



Children's Rights during Coronavirus: Children's Views and Experiences

#CovidUnder19: Life Under Coronavirus is an initiative to meaningfully involve children in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. 26,258 children from 137 countries across all five UN regions responded to our survey. More detail on this can be found at the end of this paper. This briefing presents our headline findings



UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) sets out the rights that all children and young people have.

We wanted to find out how children's rights were being impacted during Coronavirus by asking children and young people themselves. In total, **26,258 children and young people age 8-17 from 137 countries across the world** have taken part in our survey. This summary presents some of the global headline findings.



POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Many children reported that they are unaffected and some say that things were better for them during Coronavirus. Lots of children enjoyed having more time to spend with their family. Children told us that not being at school provided opportunities to learn new hobbies and to relax.

'It is much nicer now. My parents are home, they do work but it is nice to know that they are home more and that you know that they are there. Meeting online with friends is easy and fun and you actually talk to them more than before Corona.'
(Girl, 8, Netherlands)

'I can sleep well/ get enough sleep, no need to rush anywhere, no need to get up early. I can complete school assignments at an individual pace and order. Mom is always at home; she prepares delicious things more often... Mom might prepare tea and dessert and bring it to my room. I can sit with your mom and talk.'
(Boy, 14 Russia)

'I had more time to read books, I have time to do exercises, watch movies, play game, and my mom spend more time to teach me do homework.'
(Male, 8, Vietnam)



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For other children, not having to attend school meant they felt safer, for example, in school or their local communities, and less anxious about speaking out in class.

'I like the online lessons; I have problems with anxiety, so being able to turn off my microphone and/or camera sometimes makes me feel much safer and makes it easier for me to pay attention...Personally, I've found that less extra murals and not having to spend time travelling leave me more time for hobbies and sleep.'
(Girl, 15, South Africa)

'I didn't have to go outside and be bullied about the way I look and how I act' (NB*, 13, United Kingdom)

Some children felt that lockdown was a good thing because it meant there was less pollution and that could help to slow down climate change.

'We're letting the planet breath. Our way of thinking has changed and now we value little things more.' (Girl, 15, Costa Rica)

'The environment can at last rest from pollution.' (Boy, 13, Philippines)

*Children who did not identify with a binary gender are identified as NB throughout the report

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

However, other children reported negative experiences since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Many children said they missed school, their friends and other members of their family. For some children this had a significant impact on their mental health

'Now, more than ever, teenagers are suffering from anxiety. We have to do too much work for school. My eyebrows began to fall off because I'm so worried I won't pass my course. There are many who think about suicide... some demand too much from us... I have no internet connection and can't talk to my friends, that makes me feel very depressed... I feel bad not being able to see my family and friends.' (Girl, 14 Costa Rica)

Children also spoke about missing physical closeness and hugging their family and friends, missing out on key milestones such as birthdays and graduation. **The rest of this briefing will explore the challenges children experienced in more detail.**



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A LETTER TO COVID

Dear COVID-19, This is my letter to express what I am feeling about you. At times, I'm happy for you, but at times I am so furious with you for coming to shake our world. The good things: you are helping us realize what a great place we live in and how much we take it for granted. You are giving us more quality time with our families. The negative things: You are destroying the lives of so many people. Due to the new world of social distancing which you have created, you have separated people up to the maximum. All is gone, because you fell in. Holidays, playdates, graduation ceremonies, celebrations and more are all now the things of the past just because of you. NO it's NOT OK to lose people. To sacrifice loved ones is like to sacrifice a part of you. You should be labelled as a killer because so many people have lost loved ones because of you. You are like Thanos from Marvel who is killing half Earth's population. You are now famous on every news channel. What more do you want from us? I suggest you go to the tropical Venus heat, the cold Pluto or Neptune temperatures, or even go through a black hole on a roller coaster. Let us and our world just go. I hope that Iron Man (vaccine) will arrive soon so that people can relive their normal lives. Why are you killing so many elders? You should know that our elders have lived their lives while making us strong. It is now time for them to take some rest and enjoy. They are the ones who are most vulnerable and they need us the most. We wish to see and hug them again. Hope you understand and from this moment onwards you will show some respect to them. Another important part of our lives that you are trying to affect badly is our education. I should tell you that our educators are strong and are not going to give up easily. They have created our new classrooms with the help of Google and Microsoft. I am worried about my friends who don't have access to these tools and will be left behind. But, you don't worry our global and local leaders will find some solutions for them too and we will help them to catch up their loss. Mark my words today - the day will come soon when we will again hug our teachers and play with our friends. JUST WATCH. We have been in quarantine for more than 10 weeks straight now. We kids can't take it anymore, we have to play, run around especially go outside but you aren't letting us. Some people don't have any food to eat because they have lost their jobs. You changed our whole lives. You have made people realise the difference between their needs and wants. You have brought the Dolphins back in Venice. I appreciate that. But, you can do this more peacefully next time. Do something to protest, march or boycott but please don't kill half the population. You can't just ruin children's summer break. That's really mean of you. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! I asked my Mom, "Why did it need the virus to bring the people back together?" Mom replied, "Sometimes you gotta get sick, my child, before you start feeling better."

Sincerely Female, 12, Canada

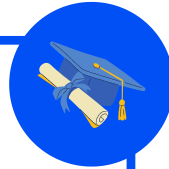


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ARTICLES 28 & 29 UNCRC: EDUCATION

61% of children said they were getting a better education before Coronavirus

‘Our country's economy is degrading by which some children are starving because of no income of their family, Some are suiciding, Some are not getting to join online classes because of no internet access and even some are getting to join it they are not having good studies as before and those whose examination was stopped by COVID-19 pandemic, their studying has so much stopped or they are being demotivated about exams and some children aren't even safe at home; they are being raped or abused! Our government should think of these things rather than other things which are not so important and ensure child rights’. (Boy, 14, Nepal)

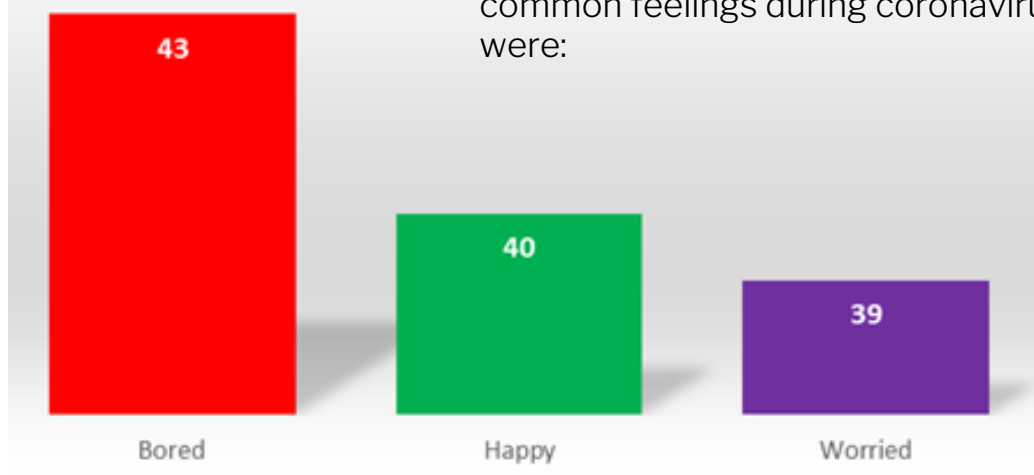


ARTICLE 31: PLAY, REST AND LEISURE

56% of children said they got to talk to their friends less than they would like since Coronavirus.

FEELINGS

Children told us their three most common feelings during coronavirus were:





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ARTICLE 13 & 17: INFORMATION



62% would go to their family members for 'information that they trust' on Coronavirus

'Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety. Provide information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information. Children may misinterpret what they hear and about something they do not understand.'
(Boy, (doesn't know age) Somaliland)

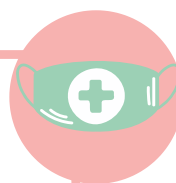
ARTICLE 27: ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING



41% said their family had less money to meet their needs since Coronavirus.

.I live with my mom, my step dad, my brother and two step brothers. We live in an apartment with only one room, we're growing and its getting crowded. Food is hard cause we're too many. I feel embarrassed to my stepfather because he has to feed me and my brother, too. We are not his responsibility but I am thankful and grateful that he's treating us like his own child.. (Girl, 17, Philippines).

ARTICLE 24: ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES



21% of children said access to medical help was better before Covid-19.

'They should pay more attention to children now especially the ones going back to school. Some children can't afford to buy face masks which is bad. The government should provide face masks and other things to ensure children's safety during this time of coronavirus. Face masks on the market are for adults and few being tailored are for children.' (Girl, 15, Zambia)



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ARTICLE 19: PROTECTION

9% felt less safe in their homes/where they lived since the start of Co
36% felt safer since Coronavirus and
done prior to the pandemic

'In case of quarrels or violence in the family I can not ask fo
cannot help me to go in another place. This is an issue, all th
quarantine. Many emergency phone numbers for certain issues are
the moment, or you keep calling and nobody answers.' (Girl, 10,

30% of children reported that they had greater knowledge than before the start of
Coronavirus of how to seek help if they felt unsafe. while
less knowledge now, than before Coronavirus,

'Previously my mother used to be outside home most of the times
always at home. I don't need to do household works. I'm spendin
mother all day. As liquor shops are closed so case of domestic
Previously the male members became drunk and used to create nui
the family as well as community. But during lockdown, the male members are doing
household work and outside work together.' (Girl, 15, India)

ARTICLE 2: DISCRIMINATION AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

16% think the media has
portrayed children more
negatively than before
Coronavirus



vectors it hurts our feelings and make us
sad I want to see my friends and my nana
and granddad' (Boy, 8, Ireland)

'I wish there were more help available
for families going hungry. People can't
go out and work and the situation is
desperate. Children don't know how
to wait. They only know they're
hungry' (Girl, 9, Bolivia)



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ARTICLE 12: GIVING CHILDREN'S VIEWS DUE WEIGHT

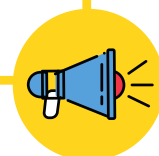
38% don't think their government is listening to children when making decisions about Covid-19.

'Dear government: ...The adults in our homes are the ones who make sure that our rights are fulfilled, but if they too are misinformed, and also with the influence and bad example that, these public figures have on society, they will not give due importance to this. serious situation of the pandemic. If they do not take care of themselves, even though we are at home, after all, we will also be affected. It is very difficult to try to make a change, because as they say, they are children and they do not know. Is not true. These days it even seems that some young people are taking a little more common sense.... Thanks for listening, if at least this message gets to be read .' (Girl, Mexico)

ARTICLE 3: BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD AS A PRIMARY CONSIDERATION

'I would tell politicians when they are making laws to do that with the heart of mothers and not of politicians'.

(Girl, 12, Bolivia)





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#CovidUnder19: Life Under Coronavirus is an initiative to meaningfully involve children in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. 26,258 children from 137 countries across all five UN regions responded to the survey.

All children have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). #CovidUnder19 is a multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together children, civil society organisations, academia and other partners to work together in understanding children's experiences of their rights during the COVID19 pandemic. A goal of #CovidUnder19 is to create a space for children across the globe to be meaningfully involved in the discussions around issues triggered by the COVID19 pandemic and contribute towards shaping the post-COVID19 world.

On 28 May 2020, the initiative launched a global consultation survey to understand children's experiences of their rights under the coronavirus pandemic and their views on how their rights could be better realised. The survey applied the Centre for Children's Rights' innovative approach to rights-based research directly involving children and young people as advisors from the outset. The survey has been designed by child rights experts and 270 children from 26 countries. The survey was open until 31 July 2020. It was made available in 27 languages as well as an Easy Read version for children and young people with intellectual disabilities.

Children and young people contributed to data analysis and interpretation. Each thematic paper presents key findings. Data is disaggregated as far as possible and where findings are significant. Please note that the survey is not intended to be representative of the global child population. Findings are presented on a global basis.

For more information please contact covidunder19@gmail.com

The Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast designed and conducted the survey and developed the thematic briefings in collaboration with Initiative partners and a team of child advisors. This was supported by an ESRC Impact Acceleration Account award through Queen's University Belfast