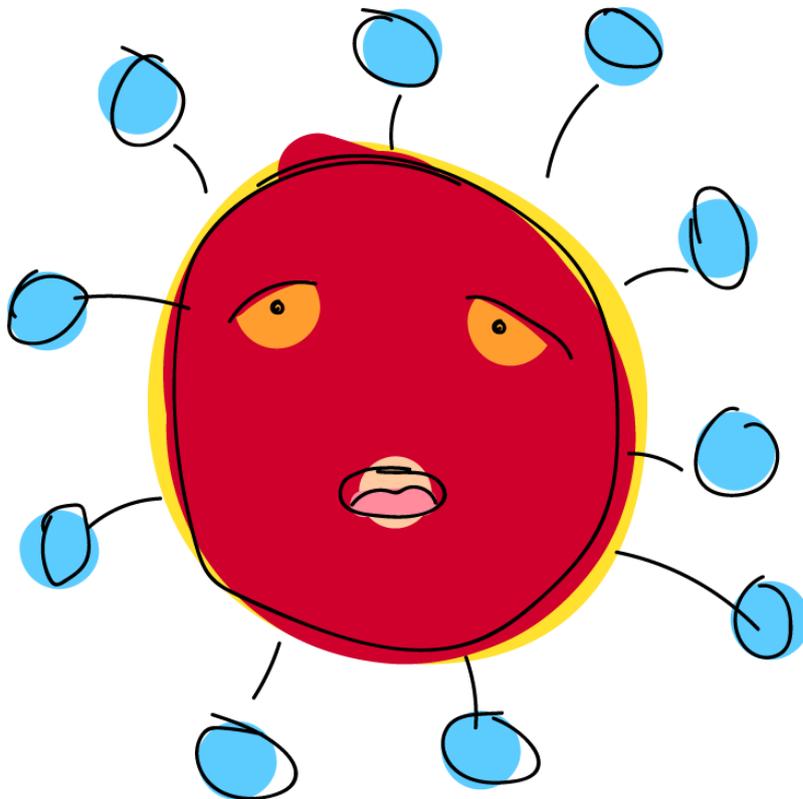


HOW ARE YOU DOING?

A report on the findings from the How are you doing? survey using data from April, May and June 2020



Children's Parliament
August 2020

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SUMMARY

Since the start of the lockdown children aged 8 to 14 have been part of a conversation with Children's Parliament about their experiences of the virus and of lockdown. Children have been responding in large numbers to a wellbeing survey called *How are you doing?* and a number of Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs) have been working as journalists and writing in response to questions posed over a series of the *Corona Times Journal*. All the work is published here: bit.ly/Coronavirus_Kids

This is a summary of the findings from the *How are you doing?* survey using data from April, May and June 2020. The survey is for children aged between 8 and 14 years old. The survey is made up of 31 statements with a 5-point scale to respond – from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. There are final questions where children can identify what they are worried about and what helps them feel good.

i. Learning

The closure of schools was a necessary response to the public health emergency presented by Coronavirus. When the decision was made it was not possible to ascertain how children would be impacted. The results from the three months of the *How are you doing?* survey are mixed but the conclusion is that most children do not like the home-learning model and many have struggled to engage.

From the detailed reporting in this document we can see that a minority of children have felt that they have had a choice in what they were learning during lockdown, and there are increased levels of boredom and a decline in the numbers of children who report having fun things to do in their days. Across the lockdown period children have been less likely to 'try their hardest' or feel pride in what they do. Doing school work has become something that children worry about increasingly.

If any model of home or blended learning is to be used in the coming months, the experience of children as reported here suggests there is much work to be done to improve what is offered and how children are supported. Likewise, as children return to school on a full-time basis, there is a need for educators to acknowledge the child's experiences and think about what this means for their return to school-based learning.

ii. Family and friends

The period of lockdown shifted the balance of children's lives. Not going to school, meeting friends, spending time with grandparents and extended family, or taking part in clubs or activities has meant that relationships at home have become even more central. Across the months, via the *How are you doing?* survey, children have reflected on being with their family and how they think their family is doing.

While most children enjoy being with their family the proportion reporting they do has declined over the lockdown period. While children identify their greatest support comes from parents and carers this has also declined somewhat from April to June.

The majority of children report that they are safe at home, and yet although numbers are relatively small, we can highlight some statistically significant changes in terms of responses from girls which indicate increased vulnerability during the lockdown period.

Our monthly surveys confirm the experience of money worries and poverty; in June 27% of children report that their parents/carers worry about having enough money for their family.

Peer relationships are important to a child's development. It might be expected that the experience of lockdown has meant a loss of the day-to-day connections children have with friends, only some of which can be made up for by connecting online.

Throughout the survey period most children have reported being happy with the friends they have. Most children also report feeling supported by friends.

iii. Health and wellbeing

There is a range of evidence emerging of the impact of lockdown and associated social isolation on the health and wellbeing of children and adults. The *How are you doing?* surveys have placed a focus on mental health and wellbeing by exploring mood and a sense of self-efficacy in terms of health choices.

Children are indicating a decline in mental wellbeing; fewer generally feel cheerful and in a good mood and they have less energy. Children are increasingly feeling lonely and less sure that 'even if I am having a difficult time, I feel I will be okay'.

Children are increasingly worried about a number of things. What they worry about is influenced by age and sex and, as time passes, they worry more. Most children have someone at home or external to their family to speak to, but a significant minority indicate they do not have anyone.

Children identify a number of things that support their wellbeing and help them feel good at the moment but overall children are identifying fewer things that make them feel good. A significant number of children are reporting a sedentary lifestyle during lockdown that may have longer term impacts on physical activity, health and wellbeing.

iv. Worries

It is sensible to assume that in the short, medium or even longer-term children may experience increased worry or anxiety resulting from lockdown and concerns about the Coronavirus. Across the three months mapped by the survey a consistent number of children (36% in June) have indicated that there are lots of things they worry about while more than half (56% in June) express a general worry about 'the future'.

Anxiety is one of the most common mental health problems that a child might experience. From our survey results we report that some children have multiple worries: in April 26% of children reported 5 or more worries from the options provided, in May this was 29% and in June 27%.

v. Access to information, expressing opinions and experiencing rights

Lockdown has seen limitations on our ability to meet others face-to-face; we have agreed limits on our right to assembly, but in a democratic society every citizens' rights to information and to express opinions must not be compromised – whether the citizen is an adult or child.

While a majority of children indicate a positive response when asked about access to information, freedom to express ideas or opinions and have their rights respected by others, there are a significant minority who do not feel that this is so. In the context of Scotland's preparedness for incorporation of the UNCRC, and in light of the Scottish Government's consideration of how Coronavirus has and is impacting on children, these are important factors to consider.

vi. In particular, our survey results emphasise the need to consider the impact of lockdown on 12 to 14 year old girls.

As we look across the three months' results, we report that compared to other groups (younger girls age 8 to 11 and all boys) girls aged 12 to 14 are *least likely*:

- To report having fun things to do in their day, know there are things they are good at, or be proud of things they can do.
- To feel they have a choice in what they are learning.
- To feel cheerful or in a good mood.
- To feel free to express opinions or look for and get the information they need.
- To feel that even if things are difficult, they know they will be okay.
- To say they make healthy choices, to know who to speak to if they have a health concern, to say they have plenty of energy.
- To report enjoying spending time with their family, that their family gets along well together, that they have someone to talk to in their family if they have a worry or that they are happy with the friends they have.

And compared to other groups, girls aged 12 to 14 are *most likely*:

- To feel bored.
- To feel lonely and to say that there are a lot of things that they worry about in life and to worry about their own health.

INTRODUCTION

Children's Parliament is Scotland's Centre of Excellence for children's participation and engagement. Our dream is that children grow up in a world of love, happiness and understanding. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland. We work with partners to evidence how a children's human rights approach improves outcomes for children.

In recent months children aged 8 to 14 have been part of a conversation with Children's Parliament about their experiences of lockdown and how Coronavirus has impacted on them. From questions and worries, to learning at home, to family and peer relationships, to health and wellbeing, children have been responding in large numbers to a wellbeing survey called **How are you doing?** and a number of Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs) have been working as journalists and writing in response to questions posed over a series of the Corona Times Journal.

All the work is published here:

bit.ly/Coronavirus_Kids

This is a report on the findings from the How are you doing? survey using data from April, May and June 2020.

The survey is for children aged between 8 and 14. For the purposes of reporting we sometimes look at and compare the responses from younger children aged 8 to 11 and older children aged 12 to 14. Where it is helpful, we report on differences in responses from girls and boys.

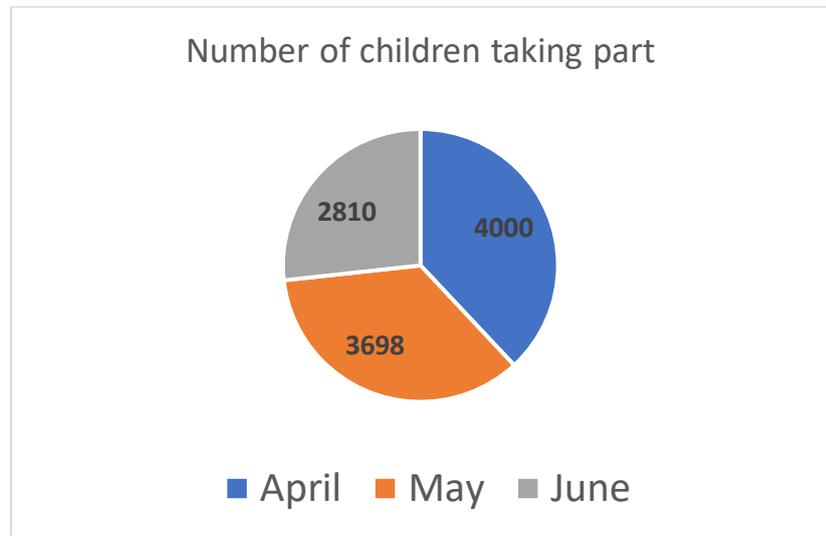
The survey is made up of 31 statements with a 5-point scale to respond – from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. There are final questions where children can identify what they are worried about and what helps them feel good.

Our thanks to our colleagues in **Public Health Scotland** and **Scottish Government** for their support with this work.

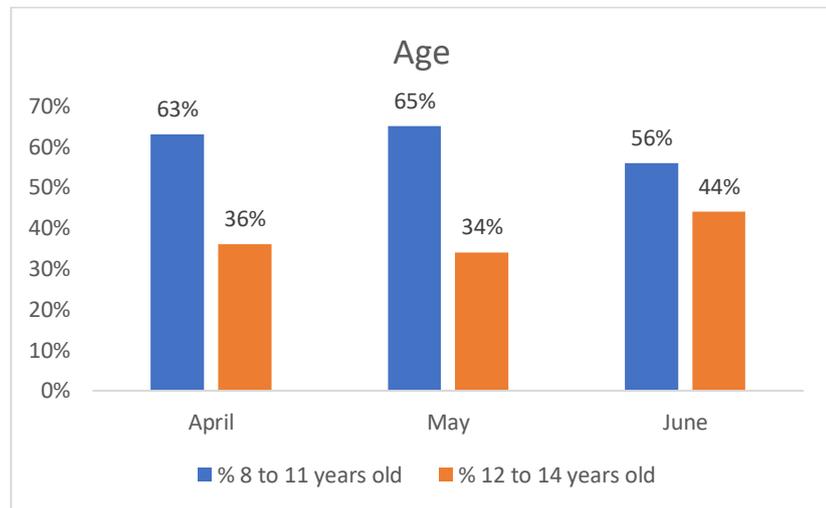
Following the summer break, and in line with the return to school **How are you doing? survey #4** will be launched on 1st September 2020.

ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

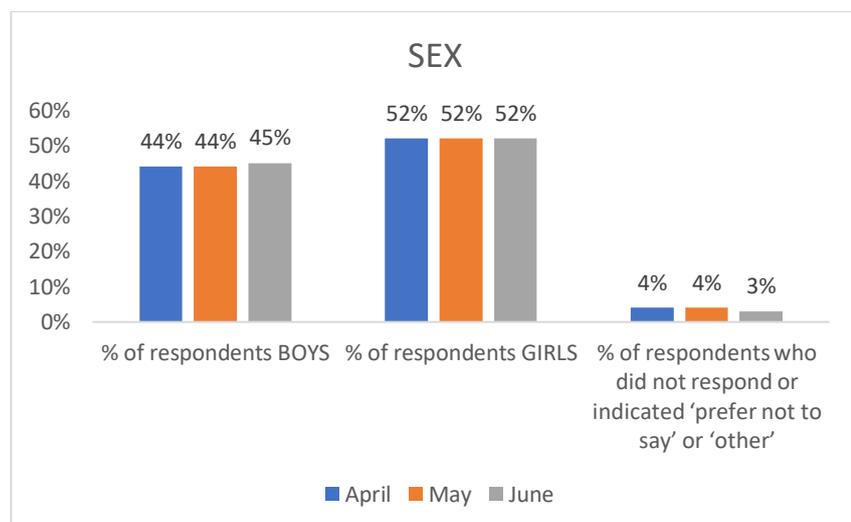
The number of children taking part each month is shown here:



The age of children responding each month is shown here:



The sex of children responding each month is shown here:



1. LEARNING

Introduction

The closure of schools was a necessary response to the public health emergency presented by Coronavirus. When the decision was made, it was not possible to ascertain how children would be impacted. Over April, May and June 2020 the *How are you doing?* surveys provided an opportunity to find out more and to report on aspects of learning at home. The results are mixed but the survey evidences that most children do not like the home-learning model and many have struggled to engage.

Using the results from three surveys the statements reported here relate to learning or activities that children took part in during lockdown. In this period all children should have been provided with home-learning activities by their school. Via the statements, children tell us whether they feel they had a choice in what they were learning, and with increased use of digital platforms for learning and connecting with others they tell us about whether they feel safe online. Children reflect here on whether during lockdown they had fun things to do and whether they had opportunities to be creative; they also report on boredom. Finally, children reflect on characteristics that positively underpin learning or participation in activities: on whether they are trying their hardest, on whether they know there are things they are good at or that they are proud of, and if they enjoy learning new things.

This report is published (August 2020) as schools re-open to provide a full-time education. This may change should there be concerns about transmission of the virus or a rise in Coronavirus cases, and schools are expected to have in place a plan to provide home learning or a blended model of home and school learning in such circumstances. If any model of home or blended learning is to be used in the coming months, the experience of children, as reported here, suggests there is much work to be done to improve what is offered and how children are supported. Likewise, as children return to school on a full-time basis, there is a need for schools to acknowledge the child's experiences and think about what this means for their return to school-based learning.

In each section of this report, the statements provided in the *How are you doing?* survey provide the structure.

Learning: Findings

I feel like I have a choice in what I am learning just now

The education system is committed to extending learner participation within what is called an empowered system¹. Throughout lockdown responses to this statement have helped us understand how learner choice is experienced by children. Between the April and May surveys we saw a fall in the numbers of children reporting that they feel they have a choice; this was true for all ages and for both girls and boys. What was a statistically significant decline between April and May has continued, so that by June a minority of children (42%) *agree/strongly agree* with the statement provided.

It is amongst 12 to 14-year olds that we find the lowest positive responses—by June only 33% of girls and 38% of boys indicated they *agree/strongly agree* that they have a choice in what they are learning. Further, while 8 to 11 year old girls report most positively of all groups there was a statistically significant decline in the proportion who reported they *agree/strongly agree*: 57% in April, 48% in May with a marginal increase to 51% in June.

Looking at the other responses, there has been an increase in both children reporting that they *neither agree or disagree* with this statement (27% in April, 28% in May and 29% in June looking at all respondents) and those who *disagree/strongly disagree*; by June older children were most likely to *disagree/strongly disagree* (34% of girls and 37% of boys aged 12 to 14).

When I am online, I feel safe

Lockdown has seen a significant shift to digital platforms to support learning. From our work during this period Children's Parliament knows that children have increased levels of access to online environments not just for learning but also for fun and to socialise with friends and family. Across all 3 months of the survey, and looking at all children responding, most children (82%) report that they *agree/strongly agree* that they feel safe when they are online; of course, this means that 18% of children do not agree. For one sub-group however there are changes to be highlighted: the percentage of girls aged 8 to 11 who report that they *disagree or strongly disagree* with the statement has gone up from 3% in April, to 4% in May, to 5% in June.

I have fun things to do in my days

When children talk about their experience of learning and school they tell us it should be fun. Across the 3 months of lockdown there is a statistically significant decline in the numbers of children who *agree/strongly agree* that they have fun things to do in their day: 75% in April, 74% in May and 72% in June. In terms of groups of children (across April, May and June) girls are less likely to agree than boys that they have fun things to do, and by June only 59% of girls aged 12 to 14 *agree/strongly agree* with the statement.

¹ Education Scotland

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/an-empowered-system>

I often feel bored

Educators and parents/carers will have different views on the meaning or significance of 'boredom' for children. It can be argued that boredom can be a motivator for children's creativity, so that rather than feeling the need to respond to an expression of boredom by giving children things to do, it might be beneficial for children to be left to their own devices to have a chance to respond creatively to this emotion. However, we would suggest that in the context of lockdown this needs to be thought about differently, and that alongside other factors that tell us that learning at home has had a detrimental effect on the child's wellbeing, then boredom is another negative factor.

Looking across all responses, more than half of children (51% in April, 54% in May and 52% in June) *agree/strongly agree* that they often feel bored. These levels peaked in May, mid-way through lockdown, and have fallen slightly for June. Between our April and May surveys we reported that the increased levels of boredom being reported by girls – stating that they *strongly agree* - was statistically significant. It is still the case that it is amongst girls aged 12 to 14 that we see the highest levels of boredom being reported (20% *strongly agree* in June).

When I do something, I try my hardest

To be a successful learner requires a level of intrinsic motivation, and this statement asks children to consider whether they try their hardest. While most children agree to some extent that they do, (75% consistently across April, May and June for all respondents), there are differences in responses from boys and girls. By June it is evident that boys are less enthusiastic in terms of the statement – 25% of 8 to 11 year old boys *strongly agree* compared to 35% of girls of the same age while only 16% of 12 to 14 year old boys *strongly agree* compared to 22% of girls of the same age.

I enjoy learning new things

We might think of this statement as an expression of optimism about learning. Across the surveys, and looking at all children, most children report that they enjoy learning new things, in June 78% *agree/strongly agree*. However, when we look at children who *strongly agree* with the statement we find that older children are less positive than their younger peers: 29% of boys aged 8 to 11 *strongly agree* compared to 21% of 12 to 14 year old boys; 36% of girls aged 8 to 11 *strongly agree* compared to 23% of 12 to 14 year old girls.

This statement, alongside others in this section of the report, highlight that 12 to 14 year olds have had a less positive experience of learning at home than their younger peers; looking to older boys they are least likely to report that they enjoy learning new things or (the statement above) try their hardest when they do something.

If I want to, I can be creative

Creativity is a central feature of a positive learning experience and this statement asks children to consider this. Across April, May and June 92% of children reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that they can be creative if they want to be. This decreases somewhat with age, and girls are more likely to *strongly agree*; 8 to 11 year olds are more likely to *strongly agree* (60% of girls and 49% of boys in June) compared to 12 to 14 year olds (40% of girls and 34% of boys in June).

I know that there are things that I am good at

This statement helps us explore learner self-perception and confidence; when it comes to learning, ability alone is not enough and how we think about ourselves matters too. Looking across all responses, almost all children *agree/strongly agree* with the statement (93% in April, 92% in May and 91% in June) that there are things that they are good at, although across these months there are fewer children each month who respond *strongly agree* (50% in April, 48% in May and 46% in June).

As we identified in earlier reporting of the April/May surveys there were statistically significant shifts between April and May responses for 12 to 14 year old girls who were *less likely* to *strongly agree* with the statement (40% in April and 33% in May and now 32% in June) and *more likely* to *disagree* (2% in April, 5% in May and now 4% in June).

I am proud of the things I can do

Having pride in one's work and achievements is a further indication of learner confidence and suggests that the child believes that their efforts will be successful and have a favourable outcome. Across the three months of the survey most children, although declining, *agree/strongly agree* with this statement (88% in April, 86% in May and 85% in June). There are differences however in terms of age and sex when it comes to how enthusiastically children agree with the statement. Looking at those who *strongly agree*, by June 49% of girls aged 8 to 11 *strongly agree*, 44% of 8 to 11 year old boys, 38% of 12 to 14 year old boys and only 30% of 12 to 14 year old girls. For the 8 to 11 year old boys this is a statistically significant change from 49% in April to this figure of 44% in June.

Children's Parliament publishes the **Corona Times Journal**. Across all 5 editions to date Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs) report on aspects of learning at home and thoughts about the return to school. The Journal can be accessed at <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/our-work/children-and-coronavirus/#childrensjournal>

2. FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Introduction

As social beings, children form and maintain relationships at home but also at school and in a multitude of other places and spaces. These social relationships are essential for positive mental health. The period of lockdown shifted the balance of children's lives. Not going to school, meeting friends, spending time with grandparents and extended family, or taking part in clubs or activities has meant that relationships at home have become even more central.

The UNCRC acknowledges that "the family, as the fundamental group in society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community". It also then goes on to recognise: "that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding".

Across the months, via the *How are you doing?* survey, children have reflected on being with their family and how they think their family is doing. Children have reported on whether they feel safe at home, levels of privacy at home and on whether their parents/carers worry about having enough money for the family. When it comes to friends, children have reported on whether they are happy with their friendships and the degree to which they feel supported by friends. These questions have been posed in the context of the loss of face-to-face contact with friends and a shift to maintaining friendships (or making new friends) in online environments.

The quality of our relationships with others matters and as we emerge from lockdown and children can socialise again they take their lockdown experiences with them; these need to be considered as we support children to re-engage with these important interpersonal relationships.

Family and Friends: Findings

I enjoy being with my family

The family is the child's primary social group and so the first of the statements reported on in this section asked children about enjoying being with their family. Across all three *How are you doing?* surveys most children *agree/strongly agree* that they enjoy being with their family. In April and May 92% responded *agree/strongly agree*. In June this has fallen to 90%, a small but statistically significant change.

Younger children aged 8 to 11 are more likely to *strongly agree* with this statement (68% of girls and 65% of boys in June) compared to their older peers aged 12 to 14 (47% of girls and 48% of boys in June).

My family gets along well together

Children have reported consistently across April, May and June in terms of this statement with 80% of children saying they *agree/strongly agree* that their family gets along well together. Younger children aged 8 to 11 are more likely to *strongly agree*. Older children are more likely to have responded *neither agree or disagree* with this statement: 18% of 12 to 14 year old boys and 19% of 12 to 14 year old girls. Older girls were also the most likely group to *disagree/strongly disagree* with the statement: 5% did so in April, 8% in May and 6% in June.

I think my parents/carers worry about having enough money for our family

One in four of Scotland's children are officially recognised as living in poverty. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports that almost a third of Scots' incomes have reduced in lockdown, with half of affected renters worried about paying rent². From the work done by Children's Parliament on poverty³ we know that children are aware of the financial circumstances and pressures their family can face.

Our monthly surveys confirm the experience of money worries and poverty. In both April and May 29% of children reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that their parents/carers worry about having enough money for their family, in June this was 27%. Younger children are more likely to report such a worry. Around 26% of children have reported that they *neither agree nor disagree* with the statement. This means that in June fewer than half of children (47%) reported they *disagree/strongly disagree* with the statement. Children are not immune from understanding and worrying about the financial worries families may face.

² Joseph Rowntree Foundation
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/almost-third-scots%E2%80%99-incomes-have-reduced-lockdown-half-affected-renters-worried-about-paying>

³ Children's Parliament
<https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/our-work/past-work/child-poverty/>

I feel safe at home

Agencies across Scotland have reported concerns about increased levels of domestic violence and harm to children during the period of lockdown. Of course, most children are safe and happy at home, but some are not. A large-scale survey such as *How are you doing?* is not the place to identify levels of harm, rather the surveys have acknowledged the generally positive circumstances of most children, but recognises that a small and important number of children do not feel safe at home.

Looking at responses from all children, 96% of children in April, May and June reported they *agree/strongly agree* that they feel safe at home. In April and May, although numbers are relatively small, we highlighted some statistically significant changes in terms of responses from girls which indicated increased vulnerability. For 8 to 11 year old girls there was an increase from 2% to 3% of girls reporting that they *neither agree nor disagree* with this statement. Further, for girls aged 12 to 14 there was a decrease in the number reporting that they *strongly agree* that they feel safe at home from 69% in April to 62% in May. In both instances this decline has reversed somewhat, but there is a deterioration in feelings of safety for girls between April and June.

When I want to be alone, I can have privacy

The intensity of the lockdown experience has impacted on everyone's access to private space and time; this is particularly so for families that have no immediate access to a

garden and for families where children live in small flats or share bedrooms. In April and May 82% of children reported they *agree/strongly agree* that when they wanted to be alone, they had privacy, in June this reduces to 80%. Responses from children are similar for both boys and girls and younger and older children.

I am happy with the friends I have

Peer relationships are important to a child's development, they provide the context for children to learn critical social skills. Positive friendships help children experience and practice kindness, empathy and build trust and of course negative experiences such as bullying and being left out are damaging to the child's confidence and feelings of safety. It might be expected that the experience of lockdown has meant a loss of the day-to-day connections children have with friends, only some of which can be made up for by connecting online.

Throughout the survey period most children have reported being happy with the friends they have. In April, looking at all children, 91% reported they *agree/strongly agree* with this statement, and in May and June 90%. However older children aged 12 to 14 are less likely than younger peers aged 8 to 11 to *strongly agree* – in June 60% of younger boys *strongly agree* compared to 53% of older boys. In June 64% of younger girls *strongly agree* and only 54% of older girls. This points to the need for adults to be concerned with helping to rebuild friendships as we move through the various periods of transition.

I feel supported by my friends.

An important part of friendship is to feel that one's friend is kind, has empathy and is a person that can be trusted to provide support. Most children report feeling supported by friends. In both April and May 83% *agree/strongly agree* with the statement, in June there is a fall to 80%. While such a response should be read positively there is still a need for a significant minority of children to be given support to help rebuild friendships.

Children's Parliament publishes the **Corona Times Journal**. Across all 5 editions, Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs) report on aspects of their wellbeing including relationships: <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/our-work/children-and-coronavirus/#childrensjournal>

3. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Introduction

There is a range of evidence emerging of the impact of lockdown and associated social isolation on the health and wellbeing of children and adults. Statements about health in the *How are you doing?* survey are primarily about mental health and wellbeing; we might consider this as focusing on mood and a sense of self-efficacy in terms of health choices. Reporting in terms of these statements should inform considerations being given to how we mitigate any immediate concerns for children's mental health as a consequence of lockdown and should also inform the medium to longer term road out of lockdown, being discussed as a period of recovery.

Using the statements provided in the *How are you doing?* survey, children have reflected on their ability to make healthy choices, to exercise, and whether they have someone to talk to regarding questions about health. They have also reported on their mood, in terms of feeling cheerful, feeling as if they have plenty of energy, feelings of loneliness and whether in difficult times they feel they will be okay.

Health and wellbeing: Findings

Generally, I feel cheerful and I am in a good mood

For a child, their general mood has an impact on their attitudes towards learning and ability to cope with adversity. A generally good mood would mean that a child is more likely to be coping with feelings of frustration, worry or sadness. Looking at all responses, in April 65% of children reported they *agree/strongly agree* that they generally feel cheerful and in a good mood, in May this was 61% but by June 59%.

Throughout the reporting period from April to June there are marked differences by age which can be identified, with older children aged 12 to 14 less likely to *strongly agree* than younger children. By June, 19% of 8 to 11 year old girls *strongly agree* with the statement while only 11% of 12 to 14 year old girls do so. For boys in June, 20% of 8 to 11 year olds *strongly agree* while only 12% of 12 to 14 year olds do so.

Looking to the other end of the scale of responses when it comes to those children who *disagree/strongly disagree* that they generally feel cheerful and in a good mood, this proportion has gone up from 11% of all children in April, to 12% in May and 13% in June. Girls aged 12 to 14 report higher numbers than other children in terms of stating they *disagree/strongly disagree* with 19% of girls doing so by June.

Responses to this statement, along with others reported below, point to a significant number of children responding to the *How are you doing?* survey experiencing low mood.

Most of the time I have plenty of energy

The survey statement about 'energy' acknowledges that when a person feels they have low energy, or is tired or exhausted, and when that is experienced over time, this can become a longer term problem and affect feelings of self-efficacy and social relationships with others. When a child is feeling a lack of energy, they may feel stuck or trapped in this mode and find the changes as we leave lockdown more challenging.

Looking at all responses and over the three survey points there is a statistically significant decline in the proportion of children who reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that most of the time they have plenty of energy: 80% in April, 78% in May and now 77% in June. Throughout the reporting period from April to June there are marked differences by age which can be identified, with older children aged 12 to 14 less likely to *strongly agree* than younger children: by June, 45% of 8 to 11 year old girls *strongly agree* with the statement while only 21% of 12 to 14 year old girls do so. For boys in June: 49% of 8 to 11 year olds *strongly agree* while only 29% of 12 to 14 year olds do so.

I often feel lonely

Having removed children from the spaces and places where they could meet friends and extended family, it might be expected that there will be increased levels of social isolation, expressed as loneliness. Loneliness matters because it is associated with feelings of sadness and malaise, and emotional responses to experiences such as the lockdown, although temporary, can impact over the longer term too.

Across the survey period, a significant number of children reported that they often feel lonely; in April 26%, in May 28% and in June 26% of children reported they *agree/strongly agree* with the statement. This statement also had one of the highest responses of children reporting *neither agree or disagree*: 19% in April, 20% in May and 21% in June. This means that by June only slightly more than half of children (53%) were reporting that they *disagree or strongly disagree* that they often feel lonely.

In May we reported a statistically significant increase from April to May in the percentage of girls who reported that they *strongly agree* that they feel lonely (12% to 17.5%); in June this had fallen to similar levels to April, now at 11%. Although not statistically significant the percentages of 8 to 11 year old boys who have reported they *strongly agree* with the statement has gone up each month: 6% in April, 7% in May and 8% in June.

Even if I am having a difficult time, I feel I will be okay

An aspect of resilience is a belief that even when facing adversity one will be able to cope and bounce back. Over the three surveys a majority of children have reported that they *agree/strongly agree* with the statement but there has been a statistically significant reported decline in the proportion doing so: 72% *agree/strongly agree* in April, 70% in May and 67% in June.

There are differences in terms of age and sex of children reporting positively regarding this statement. For boys, 73% of 8 to 11 year olds *agree/strongly agree* while only 67% of 12 to 14 year old boys do so. For girls 68% of 8 to 11 year olds *agree/strongly agree* while only 59% of 12 to 14 year old girls do so.

One group of children, girls aged 12 to 14, express least likelihood that they will cope/bounce back from adversity: they have been most likely to report that they *neither agree or disagree* (30%) with this statement or *disagree/strongly disagree* with it (10%).

I think I make healthy choices in my life

At school children are encouraged to reflect on what might constitute a healthy lifestyle – for example thinking about physical activity, or what they eat and drink. Of course, the younger the child the less likely they are to have the opportunity to make choices and so this item comes with a caveat in that we need to understand that choices may be limited. However, the aim remains that children can acquire levels of knowledge and understanding that support healthy choices in all areas of life as they grow.

When it comes to the healthy choices statement, results have been consistent across all 3 surveys. In April and May 73% of children reported they *agree/strongly agree* that they think they make healthy choices; in June this had risen slightly to 75%. Across all 3 monthly surveys younger children aged 8 to 11 were more likely to *strongly agree* with the statement (22% of boys and 24% of girls in June) compared with their older peers aged 12 to 14 (16% of boys and 17% of girls in June).

I think I get enough exercise

Children's ability to play outside or be part of physical activities at school or at out of school clubs have all been curtailed by lockdown. In the early days of lockdown advice was that families could take one opportunity to be outside for a walk, to play or bike ride. By June children had more opportunities to be outside although this was still limited to being with their own family.

While opportunities to exercise outdoors have been limited, Children's Parliament has also heard from children that they have been participating in online exercise classes or using games/apps to engage in physical activity.

In both April and May 73% of children reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that they get enough exercise and by June 72% do so. It has been consistently reported by around 15% of children that they *neither agree or disagree* that they get enough exercise, while around 11% every month reported that they *disagree/strongly disagree* with the statement. A significant number of children then are reporting a sedentary lifestyle during lockdown that may have longer term impacts on physical activity, health and wellbeing.

There are also differences in age regarding reporting on this statement. Across the 3 months younger children aged 8 to 11 years old were more likely to have reported they *strongly agree* with the statement. In June 34% of younger boys strongly agree compared to 27% of older male peers aged 12 to 14. In June 33% of younger girls aged 8 to 11 strongly agree, while only 27% of older girls do.

While younger children are more likely to have reported agreement with the statement, it is also the case that there was a statistically significant decline in the proportion of 8 to 11 year old girls reporting that they get enough exercise: 80% in April falling to 76% by June.

**If I have a question about my health,
I know who to speak to**

In recent months it is likely that children will have had worries about their health (see section 5) and as a result many more questions may have arisen. At school, via their Health and Wellbeing curriculum, children will have also been encouraged to develop what might be called help-seeking behaviours – one aspect of which might be knowing who to speak to with a question about their own health.

Most children have reported that if they have a question about their health, they know who to speak to: in April 88% reported they *agree/strongly agree* with the statement, in May 87% and in June 86%. However, for all children, across age and sex, there is a decline in percentages of children who responded *strongly agree* to this statement.

In the Corona Times Journal, Members of Children’s Parliament (MCPs) report on aspects of their health and wellbeing throughout lockdown, and as we emerge from it: <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/our-work/children-and-coronavirus/#childrensjournal>

4. ACCESS TO INFORMATION, EXPRESSING OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCING RIGHTS

Introduction

As we have navigated our way through the lockdown, and understood more about Coronavirus and its impact on us, accessing news and information has been incredibly important.

Lockdown has seen limitations on our ability to meet others face-to-face, we have agreed limits on our right to assembly, but in a democratic society every citizens' rights to information and to express opinions must not be compromised – whether the citizen is an adult or child.

Article 17 of the UNCRC explains the right to access information and mass media. It says: *States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.* The importance of Article 17 for the rights and wellbeing of the child has perhaps never been clearer.

The statements discussed in this section are about these issues. They relate to children's perceptions of whether they can look for and get information, whether they feel free to express ideas and opinions and whether their rights are being respected.

While a majority of children indicate a positive response across these statements there are a significant minority who do not feel able to express their ideas or opinions and for whom there is a feeling that rights are not respected by others. In the context of Scotland's preparedness for incorporation of the UNCRC, and in light of the Scottish Government's consideration of how Coronavirus has and is impacting on children, these are important factors to consider.

Access to information, expressing opinions and experiencing rights: Findings

I can look for and get information that I need

News and social media have been awash with news and information about the pandemic. But have children been able to look for and access the information they need? In April, 88% of children reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that they can look for and get information that they need, in May the response was consistent at 89% and in June it was 88%. This is true for all children regardless of age or sex however girls aged 12 to 14 are less likely to *strongly agree* with the statement over all 3 months (30% compared to 37% of boys the same age in June).

I feel free to express my ideas and opinions

The right to freedom of opinion and expression is a complex right that includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds and through whatever medium. In their responses to this statement children report on experiences over the period of lockdown and into the early stages of re-connecting with others. There has been a statistically significant decline in children reporting that they feel free to express ideas and opinions: 79% of respondents reported they *agree/strongly agree* with this statement in April, compared to 76% in June.

I feel like my rights are respected by others

An aspect of the lived experience of one's rights is to know that those rights are respected by others. At Children's Parliament we talk with children about rights-based relationships, where they learn that it is in our social interactions, face-to-face and online, that a person can express their respect for others as well as understand when their own rights are being acknowledged or infringed.

Looking across all children responding over the 3 months of the survey there are consistent reports that most children feel that their rights are respected by others; 82% of children *agree/strongly agree* in April, 80% in May and 81% in June. In terms of the 19% of children who do not agree, each month around 15% of children *neither agree or disagree* and a small percentage *disagree/strongly disagree* that their rights are respected (<5%).

In Edition 5 of the **Corona Times Journal**, Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs) report on the issues discussed in this section: Finding Out How Children Get News and Information About the Pandemic <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/childrens-journal-5/>

5. WORRIES

Introduction

Children's Parliament is keen to promote understanding that children are typically resilient, but it is sensible to assume that in the short, medium or even longer-term children may experience increased worry or anxiety resulting from lockdown and concerns about the Coronavirus. This means that we must create space for children to articulate and share their worries; the *How are you doing?* survey has provided one such opportunity.

How are you doing? asks children to comment on worries they may have, with a set of statements about worries and a list of things to which they can agree or disagree that they worry about. In responding to the prompts, children tell us about their worries in relation to home life, health, learning and friendships.

Children have also shared with us where they might go with a worry, this can be thought of as help-seeking behaviour.

Responses in this section of the report give us an indication of the scale and scope of what children are worrying about – and we can track changes from the early period of lockdown in April 2020 through to the emergence from lockdown which began in June 2020.

The worries children have reported over April, May and June should inform the supports available to them now, and inform parents, carers and professionals so that they better understand what they should be attending to as we move to the next phases of our response to Coronavirus. Firstly, some reporting on the statements.

Worries: Findings Part 1

There are lots of things I worry about in my life

Anxiety is one of the most common mental health problems that a child might experience. Before asking children about the specifics of things they may have worried about during the lockdown period, this statement sought to ascertain a general level of worry the child might have. Across the three months mapped by the survey a consistent number of children (36%) have indicated that they *agree/strongly agree* that there are lots of things they worry about. In this period the percentage of all children responding *strongly agree* has grown from 11% in April to 13% in May and June.

Older girls aged 12 to 14 are more likely than younger girls or boys of all ages to *agree/strongly agree* with this statement. Between April and May there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of 12 to 14-year-old girls who *strongly agree* that there are a lot of things they worry about in their life, from 17% in April to 21% in May. This figure is sustained into June (21%)

This statement also saw one of the largest responses from children using the *neither agree nor disagree*

response: 26% of children have done so across all three months of the survey. This means that fewer than half of children have disagreed to some extent with this statement. There are differences in this regard in terms of age and sex. Boys aged 8 to 11 are most likely to *disagree/strongly disagree* with the statement (47% in June); 39% of girls in June in this age group also report that they *disagree/strongly disagree*. 40% of boys aged 12 to 14 also *disagree/strongly disagree* but far fewer older girls do: only 24% in June.

I worry about my own health

The public health crisis resulting from Coronavirus has focused our minds on our health and the threat it poses to us personally. Considering all responses in April and in May 25% of children *agree/strongly agree* that they worry about their own health; this has risen to 27% in June. For boys aged 8 to 11 the proportion of those who *agree/strongly agree* has seen a statistically significant increase from 23% in April to 26% in June. With 24% of children in June responding *neither agree or disagree* this means that only half of children (49%) have reported they *disagree or strongly disagree* with the statement.

I worry about the health of people in my family

Public health messages about Coronavirus have focused on how to protect oneself and how to protect others. In middle childhood children are aware of health conditions that may be experienced by members of their family, and of course the lockdown has had a particular impact on those living with chronic conditions. With all this in mind this statement asked children about worries they may have for others in their family. Considering all responses, in April 62% and in May 61% of children reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that they worry about the health of people in their family; this has fallen to 55% in terms of all responses by June.

The most significant drop in responses of *agree/strongly agree* between April and June is that from boys aged 12 to 14; 60% were worried in April, 56% in May and now 47% in June.

I have someone to talk to in my family when I have a worry

This statement, and the next, explore whether children have someone they can go to when they worry. In April, 93% of all children reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that they have someone in their family to talk to when they have a worry; this was 92% in May and 91% in June – a small but statistically significant change.

There are also differences in terms of age, with younger children more likely to *agree/strongly agree* than older children; in June this is 93% of younger boys compared to 90% of older boys and 94% of younger girls compared to 86% of older girls. For older girls there was a significant change in those who responded

agree/strongly agree, falling from 90% to 86% between April and May, in June the proportion has remained the same.

I have someone to talk to outside my family when I have a worry

Children may also have someone outside their immediate family to whom they can go with a worry – a teacher, a coach, a neighbour, a friend's parent. While the survey did not ask who these people might be, the statement helps us understand the extent to which these supports are available to children.

Across all children responding, a majority (76% in April, 77% in May and 75% in June) reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that they have someone to talk to outside their family. There are differences in terms of sex of respondents. In June 84% of older girls aged 12 to 14 reported they *agree/strongly agree* with the statement but only 72% of 12 to 14-year-old boys. When we think about a recovery phase following lockdown, there is a need to ensure that every child has someone they can identify for support and feel they can go to if they have a worry.

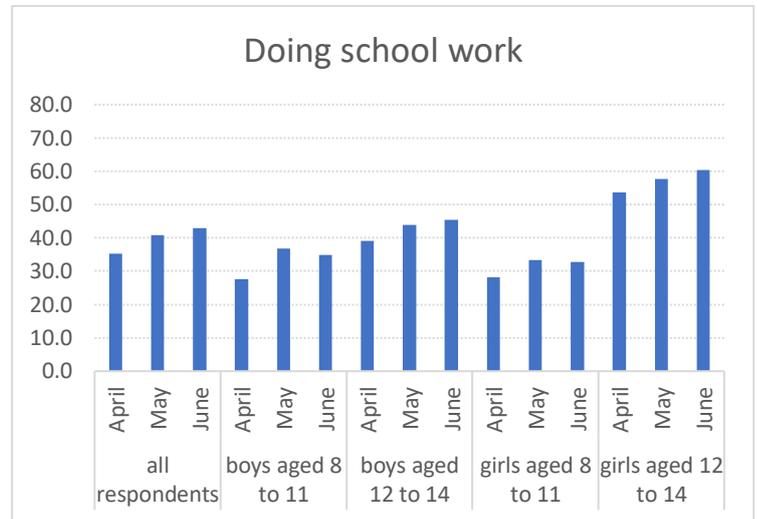
It should be of concern that any child does not have someone they can go to with a worry, we know that support will alleviate anxiety. Looking at both statements above *I have someone to talk to in my family when I have a worry/ I have someone to talk to outside my family when I have a worry* we can identify a small but significant number of children who have replied with one of the options *neither agree or disagree*, *disagree* or *strongly disagree* to both. The proportion of children who have done so rises across the three surveys from 3% in April to 5% in June.

Worries: Findings Part 2 Do you worry about....?

In addition to the statements reported, the *How are you doing?* survey also provided a list of possible worry areas and asked children to respond with a simple yes/no answer. Below we report on results, comparing responses across the months.

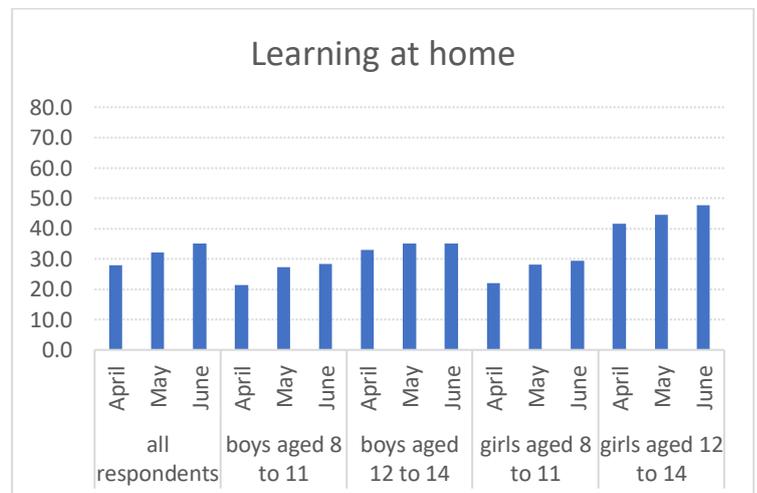
Doing school work

In section 1 'Learning and Activities' we reported on the experience of doing school work during lockdown. When asked whether doing school work is something they worry about, looking at all responses, there has been a steady increase across the three months of the survey: 35% reported a worry in April, 41% in May and 43% in June. The graphic shows results according to age and sex of the children responding, identifying differences across groups and showing increased levels of worry for older children, particularly girls.



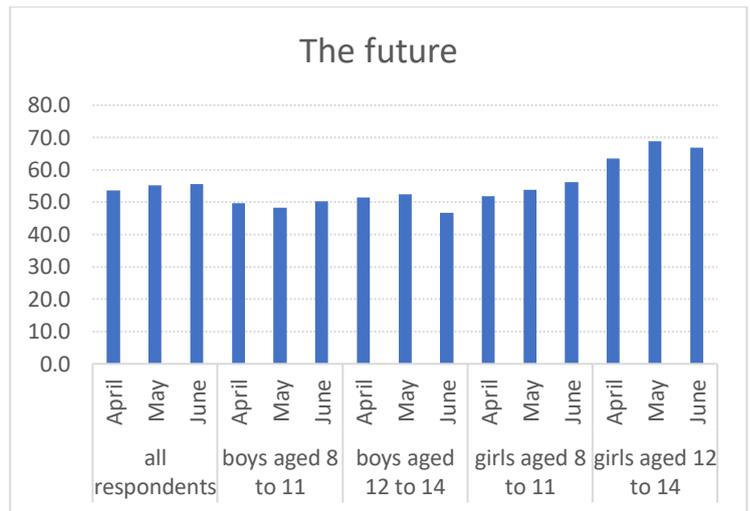
Learning at home

In section 1 'Learning and Activities' we reported on the experience of learning at home. When asked whether learning at home is something they worry about 28% of children in April reported learning at home as a worry, this increased to 32% in May and 35% in June. The graphic shows results according to age and sex of the children responding, identifying differences across groups. As with the earlier chart this shows increased levels of worry for older children, particularly girls.



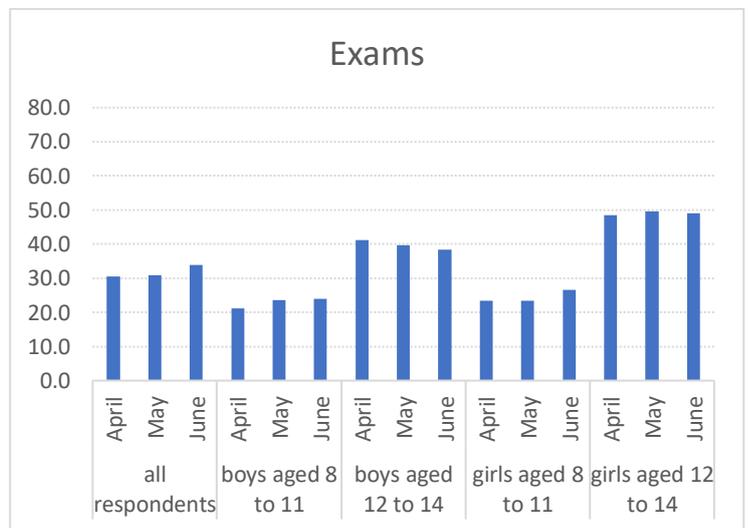
The future

Worries about 'the future' can help us assess the degree to which children are generally anxious. This option remains the area where the greatest proportion of children have identified they are worried, this is true across April, May and June. Looking at all children this figure is 56% by June. Again it is girls, particularly older girls, who worry most.



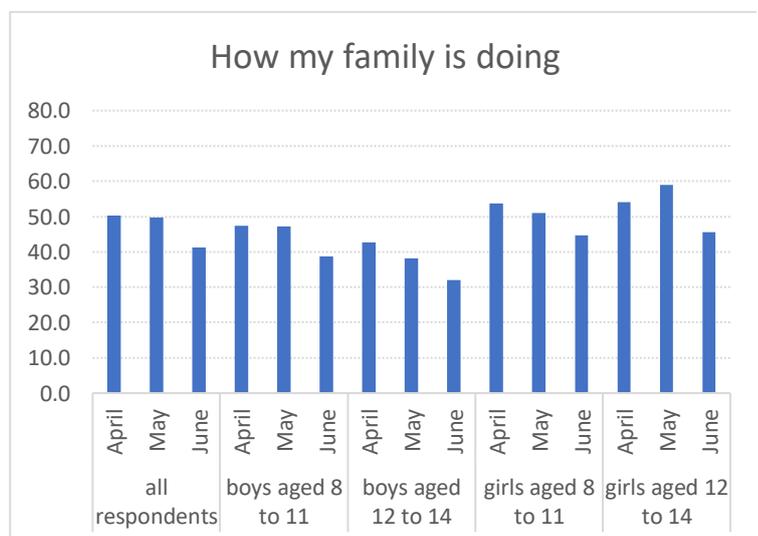
Exams

While most children responding to the *How are you doing?* survey do not face taking exams imminently the question was posed because children who were transitioning to secondary school, or those ending S2 and making subject choices during lockdown, may well have the issue on their mind. Worry about exams was consistent across April and May - 31% of all children said exams were a worry; this had increased to 34% by June. The graphic below shows that such a worry impacts more on the older children aged 12 to 14 responding to the survey, particularly girls.



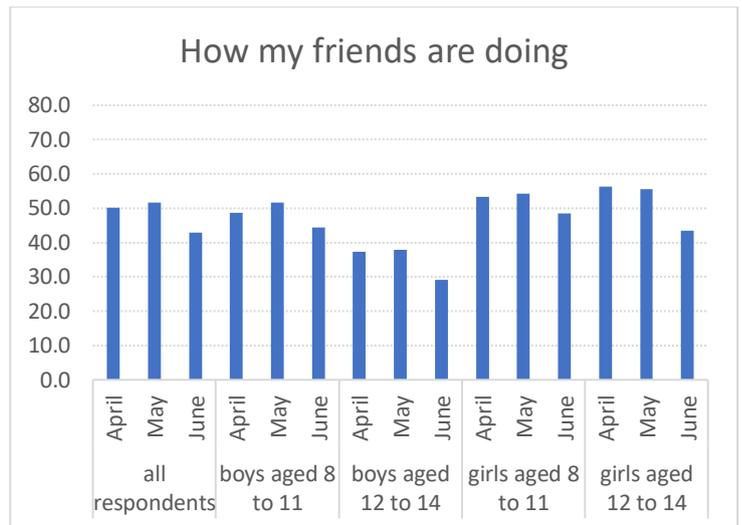
How my family is doing

In both April and May 50% of children reported that they worried about how their family was doing. In June as we emerge from lockdown this has fallen to 41%. It is clear that a concerning number of children are still carrying this worry. The graphic below shows how this worry affects the different groups of children, showing higher levels of worry amongst girls.



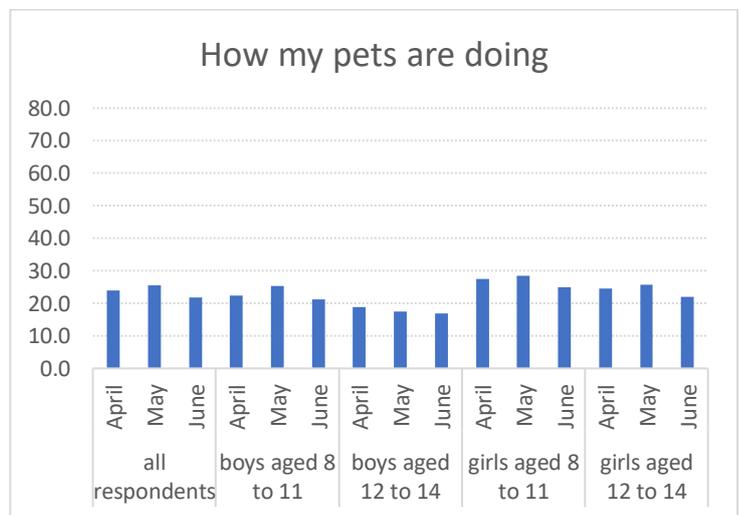
How my friends are doing

In April 50% of children reported that they worried about how their friends were doing, rising to 51% in May. As with worry about family this has fallen in June, with 43% of children reporting they are worried about friends. The graphic below shows how this worry affects the different groups of children and continues the pattern of showing higher levels of worry amongst girls.



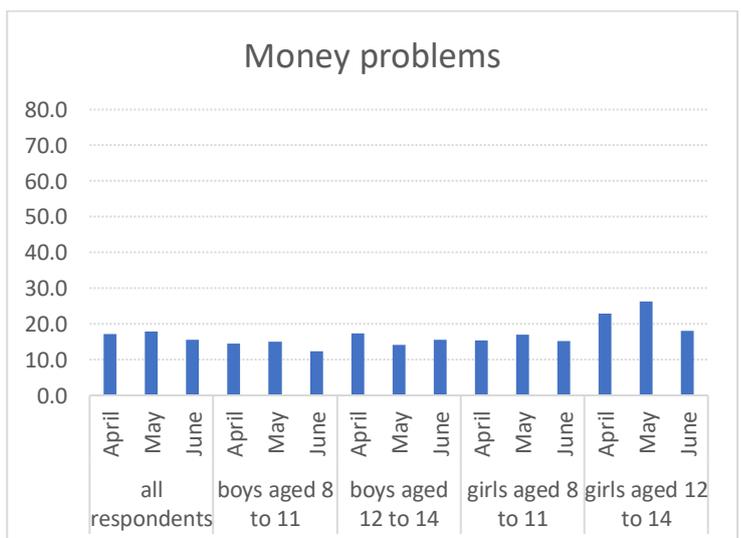
How my pets are doing

For children who have pets this may have been a real boon to mental health and wellbeing during lockdown, giving children animals to care for and play with - but they may have been something to worry about. While we do not ask children to tell us if they have a pet, we know from the responses that a small but consistent number of children have been worried about their pets in the past months. Worry about pets, peaking in May, has declined over time.



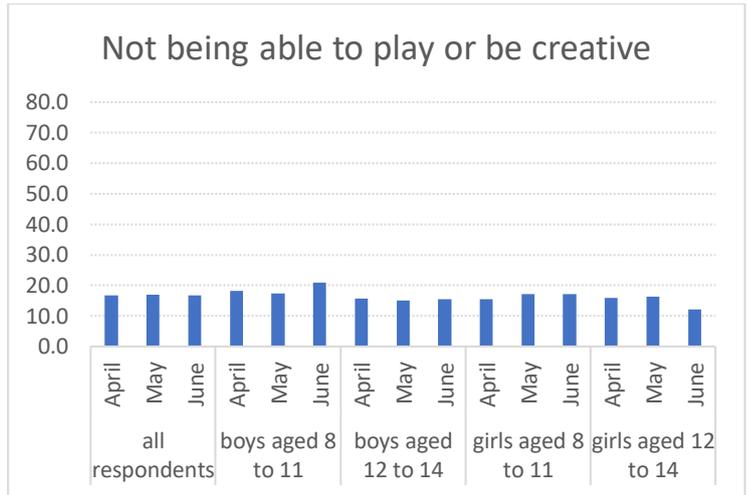
Money problems

In the earlier section Family and Friends children reported on the statement *I think my parents/carers worry about having enough money for our family*. There we reported that almost 30% of children identified that to some extent money was a worry for parents. In this section of the *How are you doing?* survey this question was posed as *What do you worry about?* with the option being 'money problems'. In April and May 17% of children responded that this was a worry, this has fallen to 16% in June. There are however higher levels of worry for older girls.



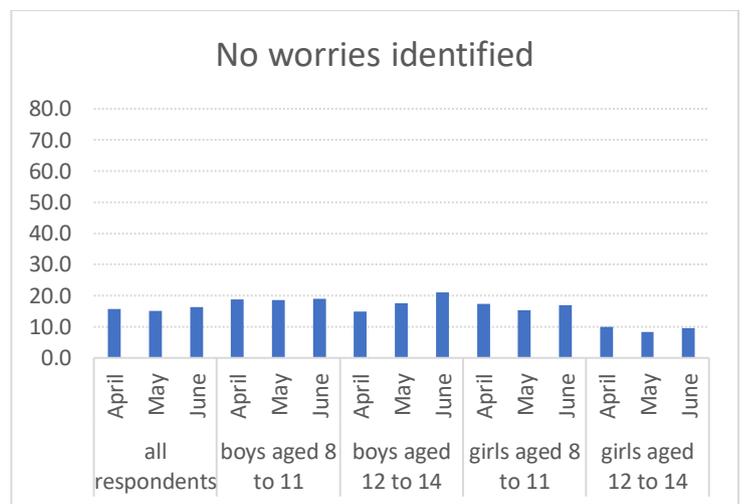
Not being able to play or be creative

Across all three months of the survey 17% of children have reported a worry about not being able to play or be creative. This is consistent across all children regardless of age and sex, with a notable rise in responses from younger boys in June.



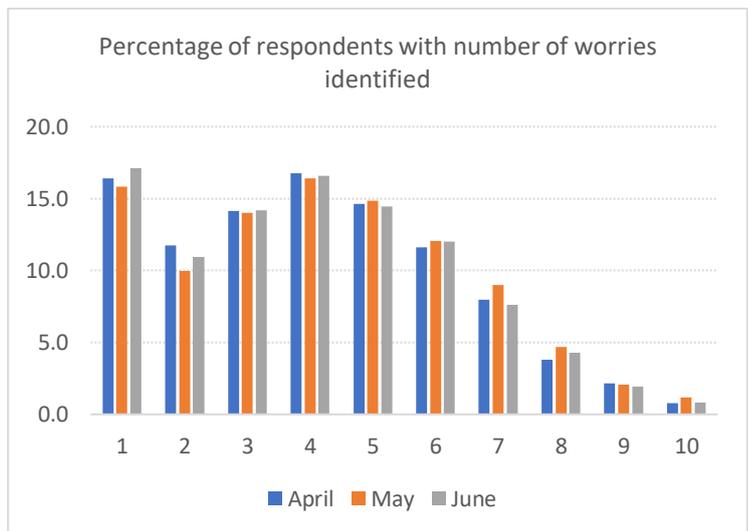
No worries

When asked to indicate 'worries' 16% of all children responding in April, 15% in May and 16% in June indicated I **have no worries at the moment**. As the graphic shows, boys are more likely to report 'no worries' than girls.



Number of worries

Finally, in this graphic we report on the number of worries that children have identified. If we want to identify and support children who worry about multiple items we can see that in April 26% of children reported 5 or more worries, in May this was 29% and in June 27%.



6. WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD AT THE MOMENT?

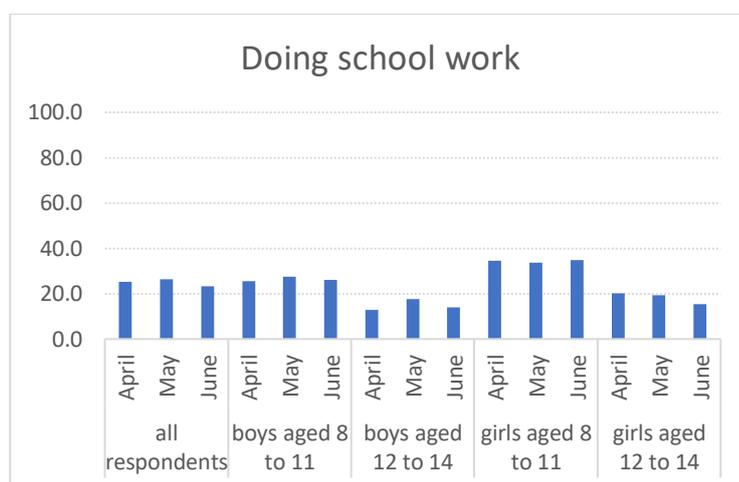
Introduction

To provide children with the opportunity to comment on what has made them feel good during their lockdown experience the survey provided a list of things children might do or have as a resource or support. The list of options mirrors the list given when considering worries. Below we report on results.

Findings

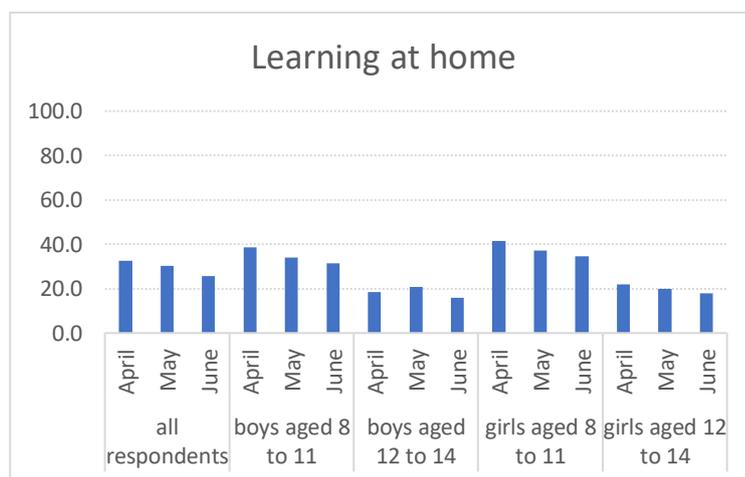
Doing school work

As reported in the earlier section a significant number of children (43% in June) worry about doing school work. We also wanted to ask whether doing school work might also help the child feel good. Over the period of the three surveys there has been a reduction in the proportion of children identifying that doing school work makes them feel good – from 25% in April to 23% in June. While most groups of children have reported consistently across the period it is girls aged 12 to 14 who account for the decline – with 20% agreeing in April and only 15% in June.



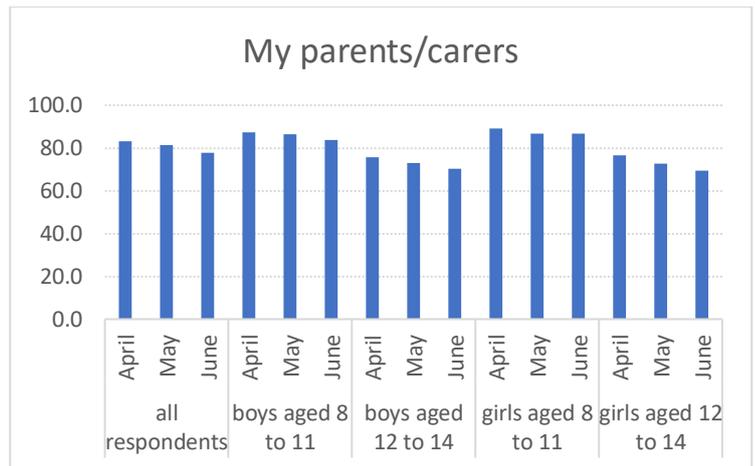
Learning at home

There has been a fall in the proportion of all children who report that learning at home makes them feel good down from 33% in April to 26% by June. While this decline is true across sex and age there are differences in terms of where groups started in April and how large this fall is. Younger children aged 8 to 11 are more likely to report that learning at home makes them feel good – 31% of boys and 35% of girls in June. For 12 to 14 year old boys only 16% report positively on learning at home, as do 18% of 12 to 14 year old girls. This amplifies the message across the survey that learning at home has been particularly problematic for the older children.



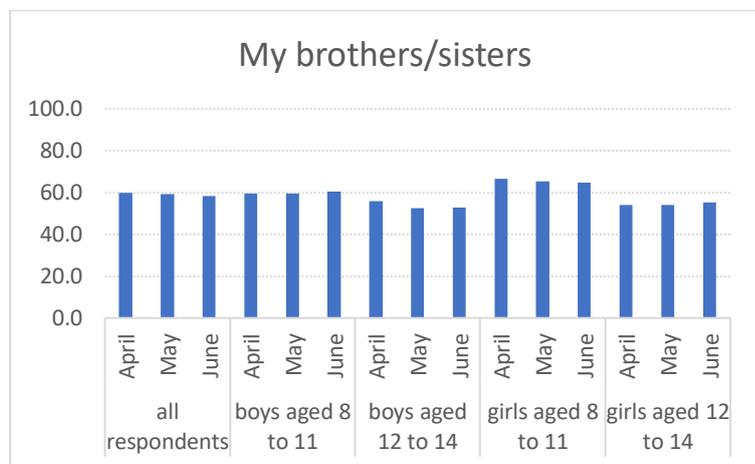
My parents/carers

Across the three months of the *How are you doing?* survey there is a decline in the proportion of children reporting that their parents and carers make them feel good: looking across all children a fall from 83% in April to 79% in June. As the graphic shows, older children, both boys and girls, are less likely to identify their parents as a factor in making them feel good during lockdown.



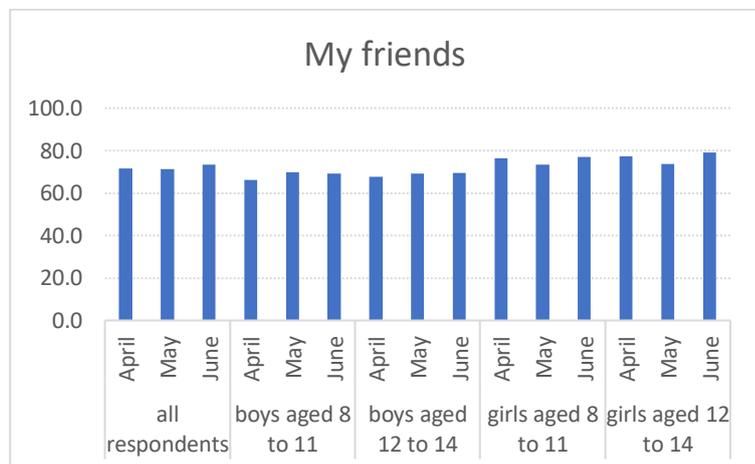
My brothers/sisters

Children have reported consistently across the survey period in terms of the role of siblings in making them feel good, with 58% of all children agreeing in June. As the graphic shows, older children, both boys and girls, are less likely to identify their siblings as a factor in making them feel good during lockdown.



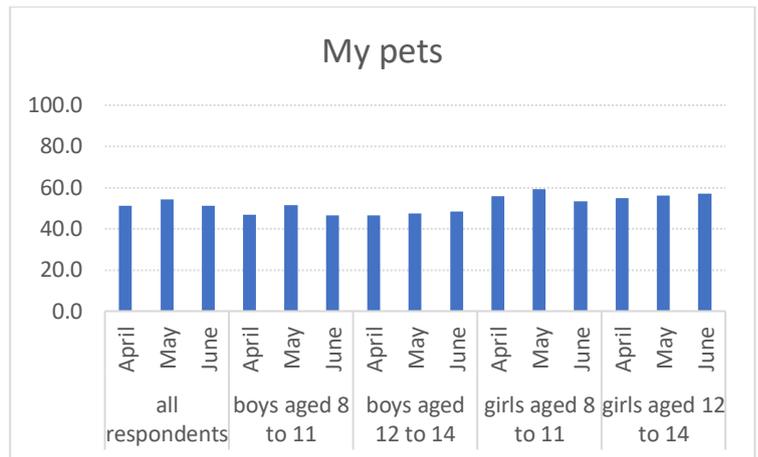
My friends

In the earlier section Family and Friends a majority of children reported that they are happy with their friends and feel supported by them. Across the three surveys between April and June the proportion of children identifying friends as something that makes them feel good has gone up slightly from 72% in April to 74% in June. Girls are more likely to identify friends as a positive impact than boys.



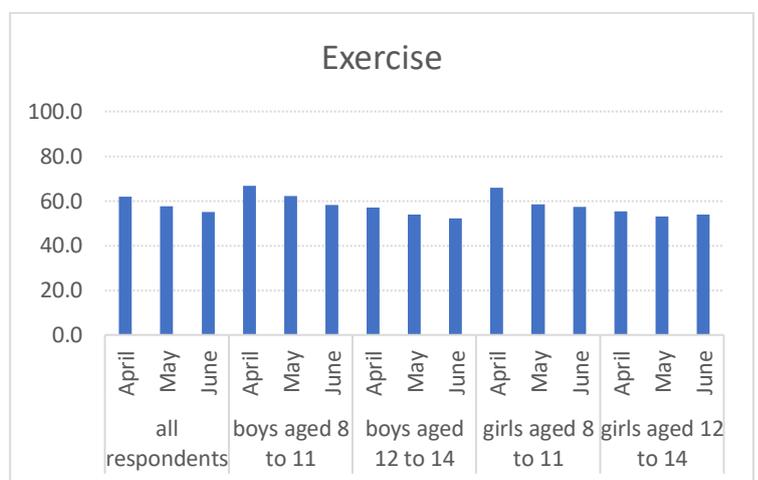
My pets

Across all three surveys slightly more than half of children (51% in June) have identified pets as making them feel good during lockdown; this is particularly true for girls.



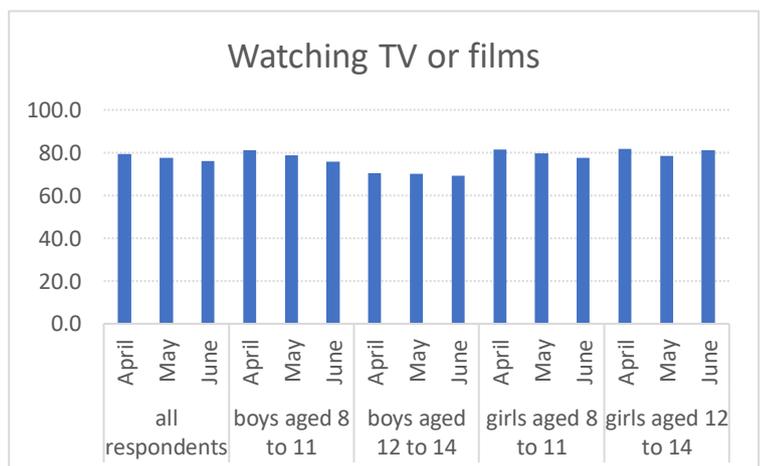
Exercise

There has been a reduction in the proportion of children who report that exercise has been something that has helped them feel good over lockdown: April 62%, May 57% and June 55%. As the graphic below shows, it is older children who are less likely to identify exercise as something that has helped.



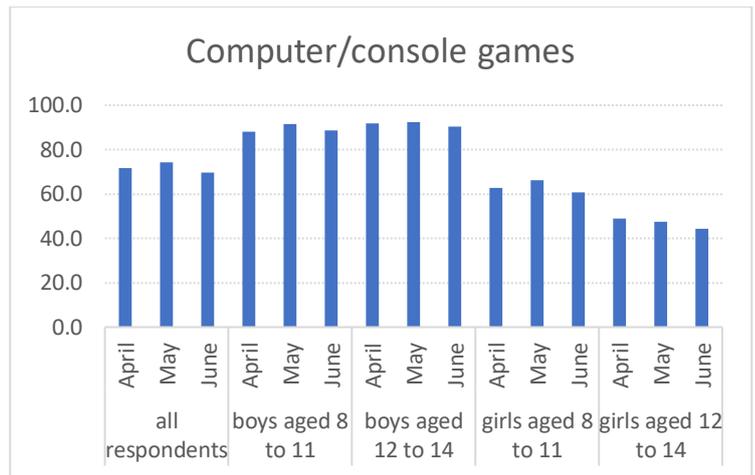
Watching TV or films

Looking at all children, most have identified watching TV or films as a positive help during lockdown: 76% agreeing in June although this has reduced from the rate in April of 79%.



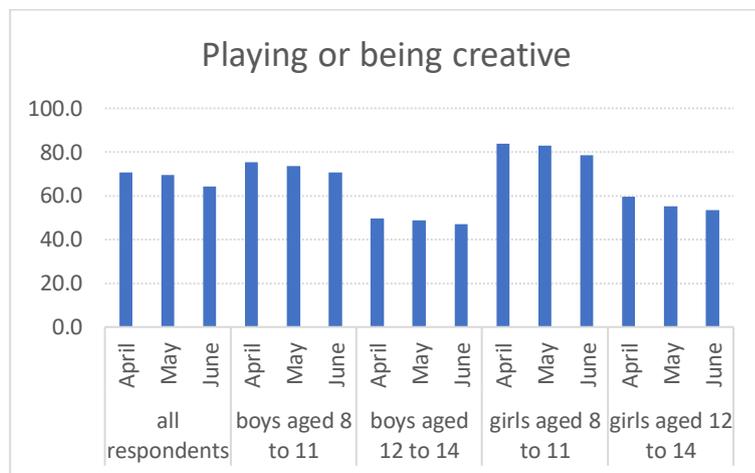
Computer/console games

As the graphic shows, this is an activity identified as helpful by many more boys than girls and has remained a key support for boys with 89% of younger boys and 90% of older boys agreeing in June this has helped during lockdown.



Playing or being creative

In the earlier section 'Learning' 92% of children reported that they *agree/strongly agree* that they can be creative if they want to be. When asked if playing or being creative helps them feel good, looking at all children, the proportion of children agreeing has declined across the survey period and for all children – 71% agreed in April and 64% in June. There are differences however in terms of age as shown in the graphic below, with younger children having always been more likely to identify the role that playing or being creative has in helping them feel good.



Very few children, fewer than 1% each month, have said *there is nothing makes me feel good just now*.

To conclude

As we report on the findings of the *How are you doing?* surveys our greatest concern is that the focus now is on heaving a sigh of relief and 'getting back to normal'. Rather, the survey results should inform considerations being given to how we mitigate the immediate concerns there are for children as a result of lockdown, and also inform the medium to longer term road out of lockdown - what we might consider as a period of recovery.

For more about the **How are you doing?** survey and the **Corona Times Journal** go here:

bit.ly/Coronavirus_Kids

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