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The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a research study conducted by an international network of research teams¹ in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (Europe) and co-ordinated by Professor Candace Currie of the University of St Andrews. This factsheet is based on data collected in 2010 from 12,661 10-17 year olds in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

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<http://www.hbsc.org>
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hbsc
HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



Summary

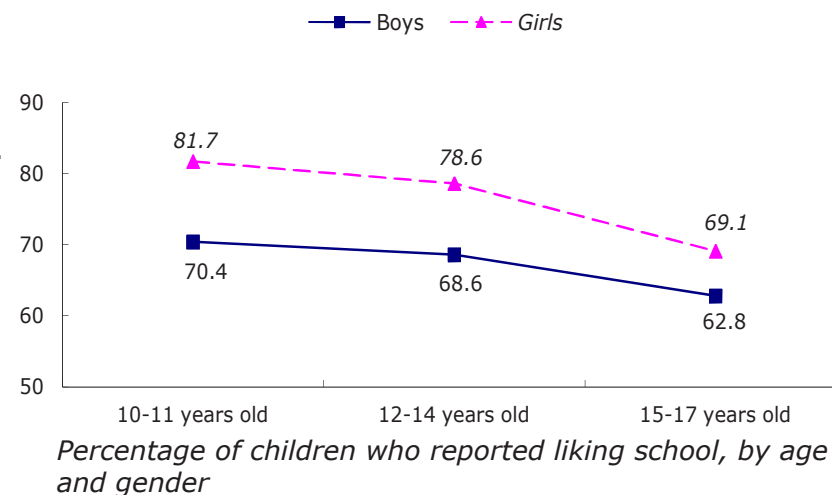
HBSC Ireland 2010 has found that 70.9% of schoolchildren in Ireland report liking school (boys 66.6% and girls 75.6%). This percentage has slightly increased since 2006 (67.8%). The percentage of children that like school is higher among younger children; 70.4% of boys and 81.7% of girls aged 10-11 years vs. 62.8% of boys and 69.1% of girls aged 15-17 years. Children who like school are less likely to report episodes of drunkenness, being current smokers and experiencing emotional and physical symptoms. They are more likely to report excellent health and happiness. Liking school in this factsheet refers to children who report liking school a bit or a lot at present.

Why this topic?

Schools are important settings for both education and health and can enhance the development of self-perception and confidence and a supportive school environment has the potential to encourage positive health behaviours¹. Liking school contributes not only to academic achievement, but has been linked to overall life satisfaction and quality of life among young people² and thus is important for healthy development³.

Change 2006-2010

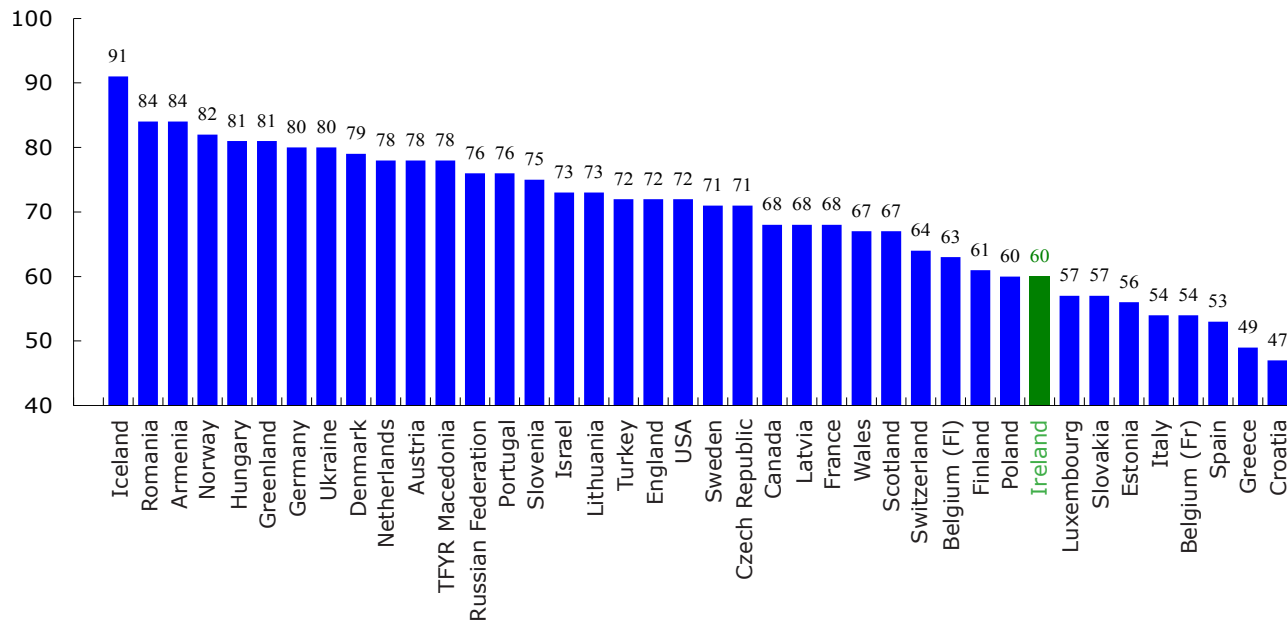
Overall the percentage of children who report liking school a bit or a lot has slightly increased from 2006 (67.8%) to 2010 (70.9%). School perception has slightly increased among 10-11 year old boys (66.9% to 70.4%) and 15-17 year old girls (66.7% to 69.1%), remains stable among 10-11 year old girls (82.6% to 81.7%) and increased among 15-17 year old boys (57% to 62.8%).



School perceptions in context

- Children from higher social classes are more likely to report liking school (social classes 1-2: 74.5%; social classes 3-4: 71.1%; and social classes 4-5: 68.9%) than those from lower social classes.
- Children who report liking school are less likely to be current smokers than those who do not (7.6% vs. 21.2%).
- Children who report liking school are less likely to have been drunk than those who do not (21.7% vs. 43.4%).
- Children who report liking school are more likely to report excellent health than those who do not (35.7% vs. 25.4%) and are also more likely to report that they feel very happy about their lives (56.4% vs. 35.8%).
- Children who report liking school are less likely to report frequent emotional symptoms than those who do not (46.5% vs. 65.8%) and they also report less frequent physical symptoms (48.1% vs. 63.9%).
- Liking school is not associated with being physically active.

...School perceptions among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting liking school, by country

International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 32nd among 40 countries in Europe and North America with 59.8% reporting that they like school a bit or a lot. Overall 73.2% of 11 year olds in Ireland (ranked 35th) and 75% of 13 year olds in Ireland (ranked 19th) report liking school.

Implications

The percentage of young people in Ireland that report liking school a bit or a lot has slightly increased since 2006. However, this can be considered midrange for 13 year olds and low for 11 and 15 year olds, when compared to other European and North American countries. These findings indicate that liking school is related to positive health and well-being. The data presented here indicate that positive

health behaviours are related to more positive perceptions of school. Not liking school may place children at risk from dropping out of school, becoming further marginalised and unhealthy behaviours. Ireland's low international ranking among certain age groups together with the importance of positive school perceptions highlights the need for inclusive strategies to be developed to prevent alienation from school. More research is needed to explore the underlying reasons for children disliking school.

References

1. Currie, C., Zanotti, C., Morgan, A., Currie, D., de Looze, M., Roberts, C., Samdal, O., Smith, R., & Barnekow, V. (eds). (2012). Social determinants of health and well-being among young people. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 6).
2. Hurrelmann, K., Leppin, A., & Nordlohne, E. (1995). Promoting health in schools: the German example. *Health Promotion International*, 10, 121-131.
3. Millstein, S.G., Nightingale, E.O., & Petersan A.C. (1993). Promoting the health development of adolescents. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 269, 1413-1415.

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All factsheets and other HBSC publications and reports can be downloaded from our website: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc>

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