



# 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)

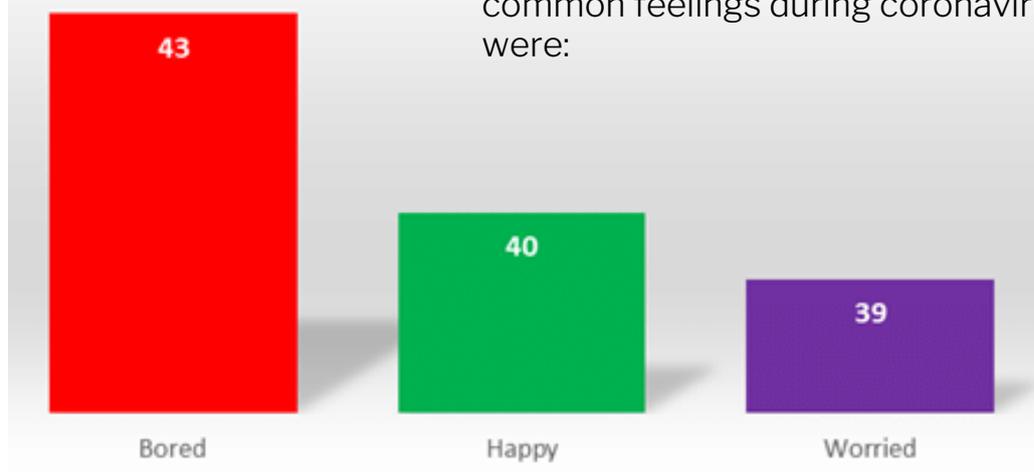


## ARTICLE 31: PLAY, REST AND LEISURE

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)

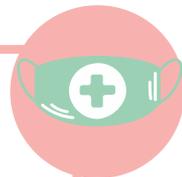
## ARTICLE 27: ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING



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 FROM VIOLENCE

9% felt less safe in their homes/where they lived since the start of Coronavirus. 36% felt safer since Coronavirus and 56% reported feeling as safe as they had done prior to the pandemic.

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

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 11% of children reported less knowledge now, than before Coronavirus, of how to get help and support.

'Previously my mother used to be outside home most of the times. Now she is always at home. I don't need to do household works. I'm spending time with my mother all day. As liquor shops are closed so case of domestic violence is less. Previously the male members became drunk and used to create nuisance within 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



'I hate how people wont let kids go to shops my mam has to leave me in the car as it's only me and mom I hate I cant go to school. Stop telling people we are 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)

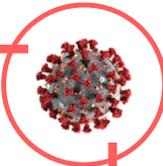




# Experiences of Covid-19

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## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF COVID-19



242

children across all age groups, said they had **CONTRACTED** Covid19.

1 in 5 of these children had a **DISABILITY**. The majority (8%) said they had another long term medical condition.

1 in 5 said they belonged to a **minority ETHNIC** community.

1008

children said that a **family members** had contracted Covid19.

in total, **1115** children had personal experience of Covid19 either **themselves, a family member, or both.**

12% of these children said they feel **LESS SAFE** now at home, or in the place where they live, compared with 8% of children with no experience of Covid19.

## ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE



25%

of children with experience of Covid19 and **21%** of children with **no** experience of Covid19 said that since Coronavirus began, they were now **LESS ABLE** to **ACCESS** the medical help they may need.

## PREVENTION & PROTECTION

97%

of children with experience of Covid-19 said they had been taught to wash their hands with **SOAP** and **WATER** for 20 seconds, or use hand gel/sanitizer.

48%

said they have **access to more soap**, and **24% more water**, to wash with than they did before Coronavirus.

**1 in 5** of these children found it difficult to apply **SOCIAL DISTANCING** and avoid close contact with people outside of their immediate family, e.g. in shops and on public transport.



## IMPACT OF COVID19



*'We are likely to be experiencing worry, anxiety and fear and this can include the types of fear that are very similar to those experienced by adults, such as a fear of dying, a fear of relatives dying, or a fear of what it means to receive medical treatment.'* (Girl, 15 India)

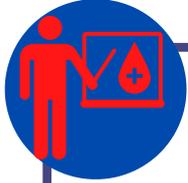
## COSTS AND ACCESS TO PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT



*'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 corona virus. Face masks on the market are for adults and few being tailored are for children.'* (Girl, 15, Zambia)



# Experiences of Covid-19



CHILDREN IN THE SURVEY TOLD US THEY WOULD ADVISE GOVERNMENT TO;

## PROVIDE RELIABLE & ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

*'Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online. Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19...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 can be frightened about something they do not understand. Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs. Remind children to wash their hands frequently and stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick. Also, remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.'*

(Boy, 17, Somaliland)

## PRIORITISE & INVEST IN HEALTH

*'Invest in food and health supplies (medicine, masks, hand sanitizer) to give them for free to families that cannot afford to buy some (especially because of being workless due to corona)'*

(Girl, 12, France)

*'Think of Children and teens before taking a decision. I know that in society politics and money influence more, and this is the reason why politicians do not see children, and only care about money.'*

(Youth, 17, Argentina)

*'We should not be forced to go in to school when it could risk people dying or their health being damaged. including us. they put money before they put people. its all economy this economy that, and we are still told to social distance but you can do anything that costs money but you cant do anything that is free like just go to a friends house or to the skate park.. they just want us to spend money and pretend to care about our health and not spreading the virus. they think we are stupid.. Also lots of kids have health conditions and just like old people everyone who is higher risk is being thrown under the bus.'*

*we are like collateral damage.'*

(Girl, 15, England)



# Participation & Information

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## UNCRC ARTICLE 12

Articles 12 of the UNCRC ensures children's right to **express their views** freely, and to have their views be accounted for and **listened to by authorities**.

While **35%** didn't know if children were being listened to by the government, another **38%** considered that they were not heard when making decisions about the COVID-19 crisis.

*'A country is not only made up of adults, we children exist and should be heard as well.'* (Girl 14, Costa Rica)

## BEING HEARD BY THE GOVERNMENT



Only **20%** of children considered that the government listens to them when making policy decisions.

Children in **residential homes** were the most positive about government responding to children (**37%**). While children with **disabilities** (**48%**) and those identifying as **LGBTQ+** (**51%**) were most critical.

They are concerned with the government **violating their participation rights** and not receiving **respect as citizens**.

*'people my age continue to be ignored by our government. You refuse to respect us now, but expect us to respect you'* (Girl 14, USA.)

## IMAGINE YOU COULD TALK TO GOVERNMENT...



Many children asked their governments to take children's voices more seriously:

*'They have to feel, speak, think and hear like a child to take the right decisions for children... In order to protect our rights, our voices have to be heard and taken seriously. Make our voice your choice.'* (Girl 17, Pakistan)

*'Take young people's opinion into consideration, because they are also a part of the community and they should have the right to express themselves.'* (Boy 17, Lebanon).

*'We should be allowed to voice our opinions on when schools should reopen. It is our future so it should be our choice'* (Girl, 15, South Africa)



# Participation & Information

## UNCRC ARTICLE 17

Article 17 recognises the importance that access to **diverse and reliable information** has for children's life and well-being.

It ensures that children must have **access to mass media**, and to national and international data sources to promote their development.

The most urgent issue in this respect is the **radically unequal access to internet** among differently positioned children.

'Seeing that I live in a rural community where it is hard to access internet.. It is a challenge to learn online' (Girl 14, Zambia)

## INTERNET ACCESS

While only **13%** of all children said that they had **hardly any or no access** to internet, and more than half (**55%**) had regular access, certain sections are disproportionately lacking access to basic internet sources.

**62%** of children in **detention centres, refugee camps and homeless centres** said they had no access or hardly any access to internet.

Children identifying as **migrants** and **asylum seekers** have also significantly lower access (**38%** and **27%** respectively).

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Family members (**62%**) and traditional news outlets (**59%**) are the preferred sources of information on the coronavirus.

Children showed scepticism to information given by **friends** or in **social media**; **83%** and **75%** (respectively) of children said they didn't use these sources.

Using and sharing **reliable info on social media** and creating **child-friendly sources of information** were important concerns:

'I admire how Jacinda Arde[r]n made sure to specifically address the children and make a point to try to reassure them that the Easter bunny is an essential worker. I think the best way to do that would be to hold a press conference where she would answer questions from children.' (Girl 13, USA).

'Using social media, I have been able to learn lots more about politics, privilege and world issues which I have not previously considered.' (Girl 17, England)





# Representations of Children



## UNCRC ARTICLE 2

In their analysis of compliance with the UNCRC, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has noted that in some countries there is an **intolerance towards children and young people, particularly in the media**.

Article 2 of the UNCRC, states that children **should not be discriminated against in exercising their rights**. The survey showed some children felt discriminated against on the basis of their age during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was the case for children in some countries more than others.

## MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN



We asked children across the world if they thought that children and young people were **represented better, worse or the same in the media** since the Coronavirus began. While many children felt that the media representation of them was better (24%) or the same (21%) as it had been before the outbreak of Coronavirus, 16% of children felt that children and young people were portrayed more negatively in the media.

**Older children aged 13-17 years (17%) were more likely** than younger children aged 11-12 years (11%) to feel the portrayal of children and young people had gotten worse since Coronavirus began.

**Children in the United Kingdom and Ireland** were more likely (34%) to feel the portrayal of children and young people had gotten worse since the pandemic began compared to children from other countries (15%).





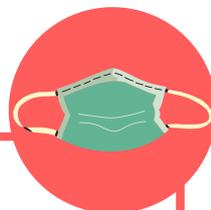
# Representations of Children

## WHAT WOULD YOU TELL GOVERNMENT TO DO?

Children in the survey were asked what advice they would give to government to help them make sure that children's rights are protected.

In some of their responses, children and young people across different countries raised **concerns about ways in which they were perceived and treated more negatively** or **discriminated against on the basis of age** during the Coronavirus crisis.

They were concerned about how they were viewed during the crisis, particularly relating to **blame** for spreading the virus. They were also angry about being **excluded** from public places and that the **sacrifices** they made hadn't be recognised.



## VIEWS ON CHILDREN DURING CRISIS

*Stop telling people we are vectors it hurts our feelings and make us sad I want to see my friends and my nana and grandad. (Boy, 8, Ireland)*

*I think the government should see that children are not dumb and easily manipulated. Some can have their own stand and think of new creative ways to face the crisis. Children should feel that trust and not feel like they have to remain silent. This would increase their confidence and motivated to report injustice. (Girl, 17, Bolivia)*

*"Children are not as clueless as you think they are. They have a voice, and no voice should be shut out. Being a child doesn't mean our voices are less credible, moreover, it should serve as an insight as to what the situation on sectors that you may have forgotten or have not given much importance is like." (Boy, 10, Philippines)*

*"Don't ignore children because they are young" (Boys, 8 South Korea)*



# Representations of Children



## EXCLUSION FROM PUBLIC SPACES

*Tell them that we need to go outside and do the same things like going into a shop like our Mom's and Dad's. Tell them that they said we were the problem in the spread of the virus but we are not & they still won't let us outside. (Girl, 11, Ireland)*

*Please tell the shops I'm not a germ infested brat like the man said so I can go into shops and help mum I miss being able to help her dad is always working and mum is stressed trying to get important stuff for us when shops give out and won't us in because I'm with her please send us some help we have a new baby and can't get all we need because shops think I'll make everyone sick by helping my mum. (Boy, 8, Ireland)*

## RECOGNISING CHILDREN'S SACRIFICES

*I think that the president should take actions and thank the children of the U.S. and thank them for the sacrifices that they are making to help stop the spread of COVID-19. We, children, have made many sacrifices for this pandemic, and we have missed our friends, graduations and proms. Sometimes it will feel like we are being punished for this pandemic, when in reality, we are making sacrifices. I think that it would make many children feel appreciated and helpful if our city council members, mayors, governors, and even, the First Family would thank us, children, for our do help and sacrifices due to the virus. (Girl, 11, United States of America)*

*I didn't have the chance to graduate from high school, I can't have the prom night party and the tour with all of my friends, I have to cancel a lot of holiday plans, I really miss hanging out with my friends (Girl, 17, Indonesia)*

*The pandemic deprived me of my friends, my colleagues, of the possibility to go on holidays. And poverty, very high poverty, because my mother did not work. (Girl, 9, Moldova)*

*'My exams got cancelled and my prom too. Every year I attend a summer camp and that got cancelled to because we could not keep 1.5 meter distance. So this Corona crisis came completely at the wrong time because this year should be one of the best years of my life and now it is all ruined.' (Girl, 9, Holland)*



# Adequate Standard of Living

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## ARTICLE 27 UNCRC

Article 27 of the [UNCRC](#) says that all children have the right to an adequate standard of living.

This includes nutrition, clothing and housing as well as financial assistance where needed. [Article 24](#) says that children must also have access to clean drinking water.

Our survey shows that some children have less food since coronavirus and that some families have less money to meet their children's needs since coronavirus. This was worse for some groups of children than others.

Across the survey responses children made reference to the negative economic impact of the pandemic both on society and their families. They expressed concern that parents did not have enough money to fulfil basic needs, especially where parents or family members became unemployed following the pandemic. Children were experiencing food shortages, which caused anxiety. They also highlighted an increased cost of living including additional expenses such as purchase of soap for hand washing.

## FOOD

20% of all children said they had less food since coronavirus with 65% saying this had not changed. 23% of 8-10 year olds reported they had less food compared to 17% of 13-17 year olds. 19% of children who were living at home reported they had less food compared to 9% of those living in residential care

38% of children from the migrant community said they had less food since coronavirus while 48% said this remained the same as before. 40% of asylum seeking children said they had less food since coronavirus; 44% said they had the same as before.

24% of children who identified as having a disability said they had less food since coronavirus compared to 18% of children without disabilities.



'We as a family are lacking a lot of things such as food.' (Girl, 17, Zambia)

'I would like to go to school, then I will be able to have food for lunch.' (Girl, 14 India)

'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)

'My parent earn less money I can not have good food like before.' (Boy, 8, Cambodia)

'My mummy had to drive to multiple locations to get our basic needs because of restrictions she was shamed for trying to purchase 2 bottles of milk. The lady in the shop yelled at her even though we use that daily as we are a large family.' (Girl, 12, Australia)

'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)



## MONEY

**41%** of all children said their family had less money to meet their needs since coronavirus. For 54% of children family income did not appear to change.

This was worse for some groups: a majority of migrant children (**58%**) and asylum seeking children (**56%**) said their family had less money to meet their needs since coronavirus. Almost half of children with disabilities said their family had less money (**46%**).

**49%** of 8-10 year olds reported their family had less money to meet their needs compared to **36%** of 13-17 year olds.

'No money we can't meet our needs.' (Girl, 11, Pakistan)

'Money is hard to find for my dad.' (Boy, 15, Zambia)

'I would urge the government to do more for the Roma Ashkali and Egyptian communities because we are in an even more difficult economic and social situation. The pandemic has aggravated our economic situation even more as family members have lost their jobs.' Girl, 11, Albania)

'I'm waiting when school will reopen so that I don't need to work.' (Girl, 13, India)



# Adequate Standard of Living



## WATER

Access to enough clean drinking water remained the same for the majority of children (83%). However for 4% of children access to clean drinking water reduced since the start of coronavirus.

Access to clean drinking water was more difficult for some groups of children: 15% of asylum seeking children, 9% of children from migrant communities and 8% of children from ethnic minority communities said they had less clean drinking water than before.

'I can tell the government to help us with clean and safe drinking water.'  
(Girl, 17, Zambia)

## IMAGINE YOU COULD TALK TO GOVERNMENT

Children told us they would tell government...



'I would tell them to make a list of the families in need and to send them help, financially or with food/water/medicine.' (Girl, 15, Croatia)

'I could advise them to improve the water supply (clean) in rural areas.'  
(Boy, 16, Rwanda)

'Help poor people to get food for their children' (Boy, 15, Iraq)

'I ask you to help children in poor families. But not with money, better with food and household items, clothes, stationery, books. Reduce mortgage interest. Give parents and children the opportunity to relax at sea.' (Girl, 13, Russia)

'Please make sure that children don't go to bed with empty stomach. They have a right to be well fed. And their parents get enough money to look after the basic needs like medical needs of children.' (Girl, 17, India)



# Family Life

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## 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:

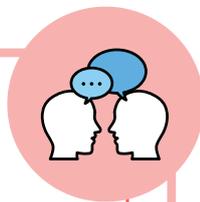
Worried 43%  
Afraid 41%  
Sad 40%

'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



# Safety and Violence

**#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 findings relating to safety and violence**

## UNCRC ARTICLE 19



Article 19 of the [UNCRC](#) says that children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence including physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

Children were asked a range of questions on feelings of safety, exposure to violence and access to support. They were asked to compare their experiences since Coronavirus began, to those prior to it – were things better, the same or worse?

Many children reported feeling safer than, or as safe as, they had done before the pandemic, and many felt at no greater risk of violence. However, this was not the case for all children. The survey results demonstrate that some children are at increased risk of violence as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This highlights groups that may require specific attention and support in protecting their right to safety and freedom from violence during periods of lockdown and global crises.



## THE VIEWS OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVISORY GROUP

The Children's Advisory Group were presented with some of the comments left by children on their surveys which related to safety and violence. They identified four themes: safety at home/ where children live; safety online; the impacts of Covid-19 on mental health; dealing with the impact of Covid-19 on mental health. The first two topics are discussed in detail below, integrating some of the quotations the Advisory Group identified as important. In relation to mental health, their analysis revealed that for some children, home could be less safe during the pandemic due to feelings of isolation or feeling 'trapped' which could increase anxiety, depression and stress.



# Safety and Violence

## FEELING SAFE WHERE THEY LIVE

36% of children felt **safer at home** (or where they lived) since Coronavirus began; 56% reported feeling as safe as they had done prior to the pandemic.

**Younger children**, those aged 8-10 years, were the age group most likely to report feeling more safe at home or where they lived.

Some of those who reported feeling safer noted this was because indoors was the safest place to be during the pandemic. For others being at home meant they were less exposed to violence in communities and schools.

'I feel safe at home. Because of Covid-19 I feel unsafe outside the house' (Boy, 9, Pakistan)

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

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

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

## FEELING LESS SAFE WHERE THEY LIVE

9% of children felt **less safe in their homes** or where they lived since the outbreak of Coronavirus.

Feeling unsafe was particularly high among some groups: almost one-quarter of **migrant children** (24%) and those living in a **detention centre, refugee camp or homeless centre** (23%) felt less safe at home/ where they lived, and 22% of children who were **seeking asylum** felt less safe at home/ where they lived.

## ONLINE SAFETY

While the **majority** of children reported **feeling safer** (14%) or as safe (70%) online during Coronavirus, **17% reported feeling less safe**

Almost one in five children aged 8-10 years (19%) felt less safe online

'The online is sometimes unsafe and there are many anonymous messages who speak vulgar to you. I know how to report or block them but many don't. We need to make a change.' (Girl, 15, India)



# Safety & Violence



## EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

Most children reported hearing, witnessing or experiencing **less violence** (52%), or the same levels of violence (39%), as they had done prior to the Coronavirus pandemic. This may reflect the high levels of community violence that some were previously exposed to (see above 'feeling safe').

9% of all children reported hearing, witnessing or experiencing **more violence**.

Some groups experienced higher levels of violence than others: 22% of children from **migrant communities**; 20% of children **living in a detention centre, refugee camp or homeless centre**; 20% of children **seeking asylum**; 19% of children who identify as **LGBTQ+**; and 14% of children with **disabilities** said they had heard, witnessed or experienced more violence than before the pandemic.

**'I suffer domestic abuse because I'm a trans person. I don't have any support from my family, and I have no friends'** (Girl, 17, Chile)

**'I heard from my mother some of the children in the community have experienced violence such as forced for early marriages, other working too much because they spend more time at home while others are involved in casual work which is not safe for children especially now with covid in town'** (Boy, 13, Tanzania)



## HELP WHEN FEELING UNSAFE

Overall, **one-third (33%)** of children had **greater awareness of how to seek help** if they felt unsafe compared to before the pandemic. This was particularly the case for **younger children** (8-10 years) (41%) and **children living in residential care/ homes** (42%).

These findings may point to effective communication, information (Art. 17, UNCRC) and processes put in place to support these children at this time of crisis.



## LESS HELP WHEN FEELING UNSAFE

11% of all children reported having **less knowledge of how to seek support** since the start of the pandemic. Some groups were more likely than others to say they had less knowledge of how to access help if worried or unsafe: 18% of children who identify as **LGBTQ+**; 21% of children **seeking asylum**; and **22%** of children identifying as belonging to **migrant communities reported less knowledge of how to access support since the start of the pandemic.**

37% of children who felt less safe at home or where they lived also reported having less knowledge, since the pandemic began, or how to get help or support if they needed it.

One in five (20%) children who reported feeling less safe at home or where they lived since Coronavirus began said that they 'never' had an adult they could talk to or contact if they needed support.

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

'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)

## WHAT WOULD YOU ASK GOVERNMENT TO DO?



Some children offered advice on how the government could protect children from abuse/violence. These are some of the things they said:

'Even though there is a pandemic going on there are people out there who experience abuse daily. The awareness, even in Canada and how to access the resources is not explains/told in the best way. Finding that information should be basic knowledge for any human being' (Girl, 16, Canada).

'Get Social Workers to check up on families and children, preferably those with any slight history of abuse. Provide children-specific guidelines for dealing with COVID-19'. (Boy, 17, Nigeria)

'Many children have abusive households all across the globe. Child physical abuse, mental abuse and also sexual abuse is very common. They thought of school as an escape way to stay away from their household. As the corona virus has arrived, they have to stay home and deal with the traumatic experiences. The government should try to make sure children have a way to call for help and to make sure households are protecting them.' (Girl, 14, Pakistan)

'Ensure that every child has a safe home that is not subject to violence' (Girl, 17, Greece)



# Education

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## UNCRC ARTICLE 28 & 29

Articles 28 & 29 of the [UNCRC](#) set out children and young people's rights to education. The Children's Advisory Group identified the [transformation of education](#) as a major theme across the data.

'I think that during quarantine, the schedule of every child changed for worse, starting with the education, communicating with friends, less time outside, alimentation, spiritual state etc. First of all, I want to mention the fact on-line classes did not have the effect and the degree of information and necessary knowledge due to the fact that a lot of children did not have the possibility (financial) to use the internet and the needed device, such as a phone or a laptop. Secondly, the on-line classes done on the mobile phone had a negative impact on our eyesight.' (Girl 14, Moldova)

Coupled with this was educational, social and emotional [disruption to children's school lives](#).

'I miss my classmates. In a classroom at school, I learn more than online, personal communication and feedback are very important for me.' (Girl, 14, Russia)

And the final theme that they identified was the significant [dissatisfaction at not being involved in decisions](#) around closing/opening schools and how best to deliver and access education on and offline.

'We should be allowed to voice our opinions on when schools should reopen. It is our future so it should be our choice.' (Girl 15 from South Africa)



## SOME CHILDREN FIND THEIR EDUCATION BETTER DURING CORONAVIRUS

12% of children said their education was better during Coronavirus. Some children enjoyed learning at their own pace and pursuing their own interests while others were glad not to be in school so that they could avoid bullying.

'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, but this isn't universal - some of my friends say their workload has increased during lockdown.' (Girl, 15, South Africa)

'My teachers stopped verbally and mentally abusing me. I no longer get constantly bullied.' (Boy, 15, Ireland)



# Education

## MOST CHILDREN FOUND THEIR EDUCATION WAS BETTER BEFORE CORONAVIRUS

Most children (58% of 13-17 year olds and 68%) of children from migrant communities said their education was better before Coronavirus.

41% ( rising to 64% of asylum seekers and 62% of migrant children) said that being able to get support from their teachers was better before Coronavirus.



'I dislike the fact that the teachers specifically in my school gave a bunch of task not according to the schedule resulting to stress, migraine, and sleep deprivation. And for some subjects like math it's harder to understand since we are not directly taught by the teacher and the teacher dont even bother setting up an online meeting to teach us ' (Girl, 17, Indonesia)

## PROBLEMS WITH ACCESSING EDUCATION ONLINE

Children with no access to internet (84%) or with poor internet access (69%) were much more likely to say that access to good education was better before the outbreak.

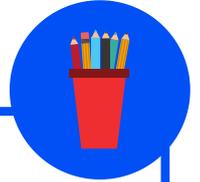
'I feel they need more to work on right to education. Seeing that I live in a rural community where it is hard to access internet.. It is a challenge to learn online' (Girl, 14, Zambia)

'No typical school activities, nothing really. If schools are still closed, I am not sure how much of a decent education I will get from Zoom. This deeply worries me. Quite a number of zoom lessons are interrupted with teacher's having bad WiFi or audio problems, etc. I think online learning has its benefits, but I don't think it can be a primary source of education. I just wish us students were at least consulted ' (Girl, 16, Malta)

'I feel they need more to work on right to education. Seeing that I live in a rural community where it is hard to access internet.. It is a challenge to learn online' (Girl 14 Zambia)



# Education



## STRESS AND WORRY ABOUT EXAMS/GRADES

42% of children (and 54% of migrant children and asylum seekers) said that they were less confident that teachers would give them good grades for their studies due to Coronavirus.

'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.'  
(Boy, 14, Nepal).



## IMAGINE YOU COULD TALK TO GOVERNMENT...

Children told us they would tell government...

'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 tool 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'.  
(A letter to Covid from a girl aged 12, Canada)

'Start teaching door to door with a teacher with 4-5 children in group and provide ration to family at door with care of small children.' (Boy, 12, India)

'not everyone is able to educate themselves with the internet, but we all know that opening schools again is not about our education its so parents can go back to work. we all know it. If they actually cared about our education they would look at changing how schools are run and why we just get tested constantly but not actually learn anything' (Girl, 15, England).



# Play, Rest & Leisure

**#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 play

## UNCRC ARTICLE 31



Article 31 of the UNCRC says that all children have the right to play, rest and leisure.

Our survey shows that some children enjoyed opportunities for free time during Coronavirus.

Lots of children missed their friends and were looking forward to playing together after lockdown.

## WHAT IS BETTER DURING CORONAVIRUS



**I get to play online: 36%** of children said that this was better during Coronavirus.

Many children were enjoying the free time and opportunity to pursue their hobbies or pick up new ones:

**'I listened to music. I learned foreign languages. I did yoga and meditation'** (Girl 15, Albania).

**'I really like the lockdown because I have had tons of time for me to do whatever I want.'** (Girl, 16, Turkey)

## WHAT WAS BETTER BEFORE CORONAVIRUS



**'I get to play/spend free time as I like'** - 41% said that it was better before Coronavirus. This increased for children aged 8-10 (46%), asylum seekers (58%) and children who identified as migrants (54%).

Lots of children were looking forward to seeing their friends and playing sports after lockdown restrictions lifted:

**'Go out with my friends, go swimming and playing basketball'** (Boy, 15, Rwanda)

**'I get to spend time outside every day'** - 65% (70% of 8-10 year olds) of children said it was better before Coronavirus

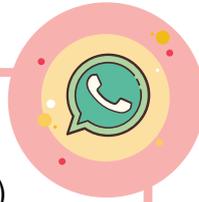


# Play, Rest & Leisure

## MISSING FRIENDS

56% (67% of children aged 8-10) said they were less able to speak to their friends. Many children said the worst thing about Coronavirus was missing their friends.

'Its all economy this economy that, and we are still told to social distance but you can do anything that costs money but you cant do anything that is free like just go to a friends house or to the skate park.. they just want us to spend money and pretend to care about our health and not spreading the virus' (Girl, 15, England)

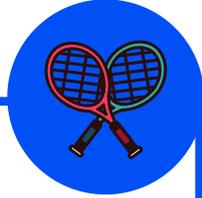


## MISSING SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

35% (46% of asylum seekers) said they got more physical exercise before Coronavirus and 31% said that they were getting more physical exercise during it. Many children said the worst thing about Coronavirus was missing their sports and activities.

'Please open our sports back up so we can go back to training. I want to go back to my gymnastics training' (Girl, 8, Ireland)

'I am missing out on all my favourite sports as don't own a swimming pool, a lacrosse pitch or netball hoops.' (Girl, 12, England)



## IMAGINE YOU COULD TALK TO GOVERNMENT...

When we asked children what they would tell government they told us...

'Due to social distancing, we hardly go out. We need entertainment and play. If our government can stream a free child-friendly, eco-friendly version of Kids TV Channel. In this way, children can still enjoy their time at home. But right before that, the government must make sure every child in the country has access to electricity. Please.' (Girl, 17, Myanmar)

'Well a heads up to the schools would have been better. But i guess they also didn't know that is was going to be this big. I would have organised more sport things for children because every club closed down. Also i would've opened up the libraries for children who don't have a quiet place to study.' (Girl, 17, Netherlands)





## Initiative Co-leads



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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](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