

Press release

Under embargo until: 31 January 2018 at 00.01h GMT

New study reveals UK children's growing anxiety about war and terrorism

A CHILDWISE survey of children aged 7-16 has revealed that one in three are now more worried about global events than anything else.

The last two years have seen a significant shift in what children are worried about. New data from the 2018 CHILDWISE Monitor shows UK children are now most concerned about 'things happening around the world' rather than worrying mainly about events that might only affect them personally.

All children aged 7-16 were asked what concerns or worries them most. These questions were last asked by the survey in 2015, allowing comparison over time.

"There has been a notable change since 2015 with today's children most concerned about global events. Their main concern on the world stage is war and terrorism," says Simon Leggett, research director at CHILDWISE.

This year, one in three are most concerned about global events, rising from one in four in 2015. Girls are also more concerned than boys.¹

"However, they are likely to source information from friends and family, or social media, which means that they may have the awareness but not the depth of knowledge, especially among the younger age groups," says Simon.

Donald Trump, North Korea, terrorism and global warming were mentioned by children as being key global concerns. One 11-year-old girl told researchers she was most worried about "Donald Trump and the leader of North Korea because the backfire will land on England and we might all die."

The data shows 27% of children are anxious about things happening to them personally, but just 7% are worried about things happening in their local area or in the country. While younger children are worried about the threat of war, by their teenage years, concern about mental health, such as depression, is just as big an issue.

The survey also asked 9 to 16-year olds how often they experience a range of emotions with 79% saying they felt stress about school work, 72% experiencing feelings of worry or anxiety, 58% having fears they are not good enough, and 57% feeling they don't look good enough.

¹ 29% most concerned about global events, rising from 24% in 2015.

Significant numbers have also felt pressure to lose weight (56%) with girls more likely than boys to have experienced any of the listed concerns.

The 2018 CHILDWISE Monitor is a comprehensive annual report looking at 5 to 16-year-olds media consumption, purchasing 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.

One in five 11 to 16 year olds say that bullying is a major concern for them, and the same number say they are worried about racism.

Older children are far more concerned with mental illness – overall, one in six list this among their top three concerns. By the age of 15-16 this is as important an issue to them as war and terrorism.

Children's top 10 concerns, listed in order from the top ranking worry, are war/terrorism/extremism, bullying, racism, mental illness/depression, cruelty to animals, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment and getting a job, homelessness and getting a house, discrimination based on sexuality, and cruelty to children.

“On a personal level, children are worried about problems with friendships, how they will do at school and their health, especially mental health. Close to home, crime in the local area is a big issue,” said Simon Leggett.

Findings of the report also include...

- Children age 5-16 spend just over two and a half hours a day watching programmes, video and short clips (2.6 hours, 2.5 hours last year).
- Most children now use devices other than a traditional television set to watch video content.
- YouTube remains the top way of watching on-demand content.
- Children age 9-16 spend an average of 2.7 hours online a day. This has dropped over the last three years and is down from 2.9 hours last year. However, this fall could be a consequence of children being less able to determine which of their routine activities are carried out online or offline.
- Children are taking to virtual reality with 25% having mobile VR equipment at home, 11% with Playstation VR, 10% have Oculus Rift and 6% have HTC Vive
- Binge watching content is a growing habit.

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

The Monitor Report 2018 covers... children and their media; TV viewing; music; reading ; cinema; children's equipment; money; purchasing; sports & activities; health & wellbeing and social awareness.

Editorial notes: For more information or to interview a member of the CHILDWISE research team please contact Liz Hollis 07880 680302 liz@lizhollis.co.uk CHILDWISE website www.childwise.co.uk