

Children's Worlds National Report

Belgium

(Flanders)



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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and population

Belgium is a country in Northwestern Europe. The country is bordered by the Netherlands to the north, Germany to the east, Luxembourg to the southeast, France to the southwest, and the North Sea to the northwest. Belgium has a surface area of 30,689 km². It has a population of more than 11.5 million (11.521.238 on January, 1st 2022; Source: Statbel). The institutional organization of Belgium is based on regional and linguistic grounds. In other words, Belgium is divided into three highly autonomous regions and three linguistic communities: on the one hand the Flemish Region (Flanders) in the north, the Walloon Region (Wallonia) in the south, and the Brussels-Capital Region in between and on the other hand the Dutch-speaking Flemish Community, the French-speaking Community and a small German-speaking Community. The Brussels-Capital Region is officially bilingual in French and Dutch, but French is the dominant language.

The data collection took place among pupils of Flemish schools. Flanders has a population of 6.653.062 persons (on January, 1st 2022; Source: Statbel). Children from 0 to 19 years old compose 21,4% of the total population. The group of 10-14 years old children compose 5.6% of the total population (373.272).

Context of COVID-19 in individual country contexts

The pandemic affected children in Belgium and Flanders across all domains of their lives (education, leisure, health, ...) from the very start (source: [KeKi](#)). On March 13th 2020, schools closed, leisure activities (including sports activities) could no longer take place and amusement parks, museums and playgrounds were closed. On March 18th 2020, day care facilities for babies and toddlers closed, non-essential travel and activities during the Easter holiday (e.g. youth holiday camps) were forbidden, physical activity outside could only take place with family members and 1 additional person, vaccinations of babies and toddlers by the government were suspended. Group gatherings were forbidden and non-essential shops had to close. In the course of May 2020, measures were alleviated. Primary and secondary education could partially restart, even though kindergarten remained closed until June 2nd. More and more leisure activities were allowed. On June 8th primary school could reopen full-time. Over summer, more and more activities and group gatherings were allowed, resulting in a surge in Covid-19 cases after the summer of 2020 and consequently, increasingly strict measures were put in place. While policy makers tried to spare youth, the measures again affected youngsters in many aspects of their daily lives: no indoor sports, longer Autumn Holiday because the schools closed an additional week, only 50% live courses in secondary schools (Nov. 2nd), With every rise in Covid-19 cases, new measures were taken, and with every drop in cases, measures were alleviated for the next months. The negative effects of

the pandemic on the wellbeing of (vulnerable) youngsters have become increasingly clear (source: [KeKi](#)).

1.2 Sampling: Strategy and outcome

The sample of ISCWeB 2018 that formed the starting point for the current survey consisted of 50 primary schools. The selection of the schools was made in 2018 via a stratified random sample based on two indicators, namely the organizing network and the percentage of pupils whose mother has no secondary school diploma, described as follows in the report of the 2018 data collection:

“Previous surveys in schools taught us that responses can differ according to the educational network and the pupil population of the schools. Therefore, we used a stratified random sample, based on the following indicators:

- *Organizing network, consisting of 1) subsidized privately run education, 2) subsidized publicly run education (organized by Municipalities), and 3) GO! (Community education).*
- *Percentage of pupils whose mother has no secondary school diploma.*

With regard to the second indicator, the schools were divided, based on percentiles, in three equal groups (each comprising one third of the schools):

- *Schools with the lowest percentage of lower educated mothers*
- *Schools which take in a middle position*
- *Schools with the highest percentage of lower educated mothers*

Non-response at the school level was obviated by drawing a backup sample that matched with the first sample. This meant that for each school in the first sample, we selected a back-up school in the same stratum (with the same scores on the two stratifying indicators). More information on the sample can be found in Belgium’s country report for Wave 3 (2018).

For the current survey, we contacted these 50 schools again and asked them if they wanted to participate in the supplementary survey. Readers must take in mind that this is not a longitudinal survey with a pre- and post-measurement in the strict sense, but this approach comes very close to it. Within the selected primary schools, we asked all pupils from the fourth, the fifth and the sixth grade of the Flemish educational system (age range 10 to 12 years) to fill in the survey.

2. Results

2.1 About you

The children from the fourth, fifth and sixth grade who participated in the ISCweB survey in Flanders were between 9 and 13 years old (Table 1). The largest age groups are the 10- and 11-year-olds, which, with 32.4% and 34.1% respectively, each comprise about one third of the children. Table 1 shows that 17.9% of the children were 12 years old and 14.6% were 9 years old. Only a small proportion of children (1.0%) were 13 years old. According to gender, the children are nearly equally distributed, 49.4% of the children are girls and 50.6% are boys (Table 2).

Table 1. Age (Q1)

	Frequency	Percentage
9 years old	354	14.6
10 years old	784	32.4
11 years old	826	34.1
12 years old	433	17.9
13 years old	25	1.0
Total	2422	100.0

Table 2. Gender (Q2)

	Frequency	Percentage
Boy	1205	50.6
Girl	1175	49.4
Total	2380	100.0

We also asked about the living situation of the children. A first question on this topic asked about where children live (Table 3). The vast majority of children (88.6%) live in a house with a garden or open space. As indicated in Table 3, 8.3% of the children report living in an apartment. A minority of children (3.1%) live in a house without a garden or open space.

A second question on living situation asked the children with whom they live together (Table 4). Most children (76.3%) live with their families in one home; 17.4% of the children report living with their families in more than one home, because their parents are not or no longer living together. As reported in Table 4, 4.4% of the children live with their family in different houses because their family has more than one house, as may be the case, for example, with

weekend stays. A minority of children do not live with their families because they live in residential care (1.1%) or because they live with another family (0.8%).

Table 3. Place where one lives (Q4)

	Frequency	Percentage
An apartment	195	8.3
A house without a garden or open space	73	3.1
A house with a garden or open space	2077	88.6
Total	2345	100

Table 4. People with whom one lives (Q5, %)

	Frequency	Percentage
With my family, in our home	1827	76.3
With my family, but in more than one home, because my parents live in different homes	417	17.4
With my family, but in more than one home, because my family has more than one home	106	4.4
In residential care	27	1.1
In a family different than mine	18	0.8
Total	2395	100

Table 5 presents results on the experiences children had during the Corona crisis. Three quarters (75.9%) of the children state that everybody in their city, town or village was in lockdown for many days. Also a majority of the children had to stay home for many days (77.5%), and could not attend school for many days (81.2%). At the time of the survey, 23.1% of the children had already been infected with the coronavirus themselves or had someone in their home already been infected. And even half of the children indicated that someone in their family (not living with them) had been infected with the Coronavirus. Only a minority (16.7%) did not know anyone who had already been infected. Finally, 36.6% of the children had to be very careful because somebody was considered at high risk of getting very ill if they got infected with the Coronavirus.

Table 5. Did you experience the following during the corona crisis? (Q6, % who marked yes)

	n	Percentage ^a
Everybody in my city/town/village was in lockdown for many days	1488	75.9
Me or somebody in my home got infected with Coronavirus	2233	23.1
Somebody in my family (not living with me) got infected with Coronavirus	1957	50.0
Somebody I know got infected with Coronavirus (e.g.: from my neighborhood or in a friend's family)	2052	83.3
At home we had to be very careful because somebody was considered at high risk of getting very ill if they got infected with the Coronavirus	2009	36.6
I had to stay at home for many days	2226	77.5
I could not attend school for many days	2268	81.2

^aPercentage is calculated on children that had a view on this, children that answered 'not sure' were left aside

At the time of our survey (June 2021) 46.0% of the children had to be in quarantine once, and 26.6 more than once. The majority of the children (91.0%) state that their school was closed during lockdown. Somewhat less but still a large part of the children (78.0%) had to stay in their home all day because of the Coronavirus. Also 40.8% of the children indicate that there were times where they were only allowed to leave their home for a few hours during the day because of the Coronavirus.

Table 6. Do the following statements describe your situation during the Coronavirus? (Q7, % who marked yes)

	n	Percentage ^a
I had to be in quarantine once	2275	46.0
I had to be in quarantine more than once	2232	26.6
My school was closed during lockdown	2281	91.0
There were times where I had to be in my home all day (including the garden, yard or balcony, if you have) because of the Coronavirus	2061	78.0
There were times where I was only allowed to leave my home for a few hours during the day because of the Coronavirus	1857	40.8

^aPercentage is calculated on children that had a view on this, children that answered 'not sure' were left aside

The first four items in Table 7 present information on feelings of safety. With respect to feelings of safety, results show that children feel most safe at home or with their friends. As indicated in Table 7, 76.5% of the children totally agree with the sentence "I feel safe at home", 13.4% agree a lot with this sentence. Of all Flemish children participating in the study, 68.0% totally agree with the sentence "I feel safe with my friends" and 19.9% agrees a lot with this statement. Comparatively less children feel safe at school or feel safe when they walk in the area they live in. More specifically, 43.6% of the children totally agree with the

sentence “I feel safe at school” and 31.4% agree a lot with this sentence. 39.6% totally agree and 29.2% agree a lot with the sentence “I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in”.

In the next couple of items in Table 7, information is presented on social relationships. Of all Flemish children participating in the study, 5.4% totally agree with the sentence “I feel alone”; 6.2% of the children agree a lot and 8.7% agree somewhat with this statement. Moreover, 36.7% totally agree and 16.8% agree a lot with the sentence “I miss my friends”. Furthermore, 53.4% of the children totally agree and 15.5% agree a lot with a statement on missing their relatives. With the statement “I feel protected from the Coronavirus”, 22.7% of children totally agree and 29.6% agree a lot. Lastly, 30.1% of the children totally agree and 15.1% agree a lot with the statement “I have problems with my siblings”.

Table 7. How much do you agree with each of the following sentences? (Q8, %)

	I do not agree	I Agree a little	I Agree somewhat	I Agree a lot	I Totally agree
I feel safe at home	2.2	4.4	3.6	13.4	76.5
I feel safe at school	2.9	10.3	11.8	31.4	43.6
I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in	5.8	13.4	12.0	29.2	39.6
I feel safe with my friends	2.2	4.4	5.5	19.9	68.0
I feel alone	59.8	20.0	8.7	6.2	5.4
I feel protected from the Coronavirus	12.5	18.1	17.1	29.6	22.7
I miss my friends	21.0	14.7	10.8	16.8	36.7
I miss my relatives (e.g. grandparents, a parent living or working far from home)	12.9	9.3	8.8	15.5	53.4
I have problems with my siblings	13.4	25.6	15.8	15.1	30.1

In Table 8 information is presented on the material things children have or do not have. There are various items that more than 80% of the children have. This is the case for having clothes in good condition (80.4), having a place at home to study (84.5%), having devices for video-classes (86.5%), having two pairs of shoes in good condition (89.9%), having the equipment they need for sports and hobbies (92.9%), having access to computer or a tablet when needed (95.6%), having enough money for school trips and activities (95.9%), having access to the internet at home (97.3%) and having the equipment/things children need for school (98.5%). The results indicate that, in comparison with other things, less children have a mobile phone (71.9%) and pocket money (65.6%).

Table 8. Things one has at home (Q9, %)

	Have
Own room	85.2
Clothes in good condition	80.4
Enough money for school trips and activities	95.9
Access to the internet at home	97.3
The equipment/things you need for sports and hobbies	92.9
Pocket money / money to spend on yourself	65.6
Two pairs of shoes in good condition	89.9
A mobile phone	71.9
The equipment/things you need for school	98.5
Access to computer or a tablet when needed	95.6
Devices (e.g. microphone and camera) for video-classes	86.5
A place in your home where you can study	84.5

2.2 Your life during the Corona crisis

Table 9 shows how children obtained information about the Coronavirus. Approximately two-thirds of the children think they have enough information about the Coronavirus: 29,2 percent agrees a lot and 33,8 percent totally agrees. Almost 40% of the children speaks about the Coronavirus in their home (16,3% agrees a lot; 22,5% totally agrees). Approximately half of them feels like his/her opinions about the Coronavirus are taken seriously in his/her home (20,4 agrees a lot; 32,7% totally agrees).

Furthermore, Table 9 shows most children received information about the Coronavirus through the news (59,3% totally agree) or from their family members or caregivers (38,8% totally agree). Approximately one-third of the children received information about the Coronavirus from teachers (30.1% totally agree) or through social media (26,5% totally agree). Most children did not receive information about the Coronavirus from other children (22,8% did not agree; 28,5% did agree a little). In line with the finding that children receive their information through the news, only a small percentage thinks that a lot of the news about the Coronavirus is unreliable (11,5% agrees a lot; 14,3% totally agrees).

Table 9. How much do you agree with each of the following sentences? (Q11, %)

	I do not agree	I Agree a little	I Agree somewhat	I Agree a lot	I Totally agree
I have enough information about the Coronavirus	7.1	15.3	14.4	29.2	33.8
We speak together about the Coronavirus in my home	17.9	27.2	16.1	16.3	22.5
My opinions about the Coronavirus are taken seriously in my home	17.6	15.4	13.9	20.4	32.7
I received a lot of information about the Coronavirus from my family members or caregivers	12.1	14.7	13.2	21.2	38.8
I received a lot of information about the Coronavirus from other children	22.8	28.5	20.5	15.0	13.2
I received a lot of information about Coronavirus from teachers	7.2	17.3	18.2	27.2	30.1
I received a lot of information about Coronavirus through social media (Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.)	23.9	17.5	13.9	18.2	26.5
I received a lot of information about the Coronavirus through the news	7.5	6.6	7.8	18.8	59.3
I think that a lot of the news about the Coronavirus is unreliable	30.1	25.3	18.9	11.5	14.3

Surveyed children were generally rather satisfied with things in life before and (even) during the Corona crisis (Figure 1). However, compared to before the Corona crisis, they were less satisfied with the things they used to learn at school (difference in mean score = 0.9), the relationships they had with their friends (1.0) and the relationships they had with people they live with (difference in mean score = 0.4) during the Corona crisis. A relatively large difference in satisfaction before and during the Corona crisis is visible for how they normally spent their time (difference in mean score = 1.5).

Figure 1. Satisfaction with things in life before and during the Corona crisis (Q12 & Q13, mean score on 11 point scale)

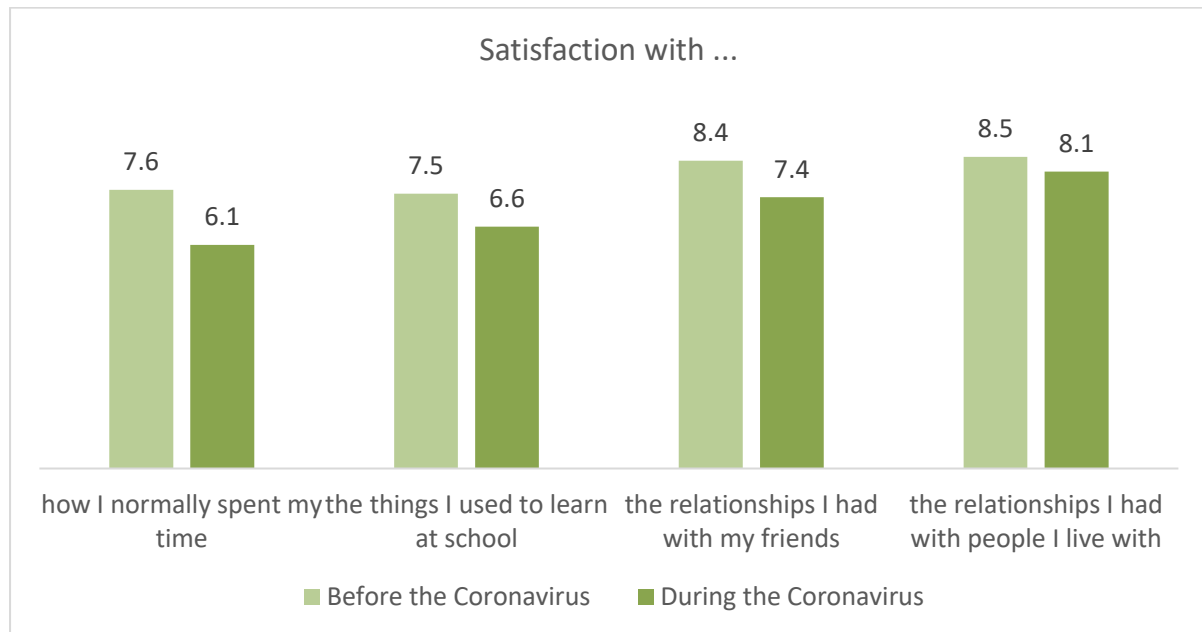
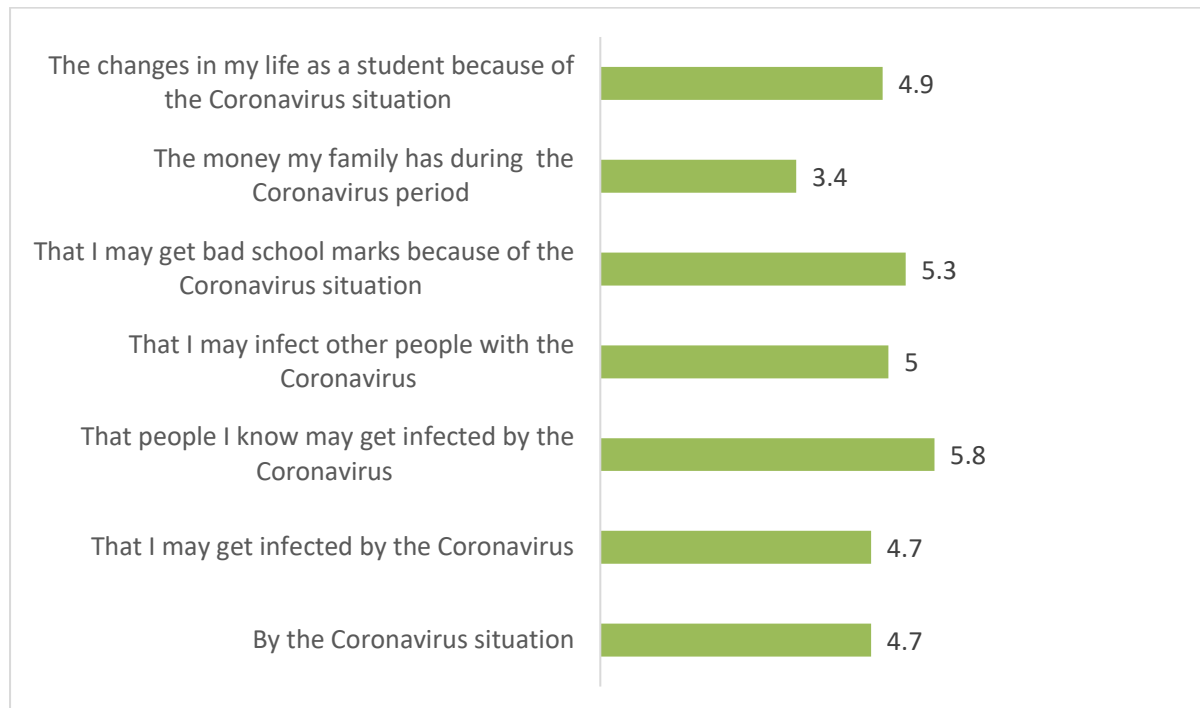


Figure 2 shows children worried to a lesser extent about the money their family has during the Corona period (mean score = 3.4), getting infected by the Coronavirus (4.7), the Coronavirus situation in general (mean score = 4.7) and the changes in their life as a student because of the Coronavirus situation (mean score = 4.9). They worried more about infecting other people with the Coronavirus (mean score = 5.0), getting bad school marks because of the Coronavirus situation (mean score = 5.3) and people they know getting infected by the Coronavirus (mean score = 5.8).

Figure 2. During the last month, how worried have you been about the following things in your life? (Q14, range '0= not at all' to '10= very much', mean scores)



2.3 School and relationships

Table 10 displays how many times a week children do certain things during the Corona crisis. On daily basis, most children use social media (52.4%), and watch movies or series on the TV, computer or another device (52.1%). At least five days a week, they spend time on learning and doing their homework (24.6% does this five or six days a week; 44.4% does this every day), playing games on a device (15.6% does this five or six days a week; 44.6% does this every day), playing or hanging out outside (20.3% does this five or six days a week; 34.9% does this every day) and playing or hanging inside the house (18.2% does this five or six days a week; 34.4% does this every day). It is remarkable that approximately half of the children never or maximum once or twice a week take care of siblings or other family members, spend time on their own and read (never: respectively 26.1%, 26.3% and 24.9%; once or twice a week: respectively 25.8%, 30.8% and 28.1%).

Table 10. During the Corona crisis - how many times a week do you spend your time doing the following things? (Q15, %)

	Never	Once or twice a week	Three or four days a week	Five or six days a week	Every day
Helping out in the house (household chores)	7.6	31.5	22.9	10.2	27.8
Taking care of siblings (brothers/sisters) or other family members	26.1	25.8	14.0	9.5	24.5
Learning and doing homework	2.0	10.4	18.6	24.6	44.4
Watching movies or series on the TV, computer or another device	2.5	14.2	15.2	16.1	52.1
Using social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc .) on the computer, mobile phone or other devices	13.3	9.4	11.5	13.4	52.4
Speaking with people on the phone or any other way (such as using WhatsApp)	12.1	26.8	19.1	16.5	25.5
Meeting with your friends online (e.g. on the computer, zoom or any other way)	19.4	27.5	17.2	13.3	22.7
Doing things I did not do for a long time (such as hobbies, games etc.)	15.5	34.1	23.1	12.5	14.7
Playing games on the computer, mobile phone or devices (such as PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo, etc.)	6.1	16.0	17.6	15.6	44.6
Spending time on my own	26.3	30.8	15.3	10.4	17.2
Playing or hanging out inside the house	5.8	19.1	22.5	18.2	34.4
Playing or hanging out outside	5.1	17.9	21.9	20.3	34.9
Reading	24.9	28.1	17.4	9.7	19.8
Playing sports or doing exercise	11.0	28.9	22.6	14.1	23.3

Table 11 indicates that most children used online classes with teachers to learn during the Corona crisis (32,4%), followed by learning with parents or people that are looking after them (29,8%), learning by searching the internet (15,1%) and learning with their friends (11,8%). Despite the group being small (1,7%) the children who did not study at home during the Corona crisis cannot be overlooked.

Table 11. Methods used to learn during the Corona crisis, when schools were closed (Q16, multiple responses possible, %)

	N	Percentage
Online classes with teachers	1284	32.4
Learning by searching the Internet	600	15.1
Learning with parents or people that are looking after you	1181	29.8
Learning with my friends	470	11.8
Other ways	364	9.2
I did not study at home	69	1.7

In line with the results presented in Table 11, table 12 shows that a small percentage of children did not manage to continue with their learning from home when schools were closed during the Corona crisis (7,3%), while most of the children did manage to do so (28,1% agrees a lot; 30,3% totally agrees).

Table 12. Degree that children managed to learn at home during the Corona crisis, when schools were closed (Q17, %)

During the Corona crisis, when schools were closed, I managed to continue with my learning from home	Frequency	Percentage
I do not agree	175	7.3
I agree a little	365	15.3
I agree somewhat	454	19.0
I agree a lot	670	28.1
I totally agree	722	30.3
Total	2386	100.0

Table 13 shows that 59.5% of the children always have access to the Internet. In a similar vein, 57,5% of the children indicate it never happens that they could not access the Internet for an entire day and 47.4% reports that they never have problems with the Internet connection while having class over the web. Most of the children miss their classmates (often: 36.2%; always: 33.3%) and wish that they could go back to school (often: 29.4%; always: 24.0%). Less children miss their teacher’s advice during the Corona crisis (never: 23.6%; sometimes 40.6%). About the same percentage of children never or always get help with schoolwork from their parent or a sister/brother (resp. 16.3% and 18.3%).

Table 13. Frequency of doing things during the Corona crisis (Q18, %)

During the Corona crisis, how often did ...	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
you have access to the Internet?	1.3	9.4	29.8	59.5
it happen that you could not access the Internet for an entire day?	57.5	33.5	6.0	2.9
you have problems with the Internet connection while having a class over web?	47.4	38.9	10.8	2.9
you miss your teacher’s advice?	23.6	40.6	24.0	11.8
you miss your classmates?	7.0	23.6	36.2	33.3
you wish that you could go back to school?	17.2	29.4	29.4	24.0
your parent or a sister/brother help you with schoolwork?	16.3	36.9	28.4	18.3

Figure 3 shows that children mostly kept in touch with friends during lockdown by calling (66.5%), video calling (65.2%) and sending messages using WhatsApp (60.0%). About one third of children kept in touch by meeting each other in person (31.6%). A small, but not negligible group, indicates not at all keeping in touch with friends during the lockdown (6.1%).

Figure 3. Ways of keeping in touch with friends during the lockdown (Q19, multiple responses possible, %)

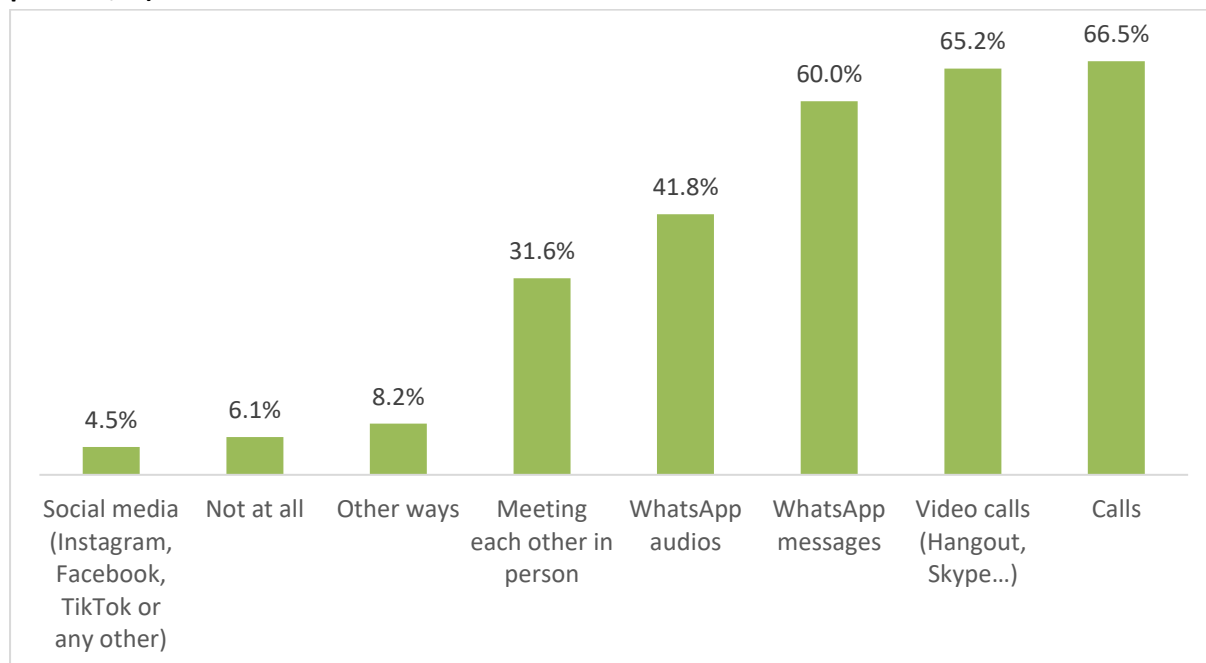


Table 14 reveals that, during the Corona crisis, children felt most supported by some people they live with (82.3% agrees a lot or totally), respectively followed by some of their friends (58.4% agrees a lot or totally) and some of their teachers (49.6% agrees a lot or totally).

Table 14. Social support during the Corona crisis (Q22, %)

During the Corona crisis, I felt well-supported by	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
... some of my friends	7.8	13.6	20.2	28.4	30.0
... some of my teachers	10.1	16.9	23.4	27.7	21.9
... some people I live with	4.5	4.8	8.4	19.1	63.2

Concerning the social relations during the Corona crisis, table 15 shows that more than half of the children indicate that they became closer to some family members during the Coronavirus (48.5% agrees a lot or totally). The results also show that 39.1% of the children agree a lot or totally that their relationships with friends were affected during this period. One in five reported making new friends with other children online during the Coronavirus (20.6% agrees a lot or totally).

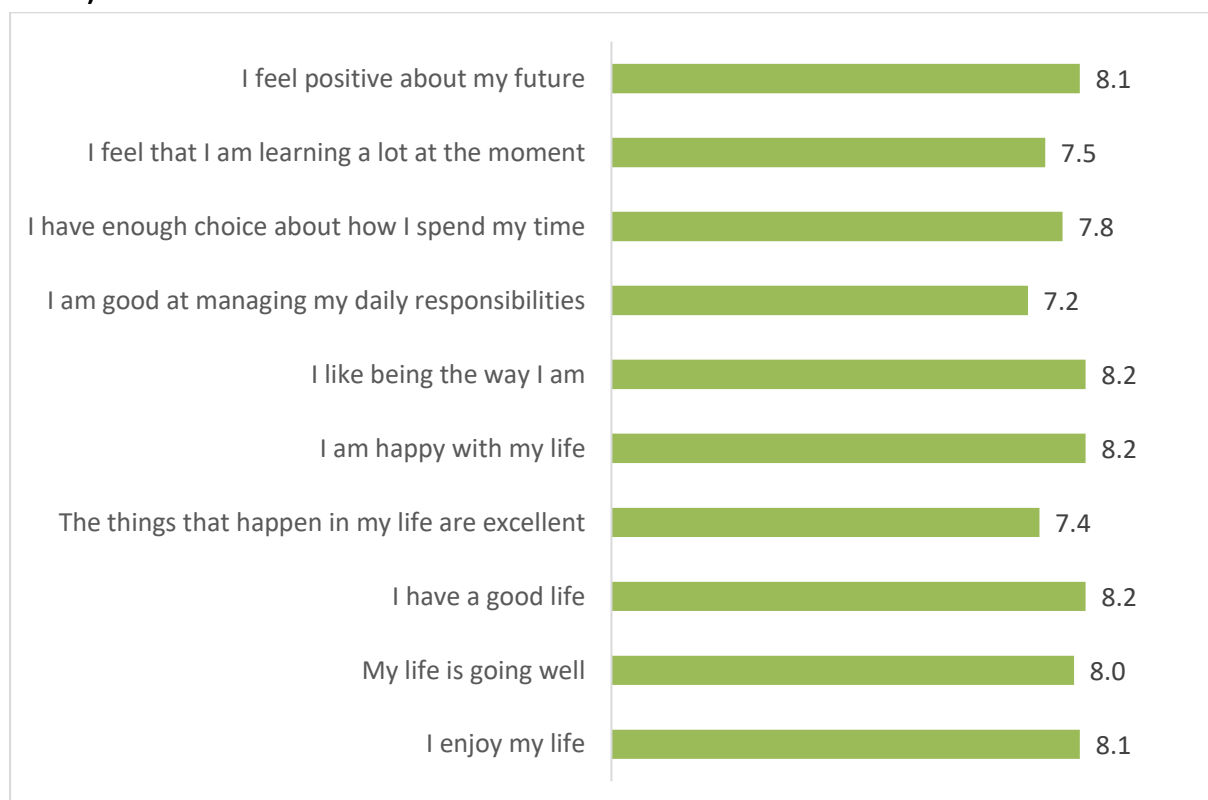
Table 15. Social relations during the Corona crisis (Q23, %)

	I do not agree	Agree a little bit	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
During the coronavirus, I became closer to some members of my family	15.0	16.4	20.1	23.2	25.3
My relationships with my friends were affected during the Coronavirus	21.4	22.3	17.2	18.3	20.8
I made new friends with other children online during the Coronavirus	59.0	11.8	8.7	6.7	13.9

2.4 How do you feel about life

Children’s responses on satisfaction with their life as a whole were collected on an eleven-point scale. Their responses, displayed in Figure 4, reveal that they are on the high side of the scale. Children are the most satisfied with the way they are, with how happy they are with their life and they indicate being happy with their life (an average of 8.2 out of 10). The results show that children are the least satisfied with managing their daily responsibilities, however they still assigned an average score of 7.2 out of 10 to it.

Figure 4. Satisfaction with life as a whole (Q24, range: 0 ‘not at all agree’ -10 ‘totally agree’, mean scores)



Positive and negative affect has also been measured using an eleven-point scale. The results in Figure 5 show that children have experienced more positive feelings (for example happy and full of energy) than negative feelings (sad or bored) in the last two weeks before the survey.

Figure 5. Positive and negative affect: how much have you felt this way during the last two weeks? (Q25, range: 0 'not at all' – 10 'extremely', mean scores)

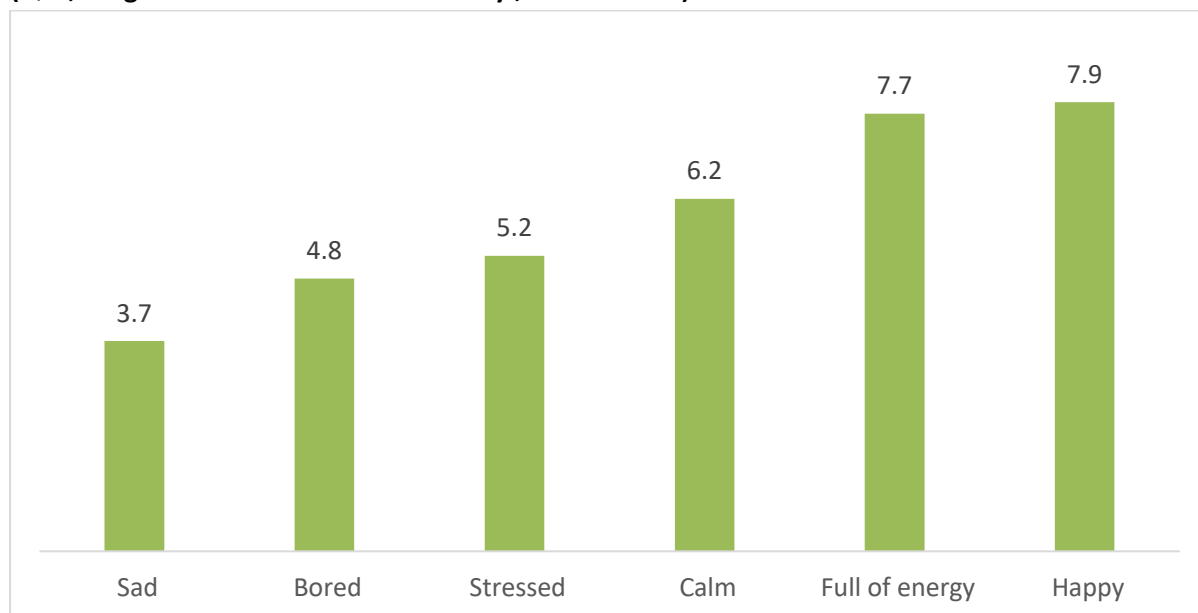


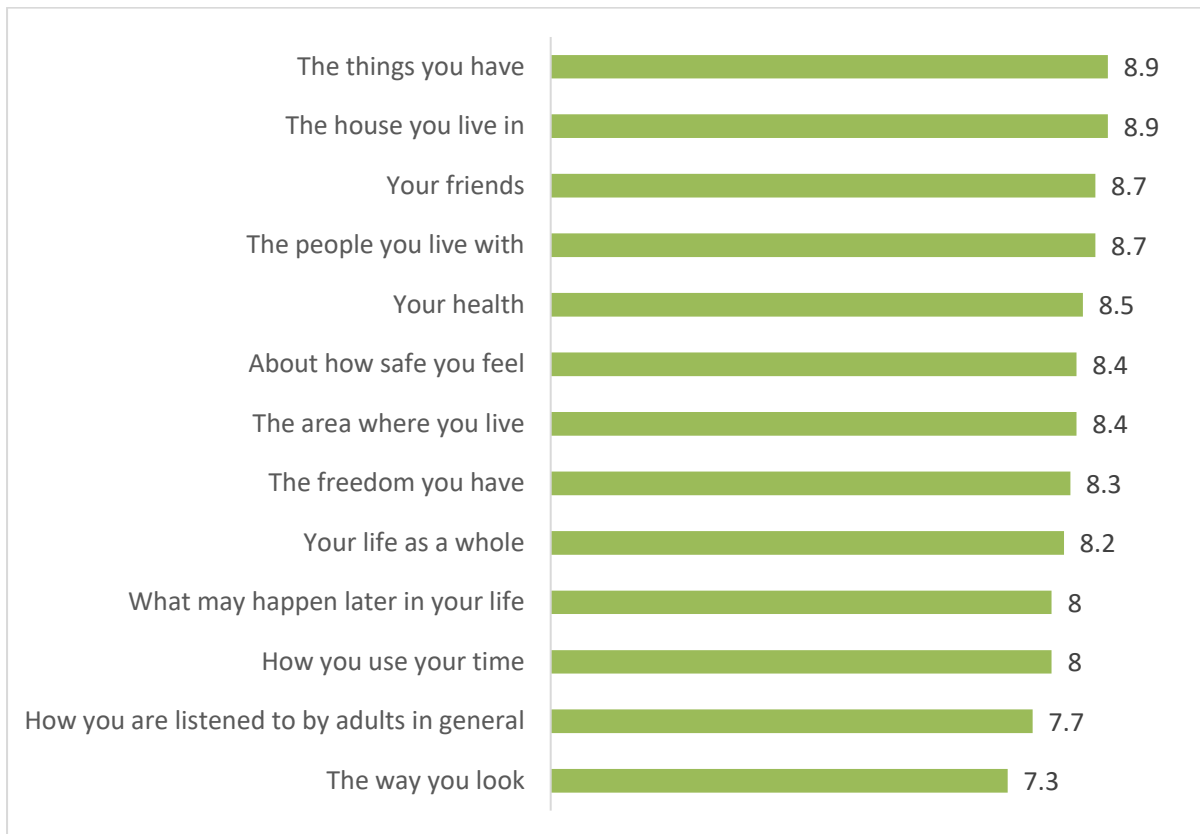
Table 16 shows that children's fear of the coronavirus generally remains limited. For example, 8% of the children indicate (agree a lot or totally agree) that they cannot sleep because they are worrying about getting the Coronavirus. Also, less than 10% of the children get sweaty hands or heart races when they think about the Coronavirus. Still, about one in five children show mild to severe symptoms of anxiety. For example, 17.3% feel uncomfortable when thinking about the Coronavirus and 17.8% of the children largely or completely agree that they are very afraid of the Coronavirus. Children are most afraid of losing their life because of the Coronavirus with 22.9% agreeing a lot or totally with this statement.

Table 16. Statements about fear of the Coronavirus (Q26, %)

	I do not agree	I Agree a little	I Agree somewhat	I Agree a lot	I Totally agree
I am very afraid of the Coronavirus	37.9	27.7	16.6	9.0	8.8
It makes me uncomfortable to think about the Coronavirus	46.9	22.5	13.3	9.5	7.8
My hands become sweaty when I think about the Coronavirus	78.3	9.4	5.4	2.9	4.0
I am afraid of losing my life because of the Coronavirus	46.8	18.2	12.1	8.7	14.2
When I watch news and stories about the Coronavirus on the TV and social media, I become nervous or anxious	49.0	26.1	10.6	7.0	7.3
I cannot sleep because I'm worrying about getting the Coronavirus	74.1	11.7	6.7	3.4	4.2
My heart races (beats very fast) when I think about getting the Coronavirus	67.2	15.2	8.0	4.8	4.7

An eleven-point scale from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (totally satisfied) is used to measure children's satisfaction with different things in life. Figure 6 shows that they are most satisfied with the things they have and the house they live in (an average of 8.9) and are least satisfied with the way they look (an average of 7.3). In general, children are satisfied with their life as a whole (an average of 8.2).

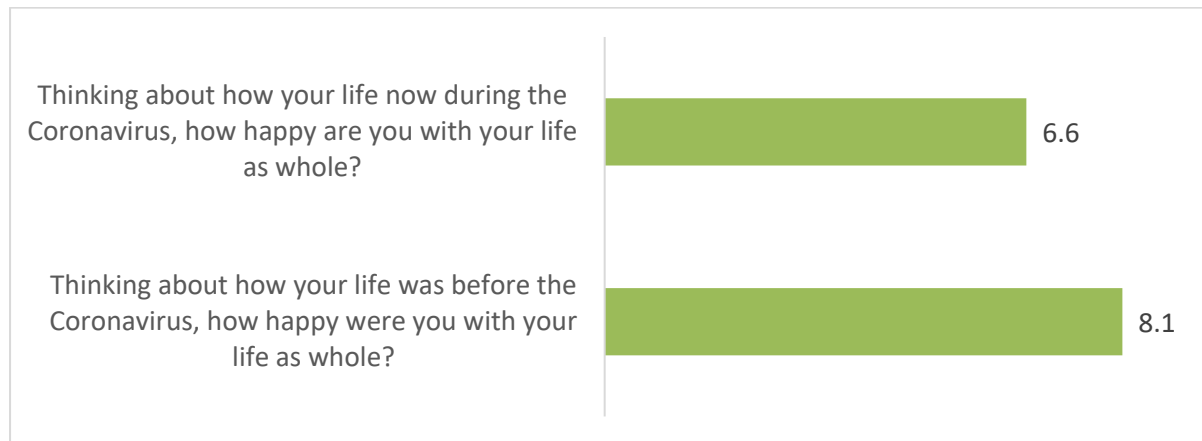
Figure 6. Satisfaction with different things in life (Q27, range 0 'not at all satisfied' to 10 'totally satisfied', mean score)



Also using an eleven-point scale from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (totally satisfied), satisfaction with life as a whole before and during the Coronavirus was measured. Figure 7 reveals that children were happier with their life as a whole before the Coronavirus (an average of 8.1) than they were during the coronavirus (an average of 6.6).

This last result is at odds with what is seen in Figure 6, where children score the satisfaction of their lives as a whole at 8.2 on an 11-point scale from 0 to 10. This may be due to a different assessment of their current satisfaction when they are specifically asked to compare it with their life satisfaction before the Corona crisis.

Figure 7. Satisfaction with life as whole before and during the Coronavirus (Q27, range 0 'not at all satisfied' to 10 'totally satisfied', mean score)



3. Conclusions

ISCWeB-2021 provides a unique insight into how children aged 10 to 12 in Flanders have experienced the Corona crisis and illustrates different aspects of their well-being and their environment. The findings indicate that the Corona crisis had a large impact on children's lives and highlights the vulnerability of some children. For example, 7.3% admitted that they did not manage to continue learning at home during the Corona crisis, 17.9% of the children report that their opinion about the Coronavirus is not taken seriously at home and 6.1% of 10-12 year-olds had no contact with friends during the lockdown. Moreover, 15% did not agree that they became closer to family members during the Corona crisis and respectively 7.8% and 10.1% did not feel supported by friends and teachers. Compared to the pre-Corona period, children report a decrease in satisfaction with how they spend their time, the things they used to learn in school and their relationships with friends.

It is clear that the corona pandemic has deeply affected young children. If we consider the COVID-19 measures that were put in place, this should not come as a surprise. Ever since March 2020, Flemish children have been confronted with school closures, restrictions in leisure activities (e.g. closure of museums, amusement parks, sports clubs, art schools, etc.) and childcare, a travel ban, the prohibition of youth holiday camps, and limitations of group meetings. As illustrated by the results reported in this report, these measures had an influence on the most important aspects of the daily life of young children, especially their home situation, their school situation, their leisure activities and their friendships.