



# Family Life

**#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 findings that relate to family life



## THE UNCRC ON FAMILY

The UNCRC preamble acknowledges family as a societal group central to the wellbeing of children and that children can reach their best potential in positive family environments.

Our survey shows many children enjoyed spending more time with their immediate family and bonding with family members but some found that family time created tensions. Children also told us they missed seeing other family members not in their home.

Most children trusted their family for information and had an adult to talk to. Children told us how their home situations affected their feelings for good and bad. All these varied by age, family type and living situation.

Children also had concern about fewer resources for families and safety at home.

## WHAT WAS BETTER ABOUT FAMILY CONTACT



Many children said that the amount of contact they had with their mum or dad was better now while most reported no change, and for some it was better before. Younger children were more likely to say it is better now whereas older children were more likely to say no difference.

For mum contact among children age 8 to 10 years old, **41%** reported better now and **44%** reported no change, whereas **30%** of children age 13 to 17 years old reported better now and **57%** no change.

Throughout the survey, children told us that they enjoyed the additional time with their family and found this time helped with bonding.

**'The best thing about Lockdown is that we are actually being able to understand our family members. My parents used to be busy all the time before this lockdown so now i am getting sufficient time to understand them'**  
(Girl, 16, Pakistan)



## FAMILY TENSION

Children also highlighted that being with family was not universally positive.

'All the family time got me frustrated and sparked bad conflict with no escape from the situation.' (Girl, 17, South Africa)

'Father stays at home and every time he beats us for some reason or the other. No one in the family has any work. When there is food shortage, we all including my mother gets bitten by my father.' (Boy, 12, India)



## LESS FAMILY CONTACT

There were children who were not able to see their parents as much or at all.

'I can't see my dad.' (Boy, 8, El Salvador)

'My mum and dad are keyworkers and because of their work I don't get to see them together as much as before. I miss family time. When they are home they are tired they work really hard.' (Girl, 8, Northern Ireland)

Children also reported less contact with other people they care about. Only **17%** of children said contact was better now, while **47%** said contact was better before. This would include friends but also extended family:

'I don't like corona virus lock down because i did not go to my grandmother house' (Girl, 13, Palestine)



## FEELINGS

The three most common feelings children said they felt varied by living situation:

At Home:


Bored 44%  
Happy 39%  
Worried 38%

In Residential Home:

Worried 40%  
Bored 38%  
Sad 35%

In Detention Centre, Refugee camp, or Homeless Centre:

Worried 43%  
Afraid 41%  
Sad 40%



'I feel safe and if I have thoughts and worries I turn to my parents. My parents are home [more than before the coronavirus crisis] so our relationship is good because they have more time... Because everybody is home so the home environment strengthens existing behavior, negative as well as positive.' (Boy, 13, Israel)

'As my mother is a doctor so I spent most of the days in stress, thinking about the uncertainty of future.' (Girl, 11, Pakistan)

'I am in a foster family and it's hard when you are stuck with 4 people whole day, every day.' (Girl, 15, Croatia)

## INFORMATION AND SUPPORT



The majority of children said they would go to family to get information on Coronavirus. This was the **most common** answer for children aged 8-12 and **second most common** for children 13-17 (behind newspaper, TV or radio).

Most children said they had an adult they could talk to if needing support all the time; however, children living with their parent(s)/ guardian(s) were the most likely to tell us this (**71%**) compared to **60%** of those living with relatives, and **61%** of those living with a foster family.

Only **5%** of those living with parent(s)/guardian(s), **8%** living with other relatives, and **6%** living in a foster family reported never having an adult to talk to for support.

'The one thing that has made my lockdown better is my family which helps me through tough times and always helps me with my daily needs. My family is the most important thing in my life, my family is the one that helps me to get through lockdown. In my family we always help each other. My family can entertain me so we can pass time. So, I can say that my family is the best thing in lockdown.' (Girl, 12, Nepal)



## CHILDRENS' ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT

Children told us they would advise the government to consider families and home environment in dealing with Coronavirus....

'Please consider that while parents suffer a lot under the weight of tax, furlough and the loss of jobs, we as their kids (especially older kids who are included more in these conversations) almost feel more helpless in witnessing these problems because we can't do anything to help our family members out whereas we might be able to if we were able to go out and work or volunteer.' (NB\*, 17, UK)

'A huge number of children are more and more becoming victims of the insensitive digital learning and of poverty. During these times, the parents of children are losing their jobs, many households are unable to have food to eat, many do not afford to even support their families' needs, and many do not have access to the internet and technological devices. Many children will be left behind!' (Girl, 17 Philippines)

'It's a fact that the cases of violence have increased during lockdown and its possible that a lot of children have experienced violence. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough information available to young people on how to deal with situations like these and who to reach out to for help .' (Boy, 16, Greece)

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



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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](mailto: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