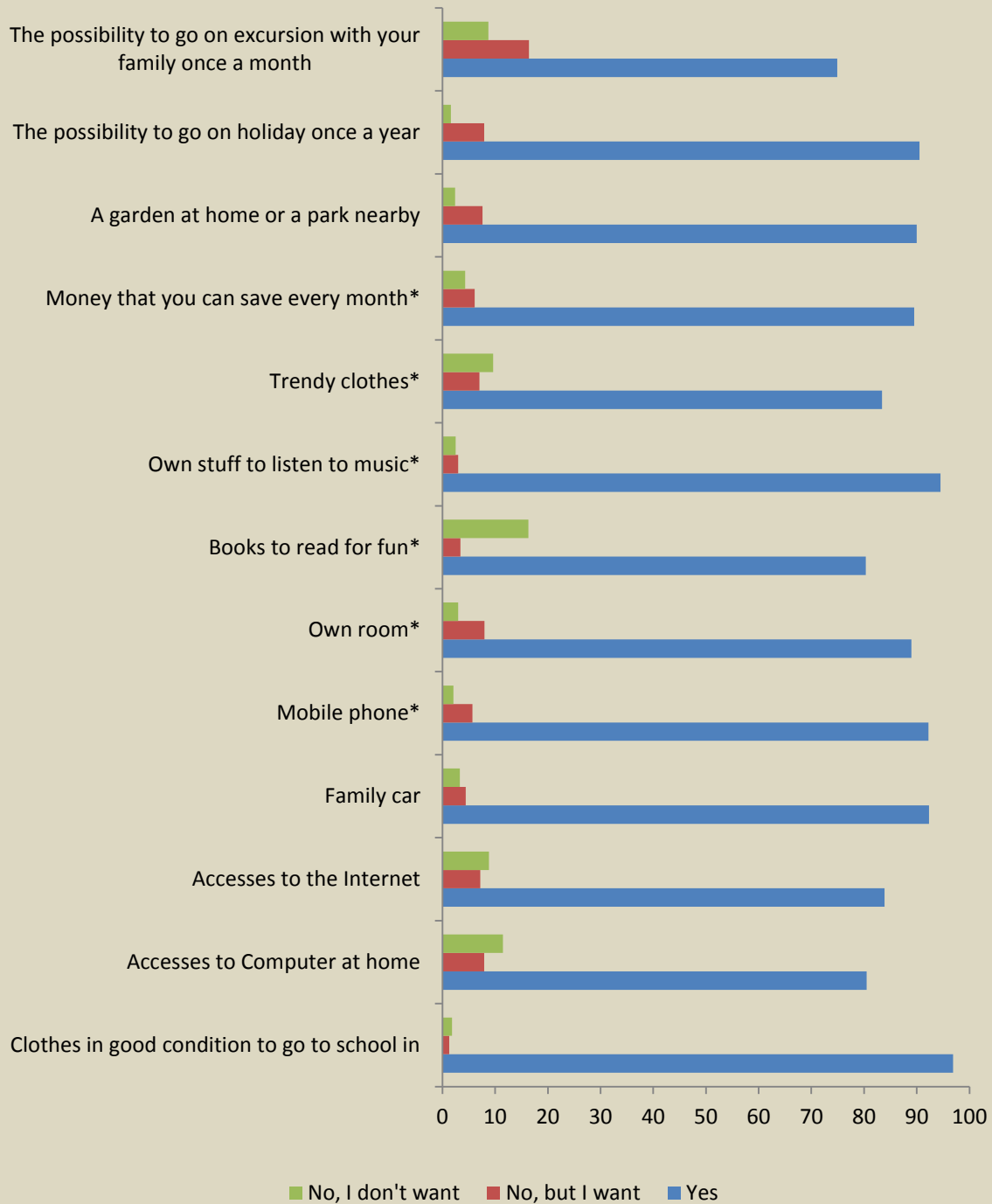


Figure 19: Things you have (All age groups) (%) *Only Age groups 10 and 12

Table 36 shows the proportion of the number of items lacked. Among age group 8, 61.2% of the children lack at least one out of the seven items. Among the older children, 65.4% lack at least one of the 13 items.

Table 36: Number of lacking Items (All age groups) (%)

	Age group 8 (% lacking out of 7 items)	Age groups 10, 12 (% lacking out of 13 items)
None	38.8	34.6
One	32.3	27.8
Two	19.7	16.9
Three	6.4	10.2
Four	1.9	5.6
Five	.3	2.3
More than Five	.4	2.7
Total	100	100

The adapted answer options allow us to differentiate items which are lacking but not wanted, and items that are lacking but missed by children (Table 37). There are 32.3% of age group 8 children, who do not have but wish to have one or more of the items. Among age group 10 and 12, there are 42.7% who wish to have at least one of the items.

Table 37: Number of Items missed (All age groups) (%)

	Age group 8 (% not wanted out of 7 items)	Age groups 10, 12 (% not wanted out of 13 items)
None	67.5	57.3
One	22.9	27.3
Two	8.2	9.5
Three	.9	3.9
Four	.1	1.2
Five	.2	.5
More than Five	.1	.4
Total	100	100

2. Conclusions

Though the children who participated in this survey seem to be quite satisfied with their lives and report relatively high subjective well-being, there are about 7-15%, who are unhappy or unsatisfied with their lives or themselves according to the life satisfaction scales (e.g. OLS). Referring to Germany, where 1.8 million children between 8 and 13 years live, this amounts in total to 126,000 – 270,000 children with low subjective well-being. The variation analysis of those scales showed that girls are likely to be more affected than boys, and children not born in Germany more than those who are born in the country. Surprisingly and in contrast to other German studies like the LBS Kinderbarometer (2009), which showed that well-being decreases with the age of the child, the age group with the highest subjective well-being and highest satisfaction in all dimensions of this survey are the 10-year-olds, followed by the youngest age group. The lowest well-being show children of age group 12. Intentionally, we did not pay attention to differences in school types, because we want to discuss school as a living environment rather than as an institution. Hence, this could be analysed in the future.

The average means by dimension (Figure 20, 21) show that the youngest children are likely to be most happy with the things they have, their time use and their home and family. The older children are most satisfied with the things they have and their home and family. The children are least satisfied with the area they live and their school. It reveals that in particular age group 12 is negative about their school experience and generally, in all of the items. The most striking differences between the two older age groups are in school matters as well as their feelings about themselves – the way they look, their health, body and self-confidence.

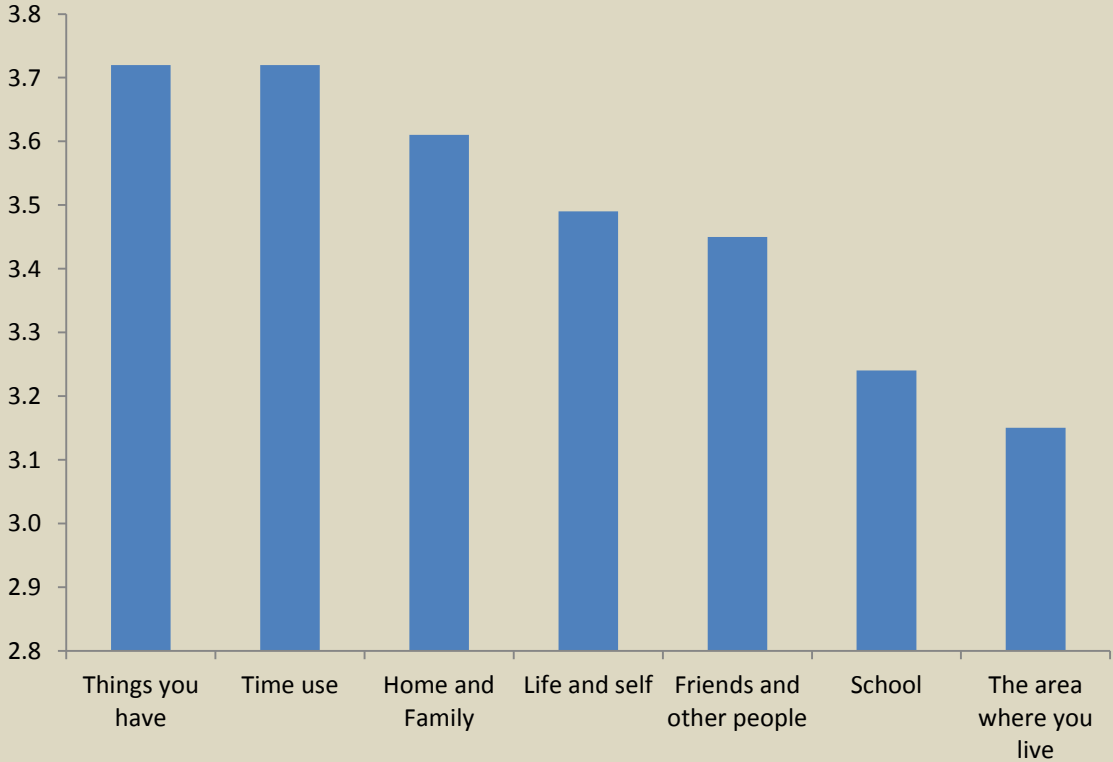


Figure 20: Average Mean by Dimension (Age group 8) (Means)

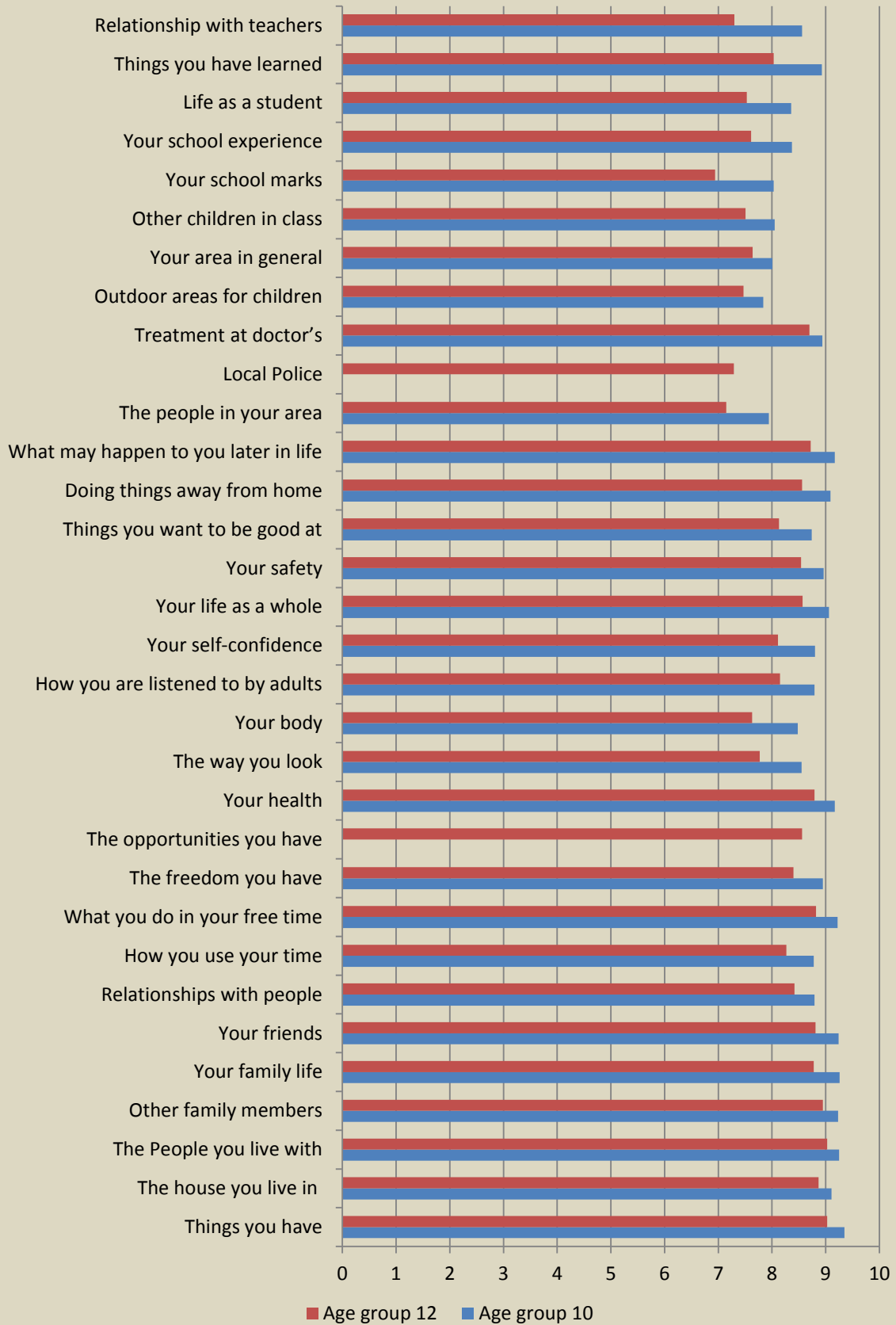


Figure 21: Average Mean by Dimension (Age groups 10 and 12) (Means)

Though the findings on gender differences show that girls tend to be more satisfied in most of the items, they show less satisfaction in matters about themselves and their sense of self, like their health, looks, body, self-confidence and the things they want to be good at. In these contexts, boys are more satisfied. A similar pattern can be found in all of the psychometric scales. Though girls are likely to be more satisfied with most of the items in the life domains, they have a lower subjective well-being regarding to the psychometric scales. The cause and effect of gender differences should be of interest in further analysis, both within Germany as well as in international analysis.

This country report is intentionally descriptive and briefly summarises the findings. But obviously, the data holds big potential for further and deep analysis. There is a need for deeper analysis of the children's relations with school, and how the experiences they have influence their subjective well-being. Generally, it will be interesting which and to what extent different dimensions determine overall well-being. To integrate the German findings into an international context, cross-country analysis will be a further step in future that should not be missed out.

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