

Press release

For immediate release

Children and the environment in 2020

2020 sees a big shift in the intensity of children's concern about the environment – reveals new independent report.

Children's overall concern about the environment is up only marginally since 2007, when CHILDWISE last surveyed children on this subject – but the intensity of concern has surged over the last 12 years, according to the new CHILDWISE Monitor 2020 report.

Overall, three in four 7-16 year olds are concerned about the environment at all (up from seven in ten in 2007), but now, one in three say they are 'very concerned' compared to only one in five in 2007.¹

The new independent report looks at children's views about the environment, including their agreement with environmental statements and how often they carry out environmentally unfriendly day-to-day actions.

'Children aged 7-17 were asked how concerned they were about climate change and global warming. This question was last asked by CHILDWISE researchers in 2007, allowing a comparison with children's views from 12 years ago,' says Simon Leggett, CHILDWISE research director.

'While children's overall concern for the environment has only increased marginally since 2007, this hides a big shift in the intensity and voice of this concern. Both genders are now equally likely to be 'very concerned' compared to previously where girls were more likely to express this view.

Furthermore, it is Generation Alpha, those born from 2010 onwards, who show the most intense concern. More than half of 7-8 year olds are very concerned, along with two in five 9-10 year olds. In 2007, half as many 7-10 year olds were very concerned about the environment.

'Whilst children seem to have always been environmentally conscious, their passion seems to have been stirred by the recent rise of Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg's school strike movement' says Simon.

'The intense concern among an expanding group of vocal younger children came through in the data – and these are likely to be the people who will actively voice worries and carry through change.'

'This is the single biggest issue this decade. It's important to measure children's attitudes and how they change as the decade unfolds.'

¹ Overall 74% of 7-16 year olds say they are concerned at all about climate change and global warming compared to 70% in 2007

The report also finds ...

- Whilst more than half of 7-16 year olds never leave the tap running when they brush their teeth, the vast majority ever leave a mobile phone charger plugged in, and most leave the lights on in rooms when they are not in them.
- The number of children who strongly agree that ‘people have a duty to recycle’ has doubled since 2007. The biggest change is among younger children.
- Younger children’s agreement that humans are capable of overcoming environmental problems has intensified significantly over time.
- Children, especially the youngest, are now more likely to say they would be prepared to pay more for products that are environmentally friendly.
- Two in five children say they don’t believe their behaviour and everyday lifestyle contribute to climate change.
- Most children disagree that acting environmentally friendly takes too much effort.
- Half of children agree with curbs on car use to reduce environmental impact.

The 2020 CHILDWISE Monitor is a comprehensive annual report looking at 5 to 16-year-olds media consumption, purchasing, reading and social habits as well as key behaviour. More than 2000 children in schools across the United Kingdom completed in-depth online surveys for the report.

CHILDWISE is an independent market research agency specialising in children and young people. CHILDWISE has a programme of published independent research and also conducts research for government agencies, charities, broadcasters, publishers and brands www.childwise.co.uk

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