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Discovering New Frontiers  
in Quality-of-Life Research

# Children's subjective well-being in Spain: Using a new synthetic index

Ferran Casas\*, Armando Bello\*\*, Mònica  
González\*, Mireia Aligué\*.

\* ERIDIQV Research Team. Research Institute on Quality of Life.  
Universitat de Girona (UdG).Spain

\*\* UNICEF-Spain, Research Department.

CHILDREN'S  
WORLDS



INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING (ISCWeB)



Universitat de Girona

Institut de Recerca  
sobre Qualitat de Vida

ERIDIQV

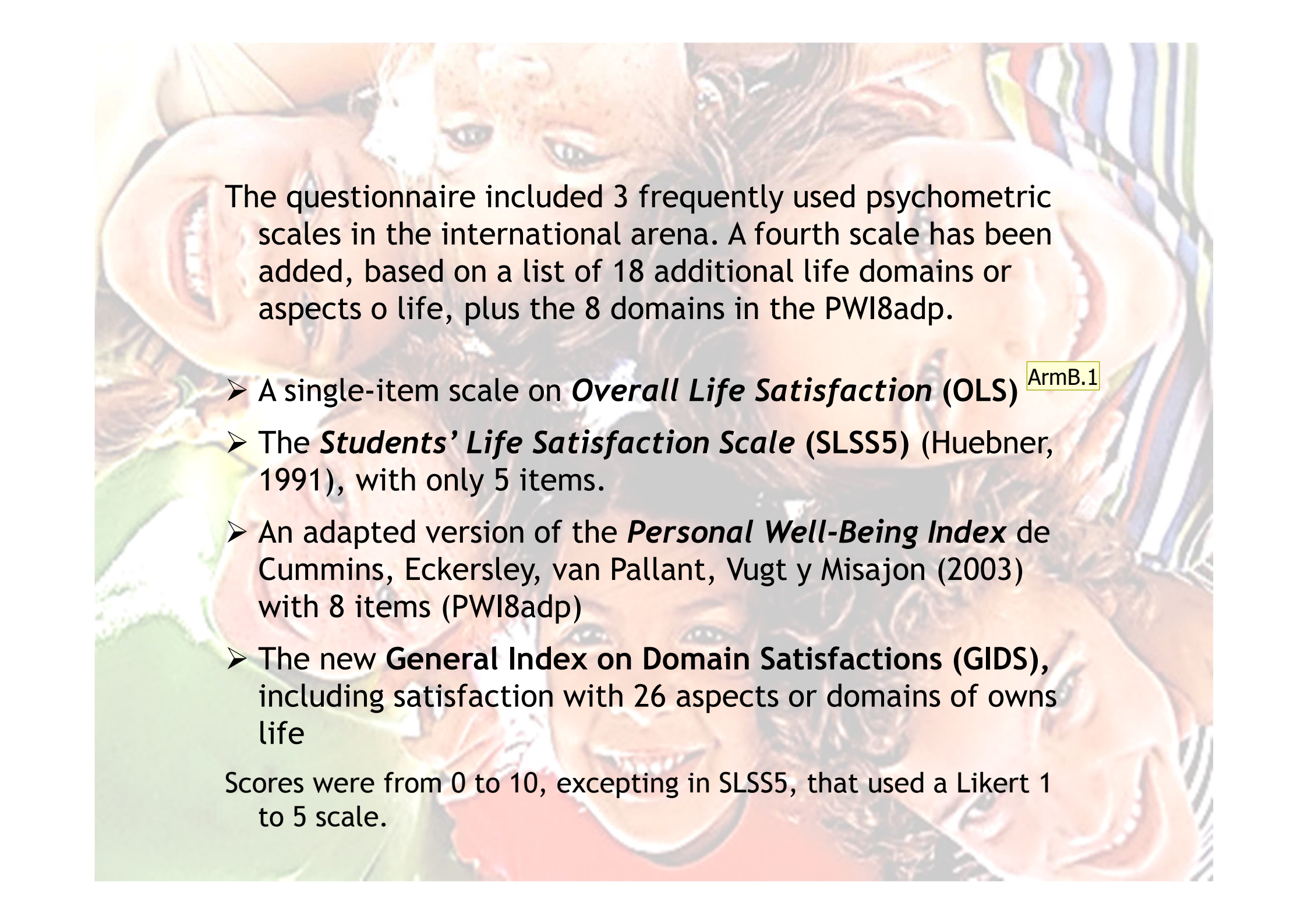
<http://www.udg.edu/eridiqv>

unicef

## Spanish survey

- Representative sample of students in the first form of Compulsory Secondary Education in Spain (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria = ESO)
- Strata:
  - Autonomous Communities and Cities (17+2)
  - Public/publically funded / private centres
  - Centres in urban/semi urban /rural environments (< 2,000 / 2,000-20,000 / > 20,000 inhabitants)
- N = 5,934 children between 11 and 14 year-olds (19,4% 13 & 14 y.o., mostly repeating scholar course)
- Administered in 4 languages, depending on the region (Castilian-Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Bask).
- 11,2% are not born in Spain
- 2,7% say NOT to live in a household with the own family
- 78,2% say to live in a household with the two parents living in it
- 14,1% say to live in more than one household, regularly or occasionally





The questionnaire included 3 frequently used psychometric scales in the international arena. A fourth scale has been added, based on a list of 18 additional life domains or aspects of life, plus the 8 domains in the PWI8adp.

- A single-item scale on ***Overall Life Satisfaction (OLS)*** ArmB.1
- The ***Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS5)*** (Huebner, 1991), with only 5 items.
- An adapted version of the ***Personal Well-Being Index*** de Cummins, Eckersley, van Pallant, Vugt y Misajon (2003) with 8 items (PWI8adp)
- The new ***General Index on Domain Satisfactions (GIDS)***, including satisfaction with 26 aspects or domains of own life

Scores were from 0 to 10, excepting in SLSS5, that used a Likert 1 to 5 scale.

### Diapositiva 3

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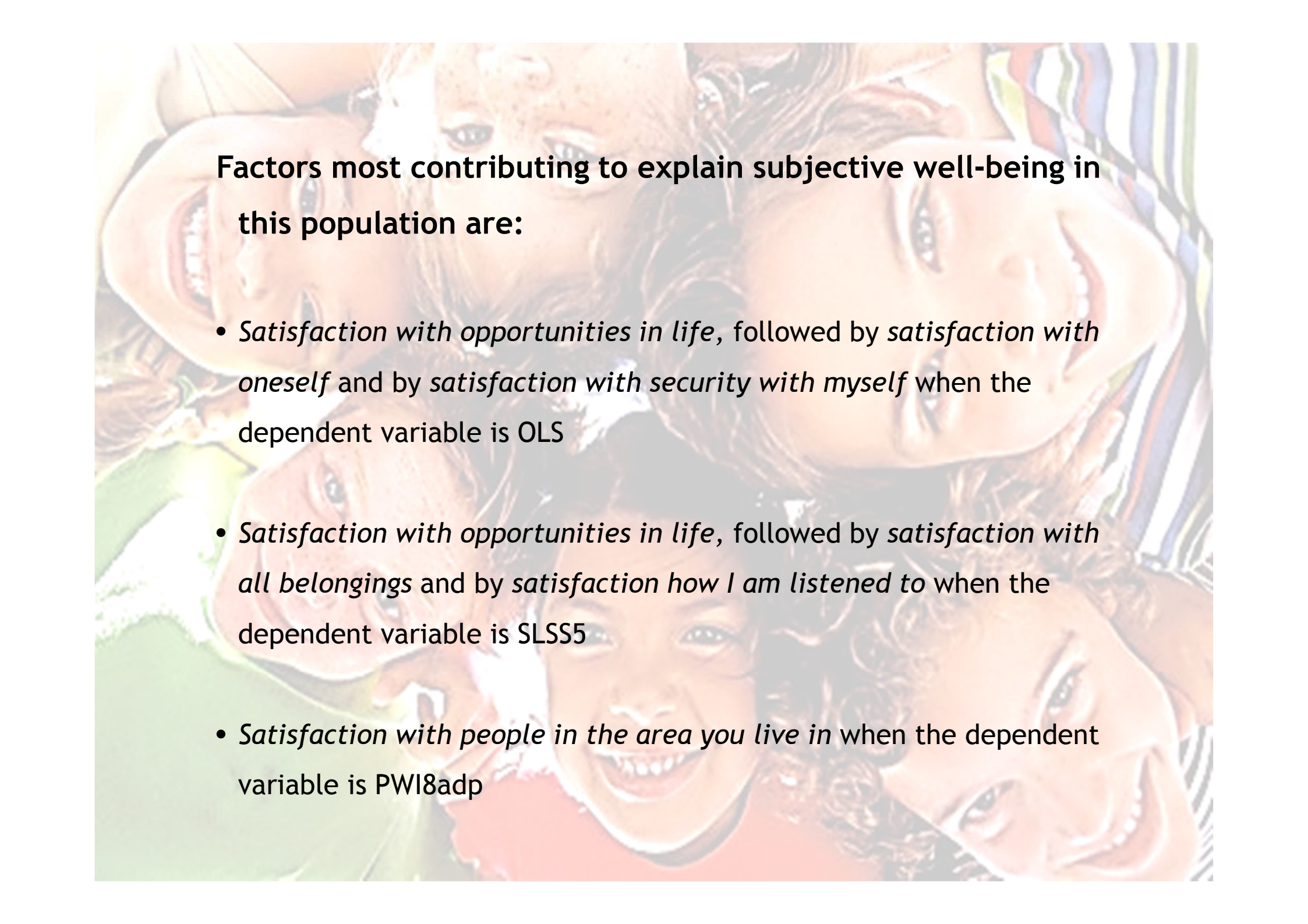
**ArmB.1**

aquí ponemos algunas siglas en inglés, pero luego (en los gráficos) las ponemos en castellano

Armando Bello; 30/10/2012

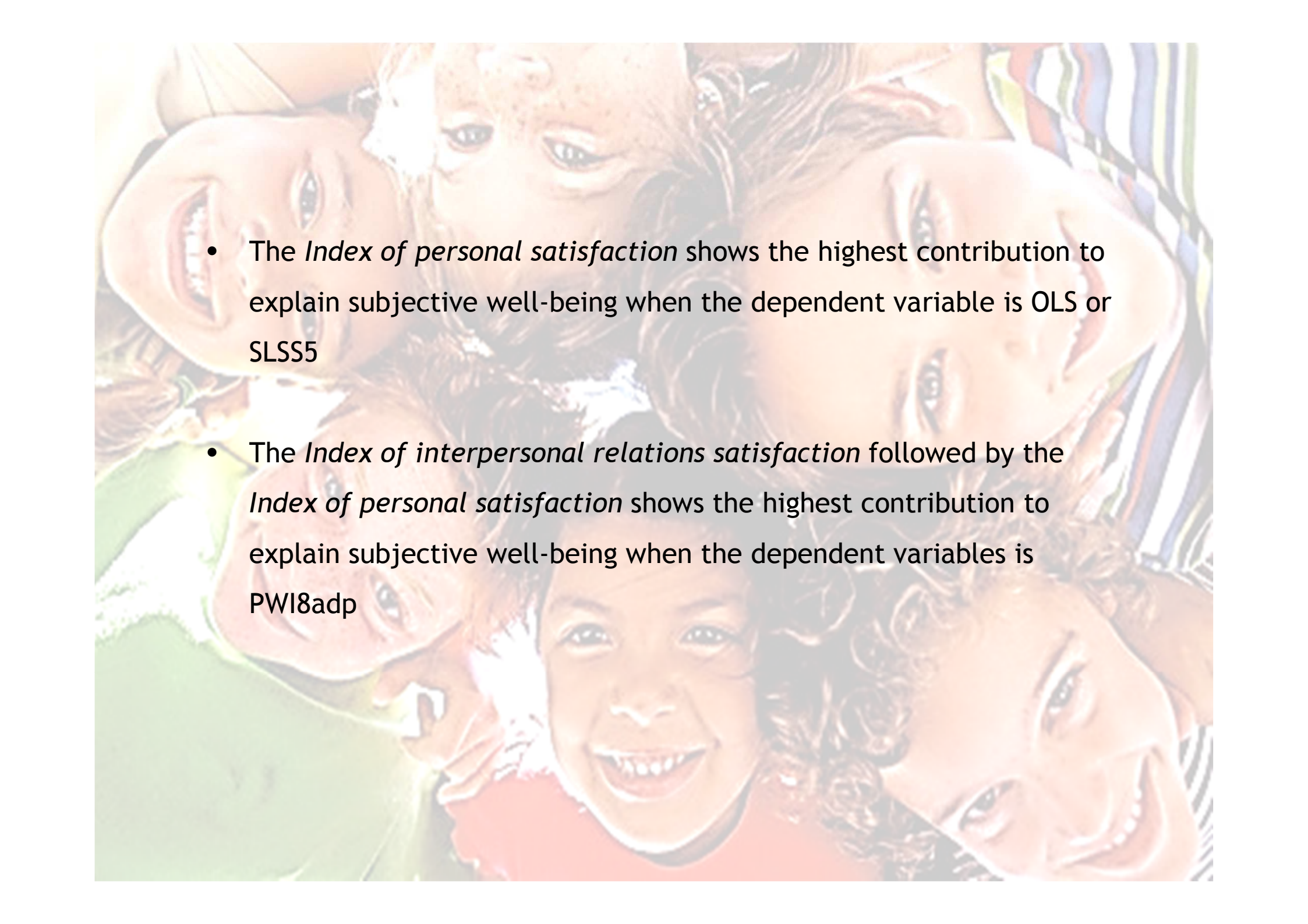
Index	Life domain satisfaction	Item
Index 1	Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The house or flat where you live</li> <li>➤ The people who live with you</li> <li>➤ All the other people in your family</li> </ul>
Index 2	Material belongings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All the things you have</li> <li>➤ The pocket money you get</li> <li>➤ The personal space you have for yourself at home</li> </ul>
Index 3	Interpersonal relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Your friends</li> <li>➤ The people who live in your area</li> <li>➤ Your relationships with people in general</li> </ul>
Index 4	Area living in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The local police in your area</li> <li>➤ The area where you live, in general</li> <li>➤ The libraries in your area</li> <li>➤ The public transport in your area</li> </ul>
Index 5	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How you are dealt with when you go to the doctors</li> <li>➤ Your health in general</li> </ul>
Index 6	Time organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How you use your time</li> <li>➤ What you do in your free time</li> </ul>
Index 7	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The school you go to</li> <li>➤ Your schoolmates</li> <li>➤ Your school marks</li> </ul>
Index 8	Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The freedom you have</li> <li>➤ The way that you look</li> <li>➤ Yourself</li> <li>➤ How you are listened to</li> <li>➤ Your self confidence</li> <li>➤ The amount of choice you have in life</li> </ul>





**Factors most contributing to explain subjective well-being in this population are:**

- *Satisfaction with opportunities in life*, followed by *satisfaction with oneself* and by *satisfaction with security with myself* when the dependent variable is OLS
- *Satisfaction with opportunities in life*, followed by *satisfaction with all belongings* and by *satisfaction how I am listened to* when the dependent variable is SLSS5
- *Satisfaction with people in the area you live in* when the dependent variable is PWI8adp

- 
- The *Index of personal satisfaction* shows the highest contribution to explain subjective well-being when the dependent variable is OLS or SLSS5
  - The *Index of interpersonal relations satisfaction* followed by the *Index of personal satisfaction* shows the highest contribution to explain subjective well-being when the dependent variables is PWI8adp





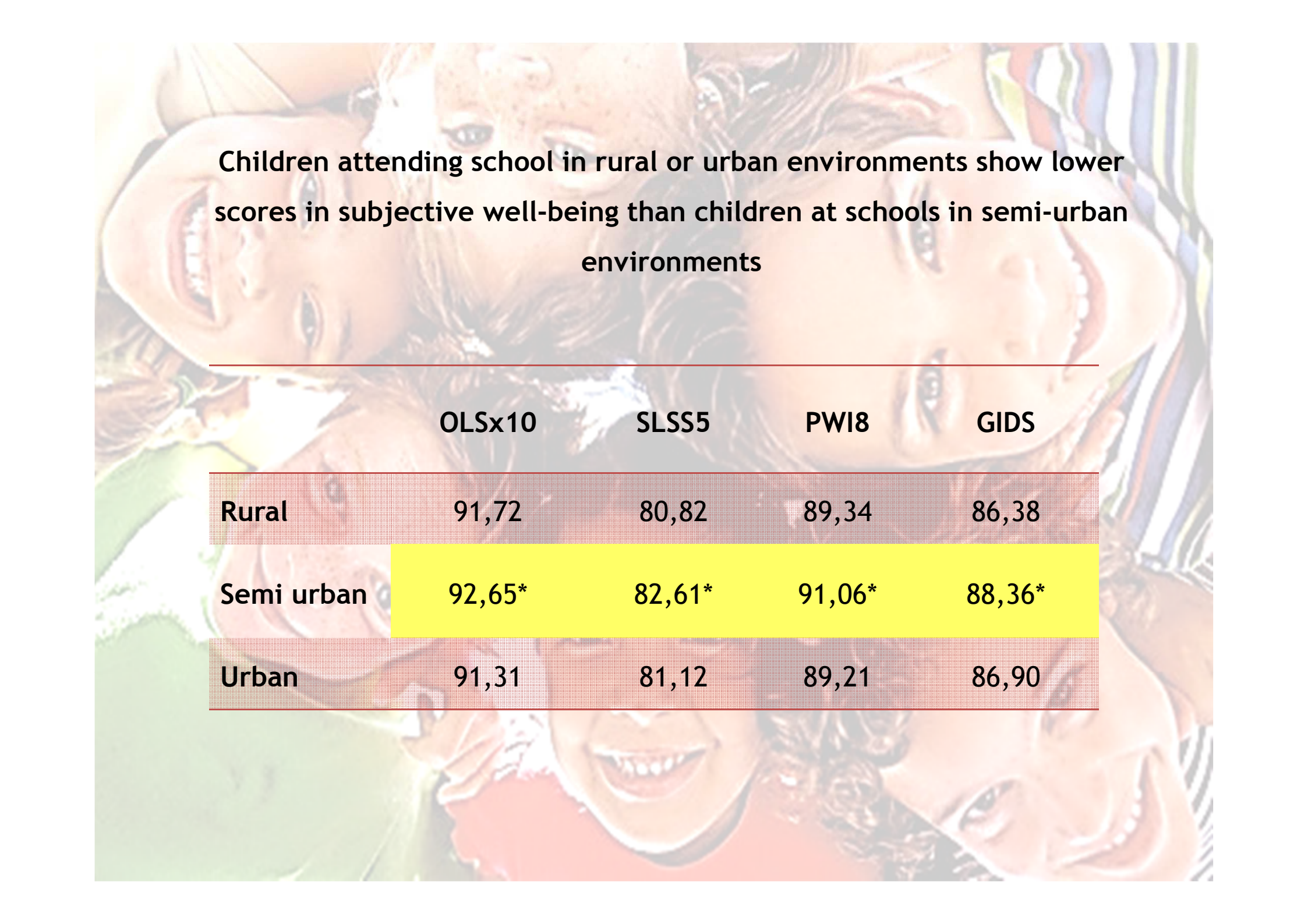
**Results using the 4 well-being general indicators,  
according to other variables**

**Children in private and publically funded schools show lower scores  
in all subjective well-being indicators than children in public  
schools**

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	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>State-run</b>	91,88	81,57	90,05*	87,43*
<b>Mixed funding</b>	91,20	81,21	89,01	86,87
<b>Private</b>	90,87	80,56	87,76	85,78





Children attending school in rural or urban environments show lower scores in subjective well-being than children at schools in semi-urban environments

	OLSx10	SLSS5	PWI8	GIDS
Rural	91,72	80,82	89,34	86,38
Semi urban	92,65*	82,61*	91,06*	88,36*
Urban	91,31	81,12	89,21	86,90



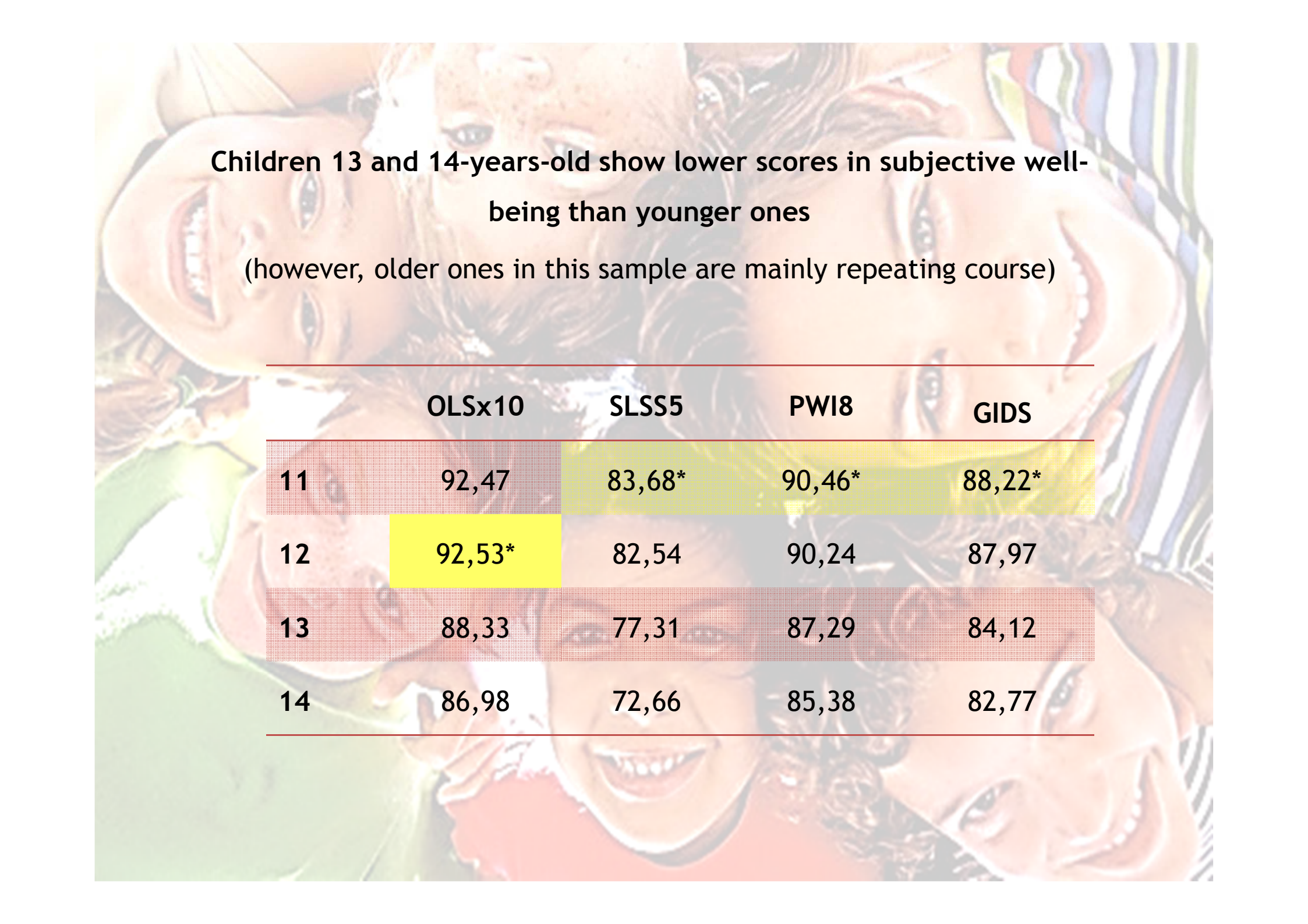
**Boys show significant lower scores in subjective well-being than girls, *only with 2 of the 4 indicators***

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	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>Boy</b>	91,60	81,05	89,10	86,57
<b>Girl</b>	91,59	81,75	90,07*	87,76*

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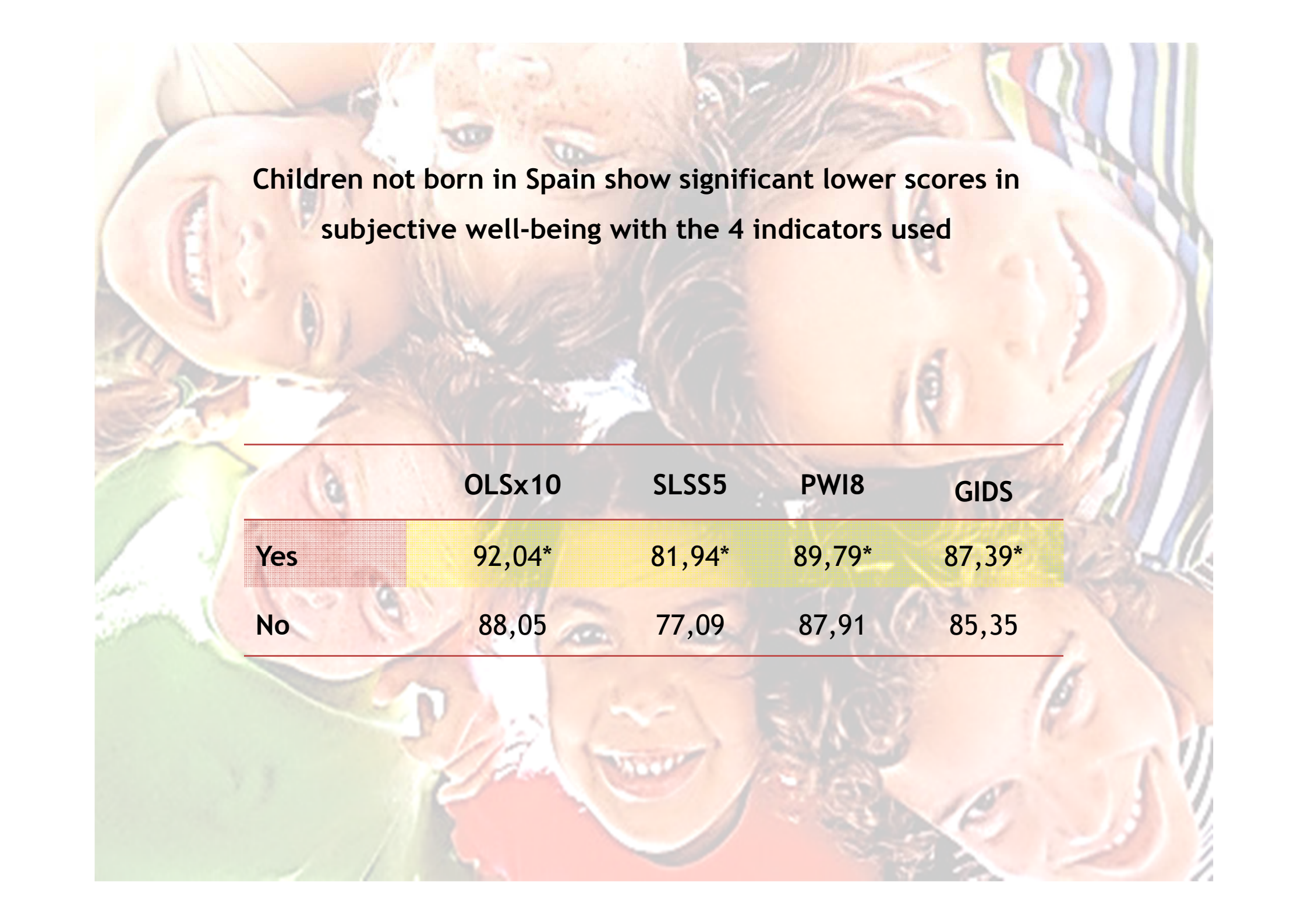




**Children 13 and 14-years-old show lower scores in subjective well-being than younger ones**

(however, older ones in this sample are mainly repeating course)

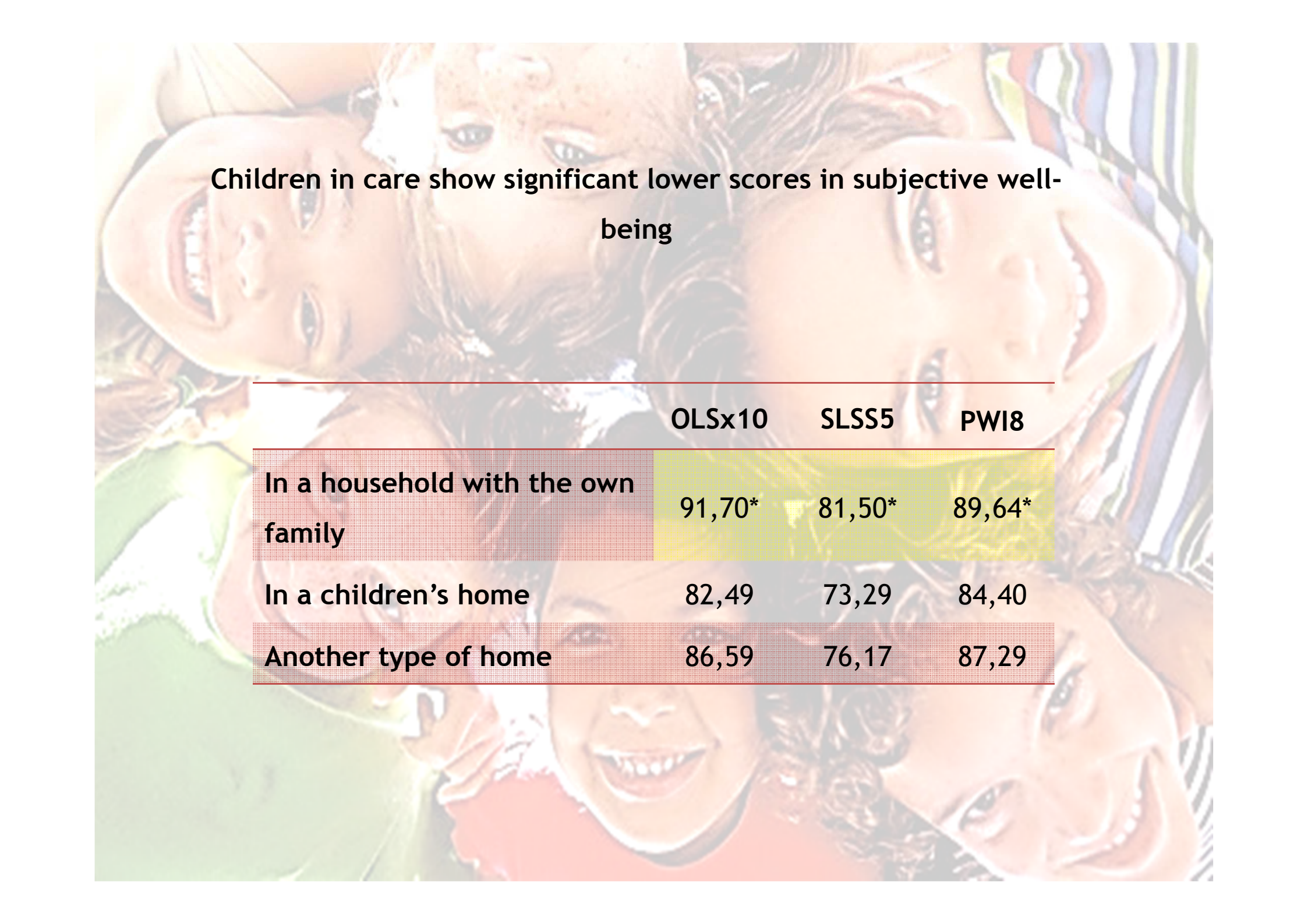
	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>11</b>	92,47	83,68*	90,46*	88,22*
<b>12</b>	92,53*	82,54	90,24	87,97
<b>13</b>	88,33	77,31	87,29	84,12
<b>14</b>	86,98	72,66	85,38	82,77



**Children not born in Spain show significant lower scores in subjective well-being with the 4 indicators used**

	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>Yes</b>	92,04*	81,94*	89,79*	87,39*
<b>No</b>	88,05	77,09	87,91	85,35

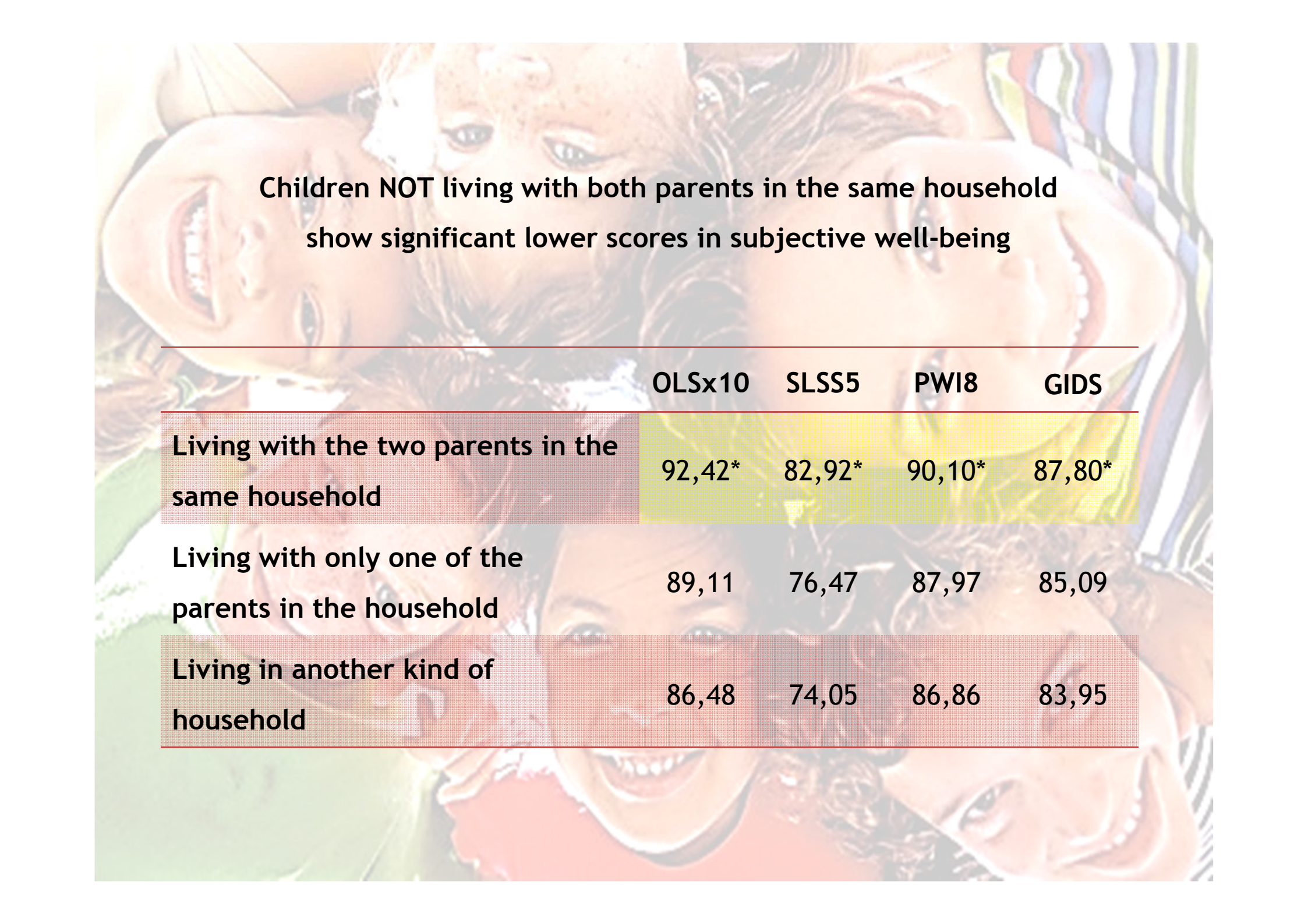




**Children in care show significant lower scores in subjective well-being**

	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>
<b>In a household with the own family</b>	91,70*	81,50*	89,64*
<b>In a children's home</b>	82,49	73,29	84,40
<b>Another type of home</b>	86,59	76,17	87,29

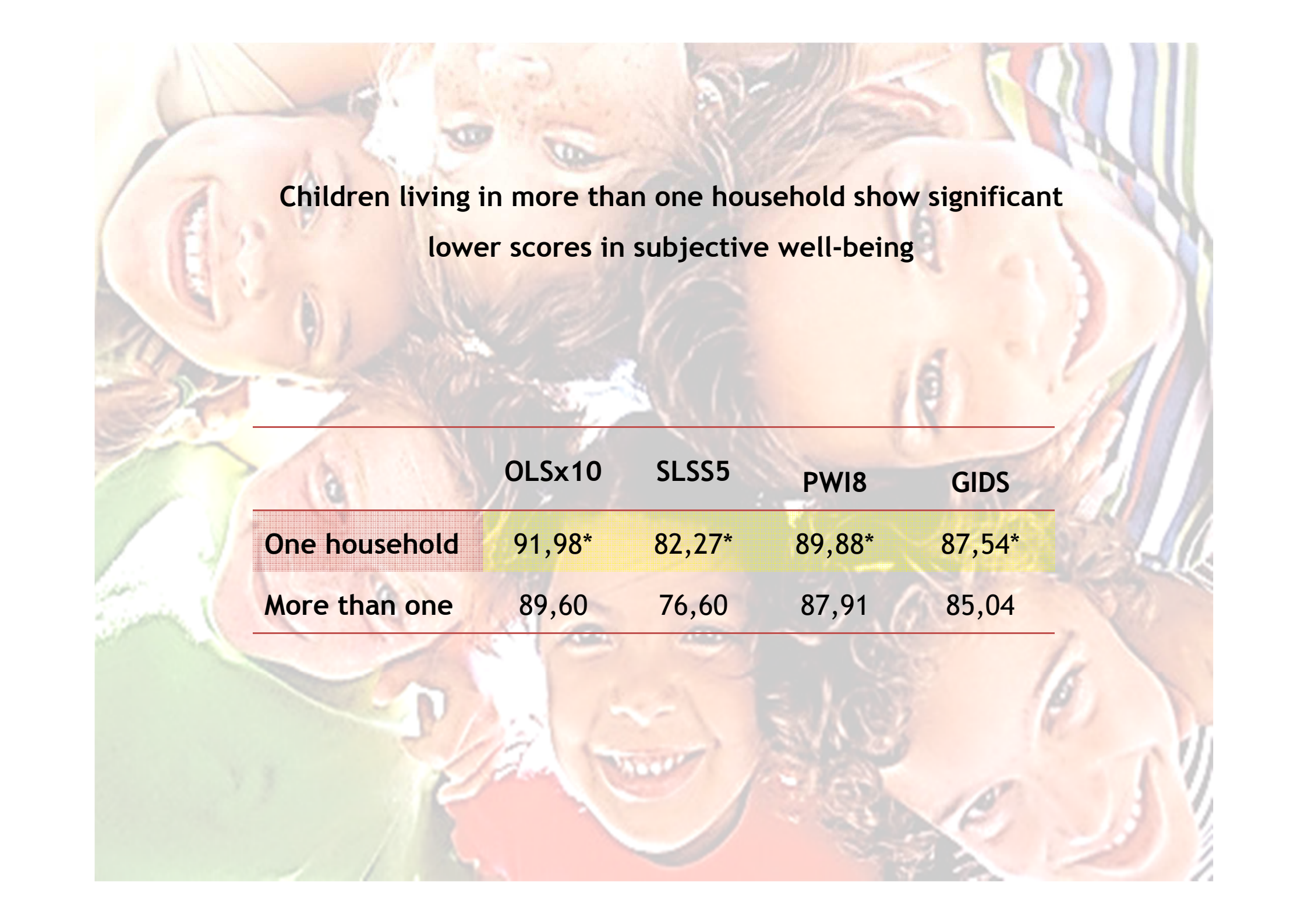




**Children NOT living with both parents in the same household  
show significant lower scores in subjective well-being**

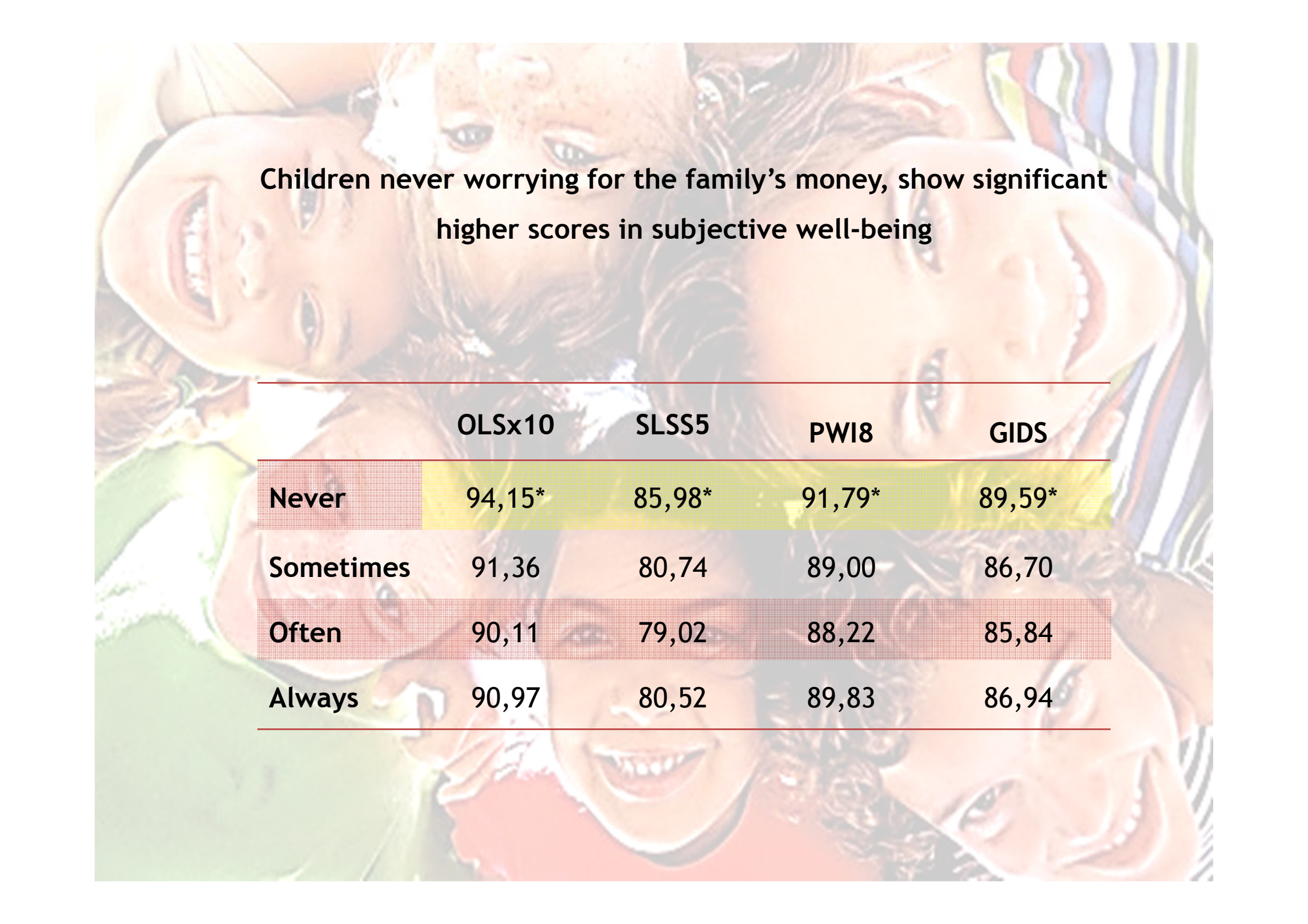
	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>Living with the two parents in the same household</b>	92,42*	82,92*	90,10*	87,80*
<b>Living with only one of the parents in the household</b>	89,11	76,47	87,97	85,09
<b>Living in another kind of household</b>	86,48	74,05	86,86	83,95





**Children living in more than one household show significant lower scores in subjective well-being**

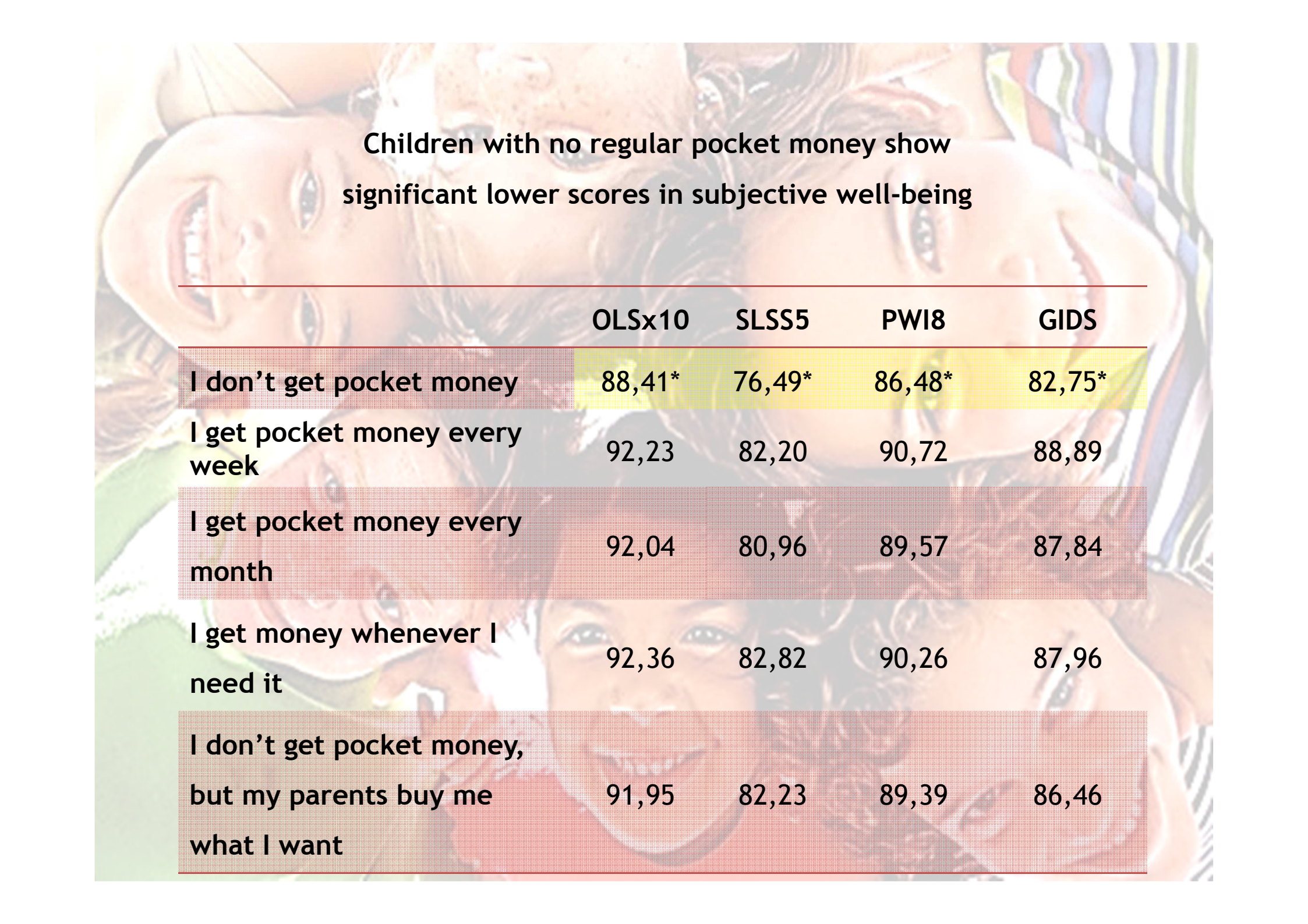
	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>One household</b>	91,98*	82,27*	89,88*	87,54*
<b>More than one</b>	89,60	76,60	87,91	85,04



**Children never worrying for the family's money, show significant higher scores in subjective well-being**

	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PWI8</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>Never</b>	94,15*	85,98*	91,79*	89,59*
<b>Sometimes</b>	91,36	80,74	89,00	86,70
<b>Often</b>	90,11	79,02	88,22	85,84
<b>Always</b>	90,97	80,52	89,83	86,94





**Children with no regular pocket money show significant lower scores in subjective well-being**

	<b>OLSx10</b>	<b>SLSS5</b>	<b>PW18</b>	<b>GIDS</b>
<b>I don't get pocket money</b>	<b>88,41*</b>	<b>76,49*</b>	<b>86,48*</b>	<b>82,75*</b>
<b>I get pocket money every week</b>	92,23	82,20	90,72	88,89
<b>I get pocket money every month</b>	92,04	80,96	89,57	87,84
<b>I get money whenever I need it</b>	92,36	82,82	90,26	87,96
<b>I don't get pocket money, but my parents buy me what I want</b>	91,95	82,23	89,39	86,46

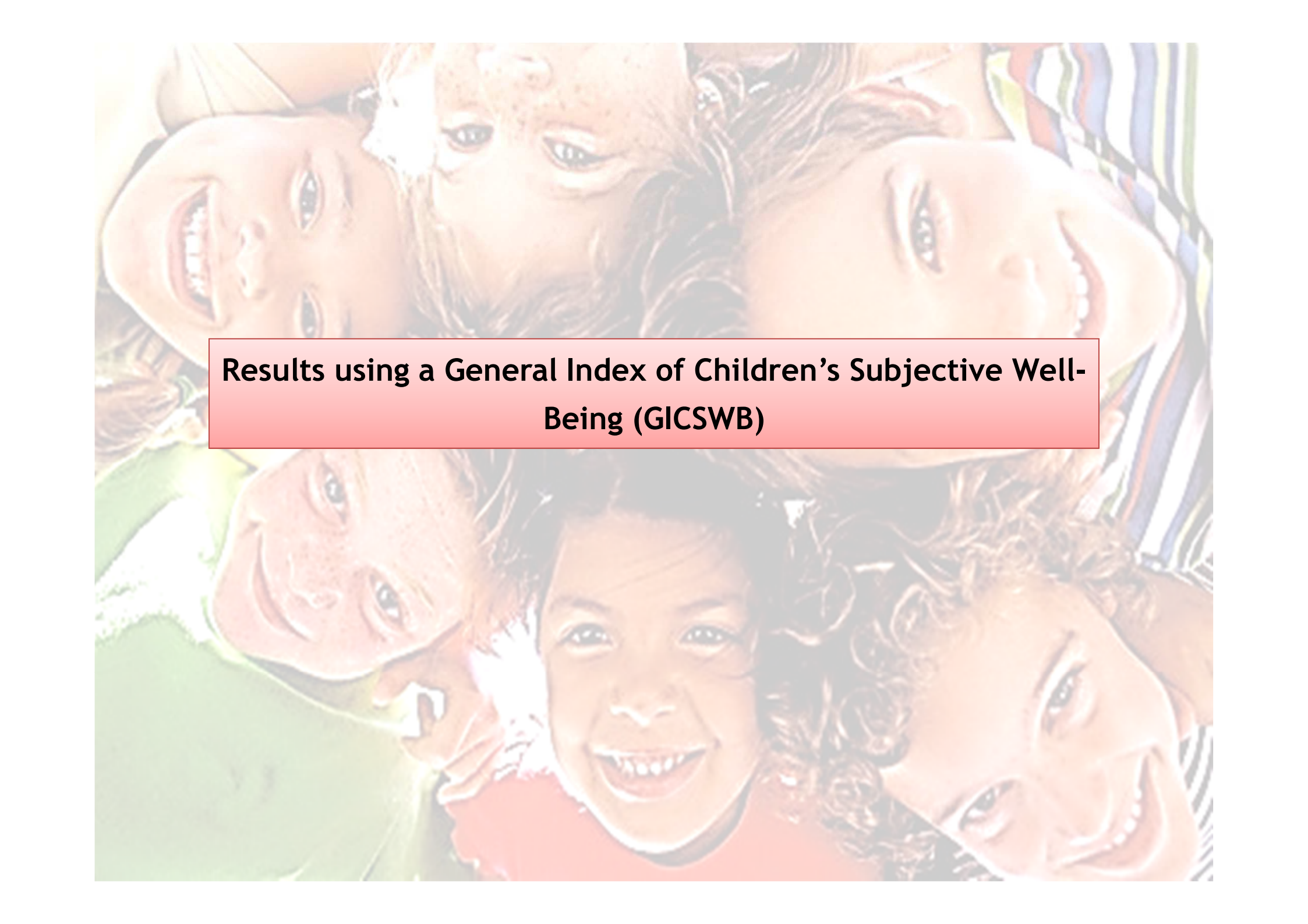


No significant difference of children's subjective well-being is shown according the amount of pocket money they get.

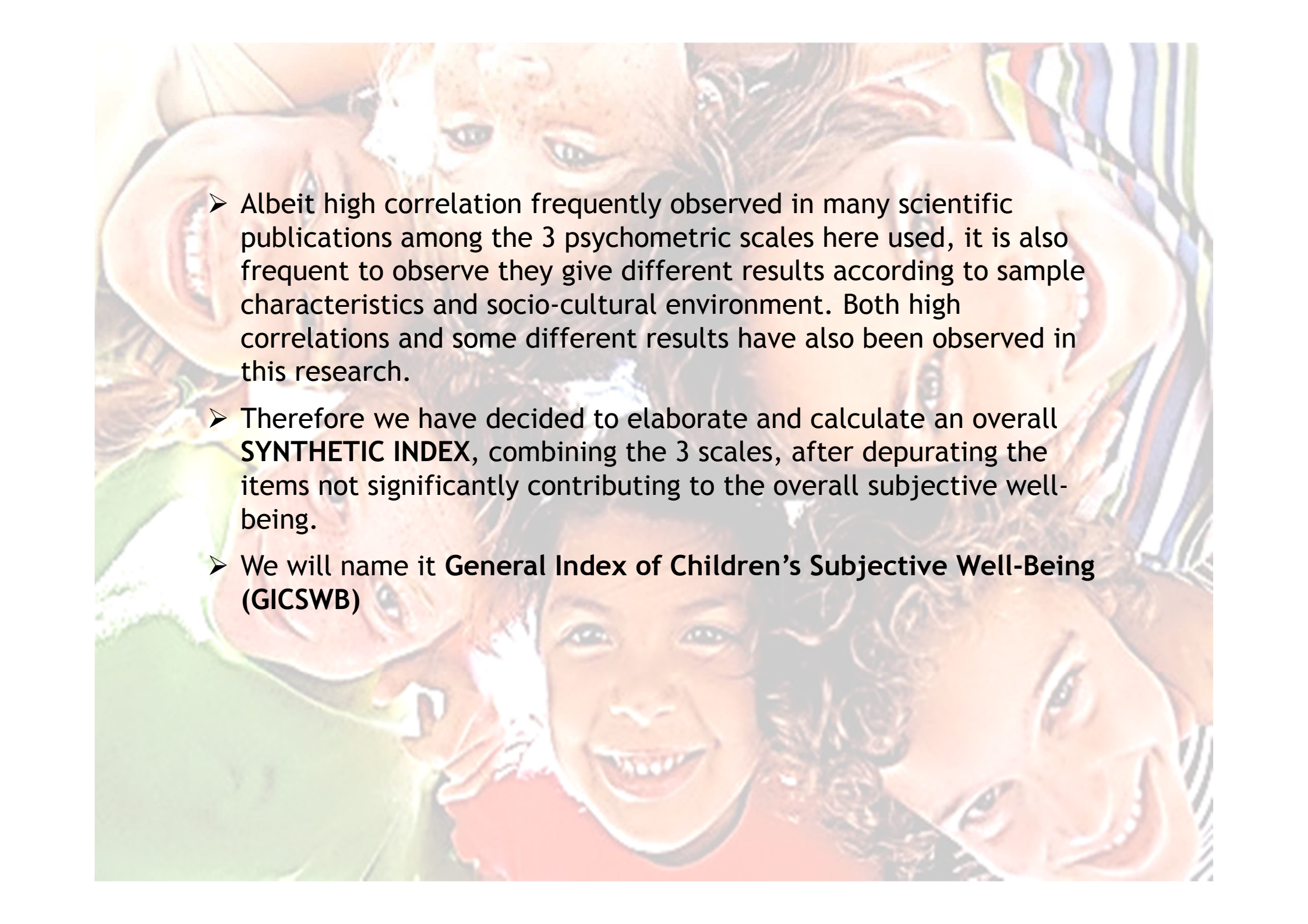
Each indicator shows different ranking in the scores, suggesting they are sensitive to different related variables

	OLSx10	SLSS5	PWI8	GIDS
Less than 5€	92,28	81,92	90,61	88,80
Between 5 & 10 €	91,83	81,67	89,83	88,39
Between 11 & 19€	92,05	83,71	90,44	88,38
Between 20 & 49€	92,57	82,04	90,79	88,63
Between 50 & 100€	91,20	78,72	87,16	85,05
More than 100€	90,00	77,65	89,70	87,91



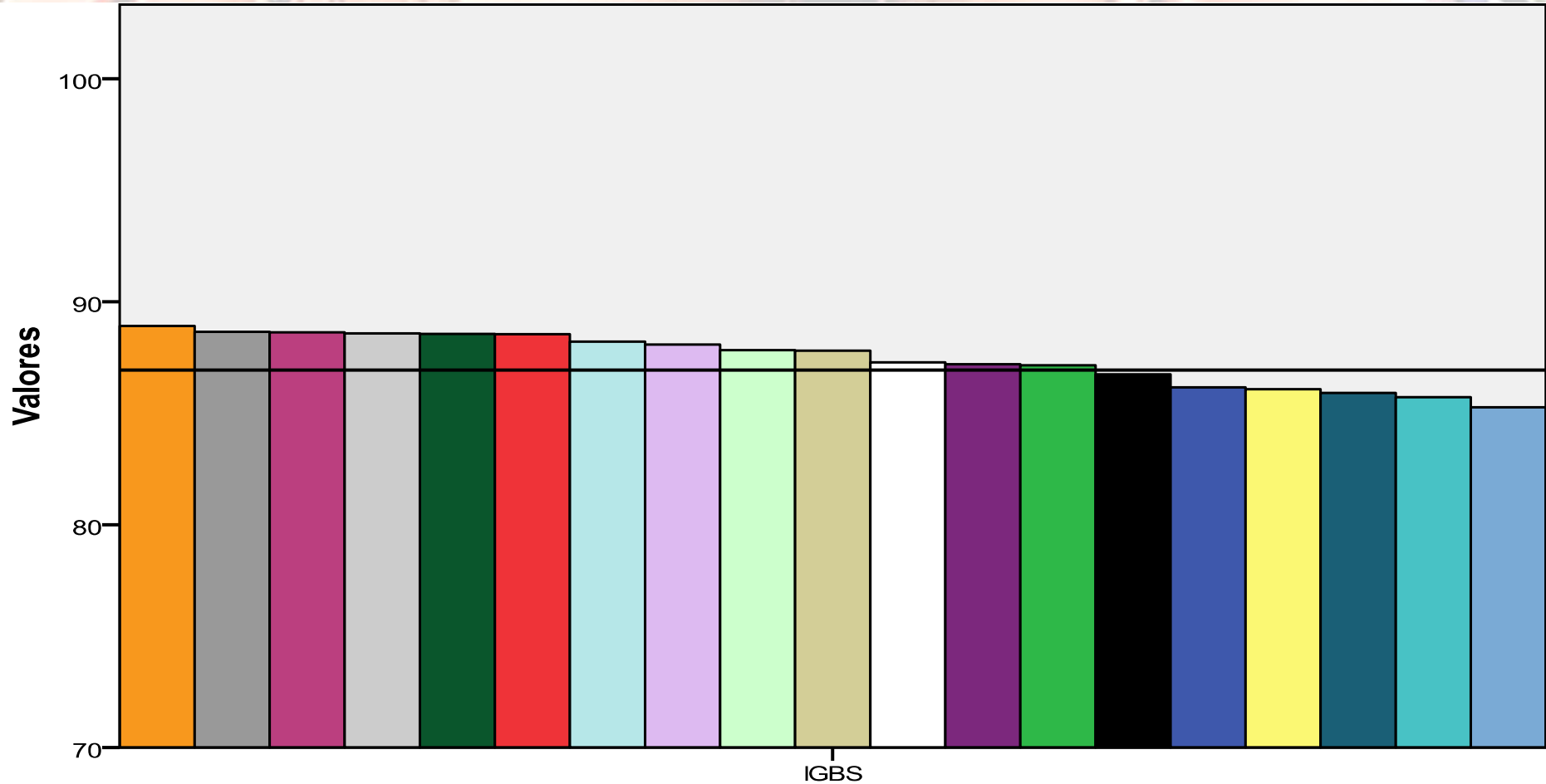
A collage of five smiling children's faces, arranged in a circular pattern. The children are of diverse ethnicities and are all smiling broadly. A central text box with a red-to-white gradient background contains the text "Results using a General Index of Children's Subjective Well-Being (GICSWB)".

**Results using a General Index of Children's Subjective Well-Being (GICSWB)**

- 
- Albeit high correlation frequently observed in many scientific publications among the 3 psychometric scales here used, it is also frequent to observe they give different results according to sample characteristics and socio-cultural environment. Both high correlations and some different results have also been observed in this research.
  - Therefore we have decided to elaborate and calculate an overall **SYNTHETIC INDEX**, combining the 3 scales, after depurating the items not significantly contributing to the overall subjective well-being.
  - We will name it **General Index of Children's Subjective Well-Being (GICSWB)**



# Subjective well-being of Spanish children (ESO first term) using the GICSWB, by Autonomous regions and cities



- Galicia
- Extremadura
- Murcia
- Aragón
- Madrid
- País Vasco
- Cantabria
- Asturias
- Valencia
- Castilla y León
- Navarra
- Ceuta
- Melilla
- Andalucía
- Cataluña
- Castilla-La Mancha
- La Rioja
- Baleares
- Canarias



## Subjective well-being, according parents' education (GICSWB)

	Father's education	Mother's education
Unfinished primary education	82.39	81.97
Primary, secondary or equivalent education	86.80	86.08
Upper secondary or equivalent	88.50	88.16
High university education	88.00	88.26



## Subjective well-being according perceived treat (GICSWB)

		My parents (or the people looking after me) treat me fairly	My friends are usually nice to me	My school peers treat me well	My teachers treat me fairly
Very much agree	Boy	88.67	89.89	90.55	90.32
	Girl	89.05	89.92	90.70	90.29
	Total	88.86	89.91	90.63	90.30
Agree	Boy	76.13	84.09	83.00	82.96
	Girl	74.98	83.43	83.36	81.79
	Total	75.61	83.79	83.17	82.40
Neither disagree nor agree	Boy	62.76	78.18	75.15	75.52
	Girl	57.61	78.84	74.76	77.79
	Total	60.10	78.50	74.96	76.39
Disagree	Boy	52.55	66.71	72.66	76.48
	Girl	44.25	69.08	67.57	68.51
	Total	51.27	67.46	70.68	73.58
Strongly disagree	Boy	79.18	76.74	75.03	71.83
	Girl	94.83*	69.71	73.58	87.46
	Total	81.41	74.59	74.53	76.91



## Subjective well-being according information received on children's rights (GICSWB)

		All children have rights	In my family, they have told me about children's rights	At school they have told me about children's rights	Other people has told me about children's rights
Very much agree	Boy	88.86	90.47	89.54	90.20
	Girl	88.88	91.16	89.77	89.95
	Total	88.87*	90.80*	89.66*	90.08*
Agree	Boy	82.67	86.64	84.80	87.11
	Girl	83.47	86.94	84.93	87.23
	Total	83.04	86.80	84.87	87.18
Neither disagree nor agree	Boy	81.14	82.61	83.57	85.11
	Girl	82.94	84.53	84.47	86.77
	Total	82.08	83.64	84.03	85.97
Disagree	Boy	78.20	78.60	79.80	83.34
	Girl	80.11	79.25	80.89	83.88
	Total	79.17	78.94	80.37	83.63
Strongly disagree	Boy	77.85	80.29	82.12	83.91
	Girl	83.96	77.66	84.54	85.17
	Total	80.69	79.15	83.06	84.43



## Subjective well-being according feelings of security (GICSWB)


		I feel safe at home	I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in	I feel safe at school
<b>Very much agree</b>	Boy	88.88	90.55	90.82
	Girl	89.30	90.52	90.57
	<b>Total</b>	<b>89.09*</b>	<b>90.53*</b>	<b>90.69*</b>
<b>Agree</b>	Boy	79.05	85.08	84.02
	Girl	79.35	87.36	83.68
	<b>Total</b>	<b>79.20</b>	<b>86.29</b>	<b>83.86</b>
<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	Boy	70.31	82.04	77.33
	Girl	64.84	83.16	78.83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>67.94</b>	<b>82.66</b>	<b>77.99</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	Boy	54.03	77.90	72.26
	Girl	67.85	79.24	70.69
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59.06</b>	<b>78.64</b>	<b>71.56</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	Boy	69.46	73.55	71.18
	Girl	67.20	77.14	72.83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>68.96</b>	<b>75.28</b>	<b>71.64</b>



## Subjective well-being according reported participation (GICSWB)

		I can participate in making decisions taken at home	The town council asks children and young people their opinion about things that are important to them	My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account
Very much agree	Boy	90.70	89.74	91.20
	Girl	90.92	89.03	90.93
	Total	90.82*	89.38*	91.06*
Agree	Boy	87.14	86.75	84.59
	Girl	87.85	87.94	85.13
	Total	87.51	87.36	84.86
Neither disagree nor agree	Boy	84.68	86.28	78.15
	Girl	83.91	86.09	77.36
	Total	84.31	86.19	77.79
Disagree	Boy	77.83	81.55	75.78
	Girl	73.81	85.11	77.70
	Total	76.22	83.41	76.68
Strongly disagree	Boy	73.12	84.26	76.31
	Girl	64.56	84.26	77.74
	Total	70.38	84.26	76.65





**Factors influencing subjective well-being of  
children in ESO first term in Spain**

**According to the General Index of Children's Subjective Well-Being (GICSWB)**

# Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (1):

## 1. *Feel greater personal safety*

When we compare children that *completely agree* they feel safe to all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display higher subjective well-being. This is the case with *safety at home* ( $F(1, 5547) = 768.46, p < .0005$ ), *walking through the streets in the city area they live in* ( $F(1, 5783) = 454.61, p < .0005$ ), or *at school* ( $F(1, 5828) = 859.22, p < .0005$ ).

## 2. *Feel they are listened to*

When we compare children that *completely agree* that they are listened to with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display higher subjective well-being. This is the case with *participating in decisions at home* ( $F(1, 5404) = 278.48, p < .0005$ ), *having their opinions asked by local authorities about important things for children* ( $F(1, 5155) = 86.68, p < .0005$ ) or *being listened to and taken into account by their teachers* ( $F(1, 5839) = 664.40, p < .0005$ ).



## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (2):

### ***3. Have experienced fewer recent important changes in their lives***

When we compare children that had experienced important changes in their lives during the past year with those that had not, the latter display higher subjective well-being.

This is the case with changes of parents or carers ( $F(1, 5734) = 124.41, p < .0005$ ), of home ( $F(1, 5765) = 79.86, p < .0005$ ), or of city they live in ( $F(1, 5755) = 32.05, p < .0005$ ).

### ***4. Consider that other people treat them well***

When we compare children that *completely agree* that other people treat them well with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display higher subjective well-being.

This is the case with *my parents treat me well* ( $F(1, 5533) = 1060.84, p < .0005$ ), *my friends are usually nice to me* ( $F(1, 5847) = 559.36, p < .0005$ ), *my schoolmates treat me well* ( $F(1, 5819) = 931.702, p < .0005$ ) and *my teachers treat me well* ( $F(1, 5852) = 838.87, p < .0005$ ).

## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (3):

### ***5. Have been told children have rights***

When we compare children that *completely agree* they have been told children have rights with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display higher subjective well-being. This is the case when they have been told about children's rights *in their family* ( $F(1, 5542) = 403.07, p < .0005$ ), *at school* ( $F(1, 5464) = 278.64, p < .0005$ ) or *by others* ( $F(1, 5258) = 134.94, p < .0005$ ). Children that answer *yes* when asked whether they have been told about the Convention on the Rights of the Child also show significantly higher subjective well-being than those that answer *no* ( $F(1, 5710) = 18.84, p < .0005$ ).

### ***6. Aspire more to relational values than materialistic values***

Children that report *high aspirations for relational values* (9 or 10 on a 0-10 scale) and *low aspirations for materialistic values* (8 or less on a 0-10 scale) display higher subjective well-being than those reporting high aspirations for materialistic values and low aspirations for relational values ( $F(1, 2773) = 45.59, p < .0005$ ). However, those children equally having very high aspirations for both relational and materialistic values display the highest scores in subjective well-being.



A background image showing several children's faces, mostly smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is slightly faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (4):

### ***7. Do physical exercise or sport every day***

When we compare children that report doing sports or physical exercise *every day or almost every day* with any other answer (from *every day* to *never*), the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5840) = 118.82, p < .0005$ ).

### ***8. Report daily activities together with their family***

When we compare children that report doing daily activities together with their family *every day* with any other answer (from *every day* to *never*), the former display higher subjective well-being, whatever the activity may be: *talking together* ( $F(1, 5843) = 379.253, p < .0005$ ), *having fun together* ( $F(1, 5780) = 573.23, p < .0005$ ) or *learning together* ( $F(1, 5696) = 483.170, p < .0005$ ).

### ***9. Consider they have a space of their own at home***

When we compare children that *completely agree* they have a space of their own at home with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5524) = 453.91, p < .0005$ ).

## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (5):

### ***10. Consider they have a space of their own at home***

When we compare children that *completely agree* they have a space of their own at home with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5524) = 453.91, p < .0005$ ).

### ***11. Consider there are enough spaces to play and enjoy themselves in the area they live in***

When we compare children that *completely agree* there are enough spaces to play and enjoy themselves in the area they live in with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5815) = 446.92, p < .0005$ ).

### ***12. Have not missed school recently because of illness***

When we compare children that have *never* missed school in the last two months because of illness with any other answer (from *never* to *every day*), the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5598) = 47.73, p < .0005$ ).



## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (6):

### **13. Have more material and cultural belongings at home**

When we compare those children reporting to have the highest number of material or cultural belongings at home with children giving any other answer about the number of belongings, the former display higher subjective well-being. This is the case with *number of bathrooms at home* ( $F(1, 5818) = 16.80, p < .0005$ ), *number of cars* ( $F(1, 5814) = 30.40, p < .0005$ ) and *number of books* ( $F(1, 5734) = 9.36, p = .002$ ). Additionally, when we compare children reporting that a newspaper is bought at their home *every day or almost every day* with any other answer, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5746) = 13.78, p < .0005$ ).

### **14. Parents have higher levels of education**

When we compare children reporting that their father or mother finished higher education or university with those reporting parents with lower levels of education, the former display higher subjective well-being. This is the case with both the *father* ( $F(1, 5721) = 45.77, p < .0005$ ) and the *mother* ( $F(1, 5743) = 60.55, p < .0005$ ).



## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (7):

### ***15. Live in populations of between 2,000 and 20,000 inh***

When we compare children attending schools in semi-urban contexts with those living in urban or rural contexts, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5917) = 11.69, p = .001$ ).

### ***16. Live in only one home***

When we compare children living in only one home with those living in any other kind of arrangement (i.e. living in two homes regularly or occasionally, living in residential care), the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5827) = 54.87, p < .0005$ ).

### ***17. Report 2 adults in paid employment living at home***

When we compare children reporting two adults living at home in paid employment with those reporting living with adults in any other situation, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5765) = 31.03, p < .0005$ ).





## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (8):

### ***18. Never worry about money***

When we compare children reporting that they *never* worry about money with any other answer (from *never* to *always*), the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5630) = 85.77, p < .0005$ ).

### ***19. Had at least 1 week of holiday away from the home***

When we compare children reporting that in the last year they have been on at least one week's holiday away from home with those that have not, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5799) = 66.27, p < .0005$ ).

### ***20. Feel their time is well organized***

When we compare children that are very satisfied with their own organization of their time (9 or 10 on a 0-10 scale) with those giving any other evaluation (8 or less on a 0-10 scale), the former display higher subjective well-being. This is the case with *satisfaction with my use of time* ( $F(1, 5803) = 1435.84, p < .0005$ ) and *satisfaction with things I do in my leisure time* ( $F(1, 5810) = 1263.11, p < .0005$ ).



## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (9):

### ***21. Receive regular pocket money from their parents***

When we compare children reporting they get *regular pocket money*, be it weekly or monthly, with those that do not get pocket money or do not get it regularly, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5867) = 12.49, p < .0005$ ).

### ***22. Report they are well treated when going to the doctor***

When we compare children that are very *satisfied with how they are treated when they go to the doctor* (9 or 10 on a 0-10 scale), with those giving any other evaluation (8 or less on a 0-10 scale), the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5835) = 704.57, p < .0005$ ).





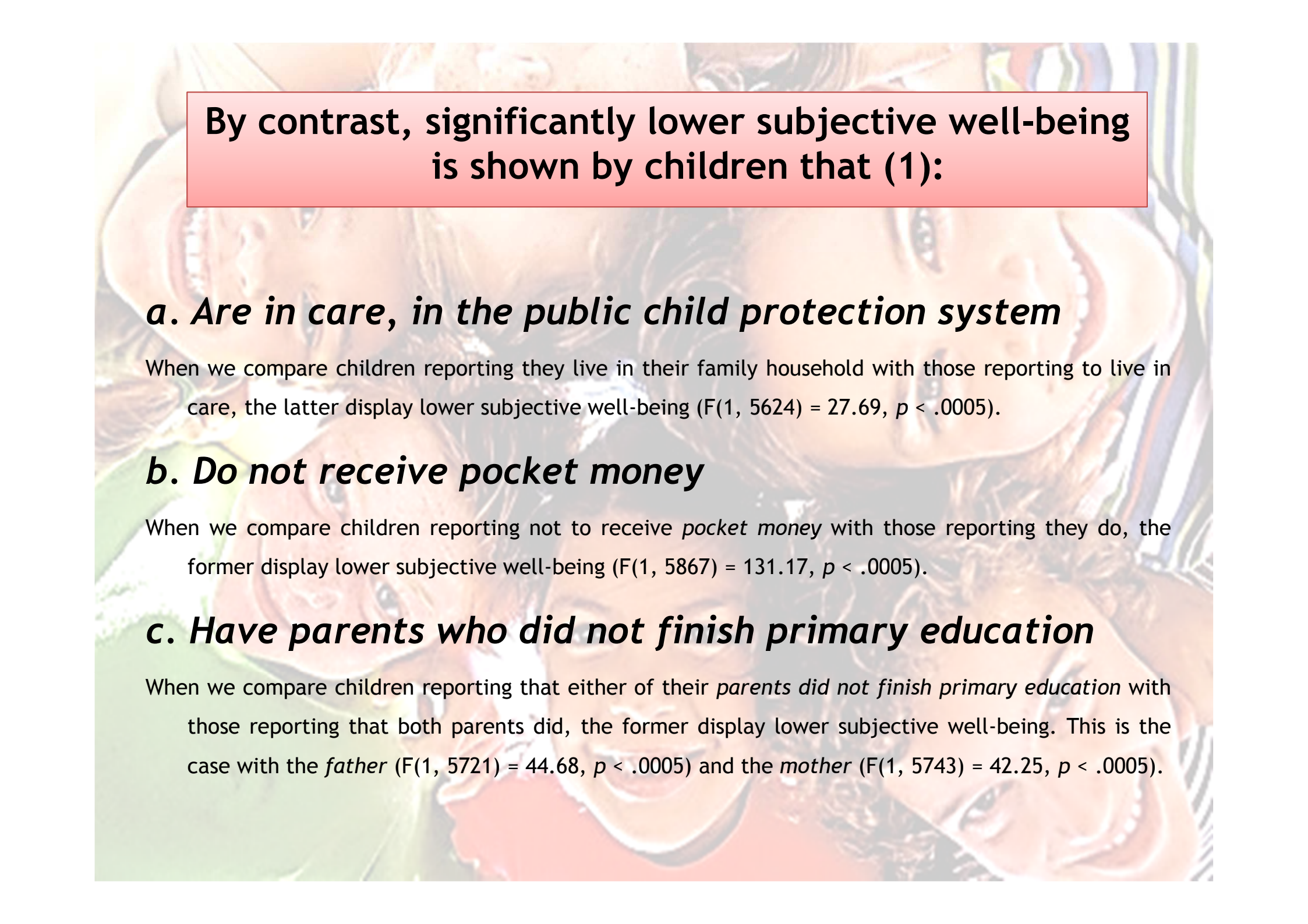
## Children with significantly higher subjective well-being (10):

### ***23. Do not repeat a school year***

When we compare the 13 and 14 year-olds, who are the ones presumably repeating a school year, with those in the school year corresponding to their age, the latter display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5802) = 150.03, p < .0005$ ). This result is also influenced by the fact that subjective well-being tends to decrease with age during adolescence.

### ***24. Were born in Spain***

When we compare children reporting that they were born in Spain with those reporting they were not, the former display higher subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5902) = 50.94, p < .0005$ ). Feel higher personal safety; be at home, in the city area they live in, or at school.



**By contrast, significantly lower subjective well-being is shown by children that (1):**

***a. Are in care, in the public child protection system***

When we compare children reporting they live in their family household with those reporting to live in care, the latter display lower subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5624) = 27.69, p < .0005$ ).

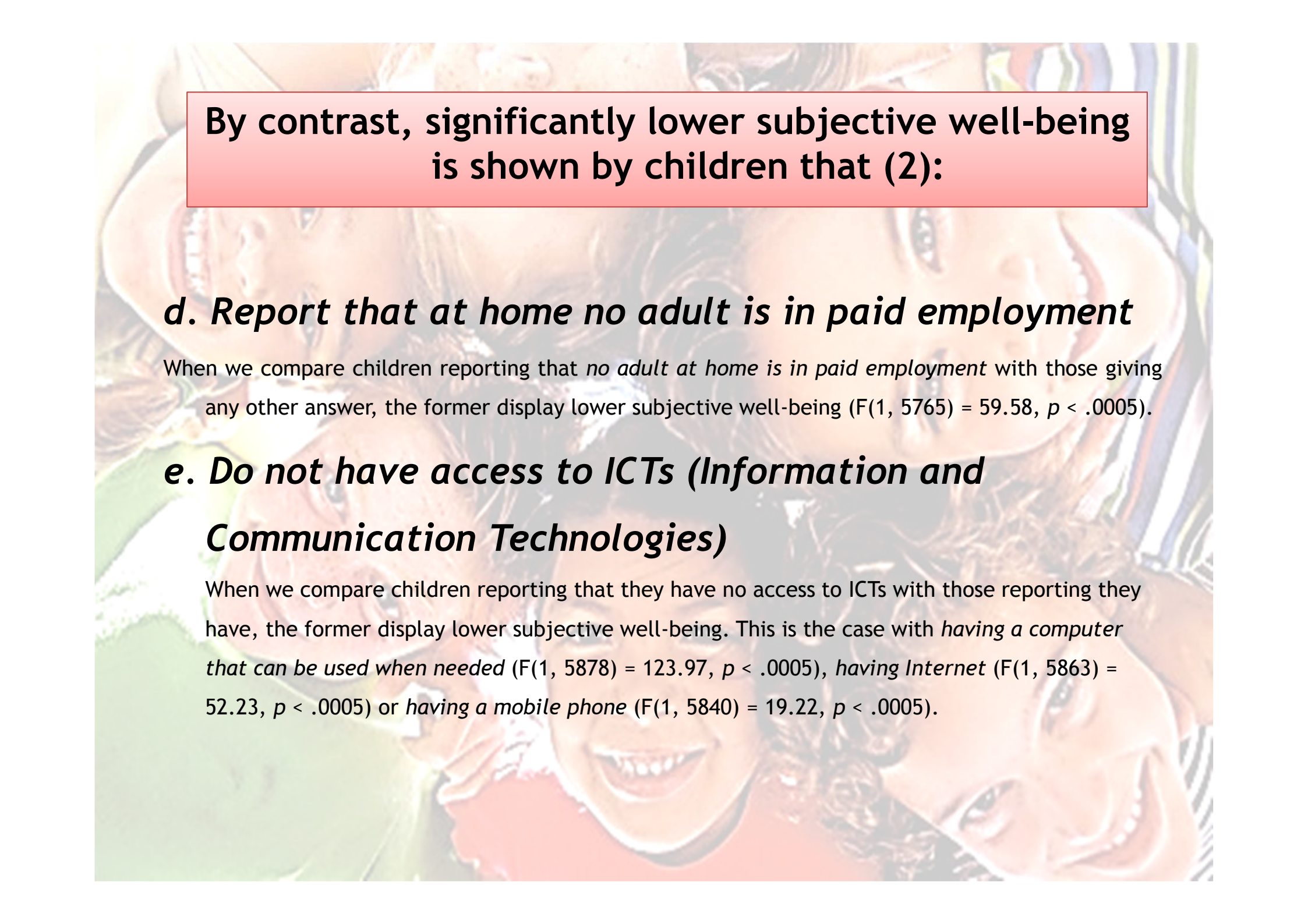
***b. Do not receive pocket money***

When we compare children reporting not to receive *pocket money* with those reporting they do, the former display lower subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5867) = 131.17, p < .0005$ ).

***c. Have parents who did not finish primary education***

When we compare children reporting that either of their *parents did not finish primary education* with those reporting that both parents did, the former display lower subjective well-being. This is the case with the *father* ( $F(1, 5721) = 44.68, p < .0005$ ) and the *mother* ( $F(1, 5743) = 42.25, p < .0005$ ).





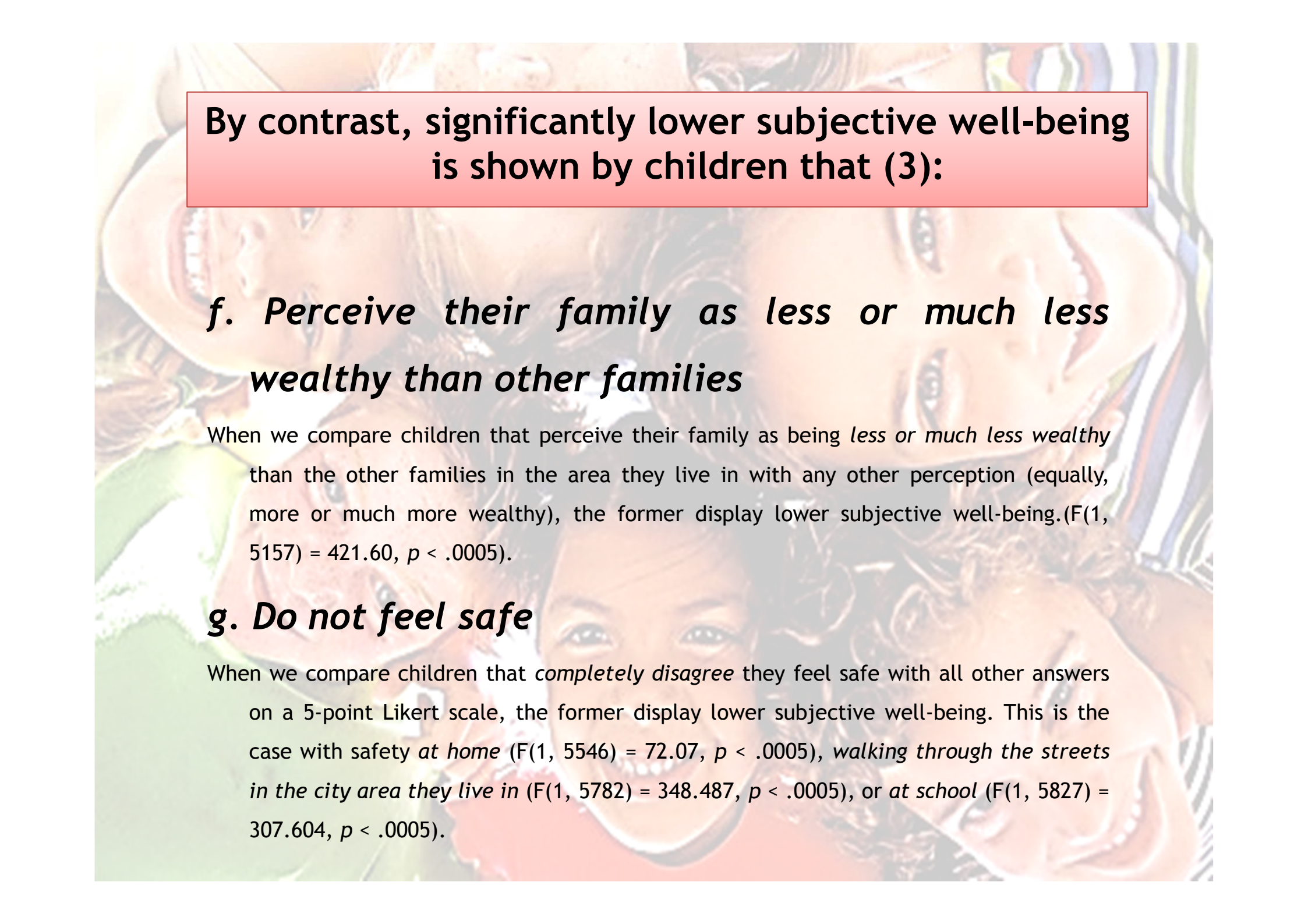
**By contrast, significantly lower subjective well-being is shown by children that (2):**

***d. Report that at home no adult is in paid employment***

When we compare children reporting that *no adult at home is in paid employment* with those giving any other answer, the former display lower subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5765) = 59.58, p < .0005$ ).

***e. Do not have access to ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies)***

When we compare children reporting that they have no access to ICTs with those reporting they have, the former display lower subjective well-being. This is the case with *having a computer that can be used when needed* ( $F(1, 5878) = 123.97, p < .0005$ ), *having Internet* ( $F(1, 5863) = 52.23, p < .0005$ ) or *having a mobile phone* ( $F(1, 5840) = 19.22, p < .0005$ ).



**By contrast, significantly lower subjective well-being is shown by children that (3):**

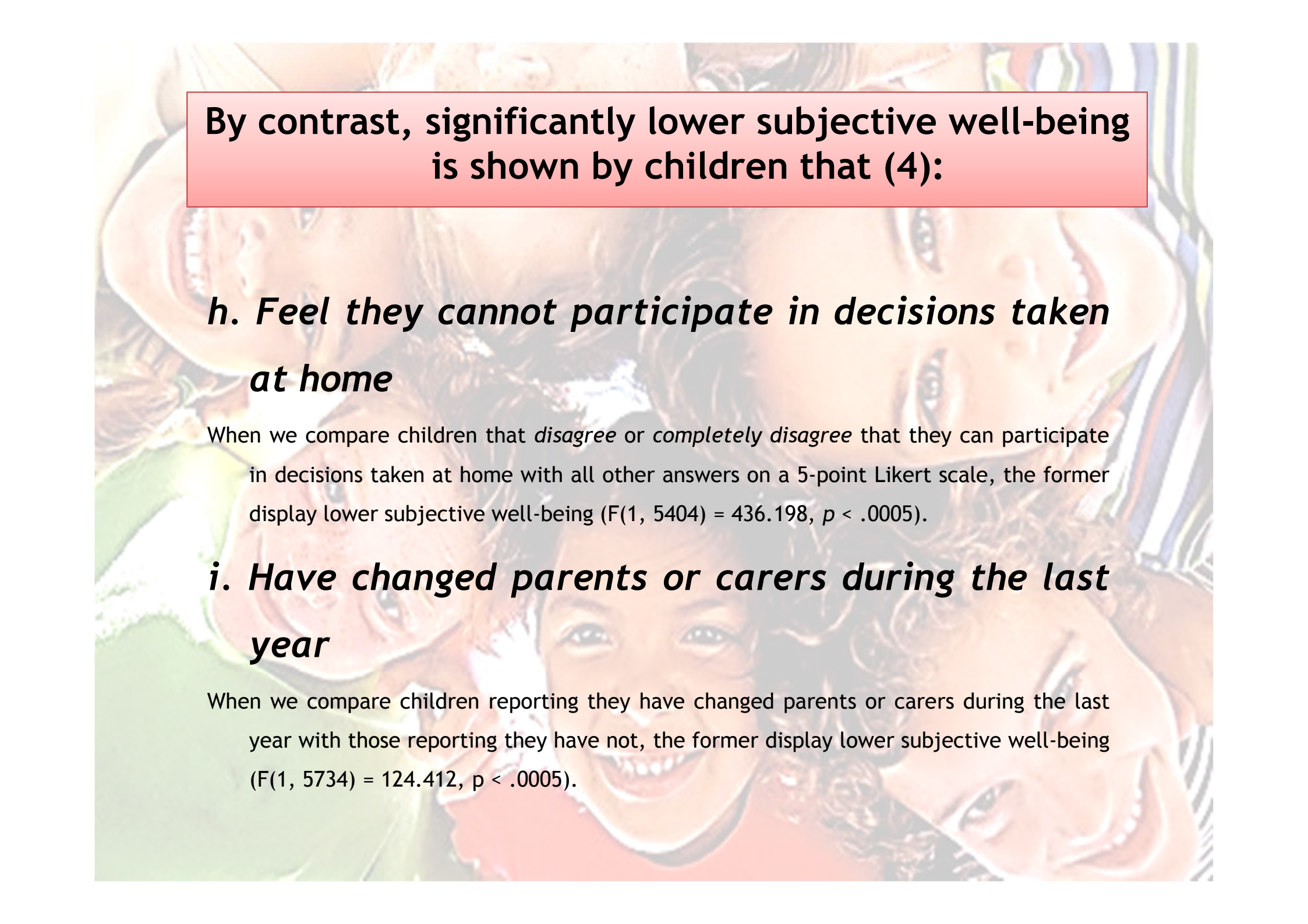
***f. Perceive their family as less or much less wealthy than other families***

When we compare children that perceive their family as being *less or much less wealthy* than the other families in the area they live in with any other perception (equally, more or much more wealthy), the former display lower subjective well-being. ( $F(1, 5157) = 421.60, p < .0005$ ).

***g. Do not feel safe***

When we compare children that *completely disagree* they feel safe with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display lower subjective well-being. This is the case with *safety at home* ( $F(1, 5546) = 72.07, p < .0005$ ), *walking through the streets in the city area they live in* ( $F(1, 5782) = 348.487, p < .0005$ ), or *at school* ( $F(1, 5827) = 307.604, p < .0005$ ).





**By contrast, significantly lower subjective well-being is shown by children that (4):**

***h. Feel they cannot participate in decisions taken at home***

When we compare children that *disagree* or *completely disagree* that they can participate in decisions taken at home with all other answers on a 5-point Likert scale, the former display lower subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5404) = 436.198, p < .0005$ ).

***i. Have changed parents or carers during the last year***

When we compare children reporting they have changed parents or carers during the last year with those reporting they have not, the former display lower subjective well-being ( $F(1, 5734) = 124.412, p < .0005$ ).

A background image showing a collage of smiling children's faces, including a young girl with braids and a boy with a wide smile. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a backdrop for the text.

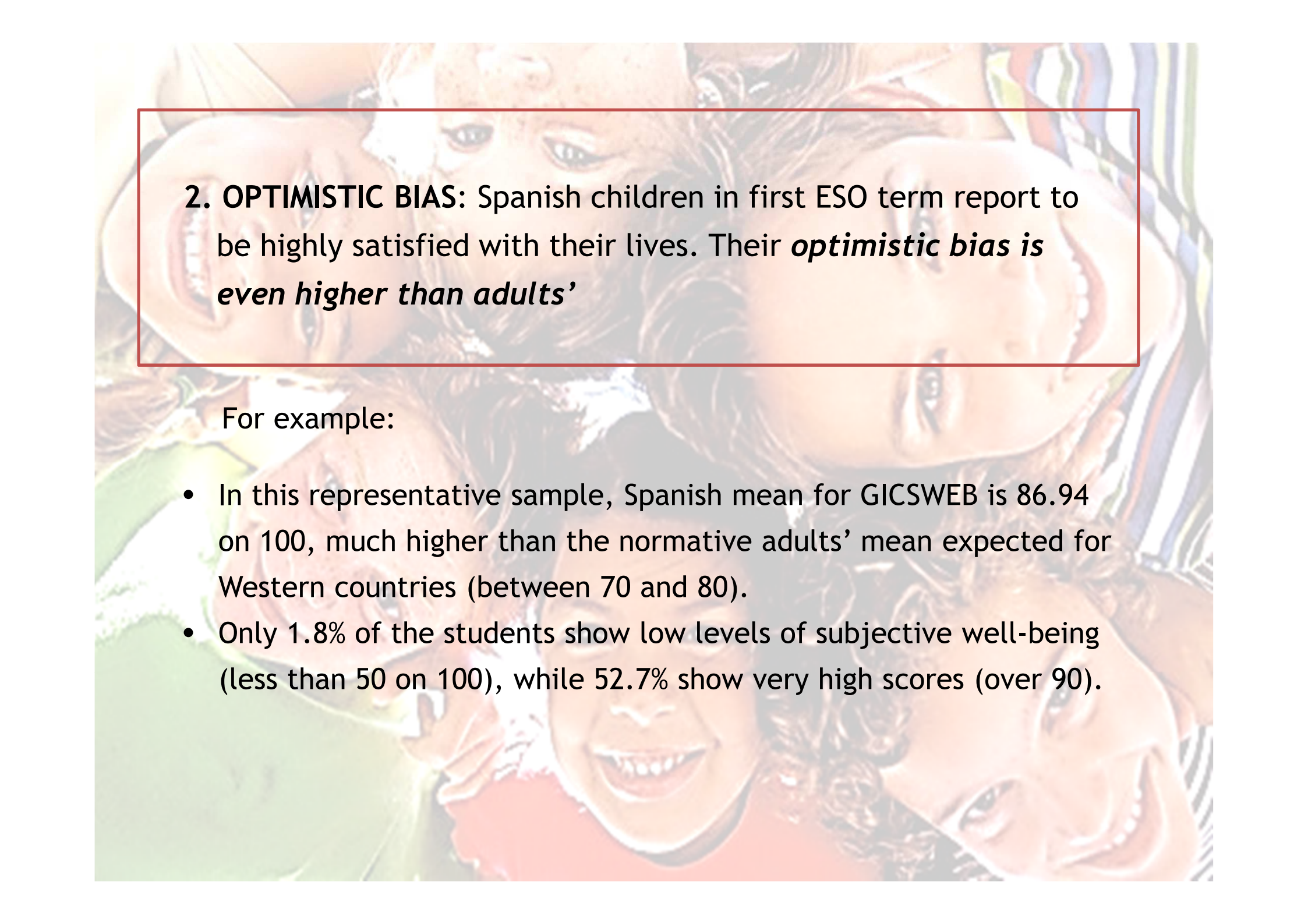
## Discussion

**1. UNEXPECTED RESULTS:** Some “expected” results have been confirmed. However, “unexpected” results have once again appeared, challenging our adults stereotypes, beliefs and social representations about children and about their evaluations and aspirations.

For example:

- *Kindness and personality* are the qualities more strongly aspired to for their future, when they become 21-year-olds.
- High scores in subjective well-being highly correlate with *relational values* (kindness, sympathy, personal relationships, solidarity), while poorly correlate with *materialistic values* (money, power, self-image).

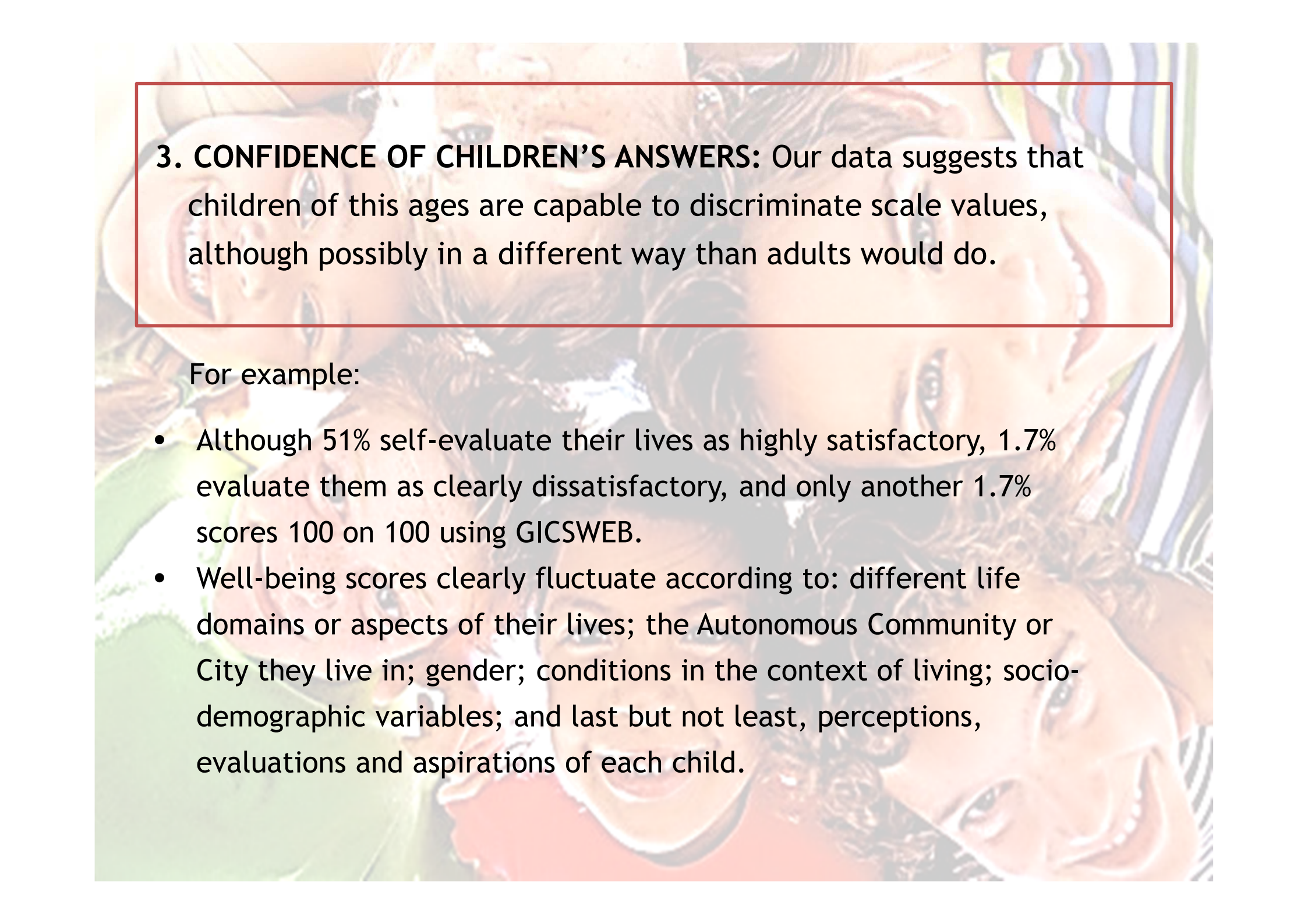




**2. OPTIMISTIC BIAS:** Spanish children in first ESO term report to be highly satisfied with their lives. Their *optimistic bias is even higher than adults'*

For example:

- In this representative sample, Spanish mean for GICSWEB is 86.94 on 100, much higher than the normative adults' mean expected for Western countries (between 70 and 80).
- Only 1.8% of the students show low levels of subjective well-being (less than 50 on 100), while 52.7% show very high scores (over 90).



**3. CONFIDENCE OF CHILDREN'S ANSWERS:** Our data suggests that children of this ages are capable to discriminate scale values, although possibly in a different way than adults would do.

For example:

- Although 51% self-evaluate their lives as highly satisfactory, 1.7% evaluate them as clearly dissatisfactory, and only another 1.7% scores 100 on 100 using GICSWEB.
- Well-being scores clearly fluctuate according to: different life domains or aspects of their lives; the Autonomous Community or City they live in; gender; conditions in the context of living; socio-demographic variables; and last but not least, perceptions, evaluations and aspirations of each child.

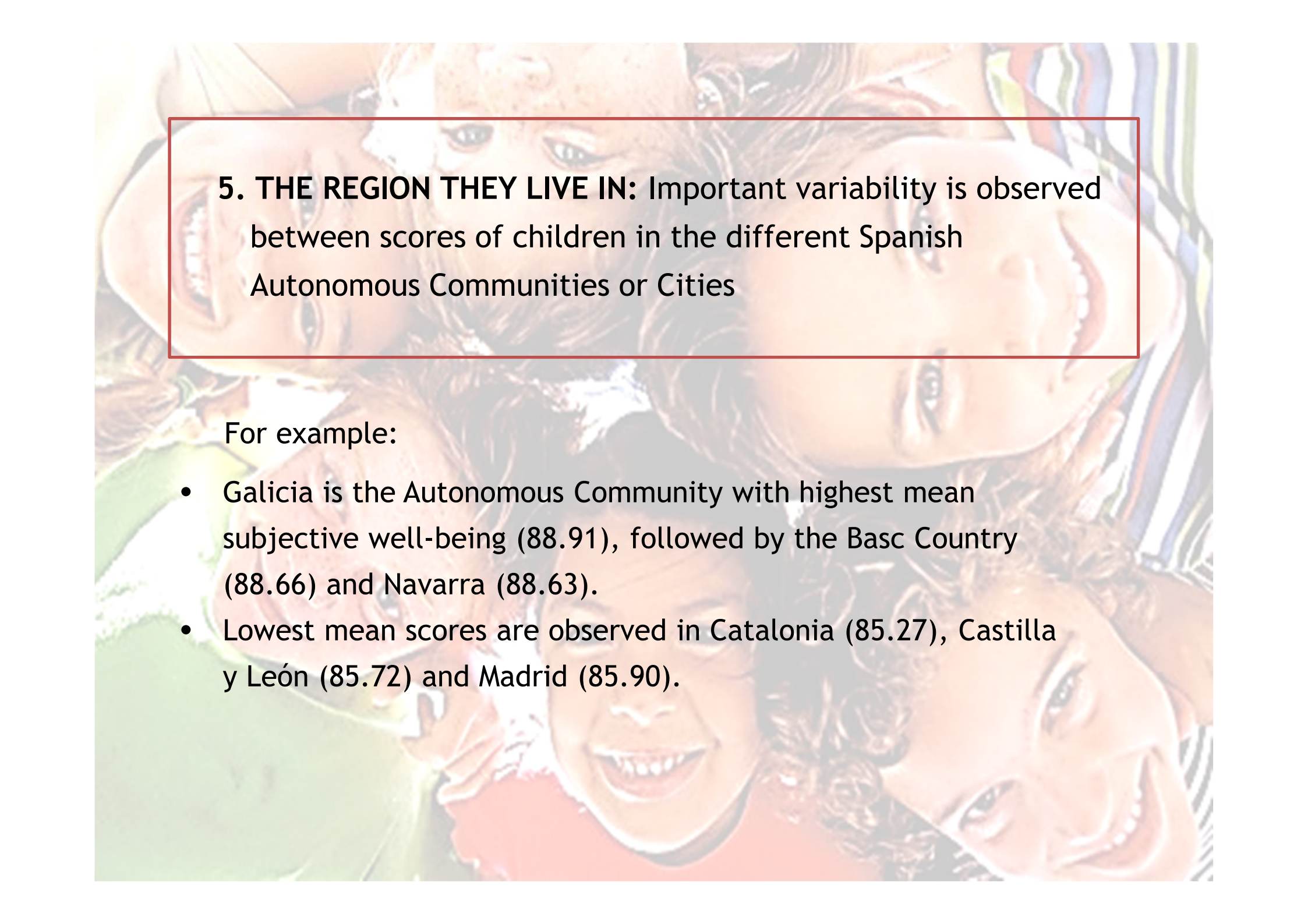




**4. SATISFACTION WITH DIFFERENT LIFE DOMAINS OR ASPECTS OF LIFE:** In a few life domains children clearly show lower satisfaction scores.

For example:

- Highest mean scores are shown in the following satisfaction Indexes with life domains: Health, household and time organization.
- Lowest mean scores appear for satisfaction with the area I live in and with material belongings.
- Three items cumulate the highest percentages of dissatisfied children: libraries in the area I live in, the pocket money I get and the police in the area I live in.

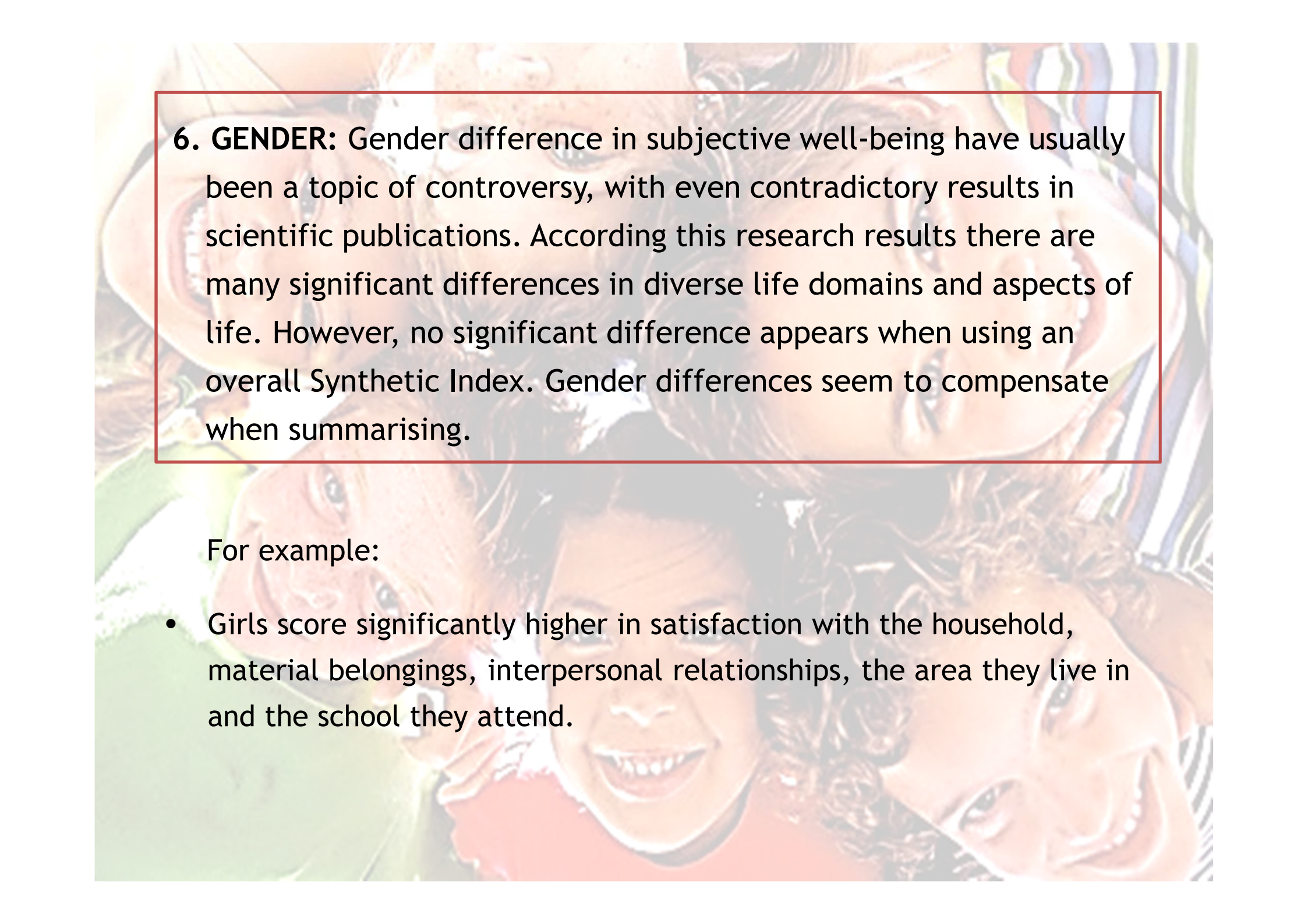


**5. THE REGION THEY LIVE IN:** Important variability is observed between scores of children in the different Spanish Autonomous Communities or Cities

For example:

- Galicia is the Autonomous Community with highest mean subjective well-being (88.91), followed by the Basque Country (88.66) and Navarra (88.63).
- Lowest mean scores are observed in Catalonia (85.27), Castilla y León (85.72) and Madrid (85.90).

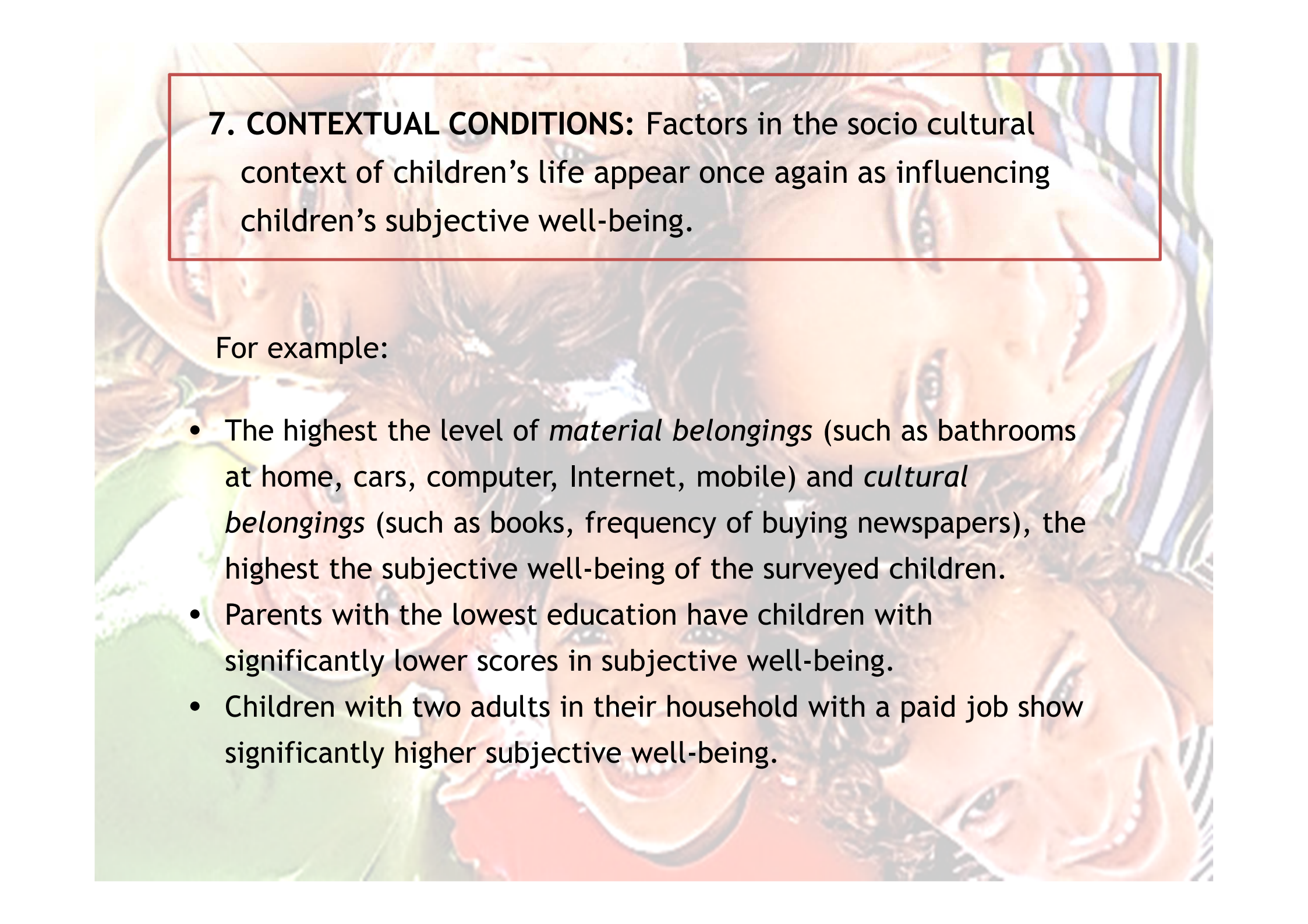




**6. GENDER:** Gender difference in subjective well-being have usually been a topic of controversy, with even contradictory results in scientific publications. According this research results there are many significant differences in diverse life domains and aspects of life. However, no significant difference appears when using an overall Synthetic Index. Gender differences seem to compensate when summarising.

For example:

- Girls score significantly higher in satisfaction with the household, material belongings, interpersonal relationships, the area they live in and the school they attend.

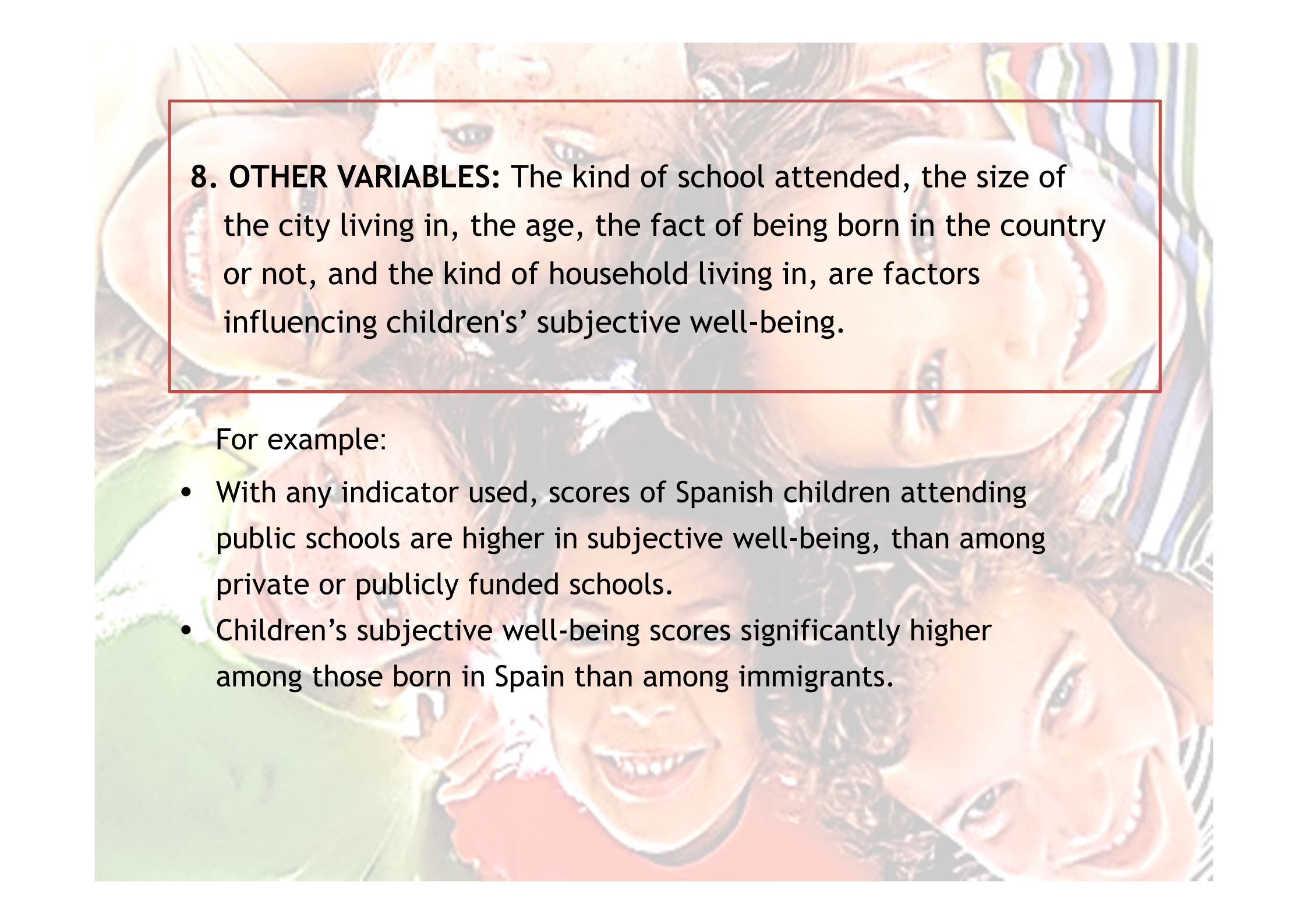


**7. CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS:** Factors in the socio cultural context of children's life appear once again as influencing children's subjective well-being.

For example:

- The highest the level of *material belongings* (such as bathrooms at home, cars, computer, Internet, mobile) and *cultural belongings* (such as books, frequency of buying newspapers), the highest the subjective well-being of the surveyed children.
- Parents with the lowest education have children with significantly lower scores in subjective well-being.
- Children with two adults in their household with a paid job show significantly higher subjective well-being.

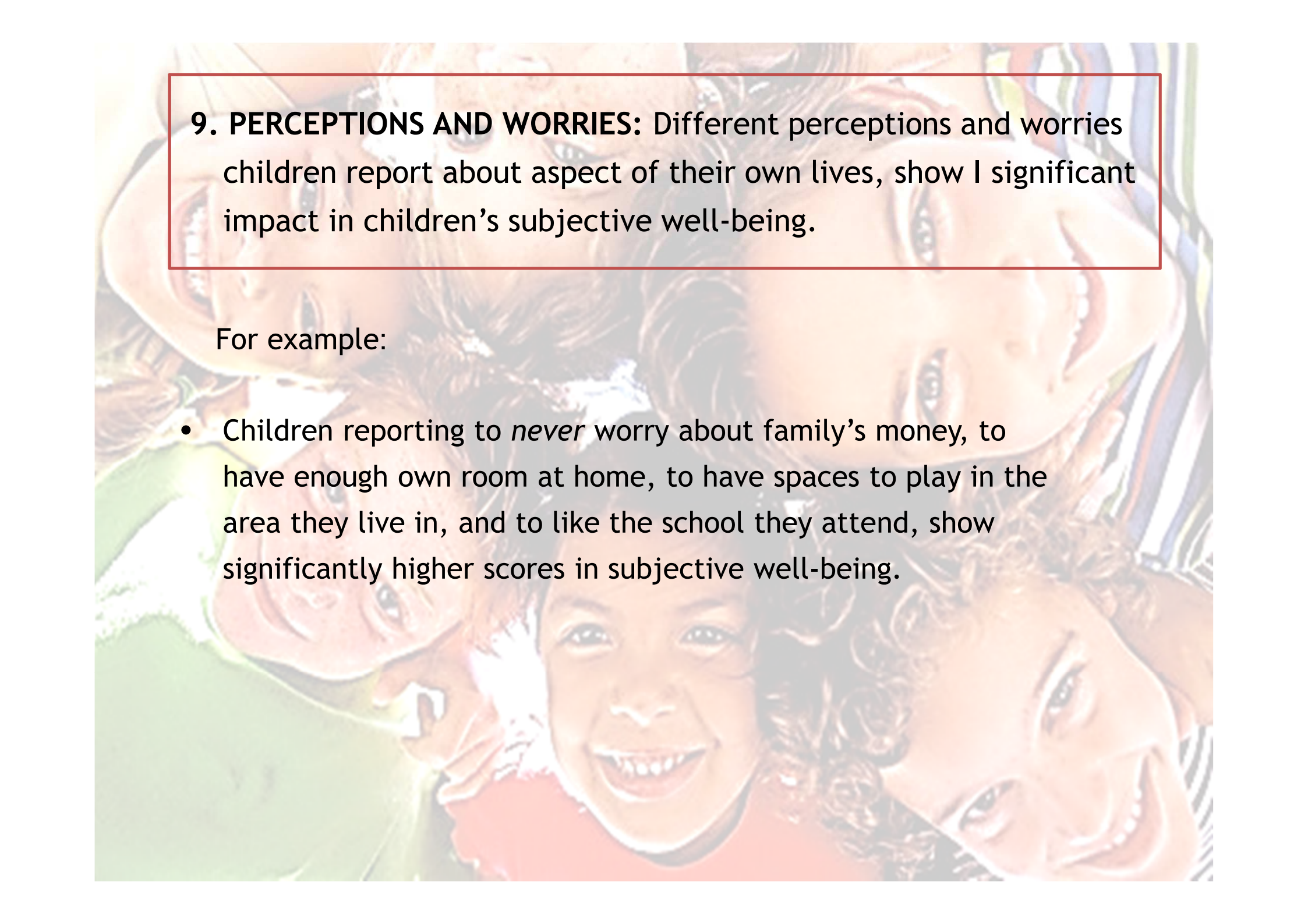




**8. OTHER VARIABLES:** The kind of school attended, the size of the city living in, the age, the fact of being born in the country or not, and the kind of household living in, are factors influencing children's' subjective well-being.

For example:

- With any indicator used, scores of Spanish children attending public schools are higher in subjective well-being, than among private or publicly funded schools.
- Children's subjective well-being scores significantly higher among those born in Spain than among immigrants.




**9. PERCEPTIONS AND WORRIES:** Different perceptions and worries children report about aspect of their own lives, show I significant impact in children's subjective well-being.

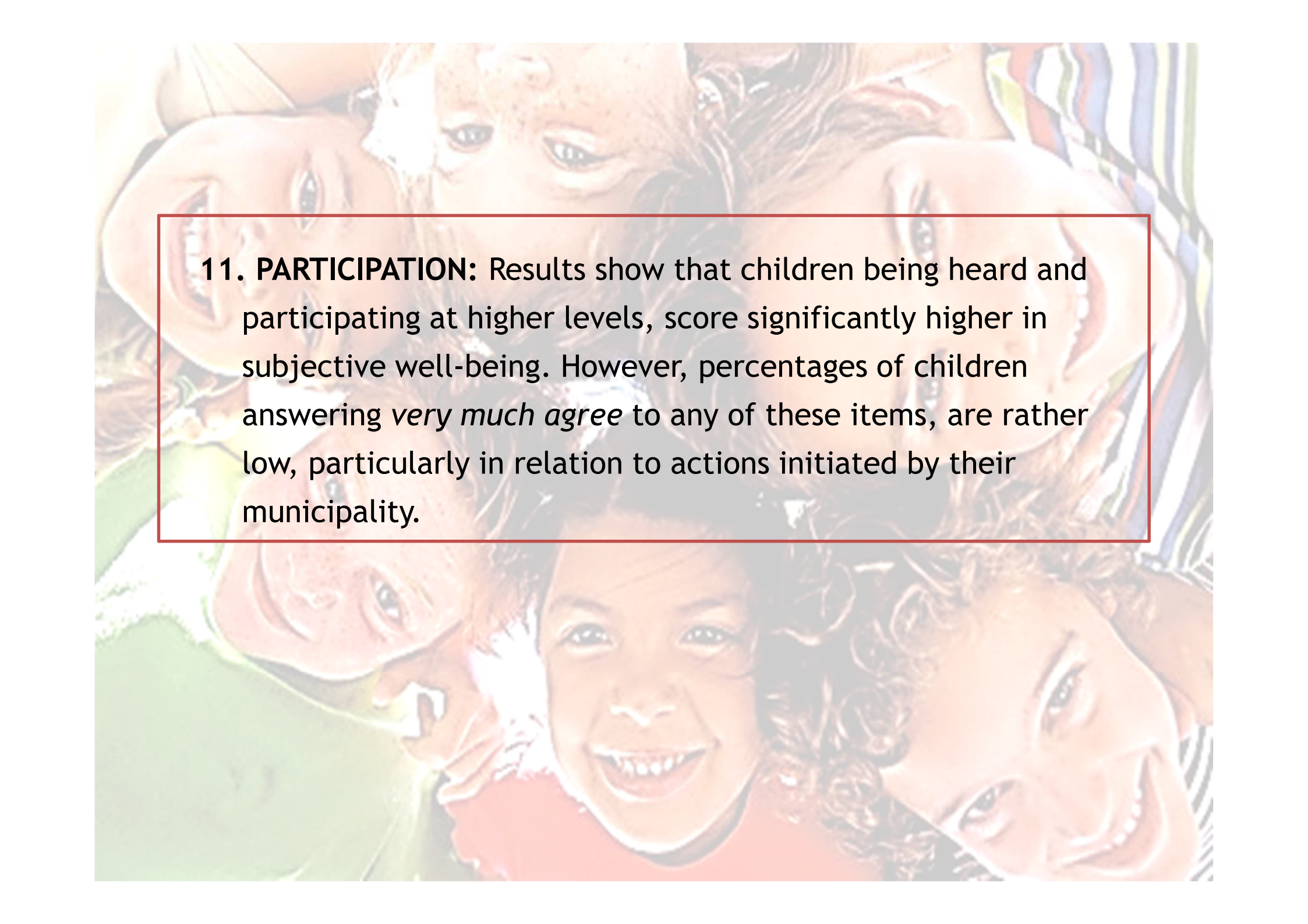
For example:

- Children reporting to *never* worry about family's money, to have enough own room at home, to have spaces to play in the area they live in, and to like the school they attend, show significantly higher scores in subjective well-being.





**10. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS:** Children that have been told about children's rights (anywhere: in the family, at school either by other people) shown significant higher scores in subjective well-being. That is also the case of children reporting to have heard about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These results are a challenge to reach those children that report not to have heard about their rights and the Convention.



**11. PARTICIPATION:** Results show that children being heard and participating at higher levels, score significantly higher in subjective well-being. However, percentages of children answering *very much agree* to any of these items, are rather low, particularly in relation to actions initiated by their municipality.





**Proposals for action**



## Some proposals for action (1)

### In relation to social research:

- More research is needed to develop better **systems of children's subjective indicators**, which, articulated with subjective indicators, may guide public policies.
- **More in-depth analysis** of the different life domains that are relevant from children's point of view is needed.
- This kind of quantitative surveys need to be complement with more **qualitative data collection** (i.e.: focus groups with children), to better understand children's meanings and points of view.
- **Longitudinal studies and representative samples at regional level** are also needed.
- **Children's participation in this kind of research** should be increased.



## Some proposals for action (2)

### In relation to public policies:

- **Regular and systematic data collection of good quality data** needs to be promoted. All public administrations should:
  - **Support and promote research** on different domains of children's well-being.
  - Regular and systematic data reported by children should be included in **official statistics**.
  - Opinions, perceptions and evaluations of children, and not only of adults, have to be taken into account when measuring **overall population well-being**.
- **Children's participation** when designing and developing public policies also needs to be promoted - in all children's' life domains, in and outside school -, because it has a significant impact in their well-being.

### Some proposals for action (3)

- Universal policies promoting **children's well-being**, and focused on positive aspects of their lives - and not only in the negative ones - are needed. That requires that:
  - Maximizing children's subjective well-being becomes a **priority goal in public policies**.
  - Systems of child well-being indicators articulate the traditional objective indicators with **subjective indicators of their well-being and quality of life**.
- Special attention to children's groups and children's life domains with the lowest subjective well-being should be paid.
  - **Specific groups**, as for example immigrants, those repeating scholar course, those in care, deserve a very special focus for political and social action.
  - We need to understand why **some specific life domains or aspects of children's lives show lower scores** in children's subjective well-being, and how these facts could be faced.





## Some proposals for action (4)

- It is crucial to know more in-depth the aspects in children's lives with more outstanding influence in their well-being, to better know how to address effective action. We have observed, once again, that one of the most important domains is children's' interpersonal relationships.
- Last but not least, as recommend by the Children's Rights Committee (2010), we need to continue and increase the efforts to increase **sensitivity towards and training on children's rights**, not only among children, but also among adults in general, and particularly among those who have jobs directly related with children. The fact that the knowledge on children's rights shows to be related to children's subjective well-being is stimulating, but also a big challenge for future action.



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# Children's subjective well-being in Spain: Using a new synthetic index

Ferran Casas\*, Armando Bello\*\*, Mònica  
González\*, Mireia Aligué\*.

\* ERIDIQV Research Team. Research Institute on Quality of Life.  
Universitat de Girona (UdG).Spain

\*\* UNICEF-Spain, Research Department.

CHILDREN'S  
WORLDS



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